

New Mexico Public Education Commission



2023 FTC Application Kit

Part B

Executive Summary

Charter Schools Division
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Approved by the Public Education Commission: October 21, 2022

Instructions

The executive summary should be no more than two to three pages long and should address, in a narrative form, the following points:

- The 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 the whose geographic boundaries where 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 the proposed charter school a school of this nature in the area 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, curriculum and assessment, etc.)
- How the proposed school will improve student achievement and exceed the academic performance of the 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 that supports this assumption.
- The founders or applicant team of the proposed school, their background, expertise, and what drives them to engage in this endeavor.
- If different from the list provided above, the proposed governing board and their vision of charter school governance, and how the proposed school will benefit the community.

Applicant Response

Name of Proposed Charter School

First Things Classical Charter School intends to offer a classical education to students in grades K-12.

New Charter Application Executive Summary

Of the approximately 20,000 school age children within the geographical boundaries of the Rio Rancho Public Schools district, 56% of those attending school are Hispanic, 31% are White, 3% are Native American, 2% are Black, 1% are Asian or Pacific Islander. Compared to their peers throughout the state, 63% of the Rio Rancho students demonstrate academic progress above the New Mexico average, and another 25% rank with the state average. That record speaks highly of the efforts of Superintendent Cleveland, her educators, and her staff. Wishing to collaborate rather than compete with such efforts, First Things intends to provide the tuition-free opportunity for those parents who desire to nurture their children in a classical liberal arts program with emphasis on mastery in literacy

along with content-rich study of science, mathematics, history, and literature while developing good moral character and civic virtue leading to responsible citizenship.

Some lottery-successful Rio Rancho families are daily transporting their children as far as Edgewood for such an experience. Other families are on waiting lists for such an opportunity elsewhere in the greater metropolitan area. Our plan is to provide a more accessible campus with these and other course offerings that are not locally available including geography, Latin, and the fine arts.

Recognizing that not every student is headed to college, we applaud the RRPS aspirations to resurrect the concept of vocational training for those pursuing a career not dependent on college credentials. We anticipate that some of our students may become candidates. Again, we are interested in partnering rather than competing to produce quality citizens of the future.

Numerous national organizations are advocating for more transparency and accountability within the educational system. We want to be a school that serves family needs as well as one that relies on parental involvement in the process. Intel will be bringing in many new workers in the next two years. We want to be ready to serve them as well as the present Rio Rancho community. We anticipate parents from not only Rio Rancho, but also Bernalillo and Corrales as well as nearby pueblos will consider enrolling their children in our public tuition-free classical charter school.

Our concept of a classical liberal arts curriculum corresponds with the successful curriculum compiled and licensed by Hillsdale College. They are familiar with our efforts and have expressed a favorable view toward an application from us to become licensed to use their curriculum. It is the same curriculum being successfully followed at Estancia Valley Classical Academy in Edgewood and Hózhó Academy in Gallup. According to PARCC assessments, students at both of those schools are performing "above" to "well above" the state average in most academic areas and grade levels. We will expect no less from our students as we employ the same curriculum. We are grateful for the examples of both schools and are indebted to them along with The Vigil Group for their support and intentional contributions to this application.

Serendipitously, we founders are already serving as members of the Board of Directors for FTCCS Foundation which is incorporated as a nonprofit public charity. We have 501(c)(3) tax exempt status and are already exercising our qualification to receive tax-deductible donations.

As members of the founding team, we bring these skills and experiences to this effort:

Chris Kershner, President; Information Technology, Business Process

Education: ASEET from North American Technical Institute

Current Employment: Owner of Breaking Good, LLC

Qualifications: 15 years as CEO/Chairman of the Board for La Vida Llena Retirement Community, contracted to reorganize how Intel retooled plants in the world, put first networks in the University of New Mexico and Albuquerque Federal Savings and Loan, assisted in creation of Technology Ventures Corporation, cofounder of Checker Airport Express, COO of Trilinear Corporation, CEO of Advanced Data International.

Gloria Salazar, Vice President; Marketing

Current Employment: Owner-Salazar Funeral Homes & Crematory

Education: BS Mechanical Engineering, MBA Technology Management

Qualifications: 20 years as Owner/Funeral Director of Salazar Mortuary and Reflections Chapel which are both companies within Reflections LLC. Previously an Engineering Manager for Chromex, Project Engineer for Honeywell Power Systems.

Stacy Moses, Secretary; Education Development

Education: Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, minor in Business, Master of Arts in Education, from UNM, and Master of American History and Government from Ashland University.

Current Employment: Ashbrook Center at Ashland University–Teacher Programs Administrator, after 36 years of teaching, 22 years at Sandia Prep School in Albuquerque.

Qualifications: MAEd and MAHG. Thirty-six years of teaching in total, and focus on American History and Literature; have studied methods/curriculum in Classical Education for the last few years. Was recognized by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History for my original curriculum for juniors which included research, presentation, art music, and collaborative learning.

David Mueller, Treasurer; Project Management, Compliance Monitor.

Education: BS in Meteorology from University of Oklahoma, graduate work at Texas A&M; graduate of USAF Squadron Officers School and Air Command and Staff College, graduate of Christ For the Nations Institute.

Current Employment: Retired as Major, USAF; also retired from private business ventures.

Qualifications: 25 years military experience as linguist, academic instructor and course writer, operational weather forecaster, forecast center quality control officer, worldwide data acquisition manager, and program manager acquiring IT assets for Air Weather Service; 2 years developing and teaching introductory Mandarin language course; 10 years as Val-Pak franchisee; 4 years as Executive Director, Oklahoma Chapter Independent Electrical Contractors Association; sales person and purchasing agent for a Fort Worth builder; founder and 4-year operator of family owned bed and breakfast capable of hosting family reunions and large weddings as well as corporate team training retreats.

David Stoliker, Team Member; Facilities

Education: BS Engineering from University of Michigan, MS Engineering from Washington State University, MBA from University of New Mexico

Current Employment: Retired, but working part time as a sole proprietor with the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority on the operation of the Cutter Water System, part of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project.

Qualifications: ASK Charter School Board Member from 2018 - 2021. Senior Civil Engineer with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission from 2011 to 2020. Southern Sandoval County Flood Control Authority Executive Engineer from 1997 to 2011. Bernalillo County Engineering Manager from 1990 to 1997. Previous Board Member Assignments include Paradise Hills United Methodist Church, Albuquerque Metro Area Public Transportation Boards, New Mexico Society of Professional Engineers, New Mexico American Public Works Society, New Mexico Floodplain Managers Association, Sandoval County Domestic Violence Shelter (Haven House) during the planning and completion of the facility and the Corrales Recreation Committee.

We are a team of concerned citizens that want our children, all of them, to be as well prepared for their lives as possible. Each founder stands ready to serve as an initial member of the Governing Council for the School when it is chartered. We are eager to receive the privilege to continue our efforts to open **First Things Classical Charter School** with grades K-6 beginning in August 2024. By adding one upper grade each year until we achieve full K-12 operation, we plan to celebrate our first high school graduation in 2031.