

## Peer Review Team Report: Equip Academy

A.(1)	Mission	Meets ▾
A.(2)	Vision	Meets ▾
A.(3)	Uniqueness and Innovation	Meets ▾
B.	Mission Specific Goals	Approac... ▾
C.	Curriculum, Educational Program, Student Performance Standards	Approac... ▾
D.(1)	Bilingual Multicultural Education, Indian Education, Hispanic Education and Black Education	Approac... ▾
D.(2)	Equity Plan	Approac... ▾
E.	Graduation Requirements	N/A ▾
F.(1)	Instruction Philosophy	Meets ▾
F.(2)	Yearly Calendar and Daily Schedule	Does not... ▾
F.(3)	Schedule Narrative	Does not... ▾
G.(1a)	Special Education: Students with IEPs	Does not... ▾
G.(1b)	Special Education: Progress Monitoring	Approac... ▾
G.(2a)	English Learners: Curriculum & Instruction	Approac... ▾
G.(2b)	English Learners: Progress Monitoring	Approac... ▾
G.(3)	ESSA and Special Population Needs	Approac... ▾
H.(1)	Assessment Plan	Approac... ▾
H.(2)	Assessment Data Analysis	Approac... ▾
H.(3)	Achievement Communication Plan	Approac... ▾
A.(1)	Governance Structure	Approac... ▾
A.(2)	Governing Board Qualifications	Approac... ▾
A.(3)	Governing Board Recruitment	Approac... ▾
B.(1)	Annual Board Training Plan	Meets ▾
B.(2)	Annual Board Self-Evaluation	Meets ▾
C.(1)	Board Oversight Monitoring Plan	Approac... ▾
C.(2)	Hiring Head Administrator	Meets ▾

C.(3)	Governing Board Roles & Responsibilities	Approac... ▾
C.(4)	Annual Head Evaluation	Approac... ▾
D.(1)	Organizational Chart and Narrative	Approac... ▾
D.(2)	Job Descriptions	Does not... ▾
D.(3)	Staffing Plan	Does not... ▾
D.(4)	Professional Development Plan	Approac... ▾
E.	Conditions of Employment	Approac... ▾
F.(1)	Meaningful Community Involvement in Governance	Meets ▾
F.(2)	Complaint Process	Approac... ▾
G.(1)	Student Outreach & Recruitment	Approac... ▾
G.(2)	Lottery Process	Approac... ▾
G.(3)	Conflict of Interest Policy	Approac... ▾
I.(1)	Third Party Relationship	N/A ▾
Appendix D	If I.(1) then Appendix D	Approac... ▾
J.(1)	Transportation	Approac... ▾
j.(2)	Food Services	Approac... ▾
k.(1)	Facilities Master Plan	Meets ▾
k.(2)	Evidence of Researched Facility	Meets ▾
A.	Projected Enrollment	Meets ▾
Appendix F	910B5	Does not... ▾
Appendix G	5 Year Budget Plan	Does not... ▾
B.(3)	Budget Narrative	Approac... ▾
B.(4)	Budget Adjustments	Approac... ▾
C.(1)	Internal Control Procedures	Approac... ▾
C.(2)	Appropriate Financial Staff	Approac... ▾
A.	Evidence of Support/Outreach Activities	Approac... ▾

B.	Community Support	Approac... ▾
C.	Community Relationships	Meets ▾

### Evaluation Rubric for Part C: Application

<b>Meets the Criteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All required elements present</li> <li>● Sufficient detail present, enabling the proposal to be implemented without requiring further proposal development</li> <li>● The proposal is reasonable and realistic</li> <li>● Fully consistent with other sections, including budget and mission</li> <li>● Fully consistent with all requirements of law</li> <li>● Coherent and easily understood</li> </ul>
<b>Approaches the Criteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The majority of required elements are present, but not all</li> <li>● Insufficient detail; further proposal development will be required before the applicant can begin to implement the concept</li> <li>● Minor inconsistencies with other sections of the application</li> <li>● May raise questions about legal compliance, but does not demonstrate non-compliance</li> <li>● May raise questions about reasonableness or viability of the proposal</li> </ul>
<b>Does Not Meet the Criteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● None or less than a majority of the required elements are present</li> <li>● Contradicts or is substantially inconsistent with other sections</li> <li>● Insufficient detail to understand the proposal, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Copying responses from a prior applicant’s application</li> <li>○ Copying statutory, regulatory, or policy/guidance language</li> <li>○ Plagiarizing information from other publicly available material</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Includes statements that violate or conflict with the requirements of law</li> <li>● Incoherent or confusing</li> <li>● The proposal is patently unreasonable or unrealistic</li> </ul>

<b>ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS</b>
<p>The founding team of the proposed Equip Academy of New Mexico presents an Academic Framework that begins with a clear mission statement:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">By providing a top-tier, inquiry-based, college-preparatory education, Equip Academy of New Mexico ensures K-5 students master the knowledge and skills to dream audaciously, engage deeply and pursue a life of purpose.</p>

Equip Academy of New Mexico is dedicated to serving students from the Westside of Albuquerque, which encompasses neighborhoods west of the Rio Grande and south of Paseo.

The proposed school's mission, uniqueness and innovation, and teaching and instructional philosophy are clearly described. Some additional detail is required to fully address Equity Council requirements. Significant concerns included the yearly calendar, effective instruction for the student population, and instructional services and support for students with IEPs, all of which were rated as Does Not Meet.

Equip Academy's Academic Framework Meets the expectations for 3 of 17 indicators, Approaches the expectations for 11 of 17 Indicators and Does Not Meet for 3 of 17 rated Indicators.

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS**

The Organizational Framework section includes significant concerns and inaccuracies regarding the audit committee, governing body bylaws, organizational and financial monitoring, job descriptions, and salaries.

Because of the significant number of tasks assigned to the Head Administrator, concern has been expressed by the independent review team that the success of the proposed school in the first two years of operation is solely dependent on the Head Administrator's ability to meet all requirements.

Equip Academy's Organizational Framework Meets the expectations for 6 of 23 indicators, Approaches the expectations for 15 of 23 Indicators and Does Not Meet for 2 of 23 rated Indicators.

#### **FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS**

Numerous concerns are noted within the proposed Financial Framework section. A sample of concerns include: The 910B5 is not in alignment with proposed enrollment; In all but year 1, the expenditures exceed revenue; The school has included funding for the K-12 Program in the SEG, but has not identified K-12 Program days in the calendar (could have significant impact on the budget); Not all of the positions in the narrative were included in the budget; and, not all salaries budgeted align with the salary schedule.

Equip Academy's Financial Framework Meets the expectations for 2 of 11 indicators, Approaches the expectations for 6 of 11 Indicators and Does Not Meet for 3 of 11 rated Indicators.

#### **OVERALL ANALYSIS**

The application for Equip Academy of New Mexico Approaches expectations. Of 51 indicators, 11 are rated as Meets, 32 are rated as Approaches, and 8 are rated as Does Not Meet.

There is a good foundation for a charter school within this application. However, more work needs to be done within all three frameworks before the proposed school would be viable.

Overall, the current Application is not strong enough to serve as a cohesive and comprehensive plan for implementation of a new charter school.

# I. Academic Framework

## A. Mission and Vision

<b><u>A. (1)</u></b>	<b><u>MISSION</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Meets</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify how the proposed school will achieve its mission.</li> <li>• Discuss the importance of the mission to your proposed community</li> <li>• Be clear, concise, innovative, and measurable</li> <li>• Discuss what mission success will look like</li> </ul>
<p>The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Meets the expectations for this section.</p>	

<b><u>A.(2)</u></b>	<b><u>VISION STATEMENT</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>This narrative will be rated for completion, not content</b>
<b>Complete</b>	<p>A complete response must describe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team’s reasoning and purpose</li> <li>• Why your team is committed to providing a public education platform for your proposed community</li> <li>• How your team intends to interact with your proposed community in order to provide their children with better academic outcomes</li> <li>• What about your proposed program serves the proposed community in unique and innovative ways?</li> </ul>
<p>The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response is Complete.</p>	

<b><u>A. (3)</u></b>	<b><u>UNIQUENESS AND INNOVATION</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>

<b>Meets</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Describe the uniqueness, innovation, and significant contribution of your educational program to the local NM public education environment;</li> <li>● Describe the needs of the community; and</li> <li>● Demonstrate how the applicant team knows there is a compelling demand for the proposed school’s educational program in the geographic area in which the school plans to locate.</li> <li>● Ensure that the evidence establishes a compelling demand for the proposed school’s educational program based on reliable research, effective practices, or demonstrated success in schools with diverse characteristics.</li> </ul>
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The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Meets the expectations for this section.

**B. Mission-Specific Goals**

B.	<u>Mission-Specific Goals</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Include two mission-specific goals;</li> <li>● Align to the student outcomes identified in the mission response (A.1.);</li> <li>● Be guided by the elements of the SMART format:</li> <li>● Include measures and metrics.</li> <li>● Include how the board of the proposed school intends to regularly monitor equitable mission success</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

Two Mission-specific goals are presented that align with the mission, one focused on reading and one focused on math. The SMART format requires that the goals be “. . . specific, clearly and concisely stated, and easily understood.” The heart of the reading goal statement is clear (At least 70% of math goal students will advance 2 reading levels or more each academic year as measured by the Fountas & Pinnell Reading Assessment), while the remaining narrative included in the goal statement may be less clear for community members and others to understand.

The expectation for a complete response includes the provision of information about how the board intends to regularly monitor equitable mission success. Board monitoring is described for Goal 1, but not included in the narrative for Goal 2.

**C. Curriculum, Educational Program, Student Performance Standards**

<b>C.</b>	<b><u>Curriculum, Educational Program, Student Performance Standards</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Describe the proposed school’s curriculum <i>including research-based evidence that supports the effectiveness of the selected model and the target population</i>;</li> <li>● Describe how the proposed school’s curriculum will meet the requirements of equity for all underserved populations.</li> <li>● Identify information that demonstrates how the curriculum will align with the New Mexico Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and New Mexico Content Standards;</li> <li>● Identify information that demonstrates how the curriculum will align with the proposed school’s mission; and</li> <li>● Include a reasonable (as based on the professional judgment of experienced educators) timeline and plan for the development of the entire proposed curriculum—including scope and sequence, unit plans, daily lesson plans, project plans and rubrics, and unit and course assessments.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The applicants provided a proposed curriculum, described how it aligns to the state standards and mission, and included a reasonable timeline for development of the entire curriculum, rubrics and assessments. Additional detail is needed, however, to show how the curriculum will meet the requirements of equity for all underserved populations. For example, how will “phonics” be modified to support students who speak only their home language and assist them to learn English structure?

