



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
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OPTIONS FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES DIVISION - CHARTER SCHOOLS
Year: 2021

NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUBMIT CHARTER APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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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 by **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. When you send the NOI to the superintendent of the school district in which your charter is to be located, you are strongly encouraged to send it by certified mail return receipt requested, or request a signed receipt when you deliver the NOI. Contact the local district regarding electronic filing.

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

The NOI is intended to provide the Public Education Commission 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 innovation, etc. (not to exceed 5 pages).

*Due to the health crisis, the PED Building may be closed and, therefore, unable to accept personal deliveries.

1. General Information

- Name of Proposed School: United Community Academy
- Grade levels to be offered and enrollment projections

Grade Levels to be offered	Projected Total Enrollment
Pre-K – Grade 5	100

- Primary Point of Contact

Name	Kiran Katira				
Mailing Address	608 Sonora Road NE				
City	Rio Rancho	State	NM	Zip	87144
Phone	505-400-6828				
Email	Kiru2u@yahoo.com and unitedcommunityacademy@nacainspiredschools.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

Name	Qualifications:
Eli Cuna Board Member	Eli is the Statewide Census Coordinator for the Center for Civic Policy (CCP) and Senior Advisor for the New Mexico Dream Team (NMDT) a nonprofit organization she co-founded. She holds two B.A. degrees and a M.P.A from the University of New Mexico.
Kay Bounkeua Board Member	Kay Bounkeua is the daughter of immigrants who escaped war devastating their home country of Laos. She served as the Executive Director of the New Mexico Asian Family Center. Ms. Bounkeua currently works as the NM Deputy Director for the Wilderness Society.
Ebony Booth Board Member	Ebony is an artist, an activist, educator, leader, cultural strategist, and poet. She is the founding director of Burque Noir, a multi-media showcase for Black performing and visual artists in Albuquerque and leads the Honeysuckle Creatives consultancy specializing in creative engagement strategies, project management, and event design that centers people of color.
Kiran Katira Design Team, potential school director	Kiran is an East-African Indian. Director of UNM Community Engagement Center and a NACA Inspired Schools Network Fellow. She has a Ph.D. in Educational Thought and Socio-Cultural Studies from the University of New Mexico. Previously a teacher and has held an administrative license. For the past 22 years she has worked with community leaders through the UNM's CEC. She is on the board of Dorn Charter Community School, NM Dream Team and NM Asian Family Center. She teaches university courses on critical multicultural education.
Vanessa Apodaca Design Team	UNM Community Engagement Center Staff Member. Public Allies NM Director and a NACA Inspired Schools Network Fellow. Vanessa is Mexican-American and a Chicana who was born and raised in a historic neighborhood in Albuquerque. She has an MA in Community Health Education from the University of New Mexico (UNM) and 15 years experience as a health educator, including teaching topics courses on Community Health at UNM and 5 years of Healing retreats for youth and community organizers that incorporated food as medicine, traditional healing practices, land based learning and dialogue circles that promote indigenous ways of being.
Eduardo Esquivel	NM Dream Team Co-Director. Eduardo immigrated to Albuquerque, New Mexico with his parents at the age of seven from Chihuahua, Chihuahua, Mexico.

Design Team	Growing up in the South Broadway neighborhood and graduating from Albuquerque High School. He studied biochemistry at the University of New Mexico and is also a student of Critical Race Theory. Eduardo has worked on training and curriculum development at the NMDT with a focus around education equity and racial justice and now serves as Co-Director for the organization.
Megan Joe Design Team	UNM Community Engagement Center Staff Member and a NACA Inspired Schools Network Fellow. She holds a B.A. in International Studies with a minor in Environmental Sustainability from the University of New Mexico. She has had an impactful experience working in nonprofit work as a New Mexico Public Ally for the UNM Community Engagement Center and now, as program staff, to continue her work in leadership development, community engagement and development.
Anushah Jiwani Design Team	Ending Gender-Based Violence Coordinator, New Mexico Asian Family Center. Anushah holds a B.A. from Hendrix College in English-Creative Writing and International Relations. She has led workshops on anti-racism, restorative justice, and sexual violence for the city, and has mentored youth for over ten years. She is also a poet and licensed life coach.
Larry Hinojos Design Team	Larry is originally from Hatch, NM. He grew up in South Broadway and the International District. He is currently a Health Promotion Specialist at NM Health Equity Council. He has 15 years of experience organizing in NM with men of color creating a positive narrative around masculinity.
Cathy Sanchez Design Team	Cathy is the Urban Health Extension Coordinator for the Bernalillo County Office of Senior and Social Services and is involved with the International District Healthy Communities Coalition.
Omkulthoom Qassem Design Team	High school educator, project teacher, Health Leadership High School & Community Organizer. Omkulthoom holds an M.A. in Educational Thought and Sociocultural Studies from the University of New Mexico and B.A. in International Studies and B.A. in International Languages. They work on visionary work especially in curriculum development transforming disciplinary systems in relation to educational equity and racial justice..

