



**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

New Charter Application Executive Summary
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Explore Academy – Las Cruces (EA-LCS) will bring an innovative and successful educational model to the Las Cruces area. The school anticipates a final enrollment of over seven hundred students at full capacity for grades 6 to 12. Within the Las Cruces area, the school anticipates, based on the local district enrollment data, an enrollment profile representative of the local district and as such, predicts for the following demographic make-up of its student body: special education between 10-15%, ELL around 10%). While the school district does show success in its graduation rates, the proficiency rates as measured on state standardized testing allows for ample room for the Explore Learning Model to elevate students to new levels of academic performance.

Explore Academy – Las Cruces anticipates its enrolled students to come from the local Las Cruces Public Schools district elementary (beginning 6<sup>th</sup> graders), middle, and high schools (when the school had phased in its high school grade levels). The school anticipates most of its students entering the EA-LCS system in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Based on the work the founding team has performed in the local Las Cruces community, there is strong evidence that the Explore Learning Model will be in high demand upon charter application approval with dozens of families having already committed to enrolling students (for each grade level) at the time that an approved EA-LCS opens its enrollment window for the 2020-21 school year. In discussions with many families over the course of developing the associated application, the founding team has received sufficient support for the establishment of a strong initial student population to create foundation from which the school will grow in the years to come.

Explore Academy – Las Cruces will utilize the Explore Learning Model, an academic framework which promotes choice-based learning through an elective-based system where students guide their own educational pathways by choosing from a series of options at each junction. Guided by a choice theory process of learning, the number of choices offered to students will enhance their engagement in class and learning overall, and will thus make them more successful in the learning process by allowing them to choose how they meet the academic objectives set forth before them.

By using shorter learning modules (1-2 months in length) and a mastery-based academic focus, student learning can be more effectively measured across a shorter term. In addition,

utilizing small class sizes and a “seminar” focus in which students help drive the learning process, students will show an increased level of academic achievement.

In this sense, Explore Academy – Las Cruces will demonstrate greater academic success than the surrounding schools because it both allows students the opportunity to choose the manner in which their education is delivered and holds them to higher academic expectations in the process. By holding students to higher standards, all the while providing them an enriched manner of education along the way, students will elevate their learning to a level that surpasses that of a traditional education system. The Explore Learning Model currently operates a campus in Albuquerque, NM, and has demonstrated a proven record for academic success. It will bring this same level of success to the Las Cruces area.

The founders of Explore Academy – Las Cruces are both members of the founding team that stated the original Explore Academy campus in Albuquerque. They not only bring their teaching and educational experience to this new endeavor, but their operational experience in starting a new school.

The Governing Council of EA-LCS brings a vital skill set in support of this start up initiative. The initial Council members provide experience in the areas of finance, facilities, management, education, and governance, all of which will help strengthen and support the school as it establishes itself and grows in its early stages of development.