**D. Bilingual Multicultural Education, Indian Education, Hispanic Education and Black Education**

<b>D(1).</b>	<b><u>Bilingual Multicultural, Indian, Hispanic and Black Education Acts</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>

<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must ensure equal education opportunities for students in New Mexico by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Addressing the goals of the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act (NMSA §22-23-1) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ providing students with opportunities to expand their conceptual and linguistic abilities and potentials in a successful and positive manner;</li> <li>○ teaching students to appreciate the value and beauty of different languages and cultures; and</li> <li>○ meeting state academic content standards and benchmarks in all subject areas.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Addressing the goals of the Indian Education Act (NMSA §22-23A-1) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensuring equitable and culturally relevant learning environments and culturally relevant instructional materials for American Indian students</li> <li>○ Providing for the study, development and implementation of educational systems that affect the educational success of American Indian students to close the achievement gap, increase graduation rates;</li> <li>○ Encouraging and fostering parental involvement in the education of their children; and</li> <li>○ Providing mechanisms to improve educational opportunities for Native American students for the purpose of closing the achievement gap, increasing graduation rates, and increasing postsecondary enrollment, retention, and completion.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Addressing the purpose of the Hispanic Education Act (NMSA §22-23B-2), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing for the study, development and implementation of educational systems that affect the educational success of Hispanic students to close the achievement gap, increase graduation rates;</li> <li>○ Encouraging and fostering parental involvement in the education of their children; and</li> <li>○ Providing mechanisms to improve educational opportunities for Hispanic students for the purpose of closing the achievement gap, increasing graduation rates, and increasing postsecondary enrollment, retention, and completion.</li> <li>○ initiate and organize an equity council composed of multiple school stakeholders with the intent to create more equitable learning opportunities for marginalized students.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Address the purpose of the Black Education Act (HB 43), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Developing and including anti-racism policies</li> <li>○ Developing curricula and instructional materials that recognize and teach black culture and anti-racism. Implementing anti-racism training for teachers and staff</li> <li>○ Opportunities to explore one’s identity and societal systems that may impact their identity and future.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.



An expectation for this section is to address an equity council. Although the applicants addressed the Equity Council in the following Section and throughout the application, they did not include information specifically regarding initiating and organizing an equity council composed of multiple school stakeholders with the intent to create more equitable learning opportunities for marginalized students in this Section.

The applicants' response acknowledged their intent to meet all requirements of the individual acts. However, the narrative focuses heavily on narrowing the achievement gap for all classified students and leaves many elements of the individual acts not fully addressed. Examples include instructional materials for American Indians, a plan for developing and including anti-racism policies, developing curricula and instructional materials that recognize and teach black culture, and opportunities to explore one's identity and societal systems that may impact their identity and future. The last two points are briefly touched on within the response to the next section

Although there are funds in the budget for student travel, no funds have been identified for staff travel to accompany the students. Additionally, the budget does not include any funds for bilingual education.

<b>D(2).</b>	<b>Equity Plan</b> Proposed school will create an effective and equitable system of supports for all students focused on root-cause analysis, equity-focused leadership and continuous improvement, and culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum and pedagogy
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must ensure equal education opportunities for students in New Mexico by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A plan to initiate and organize an equity council composed of multiple school stakeholders with the intent to create more equitable learning opportunities for marginalized students.</li> <li>● If the proposed school is to be located in a historically defined Indian impacted school district, a plan for conducting a needs assessment to determine what supports are needed in the public charter school, at home and in the community to help Indian students succeed in school, graduate with a diploma of excellence and be prepared to enter post-secondary education or the workplace.</li> <li>● A detailed plan for the implementation of a culturally and linguistically responsive framework.</li> <li>● A detailed plan for attracting and retaining quality and diverse teachers to teach New Mexico's multicultural student population</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team's response Approaches the expectations for this section.

Two of the four Equity Plan expectations have not been addressed: 1) Although the response states that an equity council will be formed, how it will be formed has not been articulated; 2) A detailed

plan for attracting and retaining quality and diverse teachers to teach New Mexico’s multicultural student population has not been provided.

### **E. Graduation Requirements**

<b>E.</b>	<b><u>Graduation Requirements.</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Not Applicable</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify all of the proposed school’s graduation requirements;</li> <li>● Provide an explanation of how the proposed school will support students behind on graduation to earn a diploma.</li> <li>● Provide proposed Alternative Demonstration of Competency policies, if any</li> <li>● Align to state graduation requirements OR explicitly identify all requirements that vary from state minimum requirements; and</li> <li>● If there are variances from state minimum requirements explain the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ why the proposed school believes the change is important</li> <li>○ how the change supports the mission</li> <li>○ how the change ensures student readiness for college, career, or other post-secondary opportunities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Not Applicable. The proposed school will be serving grades K-5 only.

### **F. Instruction**

<b>F.(1) Instruction</b>	<b><u>Teaching and Instructional Philosophy</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Meets</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Describe the teaching and instructional philosophy of the proposed school;</li> <li>● Identify primary instructional methods to be implemented that ensure equity and that align to the philosophy;</li> <li>● Identify information that demonstrates the instructional methods are research-based; and</li> <li>● Describe how the educational philosophy and instructional methods support and align to the mission and curriculum.</li> <li>● How the proposed instructional methods will best support the population the school intends to serve.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Meets the expectations for this section.

F.(2) Instruction	<u>Yearly Calendar and Daily Schedule</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Does Not Meet</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Include a yearly calendar that identifies the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Annual start date and end date</li> <li>○ Teacher professional development days and times</li> <li>○ School-wide assessment periods</li> <li>○ School days, holidays, and partial days</li> <li>○ Teacher parent conferences;</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Include a daily schedule that identifies the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Instructional times</li> <li>○ Break times</li> <li>○ Start and end times</li> <li>○ Differences in the daily schedule for full and partial days;</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Meet all minimum hour (total instructional time) requirements laid out in NMSA 22-2-8.1;</li> <li>● Describe how the calendar and schedule support the proposed school’s educational program;</li> <li>● Describe how the calendar and schedule are optimal for achieving high outcomes for the anticipated student population;</li> <li>● Describe the extended learning time programs to improve academic success of students and professional learning of teachers;</li> <li>● If this is an elementary school, and you are participating in k-5 plus or extended learning program, describe the k-5 plus program and extended learning program and provide your calendar for year 2; and</li> <li>● Be supported by the proposed budget found in the Financial Framework section of the application.</li> <li>● Describe how the proposed calendar supports and values the community it intends to serve.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team's response Does Not Meet the expectations for this section.

The calendar reflects a total of 1128 instructional hours which does not meet the current requirement of HB 130 of 1140 hours per year. In addition, the narrative does not describe how the proposed calendar supports and values the community it intends to serve.

The dates for state required testing are given in a table, but not marked on the calendar itself.

The school does request funding in the 910B-5 for K-12 Plus for ten (10) Tier 1 and six (6) Tier 2 days. However, it does not appear that these extra days are reflected in the calendar as applicants indicated they had extra days in their calendar but did not. Receiving K-12 Plus funds in the SEG, but not

calendar those days has a large financial impact on the school. In addition, a calendar for year 2 was not provided.

Additional budgetary concerns are addressed in the Financial Section Part C.

F.(3) Instruction	<u>How Instruction will be effective for the student population.</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Does Not Meet</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify the anticipated student population, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Demographic information based on the local community population</li> <li>○ Educational proficiency based upon enrollment at the school</li> <li>○ Attendance and truancy trends</li> <li>○ English language proficiency</li> <li>○ Diverse populations</li> <li>○ At-Risk populations</li> <li>○ Special Educational needs;</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Explain any special factors influencing the makeup of the anticipated student population;</li> <li>● Explain how the educational philosophy has been designed to meet students' needs;</li> <li>● Explain how the instructional methods have been designed to meet students' needs and specifically how they will meet the needs of at-risk students; and</li> <li>● Explain how the yearly calendar and daily schedule have been designed to meet students' needs.</li> <li>● Explain how the yearly calendar and daily schedule have been designed to meet students' needs.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team's response Does Not Meet the expectations for this section.

Attendance and truancy trends are not addressed, which can be a significant factor in student and school success. This needs to be anticipated and procedures for tracking and remediation need to be addressed.

Special Educational needs were not fully addressed in this section; readers were instead referred to Section G. Special Populations.

The narrative provided specifically reiterates the philosophy and theoretical approaches that the school will use. The data provided is from APS only and the information of the curriculum approach is based upon data outside of New Mexico with a different population. It's not clear as to whether the curriculum approach will make a significant difference in student performance.

## G. Special Populations

G.(1a)	<u>Instructional Services and Supports for Students with IEPs</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Does Not Meet</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <p>Describe how the proposed school will identify and provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● instructional supports and services to the spectrum of needs of students with disabilities, who have IEPs or are eligible for an IEP;</li> <li>● instructional supports and services to gifted students who have IEPs or are eligible for an IEP;</li> </ul> <p>Describe how the proposed school will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure that students who are ELs are not over-identified as students with disabilities;</li> <li>● Identify specific responsibilities for school staff, classroom teachers, and special education staff; and</li> <li>● Identify specific training and support that will be provided to teachers and school staff to ensure they are able to fulfill their responsibilities.</li> </ul> <p>Describe the proposed school's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Timeline, benchmarks, and people responsible for developing discipline policies and protocols for your special populations.</li> <li>● Capacity of the school district in the geographic boundaries of the proposed school to provide special education services and FAPE.</li> <li>● Process for tracking this protected population's progress and services, how that will be reported to the board.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team's response Does not Meet the expectations for this section.

The response provided addresses most requirements for this section with the exception of identifying instructional support that will be given to gifted students. The narrative states that a team will be created with an LEA to build this program in year 1.

Overall, responses indicate that the applicants will comply with the requirements of the law; however, little information is provided to show "how" they will comply.

