



Office of Innovation and School Choice

APS Authorized Charter Schools

Scott Elder
Interim Superintendent

Dr. Deborah Elder
Executive Director

Dr. Joseph D. Escobedo
Senior Director

2021 NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUBMIT CHARTER APPLICATION

INSTRUCTIONS

According to NMSA § 22-8B-6(B) the Notice of Intent to Submit a Charter Application ("NOI") must be filed by the organizers of a proposed charter school to the Public Education Commission at the address below **AND** to the superintendent of the school district in which the charter school is proposed to be located. *Failure to notify may result in your application being rejected.*

The NOI must be submitted by 5:00 PM Mountain Time on January 12, 2021, **the second Tuesday of January.** Notices of Intent that are not received by the Public Education Commission and the superintendent of the local school district by the deadline may result in the application being rejected.

Notice to the Public Education Commission should be delivered by one of the following methods:

- Electronically to: charter.schools@state.nm.us
- By mail or personal delivery: PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
c/o New Mexico Public Education Department
Attn: Options for Parents and Families/Charter Schools Division
300 Don Gaspar, Room 301
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Notice to the Superintendent of Albuquerque Public Schools should be delivered electronically to the APS Office of Innovation and School Choice through the Senior Director, Dr. Joseph Escobedo at Escobedo_j@aps.edu

The NOI is intended to provide the Public Education Commission and the APS Office of Innovation and School Choice with the primary point of contact among the charter developers and preliminary information about the charter proposal, such as the school's mission statement, the school's focus, the representative student population in the intended location, enrollment projections, key innovations, etc. (not to exceed 7 pages).

1. General Information

- Name of Proposed School
The GREAT Academy

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- Grade levels to be offered and enrollment projections
 - The school will include grade level configurations that include grades 6-8. ☒ Yes ☐ No

Grade Levels to be offered	Projected Total Enrollment
6-12	360 cap

- The school, if approved, anticipates opening August, 2021. ☒ Yes ☐ No
 - If yes, provide a timeline that includes benchmarks demonstrating 18-24 months of application development.

The school has been in operation for the last 10 years and was authorized by the PEC. The school currently has about 130 students and projects the Fall 2021 enrollment will move back to pre-Covid numbers between 160-180. Also, TGA has 14 staff members. The facility is located at 6001-A San Mateo Blvd NE. There is currently an approved 5-year Facility Master Plan. More information available on the school's website is www.thegreatacademy.org.

- Primary Point of Contact

Name	Jasper and Keisha Matthews				
Mailing Address	6001-A San Mateo Blvd NE				
City	Albuquerque	State	NM	Zip	87120
Phone	505-792-0306 school J Matthews' cell 505-980-8545 or K Matthews' 505-385-5321				
Email	jmatthews@thegreatacademy.org or kmatthews@thegreatacademy.org				

2. Names, roles, and current employment of all persons on the applicant team, and qualifications of the team members to establish a high-quality charter school

Names	Role on Team	Qualifications: Education, Employment, and Experience
Jasper Matthews	Executive Director	Jasper Matthews is the founder and Executive Director at TGA since its inception in 2011. He has an undergraduate degree in Sociology and African American Studies from UNM and a master's degree in Special Education from The College of Santa Fe. Mr. Matthews holds a Level 3A K-12 Special Education with an Endorsement in Social Studies and Level 3B Administrative License
Keisha Matthews	Director of Academics	Keisha Matthews is the co-founder and Director of Academics at TGA since its inception in 2011. She holds an undergraduate degree in Psychology, master's degree in Multicultural Curriculum Development and a master's in Educational Leadership. Mrs. Matthews Holds a PREK-12 3B Administrative License, Level 3A PreK-12 Specialty Area License with an Endorsement in TESOL, and a Level 3A K-8 Elementary License with endorsements in Reading and TESOL.

3. Describe the non-traditional or innovative model of promise of the proposed school:

The GREAT Academy embraces a unique, one-of-a-kind, business school/middle college model. The Academy exists, not only to improve education for students, but to provide students with necessary skills for career success. The GREAT Academy promises to make sure that our seniors are prepared for the demands of post-secondary education and/or the career world, and in turn, improve the community by improving its residents. The GREAT Academy is committed to providing students with an education that is relevant and meaningful to their journey of achieving success.

The school's unique business model will allow students the opportunity to work at their own pace, earn college credits while in high school at no cost, and participate in SMART Labs to encourage career exploration. The SMART Labs are:

Health & Education*Science & Engineering*Business & Entrepreneurship*Audio & Video Production
Students also participate in Career Expeditions, Service Learning, and College Tours.

