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RYAN STEWART, ED.L.D.  
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

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GOVERNOR

August 16, 2021

Dear Public Education Commissioners:

Enclosed is the Final Analysis and Recommendation for Rio Grande Academy of Fine Arts 2021 Charter School Application. RioGafa is applying for a state charter in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The school would fall within the boundaries of Albuquerque Public School District to serve grades K - 12 and is represented by founders, Jordan Franco, Michele Platis, and Michelle Sanchez-St.Andre.

The attached Final Analysis and Recommendation includes a summary of the evidence and rationale gathered from the peer review team's analyses of the written application and the capacity interview. It also includes a brief summary of the participation at the community input hearing and letters (in support or in opposition) received. Appendix A contains all of the correspondence received regarding the school, from the Community Input Hearing date on Thursday July 22, 2021 until the submission deadline, three days later.

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication to ensure that New Mexico's Charter Schools represent the best of alternative and innovative options for parents and students.

Sincerely,

*Corina Chavez*

Corina Chavez, Director  
Options for Parents and Families Division

## I. Recommendation

APPROVE

Overall the application is complete and adequate; and during their Capacity Interview, the applicant(s) demonstrated a clear capacity to implement the academic, organizational and financial management plans as described in the application. Nothing was identified that would indicate the applicant(s) do not have the experience, knowledge, and competence to successfully open and operate a charter school.

APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

Overall the application is complete and adequate; and during their Capacity Interview, the applicant(s) demonstrated a general capacity to implement the academic, organizational and financial management plans as described in the application. However, the CSD has identified some specific concerns that would need to be addressed during the planning year. The CSD has listed the noted concerns and conditions to address the concerns below. If the PEC determines that there are any additional conditions that need to be addressed, those should be noted during the public hearing and all approved conditions negotiated in the final contract.

### **PROPOSED CONDITIONS**

FOR ALL APPROVALS: The Applicant will negotiate a contract with the Public Education Commission pursuant to 22-8B-9.1:

1. Obtain standing as an approved Board of Finance
2. Secure a facility that meets PSFA Approval
3. Complete the planning-year checklist

PROPOSED CONDITIONS SPECIFIC TO RioGAFA:

1. Each board member obtain all required training hours, by the Charter Schools Division (CSD), within the first three months of approval
2. Re-submit proposed budget to reflect grade phase in and 80% funding for classroom by November 15, 2021.
3. Develop a Head Administrator Evaluation Process with Timeline and Outcomes by November 15, 2021
4. Develop a Lottery Policy/ Application form (separate from Enrollment forms) by November 15, 2021. Develop a parent engagement plan by March 1, 2022.

DENY

Overall the application is either incomplete or inadequate; or during their Capacity Interview, the applicant(s) did not sufficiently demonstrate the experience, knowledge, and competence to successfully open and operate a charter school in New Mexico.

The Charter Schools Act, in paragraph 1 of Subsection L of Section 22-8B-6 NMSA 1978, states that a chartering authority may approve, approve with conditions or deny an application. A chartering authority may deny an application if:

- (1) the application is incomplete or inadequate;
- (2) the application does not propose to offer an educational program consistent with the requirements and purposes of the Charter Schools Act;
- (3) the proposed head administrator or other administrative or fiscal staff was involved with another charter school whose charter was denied or revoked for fiscal management or the proposed head

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- administrator or other administrative or fiscal staff was discharged from a public school for fiscal mismanagement;
- (4) for a proposed state-chartered charter school, it does not request to have the governing body of the charter school designated as a board of finance or the governing body does not qualify as a board of finance; or
- (5) 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.

**II. Overall Score Sheet**

Section	Meets the Criteria	Approaches the Criteria	Does Not Meet the Criteria
<b>APPLICATION</b>			
• Education Plan / Academic Framework	11	6	0
• Organizational Plan & Governance/Organizational Framework	10	14	0
• Business Plan / Financial Framework	3	5	0
• Evidence of Support	3	0	0
<b>CAPACITY INTERVIEW</b>	21	3	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>

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<b>SCHOOL</b>	Rio Grande Academy of Fine Arts	
Section #	<b>WRITTEN APPLICATION (Part C)</b>	Rating
	<b>ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK</b>	
I.A(1)	Mission	Meets
I.A(2)	Vision	Completed
I.A(3)	Uniqueness and Innovation	Meets
I.B(1)	Mission Specific Indicators	Meets
I.C(1)	Curriculum/Ed Program/Student Standards	Approaches
I.D(1)	Bilingual Multicultural, Indian Education, and Hispanic Education	Approaches
I.E(1)	Graduation Requirements	Meets
I.F.(1)	Ed Philosophy/Instructional Methods	Meets
I.F.(2)	Yearly/Daily Calendar	Approaches
I.F.(3)	Programs impact for population	Meets
I.G. (1a)	SPED Identification	Approaches
I.G. (1b)	SPED Progress	Approaches
I.G. (2a)	ELL Identification	Approaches
I.G. (2b)	ELL Progress	Meets
I.G. (3)	Plan to address the needs of students as outlined in the Indian Education Act, Hispanic Education Act, and the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act	Meets
I.H.(1)	Assessment Plan	Meets
I.H.(2)	Assessment Data	Meets
I.H.(3)	Assessment Communications	Meets

