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**Charter Schools Division
Analysis and Recommendation
Equip Academy of New Mexico
New School Application**

August 2, 2024

Mercy Herrera, and Dr. Renée Delgado-Riley applied to open a new charter school, Equip Academy of New Mexico, within the boundaries of Albuquerque Public Schools to serve grades K-5.

Based on the analysis set forth below, which includes the peer review team's evaluation of the new charter application and capacity interview, as well as a brief summary of the community input hearing and written community input received, the Charter Schools Division (CSD) recommends that the application be:

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

Recommended for Approval with conditions – The application is complete and adequate; and during their Capacity Interview, the applicant(s) demonstrated a general capacity to implement the academic, organizational and financial management plans as described in the application. However, the CSD has identified some specific concerns that would need to be addressed during the planning year. The CSD has listed the noted concerns and conditions to address the concerns below. If the PEC determines that there are any additional conditions that

need to be addressed, those should be noted during the public hearing and all approved conditions negotiated in the final contract.

X Recommended for Denial – The application is either incomplete or inadequate; or during their capacity interview, the applicant(s) did not sufficiently demonstrate the experience, knowledge, and competence to successfully open and operate a charter school in New Mexico.

The Charter Schools Act, in NMSA 22-8B-6 M states that a chartering authority may deny an application if:

- (1) the application is incomplete or inadequate;
- (2) the application does not propose to offer an educational program consistent with the requirements and purposes of the Charter Schools Act;
- (3) the proposed head administrator or other administrative or fiscal staff was involved with another charter school whose charter was denied or revoked for fiscal mismanagement or the proposed head administrator or other administrative or fiscal staff was discharged from a public school for fiscal mismanagement;
- (4) for a proposed state-chartered charter school, it does not request to have the governing body of the charter school designated as a board of finance or the governing body does not qualify as a board of finance;
- (5) for a proposed charter school on tribal land, it fails to receive approval from the tribal government; or
- (6) the application is otherwise contrary to the best interests of the charter school's projected students, the local community or the school district in whose geographic boundaries the charter school applies to operate.

CSD Analysis and Recommendation

The Equip Academy application has many strengths and a clear focus on supporting the acceleration of academic achievement, however, the application and capacity of the founding team suggest the school should be denied. The CSD recommends denial for two main reasons:

1) The application is inadequate. Multiple sections presented plans that were unreasonable or not fully informed by the knowledge of what it takes to open and successfully operate a state charter school in New Mexico. The application sets lofty goals for improving academic learning for students, however, the application falls short in ensuring sufficient staff and supports for students with special needs. The majority of the sections were rated as “approaches” across the academic, organizational and financial frameworks. CSD concurs with the peer review ratings, with just a few changes noted in the final section ratings below.

2) The school is not in the best interest of the community. The proposal to open another elementary charter school on the westside of Albuquerque should question the need for such a school. The CSD pulled VISTAS designations and proficiencies of competing district and charter schools noting many Spotlight school options. Although it is unclear the specific location of the school, some areas are in more need than others. A refinement of the founders’ plans including serving a specific community with a shortage of high-performing schools would strengthen the application. CSD recommends the founders consider reapplying next year.

Overall Evaluation

APPLICATION	Meets the Criteria		Approaches the Criteria		Does Not Meet the Criteria	
	Peers	CSD	Peers	CSD	Peers	CSD
Academic Framework	3	3	11	11	3	3
Organizational Framework	6	6	15	15	2	2
Financial Framework	1	1	4	4	3	3
Evidence of Support	1	1	2	2	0	0
TOTALS	11	11	32	32	8	8

CSD ratings that differ from peer review ratings				
Indicator	Description	Peer Rating	CSD Rating	CSD Evaluation
A.(1)	Mission	Meets		
A.(2)	Vision	Completed		
A.(3)	Uniqueness and Innovation	Meets		
B.	Mission Specific Goals	Approaches		
C.	Curriculum, Educational Program, Student Performance Standards	Approaches	Does not meet	In addition to concerns for meeting the needs of all learners, the proposed curriculum does not align with NM Content Standards and Benchmarks and does not align with a structured literacy framework, based on the science of reading, rather it proposes a balanced literacy approach.
D.(1)	Bilingual Multicultural Education, Indian Education, Hispanic	Approaches		

	Education and Black Education			
D.(2)	Equity Plan	Approaches ▾		
E.	Graduation Requirements	Not Appli... ▾		
F.(1)	Instruction Philosophy	Meets ▾		
F.(2)	Yearly Calendar and Daily Schedule	Does not... ▾	Approaches ▾	Although the number of days does not add up, the application meets some of the criteria.
F.(3)	Schedule Narrative	Does not... ▾		
G.(1a)	Special Education: Students with IEPs	Does not... ▾		
G.(1b)	Special Education: Progress Monitoring	Approaches ▾		
G.(2a)	English Learners: Curriculum & Instruction	Approaches ▾		
G.(2b)	English Learners: Progress Monitoring	Approaches ▾		
G.(3)	ESSA and Special Population Needs	Approaches ▾		
H.(1)	Assessment Plan	Approaches ▾		
H.(2)	Assessment Data Analysis	Approaches ▾		
H.(3)	Achievement Communication Plan	Approaches ▾		
A.(1)	Governance Structure	Approaches ▾		
A.(2)	Governing Board Qualifications	Approaches ▾		
A.(3)	Governing Board Recruitment	Approaches ▾		
B.(1)	Annual Board Training Plan	Meets ▾		
B.(2)	Annual Board Self-Evaluation	Meets ▾		
C.(1)	Board Oversight Monitoring Plan	Approaches ▾		
C.(2)	Hiring Head Administrator	Meets ▾		
C.(3)	Governing Board Roles & Responsibilities	Approaches ▾		