3. Model or focus of the proposed school (e.g., performing arts, dual language, college prep, STEM, Montessori, IB):

United Community Academy (UCA) is a place-based school for the children and families in the International District of Albuquerque. The neighborhood is a hub for multiracial populations including urban Indigenous, refugee, asylee, Latinx immigrant, Asian immigrant and many others who have made their home the ID, looking for a sense of belonging. UCA will bring that through a “food as medicine” curriculum combined with the Reggio Emilia Approach. This evidence based approach utilizes experiential education, student-centered, and constructivist techniques to reach early learners Our community garden will be a central focus of the school, providing land-based learning through the community-developed Center for Social Sustainable Systems (CESSOS curriculum. Our ethnic studies curriculum will provide Indigenized education for multi-ethnic children to nurture cross-racial solidarity.

The school will be an extended hours community school that opens up to the families in the after school hours to provide multilingual programming through language circles. These spaces are for language immersion through experiential education. For example, cooking classes in Swahili, garden clubs in Spanish, etc... Starting as a pre-K - 5 learning environment, UCA students will grow through rigorous learning experiences that will be assessed through student portfolios and mastery-based methods for reading, math, and science.

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

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

5. Does the applicant team or any members of the team currently operate any other schools? – No
6. Vision/Mission statement (2-3 sentences)

Vision: A sense of belonging for displaced peoples in the International District, where traditional ways of being are embraced for a healthy and sustainable community.

Mission: To inspire a love of learning through indigenized ways of being, cross-racial solidarity and place-based learning so that students are academically successful, secure in their identity, and emotionally and physically well.

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.

International District, Albuquerque NM: As described by the city of Albuquerque's Sector Development Plan, the International District consists of 3.9 square miles, bounded by San Mateo Blvd, Lomas Blvd, Wyoming Blvd and Kirtland Airforce Base/Ridgecrest Drive.

- 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.

Population in the International District – 37,248. The median household income - \$29,031. 41% of the neighborhood residents are below the federal poverty rate. 2019-2020 enrollment in pre-K to grade 5 – 9,954. 22% EL learners. 22% Special Education students. Highest racial/ethnic diversity in the state: 4.1% One or more race, 6.3% Native American, 61% Hispanic, 0.1% Native Hawaiian, 22.8% White, 1.6% Asian, and 4.1% Black/African America.

- 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.

Pre-K schools: La Mesa, Our Lady of the Assumption, Alvarado Day School, All Seasons Day School, Trumbull Child Development Center, Emerson Elementary, Holy Ghost Catholic School, La Petite Academy of Albuquerque, Eastern Child Development Center.

Elementary schools: Emerson and La Mesa. Some also attend Hawthorne, Mark Twain, Sandia Base, Wherry, Whittier, and Zia elementary schools.

These current schools have proficiency rates in reading and math as follows:

Zia Elementary:

http://aae.ped.state.nm.us/docs/1718/SchoolGrading/001_385_ALBUQUERQUE_PUBLIC_SCHOOLS_ZIA_ELEMENTARY_SCHOOL_SchoolGrading_2018.pdf

School's grade has been changing from C to F from 2015-2018 and has received F for 2017 and 2018

Reading and Math scores have been either lower than expected or just met the expectations for the past 3 years (2016-2018). School growth Index for Reading is - 0.19 and for Math - 0.27

Whittier Elementary

http://aae.ped.state.nm.us/docs/1718/SchoolGrading/001_379_ALBUQUERQUE_PUBLIC_SCHOOLS_WHITTIER_ELEMENTARY_SCHOOL_SchoolGrading_2018.pdf

School's grade has been remaining F consistently for the past 4 years from 2015 to 2018

Reading and Math Scores have been consistently lower than expected from 2016- 2018 for both high and low performing students. Growth Index for Reading -0.18 and for Math -1.32

Emerson Elementary School

http://aae.ped.state.nm.us/docs/1718/SchoolGrading/001_255_ALBUQUERQUE_PUBLIC_SCHOOLS_EMERSON_ELEMENTARY_SCHOOL_SchoolGrading_2018.pdf

School's grade has been changing from D to F to D from 2015- 2018

Reading Scores have been lower than expected for low performing students and little higher than expected for high performing students. Math scores have been lower than expected for both high and low performing students. This data has been collected for the past three years from 2016-2018.

