



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

Proposed School Name. Solare Collegiate Charter School (“Solare Collegiate”)

Mission. Through rigorous academics, individualized supports, and character development, Solare Collegiate Charter School equips all students in grades five through eight with the academic and personal skills to excel in the high schools and colleges of their choice.

Projected Student Population. Solare Collegiate targeted demographic area is the 87121 and surrounding zip codes. In the 87121-zip code, 90.2% of public school students qualify for free or reduced lunch, with 100% of schools in 87121 qualifying as Title I schools. In our targeted community, 24% of middle school students were identified as having special needs, while 25% of middle school students in 87121 are classified as English Learners.¹ Spanish is identified as the primary home language for 50.4% of families.² **Figure 1** outlines the academic performance of Albuquerque Public Schools middle schools in the 87121-zip code.

Figure 1 - Middle School PARCC Proficiency Rates³

	Proficient or Higher in ELA	Proficient or Higher in Math
State	29%	21%
Albuquerque Public Schools	27%	19%
87121 (APS)	11%	6%
Economically Disadvantaged in 87121	11%	5%
Students with Special Needs in 87121	7%	6%
English Learners in 87121	7%	3%

Figure 1 shows that middle school proficiency rates are significantly lower than the state and Albuquerque Public Schools averages, with students with special needs and English Learners performing at the lowest rates of proficiency. According to the PARCC assessment, only 11% of middle school students in 87121 are proficient in English/Language Arts and only 6% of middle school students in 87121 are proficient in Mathematics.

Where Projected Students are Currently Being Educated. Solare Collegiate proposes to enroll an inaugural cohort of 52 5th graders and 104 6th graders in the fall of 2019. We expect that our students are currently enrolled in one of five elementary schools serving upper elementary in 87121: Alamosa, Carlos Rey, Ed Gonzalez, Maryann Binford, or Rudolfo Anaya. Of these, in 2017, Carlos Rey earned a C rating; all others earned a D or F letter grade from New Mexico Public Education Department. We believe that families in our community will attend Solare Collegiate because of our focus on college preparation, through increased literacy and math instruction, as well as dedicated individualized tutoring during our school day. Incorporating a small school design desired by many parents, at full capacity, our student-to-teacher ratio will be 16:1, with individual class sizes of 26 students.

Community Need. The Solare Collegiate team has met with over 130 community members and leaders who believe that 87121 needs a high quality middle school option for southwest Albuquerque. Our

¹ New Mexico Public Education Department. (2017). Inspection of Public Records Request.

² <http://www.city-data.com/zips/87121.html>.

³ New Mexico Public Education Department. (2017). PARCC Proficiencies 2017

outreach included meetings with community leaders and families in the South Valley and Westside, among others throughout the City of Albuquerque. Solare Collegiate has developed relationships with multiple South Valley and Westside community organizations, including ACCESS NM, West Central Community Development Group, the Atrisco Heritage Foundation, the National Hispanic Cultural Center, and the Rio Grande Educational Collaborative. To date, conversations share a common theme: a pointed concern about the access to quality education for students in the 87121-zip code and surrounding communities and the social and economic implications of this lack of quality education access at scale. Families and stakeholders want a college preparatory option in their community to ensure that children in 87121 have access to a strong middle school education that prepares them for attending the high schools and colleges of their choice. That belief in Solare Collegiate is demonstrated by the 43 letters of support we received, as part of our charter application.

According to the 2017 Public Education Department School Report Cards, only one school in the 87121-zip code has a grade higher than a C - Helen Cordero Primary, currently serving grades K-2. All middle school options in 87121 were rated D or F for the 2016-2017 school year. Atrisco Heritage and West Mesa High Schools earned school grades of a C, and had 2016 graduation rates of 70% and 67%, respectively. This data reveals that families living in the 87121-zip code do not have easy access to a high performing middle school in their own community, and local discussions continue to demonstrate strong dissatisfaction with local options that do not provide a program tailored to students' needs, families' desires, and aligned with high ambitions for every child's success.

Innovative and Unique Programmatic Features. Solare Collegiate is guided by the belief that voice strengthens identity. To support that belief, Solare Collegiate had included innovative components of Heritage Spanish Language classes and a New Mexico Culture Enrichment course. This unique Enrichment course was added to our academic programming based on conversations with families and community stakeholders in the 87121-zip code. Other innovative components of Solare Collegiate include an extended school day and school year, 130 minutes of daily literacy instruction, 100 minutes of mathematics instruction, purposeful integration of oral literacy across the content areas, and a middle school model with a 5th grade starting point.

