

New Mexico Public

2021 New Charter
Part D. Capacity



Education Commission

School Application Kit
Interview Questions



Scoring – All responses will be scored using the following rubric:

<p>Meets the Criteria (M)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The applicant’s response completely addresses the question posed ● The applicant’s response aligns with and enhances the related information presented in the written application ● The applicant understands the information in the written application and the work that will be necessary to successfully implement the proposal ● The applicant demonstrates the ability to appropriately respond to contingencies and challenges that will be faced when implementing the proposal ● The applicant demonstrates a strong capacity to successfully operate a high-quality, effective school by implementing the proposal in the written application
<p>Approaches the Criteria (A)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The applicant’s response does not meet all of the criteria required to be evaluated “Meets the Criteria” ● The applicant’s response addresses the question posed, but may not do so fully ● The applicant’s response mostly aligns with the related information presented in the written application ● The applicant partially understands the work that will be necessary to successfully implement the proposal in the written application ● The applicant demonstrates limited capacity to appropriately respond to contingencies and challenges that will be faced when implementing the proposal ● The applicant demonstrates some capacity to operate a functional school by implementing the proposal in the written application
<p>Falls Far Below the Criteria (F)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The applicant’s response does not meet all of the criteria required to be evaluated “Approaches the Criteria” ● The applicant’s response does not address the question posed ● The applicant’s response does not align with the related information presented in the written application ● The applicant does not understand the work that will be necessary to successfully implement the proposal in the written application ● The applicant demonstrates no capacity to respond to contingencies and challenges that will be faced when implementing the proposal ● The applicant does not demonstrate the capacity to operate a functional school by implementing the proposal in the written application

Capacity Interview Questions	
Educational Plan: Mission	1. How is the mission, as described in the application, essential to the success of the proposed school?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	Thrive describes their mission as essential to their success because its verbiage will guide the day-to-day goals and operations of the school. Performance goals are also tied to the mission because Thrive will use evidence-based practices to work to close the achievement gap so that students are given an opportunity to make significant academic growth each year in an environment that supports the school's SEL framework.
Educational Plan: Innovation	2. What is the most important contribution your proposed school will bring to public education in the community in which you propose to operate? How will this contribution be essential to the success of the proposed school?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	While many schools incorporate SEL practices, Thrive will be the first SEL school of its kind serving their targeted zip code areas in Santa Fe. Thrive will use innovative approaches, such as social emotional learning, restorative practices, anti-bias learning, and mastery based learning to both build community and ensure a robust and rigorous education for its students. Thrive will organize itself using a "three small schools model," which will help prioritize the developmental needs of students. Staff will also participate in three weeks of PD before the start of the school year and will participate in an additional two weeks of PD during the school year to ensure best practice.
Educational Plan: Mission Implementation	3. How will you evaluate whether your mission and implementation of it are working?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	Director will evaluate the effectiveness of the school's mission and its implementation by breaking down the mission statement into measurable, quantifiable data. The school intends to demonstrate growth through cognitive development and analysis of subgroup academic performance and national proficiency data. They will also use Istation indicators, tier I, and will create goals based on percentage increases.
Leadership & Governance	4. What role does a governing body play in the success of a charter school? Describe your strategic process for identifying and selecting members. How will this process support the success of your proposed school?

Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	The board recognizes that school success is analogous with board governance. Thrive has proposed creating a board made up of nine members with a wide variety of skill sets and knowledge. The board will participate in reflective processes as well as an onboarding process that will ensure that Thrive school always has at least seven seats filled. While Thrive does meet the criteria for this section, It is concerning that during Thrive's interview, their interview team did not provide any additional information regarding the structure of their governing body. The team often deferred to the ED when it came to discussing the financial, legal, academic success, as well as the mission specific aspects of the school.
Leadership & Governance	5. What role does the school leader play in the success of a charter school? Describe your strategic process for identifying and selecting her/him. How will this process support the success of your proposed school?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	Their chosen school leader will play a role in Thrive's success because they are responsible for the oversight of the school. Thrive's executive director role will be supported by the leadership team. The governing board is following best practice guidelines for the application process because they have already identified Sean Duncan, who is a part of the founding team for the school, as the proposed ED for Thrive School. The governing board has also created an ongoing recruitment plan for Thrive School. In addition, multiple members of the founding team possess the credentials and licensure necessary to step into an administrative role if the position should ever become vacant midyear.
Leadership & Governance	6. How does a high quality process to evaluate the effectiveness of the governing body and the school contribute to the success of a charter school? Describe your strategic process for conducting these evaluations. How will these processes support the success of your proposed school?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	GB will conduct a formal evaluation each year which will evaluate the group as a whole, as well as on an individual level. The board evaluation will look at all parts of the school's structure and will also ensure. They have built in a structure to share and evaluate how the school is meeting goals during their crucial formative years.
Leadership & Governance	7. Please explain the delineated roles and responsibilities of, and the relationships between, the founders, the governing body, and the proposed school's administration during the transitional period between the planning/implementation year and the first year of operations. Describe how those relationships evolve to ensure the success of the charter school.
Score	Review Team Comments:

<p>Approaches</p>	<p>Founding board members will transition into the official governing board. This is one of the official processes after the approval of bylaws. There's clear delineation between the roles of the founder, GB, and school administration. However, the team did not effectively describe how the relationships would evolve over time. Thrive also did not say anything about the role of the administrator in terms of how board members will transition from founding board to a governing board and how that would ensure the success of the school.</p>
<p>Leadership & Governance</p>	<p>8. Explain the importance of by-laws and policies to the success of a charter school. Describe the strategic processes the proposed school will use to establish and implement them and how these will contribute to the success of the proposed school.</p>
<p>Score</p>	<p>Review Team Comments:</p>
<p>Meets</p>	<p>By-laws are a guideline to ensure that GB is functioning and in support of mission related goals. By-laws will be reviewed annually and will be adjusted as needed. Focus group processes will help focus and localize policies to ensure that all stakeholders are on board with the Restorative Justice process. Thrive has a process for how they will use their by-laws to contribute to the success of the school. Thrive's team is working with a school lawyer and board council to help evaluate their by-laws, which is helpful because the school needs to work to create bylaws that are more clear and robust.</p>
<p>Leadership & Governance</p>	<p>9. How will the proposed school ensure that policies and procedures are not only compliant, but also well implemented, current, and effective? How will the proposed school determine when they are in need of change and how will it react?</p>
<p>Score</p>	<p>Review Team Comments:</p>
<p>Approaches</p>	<p>Bylaws and policies will be reviewed and vetted by outsider members to gain additional lens and all parent/Teacher/Student surveys will filter through the school's equity council to ensure successful and equitable implementation of policies and procedures. Thrive needs to consider creating a more specific onboarding process for staff; a process that is both reflective and responsive will ensure that both new hires and veteran staff. An example of successful and effective implementation of this would be to ensure that during PD, policy and procedures of the school are revisited so that staff is refreshed about their roles.</p> <p>In terms of board policy, while they meet compliance by requiring a receipt signature to ensure legal acknowledgement and receipt of understanding policies and procedures, it would be helpful for Thrive to create a calendar that outlines board procedures and policies. As a part of your implementation process, the board at Thrive should be asking for reports in terms of onboarding and PD to ensure staff training and compliance. It would also be helpful to see more input from GB in terms of audit findings. It's important that in the result of an audit finding related to policy, that these findings are addressed in a reorientation of staff or in a staff meeting.</p>

Facility	10. Describe your plan for acquiring a facility and ensuring that the facility meets educational occupancy standards required by applicable New Mexico construction codes and the weighted New Mexico Condition Index. Whose responsibility will it be to carry out this major piece of opening a charter school? Please include details about locating, securing, and funding the facility.
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	Thrive has identified a facility since the submission of their application, which will meet the PSFA standards. The Moltedo campus is located in the 87505 zip code area and can accommodate current projected student numbers as well as potential student growth. Thrive is also actively continuing to seek out new locations for facilities given the nature of the current housing market.
Facility	11. If you cannot find a building that meets the need of the plan described in the PSFA (Public School Facilities Authority) approval, what is your next steps plan?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	Thrive had a thorough next step plan in the event that they cannot find a building to suit their needs. They are committed to working with their commercial real estate agent to check potential viability of locations in the Santa Fe area. School is willing to rent land and modular buildings with support from Owner to help absorb potential growth. The applicant team mentioned a Motido Campus which had a building and could accommodate the possibility of using portables as they grow. They also stated that they would consider downsizing their school (enrollment, staff, and three schools model) and adjusting their budget accordingly if an appropriate sized campus could not be found. They also discussed the possibility of two campuses and bussing students between campuses.
Finance	12. How are you going to open your proposed school without federal start-up funds? Does the proposed school have a plan to supplement its budget in some way? Does the proposed school have a plan to acquire funding necessary to accomplish planning/implementation year requirements (setting up a bank account, acquiring furniture, having software systems in place to interface with PED's OBMS system, etc.)?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	The applicant team stated that they have secured a \$215,000 Innovative School Grant, but this grant cannot be used for capital expenditures. They have also secured a total of \$6,400 from other sources. They are prepared to