In regard to the budget, the applicants state that they will support special education in the classroom by using Title 1 and IDEA funds. They have not budgeted any special education classroom services with SEG Funding until year 3. SEG money needs to be used FIRST for special education to meet federal Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements. Title I and IDEA funds are "additional funds" for additional needs. In the kindergarten classrooms, they state there will be 1 teacher and 1 EA in each room, but they have budgeted for 2 teachers and 1 EA under early childhood in year 1.

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<b>G. (1b)</b>	<b><u>Monitoring and Evaluation of Special Education Students</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Describe how the proposed school will monitor the progress toward special education students’ attainment of IEP goals;</li> <li>● Identify specific responsibilities for school staff, classroom teachers, and special education staff; including when and who will be reporting on progress towards goals.</li> <li>● Identify the regular intervals at which progress will be monitored and success will be evaluated;</li> <li>● Identify specific actions/reporting that will engage and inform students and or families; and</li> <li>● Describe how the school will evaluate the effectiveness of its special education program and services.</li> <li>● Describe how mission success will be tracked, measured, ensured and reported on with these special populations.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The narrative indicates that the Head of School will be responsible for monitoring progress of students with IEPs or regular education teachers will assist. There is minimal contractual money for a special education teacher to assist but it appears to be part-time. There is a plan to hire an education coordinator in Year 4, but with the population specified that they want to enroll in the school, Special Education needs to be addressed beginning in Year 1. Based on the number of students anticipated to be enrolled, the timeline and budget to support special education students and provide services is inadequate.

The narrative does not fully address how mission success will be tracked, measured, ensured and reported on with a special population. The proposed tracking and reporting of mission success is a standard, required process and is not specific to the mission.

<b>G.(2a)</b>	<b><u>Required Curriculum and Instructional Supports for English Learners</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>

<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Describe how the proposed school will identify English Learners (ELs) and provide the required curriculum and instructional services/supports to students identified as ELs;</li> <li>● Identify how the school will implement the English Language Development Standards for ELs in its school;</li> <li>● Identify how the school will provide ELs with instruction and support to develop English language proficiency;</li> <li>● Identify how the school will provide ELs with access to grade-level content;</li> <li>● Describe how the school will address the spectrum of needs that ELs may present;</li> <li>● Identify specific responsibilities for school staff and classroom teachers; and</li> <li>● Identify specific training, professional development and support that will be provided to teachers and school staff to ensure they are able to fulfill their responsibilities;</li> <li>● Describe the proposed school’s process for tracking this protected population’s progress and services, how that will be reported to the board.</li> </ul>
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The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The response indicates that all students will be given the Language Usage Survey during enrollment. This is incorrect. The LUS should only be given to students who are entering NM public education for the first time. The applicant therefore also does not give a process for identifying students not new to public education in NM whose status is unknown, which is a common situation.

The Head of School is responsible for implementing and monitoring the ELL identification program for the first year as well as training staff and Instructional Assistants on the program. The founding team may need to reconsider the role of the Head of School and the numerous duties that have been assigned to this position.

<b>G.(2b)</b>	<b><u>Monitoring and Evaluation of English Learners</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Describe how the proposed school will monitor the progress of ELs toward English language proficiency, both annually and within the school year;</li> <li>● Identify specific responsibilities for school staff and classroom teachers;</li> <li>● Identify the regular intervals at which progress will be monitored;</li> <li>● Identify specific actions/reporting that will engage students and/or families;</li> <li>● Describe how the school will evaluate the effectiveness of its EL program and services; and</li> <li>● Describe how the school will monitor exited ELL students (reclassified fluent English proficient students—RFEPs) for two years for academic progress.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico’s founding team's response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The school is using a specific curriculum to teach English language learning to EL students. It’s not clear as to whether teachers will support student learning in their home language or will they require students to learn English using just this model. Staff responsibilities are listed but many of the staff to be involved do not start until year 4 or 5 and not in year 1 where the Head Administrator is the responsible party.

Under the subsection *Monitoring Progress of Els Toward English Language Proficiency*, the narrative states that “those who opt out of services will be monitored annually for two years”. This statement is incorrect. Additionally, under the subsection *Specific Responsibilities-School Staff and Teachers*, the narrative states that the “. . . Education Coordinator will request and collect LUS survey information to all incoming students upon the enrollment process information”. This is also incorrect. The LUS is to be administered only to students who are new to public education with no LUS on file.

G.(3)	<u>Plan to adhere to ESSA and State Statutes</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must Describe how the proposed school will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop an educational framework to address the educational needs of Native American, Hispanic, Black and bilingual multicultural students within a culturally and linguistically responsive approach to learning;</li> <li>● Identify specific responsibilities for school staff and classroom teachers, including professional development for teachers;</li> <li>● Ensure that the best practices are used in teaching, mentoring, counseling and administration are culturally and linguistically responsive to students;</li> <li>● Ensure policies will be culturally and linguistically responsive;</li> <li>● Demonstrate rigorous and culturally meaningful curricula and instructional materials will be developed and implemented;</li> <li>● Identify the regular intervals at which progress will be monitored;</li> <li>● Identify specific actions/reporting that will engage students and/or families; and</li> <li>● Evaluate the effectiveness of its programs to improve educational outcomes.</li> <li>● Describe how the proposed school will meet the specific requirements of the Black Education Act</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.



The response provided did not address the following expectations: 1) Identify specific responsibilities for school staff and classroom teachers, including professional development for teachers and 2) Identify the regular intervals at which progress will be monitored.

## H. Assessment and Accountability

H.(1)	<u>Assessment Plan</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Include an assessment calendar that identifies all state or district mandated assessment periods and dates related to teacher analysis/use of assessment data to inform instruction               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Include assessments/progress monitoring for special populations;</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Identify, for all state or district mandated assessment periods, the grade levels at which the assessments will be administered;</li> <li>● Describe, for all state or district mandated assessment periods, the specific data that will be collected, reported, analyzed, evaluated, and utilized to inform instruction;</li> <li>● Describe how the data identified will be used to inform instruction;</li> <li>● Describe the school’s philosophy on the use of data and how teachers will be onboarded, trained and supported to ensure the schools philosophy is followed;</li> <li>● Align with all state assessment and data reporting requirements;</li> <li>● Describe how the assessment plan meets the specific needs to equitably assess the proposed school’s projected student population;</li> <li>● Describe how the assessment plan aligns to the proposed school’s mission and any assessments that may be used to determine, measure and track equitable mission achievement; and</li> <li>● Include any assessments that may be negotiated as part of the performance framework and contract.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The following concerns were noted by the review team:

- The calendar does not explicitly state dates related to teacher analysis. However, it is noted that dates are given in the response to the next section H.(2).
- The narrative does not specifically address how the assessment plan aligns to the school's mission and any assessments that may be used to determine, measure and track equitable mission achievement. It is noted, however, that Mission alignment is addressed in the next section (H.2).
- The testing window for the WIDA ACCESS test is inaccurate. The testing window is mid-January through mid-March. In addition, the Alternative ACCESS test is not mentioned.

- The narrative does not describe the school’s philosophy on the use of data and how teachers will be onboarded, trained and supported to ensure the school’s philosophy is followed.
- The description for how the assessment plan meets the specific needs to equitably assess the proposed school’s projected student population is inadequate. It is noted, however, that more detail was provided in H.(2).

H.(2)	<u>Plan for Data Assessment Analysis</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the processes the school will use, including specific action steps, triggers that would prompt action steps, responsible parties, timelines, and associated costs, to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ monitor academic performance and</li> <li>○ take appropriate corrective action if the school is not on track to or does not meet academic performance expectations;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Address specific responsibilities related to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ meeting student academic achievement or growth expectations <u>at the school-wide level</u> and</li> <li>○ meeting student academic achievement goals <u>at the individual student level</u> (remediation/at-risk student); and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Describe how the school will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of its academic program generally and the effectiveness of specific corrective actions or interventions.</li> <li>• Describe how the proposed school intends to use the data gathered from assessments to drive instruction</li> <li>• Describe the board's role in analyzing the data gathered to inform school wide progress and potential changes.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The narrative response addressed all of the expectations for this section. However, additional details on what triggers would prompt corrective action needed and how data gathered from assessments will drive instruction would add to the completeness of the narrative.

It is unclear whether appropriate funding is available in the budget for testing and instructional materials, especially in the last two years of the charter term.

H.(3)	<u>Plan for Student Progress/Achievement &amp; Communication Plan</u>
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Rating	Expectations
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify how student achievement and progress will be communicated to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students</li> <li>○ Parents</li> <li>○ The governing body</li> <li>○ The authorizer</li> <li>○ The broader community;</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Identify the communication plan for each of the specific sources of student achievement data identified in H.(1) and any other relevant sources of student achievement data; and</li> <li>● Provide information that demonstrates the plan is effective in reaching the targeted population and the specific community in which the school plans to locate.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The narrative for this section does not sufficiently provide information that fully demonstrates the plan is effective in reaching the targeted population and the specific community in which the school plans to locate.

NOTE: Although preceded by a statement that assures all data with student information will be filed in a secure location by the operations team, as part of the communication plan for assessment (Figure 67) it is stated that “a list of students who qualify for DLM, dyslexia, gifted, or EL, data and action plan to the Governing Board”. If a list of students will actually be provided to the Governing Board in a public meeting, it would be a FERPA violation.

## II. Organizational Framework

### **A. Governing Body Creation/Capacity**

A charter application shall include a description of the governing body and operation of the charter school, including: (1) how the governing body will be selected; (2) qualification and terms of members, how vacancies on the governing body will be filled and procedures for changing governing body membership; and (3) the nature and extent of parental, professional educator and community involvement in the governance and operation of the school (NMSA 22-8B-8(I)).

