



## New Mexico Public Education Commission Charter Schools Division

### 2019 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:** ACES Technical Charter School

**Mission Statement:** ACES Technical Charter School will provide students with a challenging and exciting education and graduate students exceptionally prepared for any college and career of their choice.

#### **Demographics of the Local Community:**

All students in the Albuquerque area will be encouraged to apply and attend ACES Technical Charter School (ACES Tech) and will have equal opportunity through our lottery process. However, the recruiting emphasis for the school will focus on three southeast Albuquerque ZIP codes: 87106, 87108, and 87123. Community data show that the percent of the overall population living in those ZIP codes who are below the poverty level (26%, 33%, and 18%, respectively) exceeds the city average (17.5%). In addition, the racial demographics of these three ZIP codes are among the most diverse in the city. 87106, 87108, and 87123 represent the ZIP codes with the three highest percentages of African Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans in Albuquerque.

#### **Characteristics of our Projected Students:**

ACES Tech has researched the twelve K-5 elementary schools and four 6-8 middle schools in the three local community ZIP codes. During the 2018-19 school year, the elementary schools had a total enrollment of 4,912 students, the middle schools enrolled 2,272 students. The racial demographics of the elementary schools was 62% Hispanic, 21% White, 8% Native American, 6% Black, and 3% Asian. The middle schools were 67% Hispanic, 16% White, 8% Native American, 6% Black, and 2% Asian. In the elementary schools, 16% of students were identified as having special needs, 28% as English Language Learners, and 76% qualified for free or reduced lunch. In the middle schools, 23% of students were identified as having special needs, 23% as English Language Learners, and 83% qualified for free or reduced lunch.

#### **Academic Performance of our Projected Students:**

The ACES Tech team has researched the achievement data for all of the K-5 elementary and 6-8 middle schools in our target ZIP codes. The focus has been on elementary schools that end at grade five, since the parents of students attending those schools are likely to be looking for a high quality option as their children transition to grade six. On the 2018 PARCCC test, the percentage of students at the elementary schools who were proficient in English Language Arts ranged from 6% to 42%. The percentage of students who were proficient in mathematics ranged from 9% to 46%. For the middle schools, students who were proficient in English Language Arts ranged from 12% to 29%. The percentage of students who were proficient in mathematics ranged from 7% to 22%. This data reveals the low level of achievement that currently exists in our local community; there is not one elementary school option where greater than 50% of students are proficient in either English or math, nor a middle school where greater than 30% are proficient in either subject.

#### **Why Parents Will Choose ACES Tech**

The ACES Tech founding team expects, and hopes, that our student population will be very diverse, both racially and economically. Data indicates that many of our future students currently attend schools that are low performing and do not have the high quality, comprehensive educational program that ACES Tech is proposing. We believe that the students attending those schools have the talent to perform better academically given the right educational program, environment, and supports. Our program will be rigorous, exciting, and STEM focused, and we expect this to appeal to many parents and students.

The ACES Tech educational program will inspire students to achieve and prepare them for a successful future. New Mexico is a state where technology and health are two growing sectors with strong job potential. ACES Tech will provide our students with the academic foundation to become tomorrow's engineers, technicians, scientists, doctors, and nurses. We will place an emphasis on providing encouragement and support for groups that are underrepresented in these fields, including students of color, girls, and students with disabilities. Our

teachers will employ a number of instructional strategies to support the collective and individual needs of our students. Finally, we will ensure that we provide specific resources and mentoring opportunities to all students to ensure that they stay on a college ready path and successfully complete our rigorous STEM curriculum.

### **Evidence of Community Need**

There are several indicators which demonstrate the need for ACES Tech in the community. First, data shows that the academic performance of students in southeast Albuquerque is quite low. As discussed above, the English and math proficiency rates are very low, with less than 50% of the students demonstrating proficiency at the twelve K-5 elementary schools and less than 30% demonstrating proficiency at the four 6-8 middle schools in our target area. Persistent low performance often leads parents to pursue a school option outside of their immediate neighborhood, if an option exists. Second, the feedback and support that we have received from residents during our community outreach has been strong and positive. We received unanimous votes of support from multiple neighborhood associations and the NAACP. We also collected survey data in which 86% of respondents indicated that preparing students for STEM fields is important and 96% agreed or strongly agreed that students should complete work training or certificates while in high school. Finally, workforce data shows that New Mexico is a state with growing engineering and healthcare industries. We have spoken to several employers in the region and many are actively seeking candidates with the skills to work at their companies. Education plays a key role in preparing our youth for those STEM opportunities.

### **Innovative and Unique Features of ACES Tech**

The ACES Tech founding team has identified five innovative characteristics for our school. These characteristics represent some of the major initiatives and processes that we will implement, and also our desire to ensure that ACES Tech provides a broad range of supports so that all students have the opportunity to succeed.