	adjust their budget, including staffing changes, to reappropriate funds. They have identified a bank to open a bank account and will have systems in place. The founding board will also help with continuing to find grants.
Finance	13. In detail describe how you will make enrollment projections to establish and submit your first budget to PED? How will you ensure these enrollment projections are reasonable and align closely to your actual 40 day count?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	Thrive has partnerships with Boys and Girls Club, Girls Inc, Early Mothers, Esperanza Shelter, as well as other organizations to help with recruitment efforts. They are also prepared to increase enrollment in other grades if a particular grade is not meeting enrollment targets. The executive director will provide a monthly report on the recruiting process by week to the governing board. This was identified as a needed process to achieve enrollment along with the intentional diversity goals for enrollment. In the event that numbers do not align to specific numbers v. grade level, Thrive is willing to adjust numbers to help ensure that the school is meeting their overall student enrollment numbers.
Finance	14. Suppose your actual enrollment on the first day is 50% below your pre-opening “enrollments” and 70% below your projections used to submit your budget. What are the implications for your budget/business plan and what are your next steps? Describe in detail what actions you would take and when you would take them to address this situation.
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	Recruitment events will indicate data necessary to make lottery shifts. In the event that the school is significantly under enrollment, they are willing to delay hiring of staff, including administrative staff and will prioritize hiring staff with multiple licensure/areas of expertise. Thrive is also willing to lower expenditures for instructional materials and supplies. However, because the majority of funding comes from student enrollment, it’s imperative that Thrive creates a more robust analysis plan regarding student enrollment demographics as well as an analysis of staff recruitment areas.
Planning Year	15. Describe the organizational steps the proposed school will take during the planning year to be ready for opening?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	The applicant team stated they will focus on the following specific areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board member recruitment • Executive Director • Recruiting Students • Recruiting Staff

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Development aligned to Common Core and New Mexico Standards • Facility identification • Establish contracts with the founding team • Hire staff, aligned with budget, grade level needs, background checks.
Review Team's Individualized Questions	16. Academic Framework: A1: How will you measure your success in effectively meeting your mission?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	Mission specific goals are measurable (4 that they can consistently monitor) in order to effectively measure success. Thrive intends to Measure the demographics of staff, leadership, and students to ensure that they are aligned with its mission. They are also committed to creating an affirming learning environment which will be measured by SEL surveys with a goal of 70% participation in the survey. Thrive will also analyze affective and Cognitive development, as well as analyze benchmark assessments data to eliminate gaps in achievement.
Review Team's Individualized Questions	17. Academic Framework: B1: How will your school's use of the RULER method and restorative justice practices align to meet your mission specific goals regarding Yazzi Martinez lawsuit, social emotional learning, and how your school will handle discipline?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	The applicant team stated they will use discipline data and be sure that restorative justice directly impacts discipline. SEL Framework will use RULER method and Restorative Justice practices which will align with curriculum across grade levels. Three legs of framework are broken down into prevention, relationship, and response. The Institute for Restorative Justice will also train staff in this approach. A Restorative justice approach to discipline requires time and their daily schedule has 2 hours built in to accommodate understanding of the practice twice per day: once before classes begin and again at the end of the day.
Review Team's Individualized Questions	18. Academic Framework: C1: 1. While vision and long term planning for the school is very strong, can you provide WAG templates for teacher planning? 2. How will you ensure consistency in the classroom without this? 3. Will ELA and Social Studies be a combined learning experience? If so, can this happen with Science and math, just to ensure there is more depth to the learning? 4. What do your WAG templates, unit plans, rubrics, and course assessments look like and how will they ensure instructional consistency?
Score	Review Team Comments:

Meets	Experiential learning models and large units of instruction that are aligned to all necessary standards will be connected and integrated with intention. Thrive believes their team is well equipped to help support staff in creating a “backward design model.” Thrive identified that performance and mastery based assessment models, as well as Week at a Glance (WAG) planning templates will be utilized as a part of their reflective teaching framework to inform future instruction.
Review Team’s Individualized Questions	19. Academic Framework: F1: If restorative practice is truly embedded into your educational philosophy and framework, what does that look like on a structural level and how is it embedded into your everyday practice?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	<p>Thrive will use the discipline data with the equity council to demonstrate that restorative practice embeds a discipline structure that is more proactive and less punitive to students. The team feels that during the extended school day model, they will have time to meet and discuss student behavior and leave flexibility for feedback to students.</p> <p>Restorative practice encourages students and staff to move away from deficit thinking and aims to create a model for student agency. The team plans to work within tiers to learn the practices, then rotate to tier 2 to have restorative conversations and lean into problem solving.</p> <p>Thrive successfully indicated how Restorative Justice practices will be embedded into their everyday school practices.</p>
Review Team’s Individualized Questions	20. Academic Framework: F2: When designing the schedule and calendar for your school, which stakeholders (parents, teachers, and students) were involved in the creation of your schedule? How is this schedule sustainable and how do you intend to prevent student and staff burnout?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	Thrive needs to address and clarify how the long, extended class periods will meet student sustainability and learning needs. In order to retain teaching staff and students, Thrive needs to reach out to stakeholders (families, students, teachers and community members) to come to consensus on a schedule that best serves the needs of all parties.