A.(1)	<u>Key Components of Governance Structure</u>
Rating	Expectations

<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Include governing body bylaws in <b>Appendix A</b>; and</li> <li>● Summarize <u>key</u> governance components in the application response as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Membership structure (number, roles, length of terms)</li> <li>○ Officer structure (roles, election process, responsibilities, length of terms)</li> <li>○ Committee structure that includes both legally required committees and school-specific committees (selection process, responsibilities, membership, length of service terms)</li> <li>○ Member recruitment, selection, discipline, and removal processes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The narrative includes a number of concerns and inaccuracies regarding the audit committee and governing body bylaws:

Audit Committee

- Although the membership of the Audit Committee is stated in the narrative as "This committee will consist of two members, neither of whom are a part of the Finance Committee." (p. 38), the narrative does not include additional required members. As per NM 22-8-12.3 the audit committee must have: 2 Governing Board Members, 1 Parent, and 1 Volunteer with accounting or finance experience. The Head of School and Business Manager are ex-officio members. *Note:* In the Appendix A By-Laws, however, the following statement is included regarding the Audit Committee: "Membership of the Audit and Finance Committees shall comply with NMSA Section 22-8-12.3(8)
- The applicant states: "The Audit Committee is responsible for preparing the school for its financial audit each year, starting with presenting multiple external auditors or auditing service for the Governing Board to consider and ultimately select." The charter school is required to use their authorizers (PED) audit.

Governing Body Bylaws

- The narrative did not include that the Governing Board is required to replace departing board members within 45 days per statute.
- Bylaws give a removal process for board members, but not possible reasons for removal. The board should consider adding mechanisms for removing officers as well.
- The bylaws provided are barebones and will need revision if the application is approved.
- "As appropriate and necessary, the Governing Board shall follow Robert’s Rules of Order for all meetings." The board should either follow them or not. Later in the bylaws it states the board WILL follow Robert's Rules.
- "Meeting notices and agendas must be posted publicly at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the meeting." *Note,* this goes beyond what is required by OMA.
- The summary does not include term lengths for board members or officers.

- Bylaws give a removal process for board members, but not possible reasons for removal. The board should consider adding mechanisms for removing officers as well.
- The bylaws provided are barebones and will need revision if the application is approved.
- The Governance Committee and Audit Committee both evaluate the board.

In addition, there was no mention that the Governing Board is required to be a Board of Finance and all members must sign assurances to this when elected to the board.

A.(2)	<u>Governing Body Qualifications</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify all qualifications and skill sets that the governing body will require and ensure those are represented within its regular membership and how the proposed board would be able to ensure the long-term success of this school if, by some circumstance, the Founders were no longer involved.</li> <li>● Explain why and how the identified qualifications and skills will ensure the governing body has the required capacity and enable the governing body to operate a successful, high-quality public school;</li> <li>● Describe how the board will ensure robust board membership including training expectations, time commitments, and member onboarding.</li> <li>● Include a list of all proposed initial governing body members, describe each proposed member’s specific qualifications and skill sets through verifiable prior experience, and ensure the represented qualifications and skill sets align with the previously identified qualifications and skill sets that the governing body will require.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The response focuses entirely on the founding board members with no indication of future planning for long term success. There is very little about general qualifications and skills. Not enough explanation as to how identified qualifications and skills will ensure capacity and successful operation. Some mention of specific areas of expertise provided. Response states that board members will need to understand time commitments but does not describe how time commitment will be ensured. Onboarding will happen, but not described.

A.(3)	<u>Selection of Governing Body Members</u>
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Rating	Expectations
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a regular and ongoing governing body recruitment process, including identification of action steps, timelines, and responsible parties;</li> <li>Describe the onboarding process, the board’s role in chartering and re-chartering, authorizer relations, and time commitment.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The response provides a detailed description of the selection process for new members. However, there is no description of the onboarding process, the board's role in chartering and re-chartering, or authorizer relations.

Governance Council members have an extensive recruitment process which requires an extensive time commitment to the school which could negatively impact someone from having a full-time job and still devoting extensive time to the school.

**B. Governing Body Training and Evaluation**

B.(1)	<u>Governing Body Training Plan</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Meets</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a process for governing body member onboarding to ensure new members are properly trained and able to meet the obligations and fulfill the responsibilities of governing body service, include action &amp; monitoring steps, timelines, and responsible parties;</li> <li>Describe how the plan will identify governing body training needs, meet governing body training needs, and comply with state requirements, including any requirements that may change from year to year;</li> <li>Identify any costs required to support the training plan or onboarding process and describe how those costs are supported in the budget; and</li> <li>Develop an onboarding process and training that all new board members will be expected to complete including an outline of topics, who will be responsible for onboarding new board members, timeline for onboarding, and procedure for gathering feedback on the effectiveness of the onboarding process.</li> <li>Ensure the onboarding process and training plan address training on the open meetings act and responsibilities.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Meets the expectations for this section.

<b>B.(2)</b>	<b><u>Governing Body Self-Evaluation Plan</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Meets</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a plan for annual governing body self-evaluation, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties, timeline on the annual board calendar and identified criteria or standards; and</li> <li>• Describe how the identified plan will focus on and support continuous improvement.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Meets the expectations for this section.

**C. Leadership and Management**

<b>C.(1)</b>	<b><u>Governing Body Plan for Monitoring Outcomes</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a plan for how the governing body will monitor academic performance on an ongoing basis, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and identified criteria or standards;</li> <li>• Identify a plan for how the governing body will monitor organizational performance on an ongoing basis, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and identified criteria or standards;</li> <li>• Identify a plan for how the governing body will monitor financial performance on an ongoing basis, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and identified criteria or standards; and</li> <li>• Describe how each of the monitoring plans will focus on ensuring the school is meeting its mission, providing a quality education, and acting as a responsible public entity.</li> <li>• Describe how all of the above will be reflected in meeting agendas and the annual board calendar</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The following concerns were noted by the review team:

- The plans for Organizational and Financial monitoring need to be more robust. Timelines and action steps are not included in either.

- Financial monitoring should include more such as bank statement reconciliation, internal controls, etc.
- The narrative does not describe how each monitoring plan will focus on meeting the mission and providing a quality education.
- The response gives a summary of how meeting agendas will be set and a description of the calendar but does not tie either into monitoring as prompted.
- Regarding the governing body monitoring the financial performance of the school, other reports that should be reviewed are Journal Entries, Bank statements and reconciliations, Payroll reports and quarterly reports to the PED (cash report)

In addition, the narrative states that the Governance Council members will do the audit of the school finances (page135) which is not their responsibility. The PED recommends an audit firm to do the school financial audit – which is not stated in the application. The Governance Council through the finance committee provides an update monthly on fiscal issues (e.g. bank balances, BARs, purchases, revenue and expenditures). The reports are provided by the business manager and shared at the monthly Governance Council meeting. There is no salary line item in the budget for a business manager. There is \$43,000 listed as “other services” in the budget but it is not indicated for business manager services.

<b>C.(2)</b>	<b><u>Plan for Hiring Head Administrator</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>



<b>Meets</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify an ongoing process for hiring a head administrator, both for the initial hiring and for any time the position becomes vacant, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and identified criteria or standards;</li> <li>● Identify all leadership characteristics and all qualifications the head administrator must possess;</li> <li>● Explain why and how the identified leadership characteristics; including educational background, experience and qualifications will ensure the head administrator has the required capacity and enable the head administrator to operate the proposed school as a successful, high-quality public charter school ;</li> <li>● Explain how the identified leader, both for the initial hiring and for any time the position becomes vacant, will be on boarded including setting the expectations of how they will be reporting to, and working for and with the board.</li> <li>● Describe how the identified process will ensure the school is able to identify and equitably (openly advertise and interview multiple candidates) hire a highly qualified, licensed administrator ; and</li> <li>● If a potential head administrator has already been identified and/or is a founder, include an assurance that the individual understands they must be selected and hired by an independent governing body and identify the individual’s specific leadership skills and qualifications, through verifiable prior experience, that makes them qualified for the position, including holding the required licensure.</li> </ul>
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The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Meets the expectations for this section.

C.(3)	<u>Distinguished Roles &amp; Responsibilities</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify the process the governing body will use for distinguishing their roles and responsibilities with those of the head administrator;</li> <li>● Include specific actions the governing body will take to ensure the head administrator understands the obligations of the charter contract, the boards’ role in oversight and chartering, and the requirements of all elements of the plan contained in this application; and</li> <li>● Attach a job description in <b>Appendix B</b> that includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lists all major responsibilities of the head administrator</li> <li>○ Includes responsibilities that are unique to charter school leaders</li> <li>○ Includes responsibilities that specifically relate to the school’s mission, goals, and educational philosophy</li> <li>○ Identifies all hiring requirements including all previously identified requirements related to characteristics and qualifications.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The following concerns were noted:

- The job description should include monitoring the Performance Framework of the chartering document. It should also enumerate the requirement of board meeting attendance, etc.
- Minimum qualifications do not require a license or move toward licensure.
- Compensation is undefined only saying it is based on experience and a generous benefits package.
- Job description does not include responsibilities unique to charter school leaders.
- Job description does not align with description in C. (2).

As written, the response does not ensure the Head of School will understand all obligations. In particular, the Head of School would not understand the extensive requirements to operate a charter.

C.(4)	<u>Head Administrator Evaluation Plan</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify the plan for annually evaluating the head administrator, including action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and standards or criteria including how this will be maintained in the boards’ annual calendar process;</li> <li>● Include action steps to evaluate the effectiveness of the head administrator</li> <li>● Describe how the plan specifically takes into account ensuring the equitable implementation of the mission and goals of the proposed school; and</li> <li>● Ensure the plan meets the requirements identified in NMAC 6.69.7.8 and 6.69.7.9.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The following concerns were noted by the review team:

- As part of the Head of School evaluation, feedback from staff should be included. Additionally, staff retention should be evaluated, especially resignations, to assure that the Head of School is a "good boss". They should also look at the satisfaction of families... have there been complaints by families, are students leaving, etc.?
- Does not describe how the plan specifically takes into account ensuring the equitable implementation of the mission and goals of the proposed school
- Did not provide two formal observances of Head of School during the year as required by NMAC 6.69.7.8.

In addition:

There is a description of the roles and responsibilities of the head of School, however, the tasks that this person is being asked to do are setting this person up for failure:

- Hire staff and provide professional development to new staff.
- Take responsibility for all the assessments and collect and disaggregate the data to provide to teachers.
- Identify and test all the students eligible for special education services
- Identify and test all students eligible for bilingual/ELL services.
- Develop and monitor all financial reports to provide to the Governance Council at each meeting.
- Responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school.

