AGENDA ITEM: NEW CHARTER APPLICATION – ALHAMBRA PREPARATORY ACADEMY

Alhambra Preparatory Academy submitted a complete new charter application package to serve grades 9-12 for the Board's consideration. The revised application package meets the minimum scoring requirements set by the Board for the 2014-2015 application cycle.

REPORT SUMMARY

Applicant Name: Alhambra Preparatory Academy

Authorized Representative Name: Kerry Clark

Proposed School Name: Madison Highland Prep

Proposed School Location: 1431 E. Campbell Avenue in Phoenix

Mission Statement

Madison Highland Prep (MHP) is a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) college-preparatory high school. Madison Highland Prep features a rigorous academic program with an emphasis on 21st century preparation defined by critical thinking and inquiry learning. MHP believes in tying course content to interrelated themes to increases relevance and application in the interest of preparing students to succeed in the future global arena.

Target Population

Madison Highland Prep will be located on the campus of Madison Park Middle School in the Madison Elementary School District in central Phoenix. It will target the population currently enrolled in the Madison district, which includes 43% of students from outside district boundaries. The area is bounded by Glendale Avenue on the north, 43rd Avenue on the west, Grand Avenue on the southwest, McDowell Road on the south, and 16th Street on the east. The population targeted by MHP is over 75% minority, 70% Title 1 eligible, and has a poverty rate 10% above the state rate.

Student Count

Year	Grades Served	# of Students
1	9-10	300
2	9-11	350
3	9-12	400

School Calendar
Standard, 182 days

Target Start Date
August 5, 2014

Application Package Scoring

	Preliminary TRP Scores		Revised TRP Scores	
Any **Falls Below the Expectations** ratings?	No		No	
Any section in which more than one evaluation area scored **Approaches**?	Yes		No	
		Percent Meets		Percent Meets
Educational Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	No	88%	Yes	98%
Operational Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	No	88%	Yes	100%
Business Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	Yes	100%	Yes	100%

The TRP provided the Applicant with written technical assistance based on its review of the preliminary written application package and the revised written application package prior to the in-person interview.

In-Person Interview Summary

During the in-person interview the Applicant responded to the questions regarding the submitted (Educational, Operational, Business) Plan.

The interview was attended by the two corporate principals. The Applicant began with a description of the need for Madison Highland Prep indicating the school would be located in an area where "students are traditionally underserved in STEM education." They also described a partnership with the Madison Elementary School District.

The application package states that "Madison Highland Prep will establish a comprehensive STEM program." Asked to describe what this program would look like in day-to-day implementation and practice, the Applicant provided adequate detail describing embedded formative assessments, using the pre-Advanced Placement (AP) Springboard curriculum, and the integration of content areas as well as robotics programs and Project Lead the Way (a national non-profit supplier of problem-based STEM curriculum). The Applicant adequately allayed concerns regarding the size of the projected target community and strategies to ensure families are involved in their children's education, describing the transportation services, tutoring programs, a parent academy, parent and community advisory panel, and the use of a web-based blackboard platform providing parents with access to grades.

The TRP asked for additional detail and demonstration of relevance for student internships and mentorships described in the application package. The Applicant noted that in-person research during multiple STEM school visits indicated that internships were a common feature, and shared the strategy of utilizing internships to develop "capstone" projects as part of a student's final grade.

A specific element on which the application package was scored as approaching the criteria was the "opportunity for the student to complete a summative assessment which is clearly separate from instruction and guided or independent practice, and in which the student is assessed independently." The Applicant referenced the Madeleine Hunter Essential Elements of Instruction and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and stipulated that classroom teachers determine which parts of any summative assessment are grouped or independent. The school leaders will provide regular oversight and if "an overemphasis on either is found we will provide the feedback and help." The Applicant provided additional clarity regarding the Performance Management Plan described as an "actual living document" and "road map" regularly reviewed and amended with the governing board.

The TRP requested additional detail regarding the partnership with Madison Park Middle School and the Madison Park School District. The Applicant elaborated indicating a formal relationship had been approved by the school district, as MHP will serve as the high school. Alignment of the curriculum between the school district and MHP STEM programs will occur. The agreement was described as "not just a lease, it's a philosophical document."

Questions regarding school personnel focused on critical leadership skills and the development of the governing board. The Applicant identified multiple skills necessary for the school leaders and specifically related their experience with school start-up and school turnaround projects.

Questions regarding the Business Plan focused on personnel and the determination of salaries were well addressed. The Applicant described a research process of reviewing "a lot of nonprofit corporations and compared their plans and what they offered" and indicated that their prior experience informed the decision-making. They noted taking a "sampling" of several local school districts to also inform decision-making in these areas.

Qualitative Analysis Summary

The TRP recommends that the application for Alhambra Preparatory Academy be approved as it meets the necessary criteria and the Applicant has demonstrated the capacity to open and operate the school.

Within the Educational Plan the Educational Philosophy describes students developing critical thinking skills and becoming college ready through the implementation of a STEM program and advanced placement courses as well as through personalized education. The target population is the same as the Madison School District with which MHP is "teaming up to provide a seamless Pre-K through 12th grade STEM College Preparatory experience for students." The detailed population research conducted included an analysis of surrounding schools, AIMS performance, and middle school performance data. Personalized education plans will be developed to provide instructional context. Key instructional methods that incorporate formative assessment strategies include direct instruction, cooperative learning, project-based learning, Socratic seminars, experiential learning, and internships.

The Applicant presents a comprehensive summative assessment plan including the state-required assessment, AP assessments, the PSAT, ACT, and SAT.