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK		
II.A.(1)	Governing Board Outline	Approaches
II.A.(2)	Board Qualifications & Profiles	Approaches
II.A.(3)	New Member Process	Approaches
II.B.(1)	Board Training	Meets
II.B.(2)	Board Evaluation	Approaches
II.C.(1)	Board Oversight	Meets
II.C.(2)	Hiring Head Admin	Approaches
II.C.(3)	Principal Job Description (Appendix B)	Approaches
II.C.(4)	Principal Evaluation	Meets
II.D.(1)	Org Chart & Relationship	Meets
II.D.(2)	Staff Job Descriptions (Appendix C)	Approaches
II.D.(3)	Staffing Plan	Approaches
II.D.(4)	PD/Novice Membership	Meets
II.E.	Employment Terms	Approaches
II.F.(1)	PTA	Meets
II.F.(2)	Grievance Process: Families	Approaches
II.G.(1)	Recruitment Plan	Meets
II.G.(2)	Lottery	Approaches
II.H.	Conflict of Interest	Meets
II.I.(1)	3rd Party Relationships	
II.I.(2)	3rd Party Contracts (Appendix D)	
II.J.	Waivers	Approaches
II.K.(1)	Transportation	Meets
II.K.(2)	Food Service	Approaches
II.L.(1)	PSFA Checklist (Appendix E)	Meets
II.L.(2)	Facility Identification	Approaches

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FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK		
III.A.	School Size	Meets
III.B.(1)	SEG Worksheets (Appendix F in Excel)	Approaches
III.B.(2)	5 Year Budget (Appendix G in Excel)	Approaches
III.B.(3)	Budget Narrative	Approaches
III.B.(4)	Budget Adjustments	Approaches
III.C.(1)	Financial Oversight (Appendix H)	Meets
III.C.(2)	Financial Staff	Approaches
III.C.(3)	Governance Finance	Meets
EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT		
IV.A.(2)	Outreach Activities	Meets
IV.B.	Community Support	Meets
IV.C.	Networking Relationships	Meets
CAPACITY INTERVIEW (Part D)		
		Rating
1	Mission	Meets
2	Innovation	Meets
3	Mission Implementation	Meets
4	Leadership & Governance (GB selection & success of school)	Meets
5	Leadership & Governance (HA selection & success of school)	Meets
6	Leadership & Governance (GB and school evaluations & success)	Meets
7	Leadership & Governance (Relationship of founders, GB, and admin & success)	Meets
8	Leadership & Governance (bylaws, implementation, & success)	Meets
9	Leadership & Governance (establish, implement, change policies and procedures)	Meets
10	Facility (plan for facility and educational occupancy; responsible party)	Meets
11	Facility (next step plan if building does not get PSFA approval)	Meets
12	Finance (planning year budget without federal start-up funds)	Meets
13	Finance (enrollment projections)	Meets
14	Finance (plan if actual enrollment is below projections)	Meets
15	Planning Year (organizational steps during planning year)	Meets
<b>School Specific Questions</b>		
16	What is the planning and alignment model for instruction and assessment?	Approaches
17	What happens if a student does not have a 3.0 GPA at the end of semester?	Meets
18	What are the qualifications held and capacity of the director of academics?	Approaches
19	:In a formative sense, how will you use data obtained during performances?	Meets
20	What is your proposed timeline for filling vacant board spots? Can you explain?	Meets
21	What is your plan to ensure a continuous pool of highly qualified applicants?	Meets
22	How will the board guide the co-directors in their individual responsibilities?	Meets
23	How will you cover costs for the role reflected in the narrative (i.e. stars coach)?	Meets
24	Since rolling over funds from a previous year is not an option, how will Rio?	Approaches

### **III. Explanation Regarding Use of the Score Sheet**

An external team of four peer reviewers provided the written application and capacity interview evaluations and scoring. The peer review team consists of:

- A licensed NM School Administrator
- A licensed NM Teacher
- A licensed NM School Business Official
- A Team Leader with charter policy, team lead, or administration experience

In this Recommendation and Final Analysis, the CSD has considered the written application and the responses during the capacity interview, as rated by the peer reviewers.