### **D. Organizational Structure of the Proposed School**

D.(1)	<u>Organizational Chart</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Include an organizational chart for each year as part of the rollout with grade additions;</li> <li>● Show how the Equity Council is incorporated into to organizational chart;</li> <li>● Include a narrative that describes the structures and relationships represented in the organizational chart;</li> <li>● Include all entities essential to the operation and success of the proposed school; and</li> <li>● Describe the relationship among each of the relevant entities.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The following concerns have been noted:

- The org chart infers that the Equity Council also oversees the Head of School as it is in the same box as the Governing Board. (Page 160 - 164 in the application)
  - The org chart denotes that the Special Ed teacher and the Enrichment Teacher will be contracted in the early years, but teachers are required to be employees. It appears in the budget that those positions could be in the budget years 3, 4 and 5.
  - The narrative states the Office Assistant will be a contract position. This goes against IRS Statute and must be an employee.
  - The Education Coordinator sounds more like a Special Education Director.
  - Is a Director of Operations really needed? This position appears to be another layer of administration, and administration costs should be limited.
  - The organizational chart is present for all five years, but the relationship of employees and when they will be hired is not appropriate for this school population.
- The Culture and Equity Council is listed as part of the Governing Board but their role is not

clear. Are they part of the Governing Board? Is this another layer of the Board that has decision-making responsibilities? The chart indicates that the Culture and Equity Council makes decisions.

In addition:

There seems to be many contracted positions that are hired in Year 3, 4 and 5. It appears that the Head of School will be responsible for the work of the positions not contracted, e.g. ancillary staff are not hired until year 5 and they are given the responsibility to monitor all students and not just students eligible for services based upon their IEP

D.(2)	<u>Job Descriptions for Certified/Licensed Staff</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Does Not Meet</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ all certified and licensed staff identified in the application</li> <li>○ all non-certified or unlicensed staff identified in the application who could be considered essential to the operation and success of the proposed school</li> <li>○ any non-traditional roles or positions;</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Describe why the identified roles are key to the operation and success of the proposed school; and</li> <li>● Attach staff job descriptions as <b>Appendix C</b> for all of the positions identified in the application response and include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ List all major responsibilities of the positions</li> <li>○ Include responsibilities that specifically relate to the school’s mission, goals, and educational philosophy</li> <li>○ Identify all hiring requirements including qualifications and licensure or certification</li> <li>○ Identify reporting lines (“reports to”) that align to the organizational chart.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Does Not Meet the expectations for this section.

The following concerns have been noted:

- The narrative does not describe why the identified roles are key to the operation and success of the school as included in the expectations for this section.
- Job descriptions are included for all staff although many of the job responsibilities are not appropriate for several of the jobs listed.
- Licensure is not consistently required in the job descriptions and many non-instructional staff do the same jobs without any licensure.

- The role of the Special Education teacher in the school goes beyond their license: they are responsible for Special Education services and not ELL services, nor are they responsible to manage the budget except as it relates to Special Education.
- Many of the job descriptions do not include PED Licensure requirements. The Social Worker job description also does not include NM Boards and Licensing requirement.
- SPED Teacher and Enrichment Teachers are described for the first two years as contractors and more enrichment teachers as contractors in later years. The IRS will not allow positions primary to the business to be contracted, such as teachers. They require them to be W-2 employees with benefits. They will not be able to have some SPED teachers and Enrichment teachers as W-2 employees and others as contractors.
- Instructional Assistants job description indicates they will be teaching and assessing students. Instructional assistants are not licensed to teach students, only assist under licensed teachers. In the narrative they claim they want to promote from within, but they must be careful that their job descriptions do not assign duties to employees who are not licensed to perform them.

In addition:

- A job description for a "Dean of Culture" is included; however, there is nothing in the budget for this position.
- The job description for Instructional Assistant appears to be the same as the Lead Teacher.
- It is unclear why the Office Manager only needs a high school education, but the Office Assistant, who is supervised by the Office Manager, has a BA or MA preferred?
- The job description and minimum qualifications for the office manager and office assistant are longer than that of the Head of School and teachers. Same with the office assistant.
- Figure 81 does not have a Special Ed Teacher for year four or five. Instructional Assistants (Educational Assistants) require a license.
- Figure 82 has three (3) Instructional Assistants for year 1, but the budget only budgets for two (2).
- Figure 82 does not have an Office Manager for year 5.
- The Enrichment Teacher also requires a license.
- Business managers must also be certified.
- Instructional Assistants report to the Head of School but should be supervised by the teacher they work under.
- The staffing pattern includes an Assistant Principal in Residence and an Assistant Principal. Their jobs are basically the same except for grade levels. They are not hired until Year 3 and beyond. It appears that the Head of School handles their job until they are hired?

The application states that the Founding Team transitions into the Governing Board. Governing Board members are not allowed to take over school operations as they are not licensed staff. Governing Board responsibilities are to hire and evaluate the Head of School and to provide approval and oversight of the finances of the school and school policy.

<b>D.(3)</b>	<b><u>Staffing Needs and Plan</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Does Not Meet</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify an ongoing staffing plan and process for hiring all necessary staff, both for the initial hiring and for any time a position becomes vacant, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties;</li> <li>● Describe how the staffing plan and process will ensure the school is able to hire highly qualified staff, no later than two weeks prior to the start of the proposed school year, on an annual basis, and fill all vacancies within a reasonable time; include how the school will recruit and hire highly-qualified licensed staff;</li> <li>● Describe how the staffing plan and process is reasonable and adequate to support effective and timely implementation of the academic program/curriculum during the planning year and for all subsequent years;</li> <li>● Describe how the staffing plan and process is aligned with the budget and the school’s projected enrollment; and</li> <li>● Describe how the school will make adjustments to the staffing plan in the case that there are differences in projected and actual enrollment.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Does Not Meet the expectations for this section.

The following concerns have been noted:

- The Head of School's salary is below the minimum in the principal’s salary schedule for the first two years.
- The Education Coordinator's salary is below the minimum on the salary schedule for years 4 & 5.
- The Operations Manager's salary is below the minimum on the salary schedule for year 5.
- The Assistant Principal's salary is below the minimum on the salary schedule for assistant principals in year 4.
- Teachers cannot be paid as contractors.
- The applicant states in the narrative that enrichment teachers will be contractors, but they are required to be FTEs. In years 1 and 2 the Enrichment Teachers are not included in the FTEs; however, they are included as FTEs in years 3-5.
- In all years, there are more Educational Assistants in the staffing plan than in the budget.
- In year 1 the staffing plan states there will be 1 contracted Office Assistant. The narrative states there will be 1 office assistant and 1 office manager (OM starts in year 3), but only 1 FTE has been budgeted.
- The applicants’ response states adjustments will be made if actual enrollment is different than projected but does not describe how.
- Overall, Figures 81, 82 and 83 were not in agreement on staff.

Many positions are contracted in years 1 and 2. Once the Head of School is hired after the application is approved, The Head of School is responsible for advertising, recruiting and hiring appropriately

licensed staff. Founding Board members are not allowed to participate in the recruitment and hiring process once the application is approved. In addition, they do not recommend staff to be hired, as this is a responsibility of the Head of School.

D.(4)	<u>Professional Development Plan</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify an annual professional development plan with action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and associated costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Describe how the plan meets state requirements and rules; and</li> <li>○ Describe how the school will ensure professional development time is not used for routine staff meetings.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Identify a mentorship plan for novice teachers, including action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and associated costs that meets the requirements of PED rules; and</li> <li>● Describe how the annual professional development plan and the mentorship plan for novice teachers ensure the following occur: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ are supported by the budget</li> <li>○ support the implementation of the proposed school’s educational plan, mission, and performance goals</li> <li>○ not only address required annual training, but are also tailored to address school- and teacher-specific professional development needs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

A Mentorship program for novice teachers was not identified and support for a Mentorship program was not included in the budget.

The budget also has no money for professional development of teachers in the month before school starts in 2025-2026 and subsequent years have minimal funds for teacher training. All training is done by the Head of School and Assistant Principals who are only contracted part time. All professional development seems to be internally driven without the possibility of teachers going to outside conferences, etc.

## **E. Employees**

E.	<u>Employer/Employee Terms</u>
Rating	Expectations

<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify all primary classes of employees the school will employ (e.g., administrative, professional, term, contract);</li> <li>● Include an employment policy and handbook</li> <li>● Provide an explanation for onboarding new staff and re-training returning staff on the terms within the handbook and policy.</li> <li>● Explain how the school, through the governing body and head administrator, will address employee unions and other school-specific employee representatives.</li> </ul>
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The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

A staff handbook sample was provided as an attachment.

Possible concerns include the following:

- Overall, the complaint policy in the handbook is vague and incomplete. A concern is noted that the Handbook identifies that complaints about the Head of School should be taken to the general counsel. This is not an appropriate step.
- Included in the handbook narrative: "Benefits are deducted from the first two salary payments in each month, equaling twenty-four (24) increments throughout the calendar year". Only Insurance benefits fall into this statement. All other benefits are deducted from every paycheck.
- Regarding Family and Medical Leave: Small companies are exempt from the federal FMLA, but the school can develop its own, similar program.
- There was a one sentence description regarding employee unions stating the school "will not interfere". This could have been stronger, especially if the school decided to unionize.

The employee handbook furnished seems generally in order with the exception of the above.

**F. Community/Parent/Employee Involvement in Governance**

F.(1)	<u>Parental, Professional Educator, and Community Involvement in Governance Plan</u>
Rating	Expectations



<b>Meets</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify school operation and governance structures that will provide the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A meaningful opportunity for parental input and participation</li> <li>○ A meaningful opportunity for professional educator input and participation</li> <li>○ A meaningful opportunity for community input and participation;</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Describe how the structures will facilitate parental involvement that will help advance the proposed school’s mission;</li> <li>● Explain the role of the Equity Council in the governance and operation of the proposed school;</li> <li>● Include assurances that the school understands it may not require family or parental support or involvement as grounds for accepting, not accepting, enrolling, dis-enrolling, or otherwise differentiating treatment of a student; and</li> <li>● If the school plans to offer opportunities for parent support, explain the process of opting out for parents who are unwilling or unable to meet the proposed school’s support opportunities.</li> </ul>
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The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Meets the expectations for this section.