4. Does the school expect to contract with another entity for either management, or substantial oversight or direction in the school's operation? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If YES, describe the entity and the role it will have in the school's operational plan.

N/A

5. Does the applicant team or any members of the team currently operate any other schools? ☒ Yes ☐ No

6. Vision/Mission statement (2-3 sentences)

The GREAT Academy mission is to ensure that all students Gain Real-world Experience through Active Transition. The Academy exists, not only to improve education for students, but to provide students with necessary skills for career success. The Great Academy ensures that our seniors are prepared for the demands of post-secondary education and/or the career world, and in turn, improve the community by improving its residents.

7. Student population and geographical setting of the school

- Define the targeted geographical area of the proposed school from which you expect to draw a significant number of your students and describe why this setting is being proposed.

The GREAT Academy draws its students from the greater Albuquerque and surrounding areas. The location is centrally located on the eastern side of Albuquerque. While many students come from the immediate area in the 87109 area, TGA also has students from the far east, west and southern parts of the city. In addition, TGA gets students from the surrounding Native American reservations and Rio Rancho. Families who desire a flexible schedule and students who prefer a smaller, non-traditional setting tend to gravitate to The GREAT Academy. TGA's building is at the corner of San Mateo and Osuna. The building is the capstone building in the Paseo del Norte Shopping Center.

- Describe the student population including key demographic data (academic performance, home languages, English Learners (ELs), and special education populations) in the location in which the school intends to locate.

The GREAT Academy serves students in grades 6 through 12. TGA student demographics are as follows: 66% Hispanic, 18% White, 7% African American, 8% Native American and 1% other. 18% of its population are English Learners, 46% free and reduced lunch, and 13% students with disabilities.

- Identify where these students are most likely being educated currently and why they are expected to choose the proposed charter school for their future educational needs.

TGA students come from schools in Albuquerque and the surrounding areas. Students choose The GREAT Academy because of its small class size, focus on dual credit courses and its zero-tolerance for bullying environment. Because we service grades 6-12 we are serving multiple students in the same family. While many students come from the immediate area in the 87109 area, TGA also has students from the far east, west and southern parts of the city. In addition, TGA gets students from the surrounding Native American reservations and Rio Rancho.

8. Provide evidence that the applicant team has assessed community need for a school of the nature that will be proposed in the application (e.g., objective surveys or other measures of local demand for the proposed educational program).

89% of families TGA's families signed a letter of support for TGA. The school continues to enroll students as the year progresses. In partnership with CNM, the school provides our students the opportunity to earn college credits while in high school and/or receive a certificate in a career that is in demand. TGA has a 10-year track record in the community. Parents and students appreciate the small school environment and the increased level of attention that students are afforded due to the smaller environment.

9. Identify significant innovative features that the school will implement in order to help it realize its vision/mission (e.g., non-traditional school year, longer school day, partner organizations, etc.).

The GREAT Academy is a learning environment in which five basic components will be emphasized: virtual learning, Academic Improvement Plans (AIP) for all students, service learning, leadership and character education and pathways to success (career pathways and a college preparatory pathway). We believe that these components are an integral part in helping our students to be well-rounded, productive participants in their communities. The GREAT Academy is structured as a Professional Learning Community (PLC) with a shared mission, vision and values. We practice collective inquiry, collaborative teaming, and believe in continuous improvement. These practices help us to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our students. Students of The GREAT Academy are achieving success through increased general academic improvement resulting in improved standardized test scores. We are focused on using research-based strategies and data-driven instruction and decision making to bring this dream of school-wide academic success to fruition.

- CNM/UNM Dual Credit Partner
- 4 days a week
- Friday per month PD
- 1 Friday per month service learning
- 2 Fridays per month for additional intervention
- The hours are from 9am-9pm. This schedule allows high school students to have a more flexible schedule that allows for dual credit classes and working.

10. Describe how the school will be more effective than the schools currently serving the targeted student population, and/or plans to improve student achievement and exceed the academic performance of existing public schools in the targeted service area and any data you have to support this assumption.

TGA's small school environment allows for students to get the attention that is needed to help them to be successful.

-TGA students Meet or Exceeded the school's reading goal 3 of the last 4 years.

- TGA students Meet or Exceeded the school's Math goal 2 of the last 4 years.

