



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
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2024 NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUBMIT CHARTER APPLICATION

According to NMSA § 22-8B-6(B) a 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 **AND** to the superintendent of the school district in which the charter school is proposed to be located no later than the second Tuesday in January of the year in which the application will be filed.

The NOI must be submitted electronically to charter.schools@ped.nm.gov with a cc to the district superintendent by 5:00 PM Mountain Time **January 9, 2024.**

Notices of Intent that are not received by the Public Education Commission **and** the district by the deadline may result in the application being rejected.

The NOI is intended to provide the primary point of contact information of charter developers and preliminary information about the charter proposal. Use the form below to submit the NOI, which should not exceed 5 pages

1. General Information

- Name of Proposed School

First Things Classical Charter School

- School district where proposed school will be located

Rio Rancho Public Schools

- Grade levels to be offered and enrollment projections

Grade Levels to be offered	Projected Total Enrollment
PreK-12	520

- Primary Point of Contact

Name	Chris Kershner		
Mailing Address	kershner@kershner.com		
City	Los Poblanos	State	NM
Zip	87107	Phone	(505)288-1726
Email	kershner@kershner.com		

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	Role on Team	Qualifications: Education, Employment, and Experience
Chris Kershner	Chair/Information Technology	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 Citizen advisor to NM Supreme Court Disciplinary Board
Stacy Moses	Secretary	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; Teacher, Mid School History at Cochiti Elementary and Middle School, after teaching 22 years at Sandia Prep School and 14 years at Menaul 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 her original curriculum for juniors which included research, presentation, art music, and collaborative learning.
David Stoliker	Founder	Education: BS Engineering from University of Michigan, MS

		<p>Engineering from Washington State University, MBA from University of New Mexico</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Gloria Salazar	Vice Chair	<p>Education: BS Mechanical Engineering, MBA Technology Management</p> <p>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.</p>
Kristin Abdill	Founder	<p>Education: BS Business Management National American University; MS Educational Psychology University of New Mexico</p> <p>Qualifications: 12 years non-profit organization serving students of New Mexico; CASA with New Mexico Kids Matter; 7 years Ex Officio Board member of New Mexico Music Educators Association, 7 yrs Ex Officio Board Member of Career and Technical Leadership Project; 3 years School to World Advisory Committee Member; Project Management Professional (PMP) certified; Senior Project Manager PHP</p>
Laurie Erickson	Founder: Head of School	<p>Education: BS Elementary Education, Minors in Math & Science Education Northern Michigan University; MS Ed: Major of Special Education Northern Michigan University; School Administration License the Cooperative Education Association in Albuquerque, NM</p> <p>Licensed or Highly Qualified in Administration, Special Education and General Education</p>

		Teacher in Michigan, Wisconsin, and New Mexico (Pre-K-12) School Administration experience; Active member off AAUW; Ongoing Professional Development in Diversity & Inclusion, Teacher Mentorship, Pre-School Administration, Restorative Practices, Cultural & Linguistic Responsiveness Qualifications: Educator since 1993, with experience in SE, Gifted and GE (PreK-12); Over 7 years of charter school experience
Gene Olona	Founder	Education: Doctor of Medicine (UNM), BS Physics (NMT), MS Business Admin/Educational Leadership (present) Qualifications: Educator in School Admin and Teaching the college and High School levels (2005-2023); Fluent in several computer programs; Experience with teaching Latin

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

First Things Classical Charter School will be a Core Knowledge, American Classical, liberal arts school that aims to undergird its content-rich, balanced, rigorous, and integrated curriculum with a warm, cohesive school community, moral and intelligent teachers/support staff, and a culture of discipline, decorum, and order to provide a first-class educational experience for all students. FTCCS' academic program combines cutting-edge, researched-based programs each of which involves an organized and sequential continuum of learning, with the robust and integrated study of core subjects in the liberal arts and sciences tradition.

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

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

FTCCS will be supported by The Vigil Group or a comparable local agency for financial management assistance including budgeting and financial planning. FTCCS also expects to contract with a staffing agency such as Cooperative Educational Association (CES) to provide ancillary staff for special education and counseling services. FTCCS will also work closely with Hillsdale College for classical curriculum.

5. Does the applicant team or any members of the team currently operate any other schools? Yes, No

6. Vision/Mission statement (2-3 sentences)

First Things Classical Charter School (FTCCS) seeks to utilize a classical K-12 American education to train the minds and improve the hearts of young people to think critically and voice opposition or support of societal changes from a vantage point of knowing history leading to lifelong contributions as responsible American citizens. FTCCS will focus on liberal arts and sciences, emphasizing mastery in literacy as well as content-rich study of science, mathematics, history, and literature supplemented by geography, Latin, and fine arts.