<b>F.(2)</b>	<b><u>Plan for Processing Concerns and Complaints</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify a grievance process to receive and process concerns and complaints from the community, parents and families, and students that includes action steps, timelines, and responsible parties;</li> <li>● Include a final step in the process that provides the grievant a meaningful opportunity to be heard by, and receive a response from, the governing body; if they are unable to obtain resolution from the head administrator;</li> <li>● Describe how the process is transparent, fair, accessible to the community, and ensure a timely and meaningful response; and</li> <li>● describe how the school will provide assurances that the school will additionally meet the specific legal requirements of the McKinney Vento and special education grievance processes.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

Regarding complaints, the applicant states "...should file a written complaint to the Operations Lead staff member." This is not an identified position in the staffing plan. In addition, the narrative does not describe how the process is transparent, fair, accessible to the community, and ensures a timely and meaningful response.

## G. Student Recruitment and Enrollment

<b>G.(1)</b>	<b><u>Outreach &amp; Recruitment Plan</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify a prospective student outreach and recruitment plan, including action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and associated costs;</li> <li>● Describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ how the plan is tailored to ensure equal access to the school</li> <li>○ why the plan is likely to attract a student body that is demographically reflective of the local community and school district;</li> <li>○ provide a description of how the school will change recruitment plans and outreach if projected student enrollment is not reached</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Describe how the school will annually evaluate the effectiveness of the outreach and recruitment efforts in ensuring equal access to the school and attracting a student body that is demographically reflective of the local community and school district and how the school will use that information to make adjustments to the outreach and recruitment plan.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

Planning year costs have been noted in the budget plan, under fund 26999, which included \$5,000 for advertising 23000-55400. The school had many recruitment ideas but did not address what they would do if their plans did not help them reach their projected enrollment. The school stated they would annually evaluate the effectiveness but was not clear on how they would do this.

The plan is also unclear as to how the proposed school will attract a student body that is demographically reflective of the local community. The application indicates that the school wants to attract Hispanic students and that is indicated in its recruitment focus. Enrollment must be conducted by lottery: The school can advertise that its lottery will be at the end of March. All students within Albuquerque Public Schools must have equal access to this school whether they reside on the westside of Albuquerque or not. All interested families/students who complete an application are given a number and the numbers are drawn equally for all interested families. There can be no preference for Hispanic families.

<b>G.(2)</b>	<b><u>Lottery Admission Process</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>

<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify a plan to implement a lottery admission process if necessary, include action steps, timelines, and responsible parties;</li> <li>● Describe each of the steps of the process to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pre-lottery entry</li> <li>○ Lottery</li> <li>○ Post-lottery registration</li> <li>○ Waitlist maintenance and entry; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Describe how the lottery process supports equal access to the school.</li> </ul>
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The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The lottery process for this school states that after the March lottery is done and there is no waiting list then the school can recruit students on an ongoing basis – not necessarily through a lottery process. The lottery process must support equal access to this school.

In the timeline plan provided it is stated from “September 01, 2025 – January 01, 2026: Equip Academy accepts Intent to Enroll Forms.” This should have a different name as there should be a clear separation between lottery and enrollment. In the same section the narrative states, “. . . if a student has a sibling or if a founding member or staff member has a child who wishes to enroll (so long as the total number of students allowed under this preference constitutes only a small percentage of the school’s total enrollment.), this will be noted, and that child will receive a seat in their respective grade level.” There is no such stipulation as the one given in parentheses. The law does not provide any enrollment preference for founder members.

**H. Legal Compliance**

<b>H.</b>	<b><u>Conflict of Interest Policy</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide a governing body conflict of interest policy that includes action steps, timelines, and responsible parties;</li> <li>● Describe how the policy meets the requirements of New Mexico law addressing all areas of potential conflicts of interest; and</li> <li>● Include all forms the governing body will or may be required to submit pursuant to the policy.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The applicant states, regarding nepotism: "Should an occasion arise where the best qualified person for a position is an immediate family member, the matter should be immediately referred to the Governing Board for consideration and guidance. If there is not a consensus, the Board Chair will refer to the PEC for guidance." NMSA 22-5-6 and 22-8B-10 PROHIBITS any family member of the board from being employed by the school. This can be waived for a family member of the Head of School.

(The nepotism rule states that an employee cannot be related to a board member. Period. However, it can be waived for a family member.)

**I. Evidence of Partnership/Contractor relationship (if applicable)**

<b>I.(1)</b>	<b><u>Essential Third Party Relationships</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>N/A</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify any third party relationships with specific, identified organizations that control or influence essential elements—including the existence, operation, curriculum, or instruction of the proposed charter school—that are required by a partner organization or any part of the application;</li> <li>● Describe, in detail, the relationships;</li> <li>● Describe why the relationships are essential or required, or how they control essential elements of the proposed charter school;</li> <li>● If any such relationships exist identify the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The specific, identified organizations</li> <li>○ Contact information for that organization</li> <li>○ Specific individuals in the organization that will be associated with the proposed school;</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Describe all legal implications of the essential/required relationships, including the legal benefits and responsibilities of each party.</li> </ul>
NOT APPLICABLE	

<b>I.(2)</b>	<b><u>Appendix D Attachment Formal Agreement Documentation</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>N/A</b>	<p>A response is only required if relationships were identified in questions I.(1)</p> <p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify all MOUs or formal agreements that are attached in <b>Appendix D</b>;</li> <li>● Include proposed formal agreements or MOUs that are signed in <b>Appendix D</b>; and</li> <li>● Identify the responsibilities, activities, and costs of both sides.</li> </ul>
NOT APPLICABLE	

**J. Transportation and Food**

<b>J.(1)</b>	<b><u>Transportation Plan</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>

<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A response is only required if the school plans to offer regular transportation either for daily transportation to/from school OR for transportation to/from school specific activities and events that are a necessary part of the mission. All schools must be prepared to meet IEP transportation requirements.</p> <p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify a plan for establishing transportation services at the school including specific action steps, timelines responsible parties, and associated costs that address the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identifying equipment purchase or contracting needs</li> <li>○ Identifying hiring and or contracting needs</li> <li>○ Hiring or contracting</li> <li>○ Establishing training needs and inspection process needs</li> <li>○ Establishing travel routes and pick up/drop off points</li> <li>○ Establishing transportation policies and practices</li> <li>○ Identifying student transportation needs; transportation plan costs; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Identify all, but at least one, specific entities or organizations that have been identified as potential partners or vendors for these services.</li> </ul>
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The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The applicants indicate they will only provide transportation if they receive funding through a grant. However, should they receive funding through a grant they will establish a bus plan by August 15, 2026 and will address all expectations included in this section.

This section received an Approaches as a rating, because a bus plan was not included as a contingency should they receive a grant.

<b>J.(2)</b>	<b><u>Food Services Plan</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>

<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify a plan for establishing food services at the school, including specific action steps, timelines responsible parties, and associated costs that address the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identifying equipment purchase or contracting needs</li> <li>○ Identifying hiring and/or contracting needs</li> <li>○ Hiring or contracting</li> <li>○ Establishing training and inspection process needs</li> <li>○ Identifying and completing relevant program application and reporting requirements;</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Identify all federal and state food service programs the school plans to participate in;</li> <li>● If providing or planning to offer a PreK or Early Childhood program, provide a plan for food service;</li> <li>● Identify how the school will fund the food service plan costs prior to receiving any applicable reimbursements; and</li> <li>● Identify all, but at least one, specific entities or organizations that have been identified as potential partners or vendors for these services and describe all steps that have been taken to create a relationship, establish a relationship, or develop a partnership to provide these services.</li> </ul>
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The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The applicants stated that they would submit an application for a Student Nutrition grant in Fall of 2024, but this needs to be done in Fall 2025.

Applicants did not identify how they would fund the program prior to reimbursements.

The narrative states: “The Head of School and operational lead will partner to manage the food service programs with support from the cafeteria staff (contracted staff or Instructional Assistants) that manage the food service environment for students.” Training for instructional assistants to handle food is not addressed.

**K. Facilities/School Environment**

<b>K.(1)</b>	<b><u>Appendix E Attachment: Facilities Master Plan Ed/ Spec Checklist</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Meets</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Demonstrate the applicant submitted a Facilities Master Plan to PSFA by the deadline;</li> <li>● If offering or planning or offer a PreK or Early Childhood program, provide a description of the facilities and playground in the Facilities Master Plan; and</li> <li>● Demonstrate the PSFA has approved the applicant’s Facilities Master Plan.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Meets the expectations for this section.

<b>K.(2)</b>	<b><u>Evidence of Researched Facilities/Properties</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Meets</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Demonstrate the applicant has done the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Conducted outreach and researched multiple facilities or properties in the targeted geographic location to understand if there are public facilities that are available, appropriate, and viable</li> <li>○ Identified whether or not each potential property will meet the requirements of NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-4.2, including occupancy, adequacy, and ownership;</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Identify at least one potential facility or property that meets requirements.</li> <li>● Identify a plan that would enable the applicant to prepare the facility/property to meet the facility needs of the proposed school in time for the proposed school's opening date, include specific action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and capital outlay needs;</li> <li>● Identify how the project to prepare the facility will be funded.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team's response Meets the expectations for this section.

### III. Financial Framework

#### A. School Size

<b>A.</b>	<b><u>Projected Enrollment</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Meets</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify the anticipated number of students for each of the first five years and "at capacity", based on the long-term strategic plan;</li> <li>● Identify the grade levels requested to be served in each of the first five years (phase in plan) and "at capacity", based on the long term strategic plan; and</li> <li>● Identify the student/teacher ratio (not student/staff ratio) that aligns with the number of students served, grade levels, and staffing plan for each of the first five years and "at capacity", based on the long term strategic plan.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team's response Meets the expectations for this section.

#### B. Budgets

<b>B.(1)</b>	<b><u>Attached Appendix F, 910B5 State Equalization Guarantee (SEG)</u></b>
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Rating	Expectations
<b>Does Not Meet</b>	A complete response must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Include a complete 910B5 Worksheet in <b>Appendix F</b>;</li> <li>● Use appropriate values and computations in each year;</li> <li>● Use projected unit value; and</li> <li>● Budget the correct special education percentage based on the local special education population, unless the school has a sufficient justification for why it will have a larger population (provide justification, if applicable).</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Does Not Meet the expectations for this section.

