

New Mexico Public Education Commission



2023 New Charter School Application Kit

Part B

Executive Summary

Sierra Community Charter School

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

Sierra Community Charter School

New Charter Application Executive Summary

Sierra Community Charter School projects to serve up to **196 Sierra County students, K-8th grades.**

Key demographics - Sierra County is an underserved rural community in SWNM. According to the US Census Data, Sierra is the 2nd poorest county in the state with unfavorable risk factors connected to health outcomes. The average resident is 57. Less than 34% of adults have a high school diploma or higher. 90% of students qualify for free/reduced meals making the district. TCMSC is 100% Title I. The overall student proficiency: 30% ELL, 25% Literacy, 34% Science, and 21% Math. The ethnic representation is 7%, Hispanic 52%, White 44%, Black >5%, Asian >5%, NA >5%

TCMSC 2019 Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey score of 79 for risk factors, is among the highest in the state. 56% of students have thought about taking their lives. 49% of students feel sad or hopeless. 20% have attempted suicide. 28% are currently binge drinking and 27% are using marijuana.

The projected students are most likely being educated currently being served at TCMSC, home schooled, or did not formally return to school post COVID. Our projected enrollment is based on the historical enrollment of the private school that operated for 20 years, their waiting list, and the decline in TCMSC enrollment post COVID. We believe this evidence of need is conservative based on county birth rates vs. public school enrollment rates (23% difference) and based on TCMSC 1st grade enrollment vs. TCMSC 12th grade enrollment (20% decline). National and state data indicate increased **evidence** of family interest in individualized educational learning for their students. 43 unduplicated families representing 99 children have inquired about SCCS. NMPED must consider additional options in an effort identify and engage families in Sierra County who are opting out of TCMSC and those who are failing to reach proficiency. SCCS will engage and meet the needs of those students.

We believe children learn best when their basic needs are met and they are safe and secure in their surroundings, a “whole” child approach, Maslow before Blooms.

The following are the high-level **key innovative and unique programmatic features** SCCS will implement to accomplish our mission, ““Meeting the needs of the *whole* child... academically, culturally, socially, and emotionally.”

- **Individualized student Plans-** Educators will partner with parents, the student, and community members with experience in child growth and development to develop annual individualized student goals. These goals will focus on academic’s growth, physical health, and social/emotional wellbeing. This is unique and innovative as it applies a shared understanding that parents are their students primary educator and that parents know their student best. This only happens at a traditional public school if a student has a special needs that results in an Individualized Education Plan. It is significant as each student’s needs can be understood and met by those who are engaging in their healthy growth and development. It is significant because parents, the number one indicator of student success, are engaged.
- **Project Based Learning** – Each student will engage in learning designed with them in mind. This will include innovative menagerie of unique and rigorous educational experiences

weaving together best practices of hands-on learning, outdoor learning, inquiry based learning, project based learning, and service learning experiences to create an exciting learning environment where students desire to actively engage. Students will participate in ongoing service learning focused on the outdoors and/or civic engagement. This is unique because it is part of school wide core curriculum and is ongoing. According to research, students 18-24 are the least working generation in our nation's recorded history. Additionally, college enrollment is declining. Connecting real time learning to real time application is a necessary and significant shift that must happen in public education.

- **Individualized tracking of student growth and development-** We will track and monitor individual student performance and growth based on goals set at the beginning of the school year. We will include aspects from all five of the Pedagogical Approaches in instruction with a stronger emphasis of the student led Inquiry or "Constructivist" approach. We will use a variety of types of qualitative and quantitative data to track student progress, consistently define, measure, and communicate goals, while partnering with families and the community to commit to each student's success. This is unique and innovative as it only happens at a traditional public school if a student has a special needs that results in an Individualized Education Plan. It is significant as each student's needs can be understood and met. This only happens at a traditional public school if a student has a special needs that results in an Individualized Education Plan. It is significant as each student's needs can be understood and met by those who are engaging in their healthy growth and development.

- **Designed with our rural agricultural community in mind.** Sierra County has a diverse and unique landscape, culture, and people. Sierra County Community School (SCCS) will capitalize on our unique geological formations, demographic, culture, diversity, small town community connections, and natural resources to assure students enrolled partake in engaging and exciting student led inquiry based outdoor learning projects. Our students learning state standards and benchmarks will be connected to the unique features of Sierra County. Examples include mountains, rivers, hot springs, forests, lakes, ruins, petroglyphs, unique geological formations, farms, ranches, and historical landmarks. Sierra County has the third highest population of veterans in the state. The county is home to the New Mexico Veterans Home, five active veteran organizations, and is home to the Buffalo Soldier Monument. Students can choose service learning projects that are connected to this demographic so special to this community. SCCS offers innovative and unique ways to connect students with their surroundings in a way far beyond a field trip here or there. The significance of engaging students in meaningful community connects is something every public school student needs. SCCS will provide it.

SCCS will utilize the flexibility provided as a New Mexico Charter School to offer an evidence-based learning environment designed to meet the needs of the *whole* student. **As a result, each student will reach their full individual potential.** SCCS will **improve student achievement and exceed the academic performance** of the existing public schools in the local community or the school district by meeting the individualized needs of each student. SCCS students will be supported in ways that allow them to feel free to actively engage in a challenging educational environment, designed with them in mind, where they can excel in learning who they are and how the world around them works. Student attendance is a key indicator of student performance. When classes are meaningful and relevant, student attendance, thus outcomes improve.

Meet our Founders-

Rebecca Bartoo –Level III Instructional License and Level III B Administrative License, MA in Administration, BS in Elementary Education, MLSS trained 2021, 20 years SAT experience, 20 years ELL support services experience, NM Teach evaluation Certified, 20 years SPED support experience with

inclusive instruction, curriculum, and IEP teams, 17 years Science Instruction, STEM, Science Olympiad Coach, Exemplary Teacher 2017, National Geographic Certified Instructor, NGSS Instructional and Course Review Team for Science, NM Teacher Liaison Leader 2017, Principals Pursuing Excellence 2019, Secretary of Education Teacher Advisory Team member 2018, West Ed Making Sense of Science Facilitator

Candance Chavez- BA in Education, MA in Technology, EMD Educational Leadership, Instructional License K-3, Title I Reading Specialist, Elementary Principal 2009-15, Bilingual Director 2015-17, Sierra County Deputy Treasurer 2018-20, Sierra County Treasurer 2021- current

Leslie Boone- Masters of Physical Therapy, Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology. Certified Kinesio-taping. 13 years as Practitioner in Sierra County, 8 years of outpatient orthopedic experience in Sierra County. Contract therapist with TCMSD, strong working knowledge of ADA, IDEA, IEPs, Non-public school student family plan, and 504s. Working knowledge of MCO, Medicaid billing, program compliance, etc.

Johnna Smith- Master in Family and Consumer Science, Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Independent Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, certified mentor through UNM, National board certified, specialized training in play therapy, sand tray therapy, brain spotting, Neurofeedback, Infant Mental Health, Child Psychotherapy, and clinical trauma techniques.

Nellie Smith- Local business owner. Active community member. Served on multiple community boards. Familiar with NM SOS cooperate rules and regulations, IRS 501c3 standards, state and federal grant compliance.

Rebecca Dow - BS in Bus Admin, AA in ECD, National Administrator Credential, Founder of three Sierra County non-profits, 23 years of experience in private, state, and federal grant writing/program management and compliance including PED, DOH, CYFD, ECECD, DWS, SAMSA, USDA, and many more. NECPA accreditation verifier.