



**New Mexico Public Education Commission
Charter Schools Division**

**2018 New Charter School Application Kit
Part B. Executive Summary**



Part B: Executive Summary

This section should be two to three pages long and address, in a narrative form, the following points:

- Your proposed school's name and a description of the charter school's projected students, including key demographic data (academic performance, home languages, special populations), based on the local community or the school district in whose geographic boundaries the charter school applies to operate
- Where the charter school's projected students are most likely being educated currently and why they are expected to choose the proposed charter school for their future educational needs
- Evidence that there is a community need for a school of this nature in the local community or the school district in whose geographic boundaries the charter school applies to operate. Note: NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-6(L)(5) provides, "[a] chartering authority may approve, approve with conditions or deny an application. A chartering authority may deny an application if...the application is otherwise contrary to the best interests of the charter school's projected students, the local community or the school district in whose geographic boundaries the charter school applies to operate." Evidence of community need is required. Specific data and evidence is required in the application itself. Therefore, specific statistical information does not need to be provided here.
- The key innovative and unique programmatic features the school will implement to accomplish its mission (non-traditional school year, longer school day, partner organizations, etc.)
- How you project that the school will be more effective than the schools currently serving the charter school's projected students, or the founder(s)' plans to improve student achievement and exceed the academic performance of these existing public schools in the local community or the school district in whose geographic boundaries the charter school applies to operate. Provide a brief summary of any data you have to support this assumption.
- The founders of the proposed school, their background, and expertise
- If different from the list provided above, the founding governing board

To complete the following form, click on the text box and begin to type.

New Charter Application Executive Summary

**Raíces der Saber Xinachtli Community School
Executive Summary**

Raices del Saber Xinachtli Community School is an elementary school that will serve students from the Las Cruces Public Schools located in Doña Ana County, New Mexico (zip codes: 88001, 88003, 88004, 88005, 88006, 88007, 88011, 88012, 88013, 88046). Our services target English Learners whose dominant language is Spanish and students whose dominant language is English but whose parents want them to become bilingual and biliterate. This great desire has been expressed in the dialogue sessions conducted with 336 parent participants to date. We offer the opportunity for elementary students to become bilingual and biliterate in English and Spanish through a 90:10 dual language model. Our pedagogy is designed to actively engage and involve students in all areas of their learning, empowering them as participants in the construction of knowledge and developing a positive personal and social identity through a culturally responsive, enriching curriculum.

Las Cruces is located in a U.S./Mexico border region, serving a population with a Mexican American majority. According to 2017 Las Cruces Public School data, Hispanic students comprise 75.1% of the total student enrollment with 15.9% being English Language Learners at the elementary grades. School enrollment indicates 14.4% of students in the district are in Special Education. Among the general student population, 72% receive free or reduced lunch, an indicator of being economically disadvantaged. The home language of these students is 50.5% English and 29.5% Spanish. In 18.8% of the homes, the LCPS district has not been able to obtain information on the home language. In the other 1.2% of student homes, over 15 foreign languages are spoken including the Navajo and Zuni languages. This data indicates the great linguistic diversity of families among the student population in the Las Cruces area with at least 30.7% or 7,576 students from homes speaking a language other than English.

We predict that at Raices our student enrollment will reflect these statistics. There are 11,942 students enrolled in the elementary level of the Las Cruces Public Schools. According to Istation assessments in reading, 17% of Kindergarten students are proficient, 18% in first grade, and 15% in second grade. A combination of other assessments place the districtwide rating of English Language Learners as having a proficiency of 20% in reading and 9% in math. The overall average proficiency rating of the LCPS student is 38% in reading and 20% in math.

The foundation for literacy (learning to read, write, and communicate effectively) is set in the first primary grades. Proficiency in reading by the end of second grade needs to be at a 70% or higher rating for a child to be literate and master other academic content. Effective bilingual education enhances learning because it stimulates brain cognition which, coupled with an engaging instructional approach, allows the student to develop higher order thinking skills, critical analysis, and the ability to process challenging academic content.

Las Cruces is a community with a millenary history and diverse Native American and Hispanic cultural traditions blended together over centuries. Little, if any, information on this early history is found in the academic content or enrichment programs available in elementary schools. With a majority Mexican

American population (65% Hispanic/Latino in Doña Ana County), it is important for students to be able to explore and learn about that part of their heritage. A culturally responsive, enriching curriculum encouraging exploration, discussion, and inquiry about the personal and social aspects of their identity promotes self-confidence and enthusiasm about their cultural background. Being knowledgeable about their community history and current events will encourage personal responsibility and active engagement as citizens. Therefore, this proposed charter school has been designed around a mission, presented in the application, that will achieve this kind of learning environment.