The following concerns have been noted:

- 910B5 is the wrong Appendix 910B5 and is not in alignment with proposed enrollment. It appears the 910B5 for the first year was copied into the second year. As such, the enrollment numbers are off for each year, which is significant considering the school intends to have enrollment increase by 75 students each year.
- Rural Population is applied to all students. This does not seem accurate given the school is in Albuquerque.
- The applicant factored in a 3% increase in the SEG unit value for each year. This was an increase % from FY24 to FY25, but it could be "optimistic".  
APS At Risk Index for FY 24 = .200, Applicant used .189
- The school has included funding for the K-12 Program in the SEG, but there are no K-12 Program days in the calendar. This has a large financial impact for the school.
- The special education percentage is higher than the district for each year with several years having a special ed population of near 28%. No justification provided.

B.(2)	<b><u>Attached Appendix G: Proposed five-year Budget Plan</u></b>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Does Not Meet</b>	A complete response must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Include a five-year budget plan in <b>Appendix G</b> that is based on the 910B5 SEG Revenue Worksheet from Appendix F;</li> <li>● Support the proposed school’s mission and all elements of the proposed program laid out in the application; and</li> <li>● Align with the proposed school’s five-year growth plan.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Does Not Meet the expectations for this section.

The following concerns have been noted:

- In all but year 1, the expenditures exceed revenue. Total 5-year deficit = \$3,094,628. The applicant budgeted carry-over cash for all years, but there is deficit spending in all years, so there is no carry-over cash.
- All grants that were budgeted were in balance except 26999. In year 1 the revenue was greater than expenditures and the carryover was not budgeted for year 2.



- Should not have budgeted for Fund 26999 as this grant needs to be applied for and there is no guarantee the applicant will receive the funds. Additionally, the applicant included the planning year revenue and expenditures for this grant, and this is not correct.
- Applicants did not budget SPED teachers until year 3.
- Did not budget anything in 2200 for testing or technology (library as well).
- Used incorrect object code for Professional Services, used 55900, should be 53414 and for function 2600 contracted janitorial should be 54312.
- The salary for the assistant principal in year 4, even as a .5FTE, does not meet PED minimum requirement (off by \$250).
- If the office assistant is the position budgeted in 2400-1211, this position salary is more than the office manager position, 2400-1217, which supervises the office assistant.
- There was no budget for the Manager of Operations, who starts in year 5.
- Not all of the positions in the narrative were budgeted (1.0 Sped and 1.0 Enrich Teachers in year 1 & 2 and 1.0 Enrichment teacher in year 3 and 2.0 Enrichment teacher in years 4 & 5)
- Even though the budget indicates SPED & Enrichment teachers are paid in contract services there is not enough to cover 1.0 for each in years 1 & 2.
- The principal and manager of operations salaries were lower on the budget than on the salary schedules
- The revenue amount for year 1 should be based on projected SEG without federal flowthrough funds. Unrestricted cash amounts are not accurate, and the school cannot depend on capital outlay to support purchasing a building.

B.(3)	<u>Budget Narrative</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Does Not Meet</b>	A complete response must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explain basic assumptions;</li> <li>● Identify reliable sources for each assumption;</li> <li>● Include priorities consistent with the proposed school’s mission;</li> <li>● Include priorities consistent with the proposed school’s educational program;</li> <li>● Include priorities consistent with the proposed school’s staffing; and</li> <li>● Include priorities consistent with the proposed school’s facility.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Does Not Meet the expectations for this section.

The following concerns have been noted:

- In the budget narrative, Figure 96, the expenditures are not the same as in the budget document. The applicant references a grant from Excellent Schools New Mexico and has budgeted for this grant in the amount of \$350,000. They are counting on this grant to fund their planning year and in year one. Scott Hindman, Executive Director of Excellent Schools New Mexico verified by a letter dated June 19, 2024, that Excellent Schools New Mexico will make a one-time, \$350,000 unrestricted grant to Equip Academy of New Mexico upon Equip Academy of New Mexico's successful charter application authorization by the New Mexico Public Education Commission. However, because they will use the funds, mostly in their

planning year, this should not be included in their budget spreadsheet, especially for the planning year.

- Not all positions are budgeted for and not all salaries budgeted align with the salary schedule. The budget projections are unrealistic. The amount of federal flowthrough funding from APS is negotiated per year and cannot be assumed to increase in the amounts listed. Cash reserves of 48% in Year 4-5 to help to purchase a permanent facility are unrealistic as the school’s cash reserves from the SEG go to instruction and not capital campaigns.
- The budget projections are unrealistic. The amount of federal flowthrough funding from APS is negotiated per year and cannot be assumed to increase in the amounts listed. Cash reserves of 48% in Year 4-5 to help to purchase a permanent facility are unrealistic as the school’s cash reserves from the SEG go to instruction and not capital campaigns.

B. (4)	<u>Budget Adjustments</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe budget control strategies <b>as well as</b> budget adjustments that will be made to meet financial budget and cash-flow challenges;</li> <li>• Describe budget control strategies <b>as well as</b> budget adjustments that will be made to address the failure to receive any anticipated funding sources;</li> <li>• Include explanations that are viable and realistic, based on the professional judgment of experienced, licensed, school business officials;</li> <li>• Address how special education students will receive services <b>before</b> special education funding is provided, based on accurate 40-day counts; and</li> <li>• Address how gaps between budgeted students and actual enrollment will be addressed.</li> <li>• Demonstrate how budget control strategies provide <b>capacity</b> to manage the budget successfully.</li> <li>• Address how the school will modify the budget for students with special needs.</li> <li>• describe how the proposed school will address the budget in the event that the proposed school has budgeted for more students, based on early enrollment, than actually enroll in the proposed school at the beginning of the proposed school year.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The following concerns have been noted:

- The applicant states: "Our budget includes only the revenues we qualify for based on our academic and supportive programming for our projected student enrollment. We have not budgeted any grants or funds that should not be allocated to Equip Academy." The applicant budgeted for Title I (24101) and IDEA (24106) for all years. In year 1 these may not materialize, especially IDEA as they will not have a full accounting of their SPED population.

- Additionally, all SPED expenditures need to come from their SEG Operational fund; IDEA is for costs above and beyond.
- The applicant states: "Additionally, the school has an Administrative Assistant budgeted at a part-time FTE for year 1. The school will delay hiring this position until we have submitted 40th day student counts and know we can afford the position". Who will perform these duties if they cannot afford to hire for this position?
- Does not adequately address how gaps between budgeted students and actual enrollment will be addressed. Similarly, does not address what happens if actual enrollment is less than early enrollment predictions.
- Cash balances projection is unrealistic for the budget to be used towards purchasing a building. Cash balances are used to maintain program, curriculum, training, equipment, furniture for the school, and not capital outlay to the extent stated in the budget application.
- There is a concern about the issue of supplanting with the use of federal funds instead of SEG to support staff. It's not clear that the founding members/Governing Board understand the difference and the requirements.

### **C. Financial Policies, Oversight, Compliance, and Sustainability**

C.(1)	<b><u>Internal Control Procedures</u></b>
Rating	<b><u>Expectations</u></b>
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify all the internal control procedures that have been attached in <b>Appendix H</b>;</li> <li>• Attach in <b>Appendix H</b> internal control procedures the proposed school will utilize to assure the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ safeguard assets</li> <li>○ segregate its payroll</li> <li>○ segregate cash and check disbursement duties</li> <li>○ provide reliable financial information and promote operational efficiency</li> <li>○ ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state statutes, regulations, and rules;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Attach procedures that—based on the professional judgment of experienced, licensed, school business officials—successfully ensure appropriate segregation of duties; and</li> <li>• Provide a process the school will use to regularly evaluate compliance with the internal control procedures that have been attached in <b>Appendix H</b> and other internal control procedures that will be developed and implemented by the school.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The following concerns have been noted:

- In the internal controls document, the applicant refers to the Office Manager of Education at the PED. There is no such position.
- “Equip Academy of New Mexico will maintain an emergency account that may range from one (1) percent to five (5) percent, not to exceed five (5) percent, of its operational expenditures using operational cash balances carried forward from the previous fiscal year. Equip Academy of New Mexico will use the account to pay for any unforeseen expenditures that may arise after the initial budget has been approved.” Money in the emergency account shall not be expended on salaries or benefits without prior written approval from the Head of School.
- If the school budgets emergency reserve, they must get permission from the Secretary of Education to spend these funds.
- The internal controls document states that land has a depreciation schedule of 39 years. Land does not get depreciated, only the structures built on the land.
- Regarding purchasing contracts, it should be included in the policies and procedures that only the Head of School (or the GC Board Member) can sign contracts. Employees are not allowed to commit the school to a contract. All multi-year contracts (contracts crossing fiscal years) need to include the non-appropriation of funds cancellation clause.
- Detailed Internal Controls are given within the response area of the application, but these details are not included in the Internal Controls document.

C.(2)	<u>Staff for Financial Tasks</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify the appropriate staff to perform each financial task identified in the response to B(1) and all other required financial tasks;</li> <li>● Align completely with the organizational chart from response to D(1) in the Organizational Framework;</li> <li>● Align completely with the budget in A(1) and A(2) responses in Financial Framework;</li> <li>● Describe appropriate qualifications and responsibilities for each of the identified positions; and</li> <li>● Include a plan that will result in the recruitment, identification, the evaluation of candidates, and the hiring of highly qualified staff for each of the identified positions, no later than two weeks prior to the start of the proposed school year.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The following concerns have been noted:

- It appears that multiple employees are tasked with the same financial tasks as noted in the charter document and the job descriptions.
- The office manager is assigned some financial tasks. However, in the budget adjustment area, it is stated that this position may not be filled in year one if there is not enough revenue provided to the school to pay for this position.
- The office assistant and the operations manager are not hired until later years, and they appear to have some of the same responsibilities.
- The operations manager is not budgeted.

- The business manager (contracted firm) is in the Organizational Chart and will be hired using the CES or ACES contract.
- The narrative is missing a plan that will result in recruitment, identification and hiring of staff no later than 2 weeks before the start of school. However, this was addressed in the section on staffing.
- There appears to be a significant overlap between many of the administrative staff for the school which is confusing regarding who is responsible for what tasks. The Governing Board has the Head of School being responsible for the budget and monthly reporting, etc. But many of the same monthly tasks are also the responsibility of the contracted Business Manager, the contracted Assistant Business manager and the contracted Chief Operating Officer.
- Although the Internal Controls Manual follows the State and Federal laws relative to financial issues, who does each task seems confusing and the process that the school will follow is also not clear. For example, the submission of BARs to PED are considered approved if the PED takes longer than 30 days to approve a BAR.