Effectiveness of Solare Collegiate. Solare Collegiate's Lead Founder and proposed Head of School Rachael Swards is a teacher of 10 years, the most recent 7 of which were in New Mexico. Most recently, she was rated Exemplary on the rigorous NMTEACH evaluation system. Additionally, through her work with the Building Excellent Schools (BES) Fellowship, Ms. Swards has visited more than 30 high-poverty, high-achieving charter schools across the country, while also receiving training and support in organizational leadership, school finance, curriculum, and school culture. In January 2018, Ms. Swards has completed leadership residency at BES school Excel Academy, in Chelsea, MA. Excel Chelsea's performance on the PARCC assessment ranked the school among the top 15 middle schools in the State of Massachusetts. Excel Chelsea boasted 37% of their students with special needs and 31% of their English Language Learners as proficient on the PARCC assessment, significantly higher than the state average, and higher than the New Mexico average for all students.⁴ Solare Collegiate's design is based on proven methods of school design, as well as partnerships built with high-performing charter schools in New Mexico and across the country, creating a foundation for building a school of high expectations and high support of students and teachers for student in the 87121 zip code, improving the academic expectations and outcomes in our community.

⁴ <http://www.excelacademy.org/impact/>.

Founding Team and Proposed Governing Board:

Name	Qualifications: Education, Employment, and Experience
Rachael Swards Lead Founder Proposed Head of School	Education. MA, Teaching Middle Grades; MA, International Affairs; BA, Psychology & Sociology Current Employment. Fellow, Building Excellent Schools – Nationally renowned training program focused on the development of leaders for high-performing charter schools. Experience. Exemplary-rated classroom teacher of 10 years, with extensive experience with curriculum development and implementation.
Norma Binder Founder Proposed Governing Board Member	Education. MA, Education Administration, University of Denver; MBA, Drexel University; BA, Penn State Current Employment. Retired, most recently Deputy Superintendent of Bernalillo Public Schools Experience. Extensive experience in charter schools, district administration, school principalship, and teaching. Previous private sector experience.
Veronica Gonzales-Zamora Founder Proposed Governing Board Member	Education. JD, UNM; BA, University of New Mexico Current Employment. Attorney, Brownstein, Hyatt, Faber, & Schreck, LLC Experience. Executive Member of the New Mexico Hispanic Bar Association and NM chapter of the Federal Bar Association.
Subramanian Iyer Founder Proposed Governing Board Member	Education. PhD, Finance, Oklahoma State University; MBA, University of Kerala; BS, Mahatma Gandhi University Current Employment. Assistant Professor, University of New Mexico Experience. Dr. Iyer has published in various leading finance journals. His current research relates to governance and social networks in a corporate setting. He is also exploring the effects of director compensation composition in public corporations.
Peter Lorenz Founder Proposed Governing Board Member	Education. MBA, Harvard; BA, Middlesex University Current Employment. CEO & President, UNIRAC Experience. Executive Committee member of the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce’s Board of Directors.
Amber Macias-Mayo Founder Proposed Governing Board Member	Education. JD, UNM; BA, UNM Current Employment. Partner, Walther, Bennett, Mayo, Honeycutt, PC. Experience. Vice President of the Hispanic Bar Association and has previously served as Deputy Regional President for the Hispanic National Bar Association.
Luis Olivas Founder Proposed Governing Board Member	Education. BA, Sociology, UNM Current Employment. Independent HR Consultant Experience. Previously taught first grade in Albuquerque Public Schools, as well as having led gang prevention outreach with local middle school students.
Camille Vasquez Founder Proposed Governing Board Member	Education. BA, Chicana Studies, UNM Current Employment. Program Director, ACCESS NM Experience. Speaks with and interacts with more than 50 families in the South Valley each week.
Michael Wallace Founder Proposed Governing Board Member	Education. MS, Health Administration, UNM; BA, University of Southern California Current Employment. Director of Special Projects, DaVita Experience. Board Member of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central New Mexico and the New Mexico Philharmonic, Chairman of the NM Health Insurance Exchange Stakeholders’ Committee and NM Association of Commerce and Industry Health Care Committee.