Review Team's Individualized Questions	21. Organizational Framework: A1: 1. What would constitute removal from the board? 2. What is the protocol for missing meetings? 3. Are there protection in place to protect board members? 4. What is your rationale behind the fluctuation of board member seats since it is not legal to decrease the amount of board seats once you've added an additional.
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	While the board has implemented some policies and practices in terms of removal of board members, Thrive has not clearly indicated which actions might constitute removal of a board member. Thrive needs to work to specify the standards that would constitute board removal.
Review Team's Individualized Questions	22. Organizational Framework: A2: Does Thrive School fully understand what it means to be a board of finance in terms of the legality associated with being a state charter?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	In their response, the Thrive team seemed clear on their understanding of and adherence to being a board of finance.
Review Team's Individualized Questions	23. Organizational Framework: B1: Will you be providing board members with site reports, audit findings, and a copy of the charter and budget so that they can be successfully onboarded into the school?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Approaches	While the applicant team did name different data items that (new) board members would receive, they did not provide new information and it appeared that they read straight from their charter application as their response. They struggled with their corrective action plan for audit findings and other aspects of this question. Thrive also did not successfully define what they will provide to board members to ensure a successful onboarding process.
Review Team's Individualized Questions	24. Organizational Framework: D3: 1. Where is the Academic Director/PSS Budgeted? 2. Why are the additional compensation costs in function 1000 so high? 3. Where is the \$500 for new staff members budgeted for the new signing bonus? If it is included in additional compensation, where it belongs, those budgeted costs are still way too high. 4. In the event that you cannot find TESOL/bilingual endorsed teachers, will you be using the allocated funds for unendorsed staff to get endorsements?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	The applicant team identified where these items were budgeted on the budget sheet. However, if the professional development days are additional compensation, this needs to be noted in the staff contract and a daily or hourly rate must be noted in the contract. It was stated that if TESOL/BL endorsed staff could not be

	found, the school would find funds to pay for a staff member to obtain the endorsement and would reallocate funds from the additional compensation line to professional development.
Review Team's Individualized Questions	25. Organizational Framework: D4: How will the allotted amount of PD days match the school calendar?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	The applicant team stated that they will adjust the calendar to reflect two parent teacher conference days (one in fall, one in spring) and that the remaining days will be allocated to professional development.
Review Team's Individualized Questions	26. Financial Framework: A1: What is the long term, phased in plan for school growth overtime?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	The applicants stated that they would use a slow growth model where each class would rise to the next level and new students will be admitted to the vacated grade. Eventually all grades will be filled at capacity of 75 students and then normal matriculation will be the norm (in or about year 4). A waiting list will be maintained and when a student leaves during the year, the student at the top of the waiting list will be offered the position until the vacancy is filled. However, it is unclear as to how Thrive school will handle issues of student retention.
Review Team's Individualized Questions	27. Financial Framework: C2: Will the preparation of grant reports provided by The Vigil Group include the monthly RFR's, BARs, etc. that need to be submitted to the PED?
Score	Review Team Comments:
Meets	All grant reports will be reviewed and monitored by the Vigil Group. The applicant business manager representative from The Vigil Group named several reports that will be submitted to the governing board for review. The representative stated that the bank statement and reconciliation report would be optional, but this report should be mandatory. The representative also stated that, occasionally, the bank statement would not be reconciled to the general ledger, but this should never be the situation. The Vigil Group representative stated that his firm would submit BAR's, RFR's, etc. to the PED after board approval. Regarding the need for an RFP for business management services, the charter review team was assured that the Vigil Group fees would be less than \$60,000 and therefore not subject to an RFP. The remaining amount in the

[REDACTED] line item in the budget (11000-2500-53414) was for AptaFund software. Please note, this expenditure should be expensed to budget line item 11000-2500-56113.

The review team advised the Applicant Team that “read only” access should be given to the school leader and a member of the governing board (Treasurer), for oversight and random review of financial activity and report generation.