C.(3)	<u>Governing Body Legal &amp; Fiscal Oversight</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Describe how the Governing Body audit and finance committees will be formed and how they will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Function generally</li> <li>○ Ensure proper legal oversight</li> <li>○ Ensure proper financial oversight;</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Describe how the proposed school’s audit and finance committees will interact with the school’s management; and</li> <li>● Describe how the audit and finance committees will interact with the full Governing Body.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The following concerns have been noted:

- The applicant states in this section that the audit committee is responsible for selecting the school’s annual auditor. As a state-chartered charter school, the school is required to be audited as a part of the PED audit. It is also stated that this committee will also conduct an internal audit of the Governing Board to assess its performance, but this is not a requirement and should possibly be an ad hoc committee or a part of the governance committee (if there is one). Additional clarity is needed in regard to legal oversight or how the committees will interact with management or the full governing body.
- Per NMAC 22-8-12.3 the Audit committee must contain two Governing Council members, a parent and a volunteer who has experience in finance or accounting. This requirement should be included in the plan and Bylaws.
- There is a concern that the Governing Board will be involved with the running of the school and its finances. The Head of School and the Business Manager/Assistant Business Manager

run the school and finances and keep the Governing Board informed of the operation of the school.

- Although every member of the Governing Board is involved on a committee, there is concern that communication between Board members could violate the Open Meetings Act (e.g. Finance Committee and Audit Committee communication).
- Although Governing Board members have appropriate background and training in various aspects of running a program or a business, the understanding of financial requirements for running a school are very different from the business world and the State and Federal laws required for public schools.

## IV. Evidence of Support

### A. Outreach Activities

A.	<u>Outreach Program</u>
Rating	Expectations
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe an outreach program to develop community support for the proposed school that has been implemented during the application process;</li> <li>• Describe specific activities that have been implemented, include evidence of implementation;</li> <li>• Include evidence that demonstrates the activities reached a broad audience that is representative of the community in which the proposed school will be located; and</li> <li>• Describe how this outreach has enabled the applicant team to understand the needs of the community in which the proposed school intends to locate.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team's response Approaches the expectations for this section.

The following concerns have been noted:

The proposed community is east of the Rio Grande. The response includes a map depicting representation of local community organizations, businesses, and individuals. Most of the pins on this map are on the west side of the river.

The narrative states: "Out of the survey respondents (n = 36), 31% were from the Albuquerque Westside. By incorporating responses from neighboring areas such as Rio Rancho and the North Valley, which share proximity and demographic similarities, this collective accounted for 61% of the total sample. This is a substantial and adequate representation of the communities surrounding the proposed school." This does not show strong support from the Westside community. Even if the 61% is accepted as part of the community surrounding the proposed school, that's only 21 responses from the intended community.

The response reflects the timeline and names of businesses and companies in Albuquerque that attended outreach meetings, but there is little family verification to demonstrate that the families that are interested in the school were reached during the outreach activities. 245 members of the community responded, 19 possible families were included in the responses.

The narrative stated that outreach has enabled the team to understand the needs of the community; however, the response does not include what those needs are that have been identified.

## **B. Community Support**

<b>B.</b>	<b><u>Evidence of Community Support</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>Approaches</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Include quantitative data that demonstrates community support from a broad audience for this proposed school;</li> <li>● Include qualitative data that demonstrates community support from a broad audience for this proposed school;</li> <li>● Include descriptions of the anticipated demographics of the students who will be served by the proposed school, disaggregate the number of prospective students by zip code, school of attendance (current), gender, type of current school (home, private, public), or other pertinent data.</li> <li>● Ensure the demonstrated support includes support within the community of the specific targeted geographic location; and</li> <li>● Describe why the applicant team believes the evidence demonstrates the school will be embraced and supported as the community's school and that there is abundant support for this school as a part of the community.</li> </ul>

The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team's response Approaches the expectations for this section.

There is no disaggregated data on the number of prospective students by zip code, school of attendance, type of current school (home, private, public) or any other pertinent data.

Although demographics of the area were provided, it is unclear as to how many kindergarten-aged or elementary school students are available to attend to calculate if the projected membership for each grade is realistic or inflated.

## **C. Community Relationships**

<b>C.</b>	<b><u>Networking with Community</u></b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Expectations</b>

<b>Meets</b>	<p>A complete response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and describe specific meaningful and strategic networking relationships with local community agencies, groups, or individuals that will support the school. Include evidence of these relationships.</li> <li>• Identify and describe specific meaningful and strategic resource agreements with local community agencies, groups, or individuals that will support the school. Include evidence of these relationships; and</li> <li>• Describe why the applicant team believes the identified relationships demonstrate the school will be embraced and supported as the community’s school and that there is abundant support for this school as a part of the community.</li> </ul>
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The Equip Academy of New Mexico founding team’s response Meets the expectations for this section.

**D. Capacity Interview**

<b>1.</b>	<b>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?</b>
<b>Meets</b>	<p><b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant team fully responded to all the components of the question.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>How will you evaluate whether your mission and implementation of it are working?</b>
<b>Approaches</b>	<p><b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b></p> <p>The mission statement: By providing a top-tier, inquiry-base, college-preparatory education, Equip Academy of New Mexico ensures K-5 students master the knowledge and skills to dream audaciously, engage deeply, and pursue a life of purpose.</p> <p>The applicant team expanded on their mission statement as a guide for the entire academic program noting that evaluation of the assessment data will drive instruction, teacher professional development and implementation of corrective action. Inquiry-based instruction, fiscal health and responsiveness to the community were also briefly addressed. The applicant team did not, however, address the “softer parts” of the mission statement that included mastering the knowledge and skills to dream audaciously, engage deeply, and pursue a life of purpose and how that might be evaluated.</p>

<b>3.</b>	<b>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?</b>
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<b>Meets</b>	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant team fully responded to all the components of the question.
<b>4.</b>	<b>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?</b>
<b>Meets</b>	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant team fully responded to all the components of the question.
<b>5.</b>	<b>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?</b>
<b>Meets</b>	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant team fully responded to all the components of the question.
<b>6.</b>	<b>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.</b>
<b>Approaches</b>	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant’s response to this question left the independent review team with the impression that the founders might be more involved in the school than permitted during the transitional period. They spoke of bylaws and policies that would guide the governing body. However, the following paraphrased statement raised some concern: I want to emphasize that in our start-up year . . . we as a board are going to be working more closely with our head of school than we ever will again and that’s really out of necessity. Without hired staff, it’s on us as a board to support these really critical tasks for getting ready to open our doors as a school.
<b>7.</b>	<b>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, implement and update them and how these will contribute to the success of the proposed school.</b>
<b>Meets</b>	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant team fully responded to all the components of the question.
<b>8.</b>	<b>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?</b>
<b>Meets</b>	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant team fully responded to all the components of the question.

9.	<b>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.</b>
Approaches	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant founding team has established a task force that is working with Homewise and a Budget Support Specialist. Six possible facilities have been identified. The team states: "We cannot rely on one option until we've signed the lease." Details about construction code, the weighted New Mexico Condition Index, E-Occupancy, securing and funding the facility were not specifically addressed.
10.	<b>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?</b>
Approaches	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant founding team indicated that if a building that meets the needs of the plan cannot be found, criteria will be reprioritized based on the availability of facilities without affecting the school's mission and vision. A detailed next steps plan, however, was not identified.
11.	<b>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.)?</b>
Approaches	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant group's response indicated that, if approved by the Public Education Commission, the school would receive a one-time, \$350,000 unrestricted grant from Excellent Schools New Mexico. At the time of the interview, the applicant team did not have verification of the grant funding. However, Scott Hindman, Executive Director of Excellent Schools New Mexico provided a letter verifying the \$350,000 unrestricted grant award. The applicant group plans to use some of the award funds for start-up expenses.
12.	<b>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?</b>
Does not meet	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant team provided an extensive number of outreach events and activities that were being planned in the community. However, the response did not represent a clear and cohesive plan to ensure the enrollment projections are reasonable and will align closely to the proposed school's 40-day count.
13.	<b>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.</b>

<b>Does not meet</b>	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant team’s response partially addressed the question and included some options to cut back on hiring. They have worked with a model provided by K-12 Accounting that would assist with cutting expenses if the enrollment targets are not reached. However, the response did not include a clear, detailed action plan to address the situation as described.
<b>14.</b>	<b>Describe the organizational steps the proposed school will take during the planning year to be ready for opening?</b>
<b>Meets</b>	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant team fully responded to all the components of the question.
<b>15.</b>	<b>Describe how you approached the delineation of roles &amp; responsibilities for staff. How will you attract the talent and skills needed to implement the school as described?</b>
<b>Approaches</b>	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant team stated that the organizational structure is highly supportive and needs based. Many positions and needs were described in the response, including some possibilities for attracting the talent and skills needed. However, a clear and cohesive response did not emerge.
<b>16.</b>	<b>Explain how the proposed school will apply phonics to students who don’t enter the school speaking English?</b>
<b>Does not meet</b>	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant team’s response did not directly address the specific question.
<b>17.</b>	<b>Without a grant, how will EQUIP purchase all of the equipment, computers, furniture needed before day 1 of 1st school year?</b>
<b>Does not meet</b>	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant team’s response did not directly address the specific question.
<b>18.</b>	<b>How will the curriculum be specifically modified to ensure culturally and linguistically responsive instruction across all minority groups that this charter wants to address.</b>
<b>Does not meet</b>	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant team’s response did not directly address the specific question.
<b>19.</b>	<b>Your expenditures far exceed your revenue, what budget cuts will you make to balance your budget? If you don’t get a grant, how will you incorporate those expenditures in an already overextended budget?</b>

<b>Does not meet</b>	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant team’s response did not directly address the specific question.
<b>20.</b>	<b>What are your plans for providing Special Education services in year 1 and 2?</b>
<b>Does not meet</b>	<b>Independent Review Team Comments:</b> The applicant team’s response did not directly address the specific question.