Innovative Qualities of Raíces Curriculum Implicit in Philosophy and Goals of School's Mission

There are six major innovative qualities in the Raíces proposed charter school which are explained in great detail in our application. They are as follows:

1. Children as Carriers and Constructors of Knowledge,
2. Bilingualism and Biliteracy Through a Two-Way Dual Language 90:10 Model,
3. Balanced Literacy Program to Empower Students as Creators and Collaborators in Their Literacy,
4. Xinachtli (Sheen-ach-tlee) Academic Enrichment Program Based on Mesoamerican Pedagogy,
5. Parents as Partners in Creating a Participatory Learning community, and
6. Teachers Trained and Supported to Implement Innovative Approaches to Learning.

There are a number of organizations supporting our pedagogical approach which have offered written statements of support to collaborate with our school efforts through in-kind services. We provide detailed explanations in the application.

We are mindful of our role as part of a larger community to be supportive of all our public education institutions to improve the quality of service to our students. We want to strengthen our public schools by sending strong academically prepared and socially responsible students to their middle schools.

Founders and Proposed Board Members of Raices del Saber Xinachtli Community School

Founder Carlos Aceves: Carlos holds a BA in Elementary Education, an MA in Educational Psychology, is a Certified Elementary Bilingual Educator with 25 years' experience as a bilingual elementary school teacher, and author of Mesoamerican-based Curriculum. Fluent in English and Spanish.

Board Member/Founder/ Dr. Jane Ashe: Jane holds a B.S. in Chemistry and Mathematics, an MA. in Elementary Education, and an Ed.D. in Adult and Continuing Education with extensive experience in community and board development and the development of community-business-school partnerships.

Board Member Rocio Benedicto: Rocio holds a BA in Political Science, an MA in Educational Development of Learning Technologies, and is about to complete her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with extensive expertise in bilingual education, cross cultural pedagogical methods, literacy and mathematics instruction, especially with English Language Learners. Fluent in English and Spanish

Founder Lucia V. Carmona: Lucia is a NACA Inspired School Network Fellow; holds a BA in Sociology, is an expert in community engagement and community organizing with 20 years of experience working in the nonprofit sector, rural community development; leadership development and parent engagement.

Founder Laura Flores: Laura holds a BS in Education with a specialization in Special Education & Elementary Education, MA in Elementary Mathematics, MA in Educational Administration, National Board Certification in Literacy, and level three K-8 New Mexico Teaching License with endorsements in TESOL and Bilingual Education. Fluent in English and Spanish.

Board Member/Founder Dr. Nicholas Natividad: Nicholas holds Assistant Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at NMSU; holds a Ph.D. in Justice Studies with a concentration on issues of social justice in crime and law; and his research and teaching interests include borderland studies, race and identity studies.

Board Member /Founder Irene Oliver-Lewis: Irene has 40 years of experience as an artist teaching scholar; great expertise in Latino/multicultural arts, education, and humanities projects; and was a founder of an award-winning arts-based charter high school, Alma d'Arte. Fluent in English & Spanish.

Founder Olga Pedroza: Olga was a city councilor and renowned community leader who served during the first 18 months of the founding process. She was a civil rights lawyer who held a BA in sociology and MA in education and was an invaluable legal consultant. She passed away suddenly February 9, 2018.

Founder Dr. Wanda Bugler-Tamez: Wanda holds a BS in Elementary Education with mathematics emphasis an MA in Educational Administration, National Board Teacher Certification in Early Adolescence Mathematics, and PhD in Curriculum and Instruction; and is currently Project Director/PI for the Mathematically Connected Communities (MC²) project.

Board Member/Founder Monika Garcia-Tellez: Monika immigrated to the U.S. as a young Spanish speaking child; holds a degree as a medical assistant; has extensive volunteer experience in supporting children in high-risk situations; has served as president of the Parent Teacher Organization in her child's school and is employed as a Spanish-English bilingual interpreter for Cyracom Corporation.

Board Member Dr. Luis Heurta: Luis is an Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education at NMSU, holds multiple degrees in education from universities in Mexico and the U.S.; and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction; has extensive expertise in curriculum development for early childhood and elementary education, the coaching and mentoring of teachers, and multicultural and bilingual education; fluent in English and Spanish.

Board Member/Founder Ray Reich: Ray holds a BS in Psychiatric Social Work and has thirty years of volunteer mentoring experience, consulting and counseling individuals and families in matters from employment to recovery from drug abuse; and is a highly successful business entrepreneur with extensive background in business finance. Fluent in Spanish and English.

Founder Silvia Sierra: Silvia holds an MA in Health Sciences and a certificate from the US/Mexico Border Health Commission Leadership Training Program and is a graduate of Leaders across Borders first graduating class; and has an extensive background in public health services. Fluent in Spanish & English.

Founder Amanda Walden: Amanda holds an BA in Spanish and Latin American Studies and an MA in Special Education; has done extensive work with immigrant families in Latin America and the U.S.; is currently a special education teacher in the Las Cruces Public Schools; and is fluent in Spanish & English.