7. Student population and geographical setting of the school

- Define the targeted geographical area from which the proposed school is expected to draw a significant number of its students.

The targeted geographical area of the school is in the vicinity of the Rio Rancho. FTCCS anticipates drawing significant numbers of students from Rio Rancho, Northwest Albuquerque, Bernalillo and Jemez Pueblo. Since FTCCS will be a public charter school, the students will be from all demographics of this part of New Mexico including all socioeconomic, ethnic, race, religion, and gender.

- Describe the student population including key demographic data (academic performance, home languages, English Learners, and special education populations).

The student body at the schools served by Rio Rancho Public Schools, the projected location of FTCCS, is 29.3% White, 1.9% Black, 1.1% Asian or Asian/Pacific Islander, 57.8% Hispanic/Latino, 4% American Indian or Alaska Native, and

0.1% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. In addition, 5.7% of students are two or more races, and 0% have not specified their race or ethnicity. (US Census Report) RRPS serves 15.5% special education students, 4.4% English Learners, and has a district-wide graduation rate of 88.3%. (2021 State of the RRPS District report)

- 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.

The anticipated students are attending Rio Rancho Public Schools, Albuquerque Public Schools, Bernalillo Public Schools, other Rio Rancho charter schools or newly moving to Rio Rancho. Projected students may also be attending private schools or being homeschooled. Since there is no other K-12 classical education school within a 30 minute drive from the proposed location, FTCCS is the only option for a classical education in the proposed region in NM.

8. Provide evidence that the applicant team has assessed community need for the type of school proposed (e.g., objective surveys or other measures of local demand for the educational program)

According to the 2021 RRPS State of the District Report, the students lost during the COVID-19 pandemic (5% of overall student population) left looking for alternatives to the RRPS. FTCCS will offer an alternative for these families, especially those looking for traditional educational alternatives, focusing on attracting students who have not returned to the neighborhood district. Among all of the charter schools serving students in the Rio Rancho area, none provides a classical education. We believe FTCCS will fill the need for those students and their families who desire a classical foundational education.

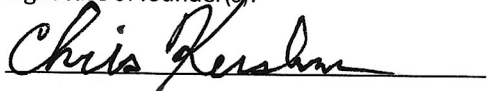
9. Identify significant innovative features that the school will implement to help realize the school's vision/mission.

We seek to bring to Rio Rancho what has already been proven in New Mexico with a Latin-based, classical curriculum. Dr. Daniel Coupland, Dean of Hillsdale College's Graduate School in Classical Education and Professor of Education, writes "The standards are based on a utilitarian understanding of education: Education should be about the highest things. We should study these things—stars, plant cells, square roots, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address*—not simply because they will get us into the right college or a particular line of work; rather, we study these noble things because they can tell us who we are, why we are here, and what our relationship is to each other as human beings and to the physical world that surrounds us." (<https://k12.hillsdale.edu/About/FAQ/>)

10. Describe how the school will be more effective in terms of academic achievement than the schools currently serving the targeted student population. Provide any data you have to support this assumption.

FTCCS will have low student/teacher ratios focused on a classical curriculum with an emphasis on core subjects, the arts, Latin, physical education, civics, and service. In the United States, curriculum standards are determined at the state level, and public schools, including public charter schools, are required to meet the state standards. NM has adopted the Common Core standards, which means that FTCCS will meet the Common Core standards using the Hillsdale Curriculum. Hillsdale College's member schools meet and exceed minimum standards. Hillsdale's scope and sequence allows schools to meet the minimum requirements set forth by the standards and exceed those standards by providing a rich curriculum. Hillsdale's affiliated schools perform very well on the state tests, even though teachers work with a rich classical curriculum. In grades 3-10, school performance is evaluated by looking at proficiency on state reading and math tests. For the 2021-2022 school year, Member Schools on average scored more than 15% higher than their counterparts according to state averages across both reading and math. (<https://k12.hillsdale.edu/About/FAQ/>)

Signature of founder(s):



Chris Kershner: Primary Contact

Date: 1/8/2024

Stacy Moses *Stacy Moses*
David Stoliker *David Stoliker*
Gloria Salazar *Gloria Salazar*
Kristin Abdill *Kristin*
Laurie Erickson *Laurie T. Erickson*
Gene Olona *Gene Olona*