1. Tech Time - The Tech Time period will be used to offer both instructor-driven supports for students and student-driven activities and projects. On the support and intervention side, students who are struggling academically will receive tutoring, in any subject needed, during the school day. In addition, we will use the time to provide individual or small group supports to our special populations. On the creativity and growth side, students will be given broad autonomy to invent and pursue activities and projects which represent their own interests.
2. Focus on Imagination and Creativity - Throughout their years of study at ACES Tech, students will be encouraged to use their imagination and creativity continually. Whether during independent assignments or group projects, students will need to practice innovative thinking by considering multiple possibilities, considering alternate outcomes, and pondering open questions.
3. Culturally Competent Educational Environment - ACES Tech staff and teachers will participate in professional development which emphasizes cultural competency and effective instruction in diverse classrooms. Among the strategies we will use is ensuring that all students are exposed to a diverse range of standards aligned literature, historical figures, and imagery throughout their educational experience. Students will have the opportunity to collectively create activities and project teams based upon interest during our daily Tech Time period, ensuring that there are opportunities to celebrate the cultures and contributions of people of many origins.
4. Character Education and Mindfulness - As a means of addressing the social emotional learning needs of all students, ACES Tech will incorporate character education and mindfulness as key parts of our instructional model. Practicing mindfulness will be an enabler for improved day to day behavior and culture in the school. It targets areas such as self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Helping our students to develop positive, respectful traits and community will help our school achieve its mission of preparing our students for college and career.
5. Industry Certificate Program Integration - ACES Tech will develop opportunities for students to attain industry recognized certificates before graduating high school. Upon obtaining a certificate, students will have the option to work in that field full time upon graduation, use the certificate as a stepping stone to higher certifications, or use the current certificate(s) to work in the field and gain valuable experience as they complete their college degree.

**Plan for Improving Student Achievement**

The educational philosophy of ACES Tech is that if students are provided with quality instruction and resources, and data is used to inform decisions and drive improvement, then they will achieve at higher level academically. The ACES Tech team is proposing an educational process and environment that will make students feel welcome, safe, and inspired to achieve. We anticipate that many students will come with needs due to circumstances such as poverty, ineffective previous education experiences, and/or traumatic experiences in their neighborhoods. ACES Tech is built on beliefs such as all children can achieve at high levels and all children have gifts. Our educational program provides a structured and caring instructional approach with supports built into our schedule. We will use research based instructional methods to ensure that all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, can access the curriculum effectively. We will also have a data rich environment where each student's academic and behavioral progress is monitored so that we can proactively respond to student needs before they get locked into a negative trend. These initiatives will help to ensure educational equity and improved subsequent college readiness outcomes for all of our students.

**Lead Founder**

Dr. Jeron Campbell has extensive experience in the areas of education leadership, engineering, and nonprofit management. He has 12 years of work experience in engineering, which aligns to ACES Tech's STEM focus. He has over 6 years of senior supervisory experience in large urban school districts, and he founded a successful college readiness program for underserved students in his hometown of Detroit. Dr. Campbell holds a degree in Electrical Engineering from Michigan State, a Master's in Manufacturing Engineering from the University of Michigan, and a Doctorate in Education Leadership from Harvard.

**Founding Governing Board**

Dr. Finnie Coleman is an Associate Professor in the Department of English Literature and Language at the University of New Mexico. Dr. Coleman also has years of experience as a charter school Board Member for an Albuquerque high school. Dr. Coleman has served as a professor at UNM for 14 years, he was also an assistant professor at Texas A&M University for 7 years. Dr. Coleman hails from Pensacola, Florida, received a Bachelors in Economics from the Virginia Military Institute, and a PhD. In Literature from the University of Virginia.

Dr. Gonzales is a top-rated General and Cosmetic Dentist in Albuquerque, NM who is committed to providing high-quality dental care based on the foundation of honesty. She and her business partner Dr. Gallagher, own Academy Dental Care, an Albuquerque based dental practice. She is originally from a small town in Southern California and completed her undergraduate education at University of California, Berkeley. Later she graduated with high honors from University of the Pacific, Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry.

Mr. Leon Howard is the Legal Director at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of New Mexico. Mr. Howard also teaches courses at UNM which explore social justice advocacy and race and the law. Mr. Howard is passionate about advocating for systems, particularly government institutions, to account for groups of people who have been historically marginalized. Mr. Howard was raised in Albuquerque and a graduate of Highland High School. He earned his B.A. in Psychology and J.D. at the University of New Mexico.

Dr. Stephanie McIver has held the position of Counseling Director for the University of New Mexico Student Health and Counseling Center (SHAC) for the past 7 years. She has extensive experience in providing psychological services to students, and has provided leadership on numerous committees addressing behavioral interventions and sexual assault response. Dr. McIver is an Albuquerque native and a graduate of Highland High School. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Spelman College and went on to earn her Masters and Doctorate degrees, both in psychology, from the Ohio State University.

Ms. Cassandra Sims is the primary ELA instructional coach for grades 6-12 at Mission Achievement Success Charter School in Albuquerque, NM. In addition to coaching and mentoring more than ten educators, Cassandra is the school's AP coordinator, managing and approving all AP college board courses, and implementing AP exams. Certified in English and TESOL, with a masters in secondary education, Cassandra has experience teaching grades 6-12 in English, theatre, and AVID.