La Mesa Elementary School

http://aae.ped.state.nm.us/docs/1718/SchoolGrading/001_285_ALBUQUERQUE_PUBLIC_SCHOOLS_LA_MESA_ELEMENTARY_SCHOOL_SchoolGrading_2018.pdf

School's grade has been changing from D to F to D from 2015- 2018

Reading Score has decreased from greater than expected to lower than expected for low performing students and has been consistently lower than expected for higher performing students. Math Score has been consistently below expectation for both high and low performing students. Growth index for Reading is -0.11 and for Math is -0.35

Wherry Elementary School

http://aae.ped.state.nm.us/docs/1718/SchoolGrading/001_376_ALBUQUERQUE_PUBLIC_SCHOOLS_WHERRY_ELEMENTARY_SCHOOL_SchoolGrading_2018.pdf

School's grade has been changing from D to F to D to F from 2015- 2018

Reading and Math Score have been below expectation for both high and low performing students for the past three years (2016-2018), except for one time just meeting the expectation for Math for high performing students in 2017. Growth Index for Reading is -0.54 and for Math is -0.38

Currently, schools in NM are not meeting the needs of low income students of color. Our school is dedicated to addressing the needs of the most marginalized in the International District.

With a University Assisted Community School model, we will utilize partnerships with Public Allies, Indigenous Education Corps, FoodCorps, UNM Service Corps, UNM Community Engagement Center, Bernalillo Community Health Council, International District Healthy Communities Collaborative, NM Dream Team, NM Asian Family Center and so many more organizations who will provide in-school and after school assistance to the school. We will implement a school garden on site where students will have the experiential application of the Ciclos de la Tierra: Cultivating Querencia through Mutualismo and Justice curriculum developed by community members for CESSOS which has a place based focus. The curriculum uses acequia knowledge and philosophy as a framework and helps to connect students and community members back to local history while cultivating a sense of stewardship for the land. We have also held numerous discussions and planning meetings with local leaders around Restorative Practices for Healing. The results of this will be creating a safe space for students to thrive socially and emotionally and provide alternatives to punitive practices of discipline that is the norm in traditional school settings, which is evidence based. (Riestenberg, 2003).

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).

United Community Academy design team members have had approximately two years to truly understand what the families of the International District want for their children, with September 2019 – August 2020 being the most intense period of community engagement. Design team members include community leaders from the very populations we want to serve: Indigenous, Black, LatinX, Asian, and low income. These very same sub-groups within the ID were surveyed, asking the families what they are looking for in a school for their child. The core themes of Indigenized ethnic studies, restorative justice, place-based community garden curriculum and multilingual programming came from the knowledge we gained from families. We listened to the children of the neighborhood by conducting youth gatherings in local middle schools such as Van Buren and Wilson, the reflection from children who have most recently been in elementary school gave us wonderful insights on what would make education more engaging and relevant. We also learned that families have not had the privilege of experiencing the best that education can provide due to the long legacy of inferior schooling for low income people of color worldwide. We then decided to provide family members a space to engage in experiential education at the Quang Minh Temple, giving them a chance to see what schooling could look like for their children, we were able to hear that they wanted culturally relevant hands-

on education. We spoke to local teachers, community leaders, principals, and family members.

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.).

UCA is a school that is truly designed in partnership with the community. Given the immense cultural and linguistic diversity in the International District, we will use “food as medicine” as the big idea that encompasses curriculum and programming at the school. United Community Academy is founded on research and evidence that shows the need for children to have a secure sense of self and sense of belonging to succeed. None of the schools in the International District provide Indigenized education for multi-racial populations, our school will be the first to implement the research on ethnic studies school wide. We are also the first to Indigenize the Reggio Emilia Approach for a culturally responsive constructivist education. Our school will also be the first to have multilingual family literacy programming, allowing the families as a whole to find a sense of belonging in their new community. In addition to all these, we also will be the first school to have a school-wide culture of restorative justice based on traditional ways of being, and to bring social emotional learning to a new level of cultural responsiveness. We plan to coalesce these innovative features with an Understanding by Design curricular framework. Furthermore, our professional development plan for staff and teachers will include ample time to refine curriculum, to provide anti-racist and anti-biased training for staff, and our community partners. This will be essential to us carrying our mission of inspiring student learning and building cross racial solidarity.

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.

The founding team of UCA is a part of the fellowship program at the NACA Inspired Schools Network. The UCA design team works closely with the Native American Community Academy and its sister schools who serve Indigenous Students. NACA has had success in serving Albuquerque (and surrounding tribal communities) as evidenced by its 4 year graduation rate where they outperformed APS and other NM school districts that predominantly serve Native American students. Part of NACA’s success has been a focus on identity and holistic wellness. UCA will use similar concepts to support students such as the wellness wheel and the Understanding by Design (Wiggins and McTighe) curriculum framework model to build academic rigor. Given the core components of our school: Food as medicine, Restorative Justice and the Reggio Emilia method we will coalesce these into UBD curricular units for every grade level. Finally, to be a partner in the network means our school will have some supports in terms of teaching and learning, specifically we will have help setting up our Instructional Lead Team and our Head Administrator will have networking access to other principals in the network to learn from.

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: January 9, 2021

Kiran Katira

[PRINT NAME]