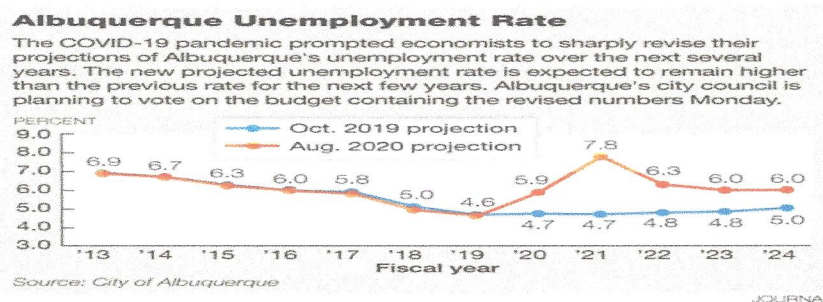
-TGA graduates earned 1,182 college credits from school years 16-20. This is evidence that our students are college ready and that we have been able to consistently give students who would not have otherwise had the opportunity to get such a jump start with college credits the means to do so.

TGA provides middle school students with an extra period of reading and math that we call "Double Dose". High school students also receive additional intervention in reading and math specific intervention courses to aid the development and continued acquisition of proficient reading and math skills.

11. Describe how the school will be in alignment with the economic needs of Albuquerque.

According to an article in the New Mexican dated February 3, 2018, "there are more people living in poverty in New Mexico than in late 2007." The article also stated that "New Mexico [was] ranked 39th among all states in 2016 when it came to higher education degrees." Then State Senator Clemente Sanchez stated in that same article, "Education and economic development go hand in hand." TGA's focus is to help students to have a more active and successful transition to college and/or careers. TGA works to ensure that all its graduates successfully complete no less than 12 college credits. TGA requires its high school students to take dual credit courses and to participate in service-learning activities. The goal is to improve the community by improving its residents. Graduates who are able to move on to and be successful in post-secondary options and/or career options become community members who are able to more adequately participate in the economics of the community.

In Albuquerque, the city is bracing for a long road to recovery. The city's baseline scenario assumes a 9.1% dip in national gross domestic product in 2020, followed by growth the next three years. However, Boerner said employment in metro Albuquerque is unlikely to return to pre-COVID levels until fiscal year 2024, an acknowledgment that Albuquerque often comes out of economic downturns more slowly than the rest of the nation.



Albuquerque Journal
City governments brace for long-term COVID impact
BY STEPHEN HAMWAY / JOURNAL STAFF WRITER
Sunday, October 18th, 2020

In addition, the COVID-19 crisis has required schools to rethink and reimagine ways in which to deliver education. TGA began 10 years ago with a hybrid model. When the school closures began, the transition to remote learning was smooth for TGA's staff and students. They were accustomed to online learning and were able to continue daily educational activities at a consistent pace with less difficulties than most students/schools were experiencing at the time.

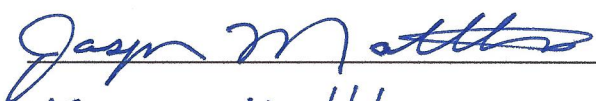
12. Describe how the school will support increasing access to choice in Albuquerque.

GA's vision is to see that every student takes advantage of the opportunity to earn college credit while in high school, understanding that through advanced academic training they will save time and money, which will enable them to gain employment and/or post-secondary success. The GREAT Academy is a learning environment in which five basic components will be emphasized: virtual learning, Academic Improvement Plans (AIP) for all students, service learning, leadership and character education and pathways to success (career pathways and a college preparatory pathway). We believe that these components are an integral part in helping our students to be well-rounded, productive participants in their communities. The GREAT Academy is structured as a Professional Learning Community (PLC) with a shared mission, vision and values. We practice collective inquiry, collaborative teaming, and believe in continuous improvement. These practices help us to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our students. Students of The GREAT Academy are achieving success through increased general academic improvement resulting in improved standardized test scores. We are focused on using research-based strategies and data-driven instruction and decision making to bring this dream of school-wide academic success to fruition.

The structure of The GREAT Academy's program meets the benchmarks and reasons families depend on school choice. Families who are looking to escape community and/or school bullying/violence look to school choice to provide additional options. School choice also provides increased parental satisfaction and parental involvement because school choice increases options that are tailored to students' needs. It also gives more choice to students from low-income families who would typically be excluded from quality school programs. These are some ways in which The GREAT Academy adds to increased choice in Albuquerque.

Please Note: Should your charter be awarded, the founding governing body could undergo a background check to determine if it qualifies to be a board of public finance in the state of New Mexico.

Signature of founder(s):



Date: 1/8/21

Jasper Matthews

[PRINT NAME]



Date: 1/8/2021

Keisha Matthews

[PRINT NAME]