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

C.(3)	Governing Board Fiduciary Oversight	Approaches ▾		
A.	Evidence of Support/Outreach Activities	Approaches ▾		
B.	Community Support	Approaches ▾		
C.	Community Relationships	Meets ▾		

Summary of Capacity Interview and Community Input Hearing

Capacity interview: 9 AM on June 18th via zoom, representatives from the school in attendance; Mercy Herrera, Dr. Renée Delgado-Riley, Alejandra Grijalva, Janet Leung, and Sara Fitzgerald. There were 20 questions asked and the applicant team received seven (7) Meets , six (6) Approaches, and seven (7) Does Not Meet. All of the school specific questions (5 of the 20) devised and asked by the peer review team received ratings of Does Not Meet the criteria.

Input Hearing: 1 PM on July 9, 2024 at the New Mexico Activities Association, 128 in attendance, there were 31 speakers in favor of the applicant.

Founders			
Name	Listed on the Application	Attended the Capacity Interview	Attended the Community Input Hearing
Mercy Herrera	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dr. Renée Delgado-Riley	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alejandra Grijalva	No	Yes	Yes
Sara Fitzgerald	No	Yes	Yes
Janet Leung	No	Yes	Yes

Summary of Written Input in Support/Opposition

3 letters were received; 2 were in support of the applicant school, 1 letter received was opposed to any new charter school.

Vista data in the proposed community

School	NM Vistas		Proficiencies		
	Score	Designation	ELA	Math	Science
Montessori of the Rio Grande	75.7	Spotlight	75.2%	35.2%	65.7%
Mountain Mahogany Community School	62.1	CSI Hispanic, White, FRL	45.7%	30.3%	55.8%
Alice King Community School	64.7	Spotlight	49.3%	30.3%	51.7%
Christine Duncan Heritage Academy	38.2	Traditional	20.5%	11.7%	13.9%
Alvarado Elementary	74.3	Spotlight	53.8%	41.5%	67.6%
Cochiti Elementary	39.6	Traditional	28.6%	12.1%	21.2%
Duranes Elementary	47.4	Traditional	35.6%	20.0%	23.8%
Ventana Ranch Elementary	79.5	Spotlight	55.6%	46.1%	60.4%
Griegos Elementary	61.2	Traditional	45.6%	36.8%	30.8%
Susie Rayos Marmon Elementary	34.9	CSI SWD	22.6%	10.1%	11.1%
Lavaland Elementary	30.8	CSI Hispanic, EL	18.8%	7.9%	10.5%
Chamiza Elementary	57.3	ATSI SWD	43.2%	27.7%	40.0%
Reginald Chavez Elementary	38.1	Traditional	21.1%	11.6%	21.9%
Los Ranchos Elementary	35.7	CSI	17.6%	8.7%	23.7%
Marie M Hughes Elementary	50.1	Traditional	35.3%	21.4%	37.5%
Coral Community Charter	78.7	Spotlight	56.8%	48.1%	68.2%
Voz Collegiate Preparatory Charter School	55.3	Traditional	31.7%	31.7%	41.7%
New Mexico International School	81.9	Spotlight	61.6%	52.2%	71.2%
Cien Aguas International	59.7	Traditional	43.0%	28.0%	44.8%
William W Josephine Dorn Charter	30.7	Traditional	19.0%	≤ 10%	*****
Horizon Academy West	75.9	Spotlight	53.8%	45.7%	55.2%
North Valley Academy	47.3	Traditional	31.7%	11.4%	22.4%
South Valley Prep	36.2	Traditional	26.3%	13.7%	15.4%
Albuquerque Bilingual Academy	52.0	Traditional	34.2%	24.5%	25.0%
Montessori Elementary School	76.5	Spotlight	69.9%	33.5%	62.8%

Mission Achievement and Success 2.0	70.8	Spotlight	55.3%	43.8%	47.5%
Albuquerque Collegiate Charter School	74.2	Spotlight	68.1%	30.6%	37.5%
Altura Preparatory School	88.6	Spotlight	79.8%	73.0%	≥ 80%
Solare Collegiate Charter School	44.7	Traditional	32.8%	22.1%	21.5%
21st Century Public Academy	71.0	ATSI SWD	66.8%	36.2%	59.5%
Rio Grande Academy of Fine Arts	59.1	Traditional	32.0%	40.0%	