The community input hearing is not rated. However, a brief summary is provided on page 8. Please see the full transcript for details.

The letters of support/opposition are also not rated. A summary is provided here and the actual letters/emails are provided in Appendix A, beginning on page 10.

## IV. Final Analysis

### WRITTEN APPLICATION (PART C)

#### Application Section

##### EDUCATION PLAN/ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK

The applicant scored “Meets Criteria” in eleven (11) indicators, “Approaches the Criteria” in six (6) indicators, and “Does Not Meet the Criteria” in zero (0) indicators. Please see the detailed comments from the peer review team, along with the rating, after each question in Part C of the application.

*The academic framework provided in the application is strong and explains both the how and the why they intend to provide an integrative-arts education to the students in their community. The founding team spoke passionately and thoughtfully about their instructional model and the needs of their west-side Albuquerque community. The application was not solely built on opinions and heart, but on facts and data including how their arts-integrative framework will use Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) practices to enrich their curriculum and ensure equity within their diverse community.*

#### Application Section

##### ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN AND GOVERNANCE / ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The applicant scored “Meets Criteria” in ten (10) indicators, “Approaches the Criteria” in fourteen (14) indicators, and “Does Not Meet the Criteria” in zero (0) indicators. Please see the detailed comments from the peer review team, along with the rating, after each question in Part C of the application.

*The organizational framework as presented did not go far enough in outlining the division of responsibilities between the co-leaders and the board’s oversight of them. Many of the capacity interview questions were focused on getting a better understanding of the proposed school’s plan for governance oversight and organizational plan. The peer review team felt that the applicant team did an excellent job in addressing their concerns in a way that was not just reciting from a prepared script.*

#### Application Section

##### BUSINESS PLAN/ FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

The applicant scored “Meets Criteria” in three (3) indicators, “Approaches the Criteria” in five (5) indicators, and “Does Not Meet the Criteria” in zero (0) indicators. Please see the detailed comments from the peer review team, along with the rating, after each question in Part C of the application.

*In terms of the financial framework, the applicant team displayed an understanding of Financial oversight and the board’s role of a fiduciary. The applicant team is working with K12 Accounting, however, the SEG Worksheets, 5-Year Budget, Budget Narrative, and Budget Adjustment plans all need more work and clarity.*



**Application Section****EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT**

**The applicant scored “Meets Criteria” in three (3) indicators, “Approaches the Criteria” in zero (0) indicators, and “Does Not Meet the Criteria” in zero (0) indicators.** Please see the detailed comments from the peer review team, along with the rating, after each question in Part C of the application.

*Evidence of support in both the artistic community and the prospective parents from the community was abundant. The applicant team was very creative in their way of showing the need for their school from many of the newly graduated New Mexico students who spoke very eloquently and passionately about how access to the arts in their education was so vital to their success.*

**CAPACITY INTERVIEW (Part D)**

**The peer reviewers asked fifteen standard questions (1-15) and fourteen (16-29) school specific questions. The applicant scored “Meets Criteria” on twenty one (21) responses, “Approaches the Criteria” on three (3) responses, and “Does Not Meet the Criteria” on zero (0) responses.** Please see the detailed comments from the peer review team, along with the rating, in Part D of the application.

**COMMUNITY INPUT HEARING**

During the community input hearing held on July 22, 2021 via Zoom, twenty (20) attendees expressed support of the school in the zoom chat. No representatives of the school district attended the hearing. Twelve (12) attendees spoke, all in favor.

Eleven (11) members of the applicant team were on the panel.

**LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR IN OPPOSITION**

Two (2) letters were received by the deadline of three business days after the applicant’s PEC hearing. All expressed support of Aspire Integrated Arts Institute. No letters of opposition were received.

The correspondence received is attached here, in Appendix A, in their entirety.

**SUMMARY**

Overall, the peer review team was very impressed by the Rio Grande Academy of Fine Arts Team and their ability to respond to their questions in unrehearsed and deeply personal ways. The community clearly expressed their feelings regarding having an arts-integrated school option on the west side of Albuquerque.

Overall, the application submitted by the Rio Grande Academy of Fine Arts School is both complete and adequate. There is more work to be done to hone the policies and procedures of the proposed school and the applicant team has expressed an eagerness to partner with the PEC and the CSD to get that done.

During both the application review process and the capacity interview, the applicant team demonstrate the capacity to implement the education plan, organizational plan and governance (organizational framework), and the business plan (financial framework). The applicant team is prepared to open a high quality charter school in New Mexico.

## APPENDIX A

### Letters of Support or in Opposition