The Applicant's proposed Operational Plan includes a school governing body described as "charged with managing and governing Madison Highland Prep." An adequate description of board responsibilities is included, as well as a description of the School Policy Council, a standing advisory committee of seven members recruited, appointed, and removed by the school leaders. The two current corporate principals, Kerry Clark and Paula Wilson, will also serve as MHP's principal and director of curriculum. Dr. Clark has served as a high school principal for twelve years. He holds state principal and superintendent certificates and his most recent school was recognized as one of America's Best High Schools in 2010 and 2011. Ms. Wilson has twelve years of teaching experience. She has also served as a data and remediation specialist, curriculum coach, and assistant principal.

Within the Management and Operations portion of the application package, clear organizational charts demonstrate the staff relationships. A five member administrative team supports a twelve member instructional team. Administrative responsibilities in relation to instruction, curriculum and assessment, staff development, financial management, contracted services, personnel, grants management, and the student accountability information system are specific and detailed. Descriptions of contractual relationships for payroll, accounting, special education, legal, and 401(k) plan administration are provided, and buttressed by explanation of the decision-making process regarding whether staff was needed or contracted services could provide necessary components in a cost effective manner.

The Business Plan describes the process underway to secure space within an existing school facility and the steps that have been taken to establish a relationship with the Madison School District for a beneficial partnership. According to the Applicant, the proposed collaborative structure is designed to increase academic achievement. The plan is further strengthened by the award of an Arizona Charter Schools Program Grant of $230,000 for start-up. The Three Year Operating Budget indicates a spending range of 70 to 80 percent on administration, instruction, and support as well as includes a minimum three percent contingency/surplus each year.

A. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

The following summary was created from excerpts and summaries of the documents submitted for the Applicant's Educational Plan.

Plan Summary

Their philosophical approach is founded on three primary beliefs: "students must develop critical thinking skills and become college ready;" "exposing our students to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and

Advance Placement (AP) programming will increase their college and career readiness;" and "personalizing education for each student and providing high quality formative instruction and assessment will lead to higher growth and greater academic success."

The target population is the students of Madison Elementary School District as well as students from several surrounding zip codes, which are within the Phoenix Union High School District. The Applicant will partner with the Madison Elementary School District for professional development, curriculum alignment, and development of a kindergarten through twelfth grade STEM program. The population research conducted included an analysis of surrounding schools, AIMS performance, and middle school performance data.

The MHP curriculum is aligned with the Arizona State and the Common Core Standards as well as the College Board's *Springboard* curricular materials. The program has its foundations in the fundamental problem-solving and critical-thinking skills taught in traditional career and technical education programs along with national academic and technical learning standards and STEM principles.

Personalized education plans are developed based on student intake interviews and entry assessments. These plans inform student placement and provide instructional context. Key instructional methods that incorporate formative assessment strategies include direct instruction, cooperative learning, project-based learning, Socratic seminars, experiential learning, and internships. The Applicant presents a summative assessment plan including the state-mandated assessment, AP assessments, the PSAT, ACT, and SAT.

Madison Highland Prep will utilize formative instruction and assessment to guide student success, continuously fine-tuning its programs and student schedules with targeted remediation every nine weeks. School leadership and instructional staff will prescribe interventions and remediation daily on a student-by-student basis to ensure that disruptions to learning success are treated expeditiously.

The Applicant predicts, based on an analysis of the surrounding areas, a thirteen percent special education rate primarily requiring itinerant services and indicated the hiring of one full time special education coordinator for management and contracting for the direct student services.

PMP

The Performance Management Plan (PMP) for new applicants is a continuous school improvement plan that demonstrates the Applicant is ready to implement systems for meeting the Board's academic performance expectations. The Applicant submitted a PMP that met the criteria in all areas for both Reading and Math. Details can be found in the attached Scoring Rubric (presented in the application portfolio: B. Scoring Results).

Curriculum Samples

Curriculum samples were provided for grades 9-12. The table below indicates which curriculum samples in the revised application package met all Board requirements (+), and which had deficiencies (-). Details can be found in the attached Scoring Rubric (presented in the application portfolio: B. Scoring Results).

Grade	Math	Reading	Writing	Science
9	+	+	+	-
10	+	+	+	
11	+	+	+	
12	+	+	+	

Educational Plan Findings

	Preliminary TRP Scores		Revised TRP Scores	
Educational Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	No	51 of 58	Yes	57 of 58
Number of "Falls Below" ratings	0		0	
Number of "Approaches" ratings	7		1	

Analysis of Educational Plan

The Educational Plan meets the standard for approval as expectations were met in all areas. The school's model stems from the belief that students must develop critical thinking skills to become college ready and that exposing students to STEM and AP programming will increase their college and career readiness. Relevant research providing clear rationale for the implementation of the STEM model for the target population and benefit to students and the community were presented.

The target population of grade appropriate students within the Madison School District and adjoining zip codes was presented with supporting data which highlights the need and capacity. A strong proposed partnership with the Madison School District locates Madison Highland Prep at the Madison Park Middle School and allows for an alignment and infusion of the STEM model from kindergarten through 12th grade.

The Applicant's detailed Program of Instruction includes varied forms of instruction, and instructional delivery models described are partnered with the development of personalized education plans geared toward providing instructional context and ensuring students receive the instruction and content appropriate for their specific academic needs. The application package clearly demonstrates understanding of the curriculum including the expected prior knowledge, alignment to the program of instruction and Arizona State Standards, the necessary resources, and complementary instructional strategies.

Formative assessment strategies are incorporated with instruction. Summative assessments measure students' status "with respect to curricular outcomes" and include a pre and post test for every subject, three benchmark assessments per year, the state-required assessment and a college readiness exam. The Applicant was able to demonstrate through the interview that summative assessments will be balanced between group and individual demonstrations of knowledge.

B. OPERATIONAL PLAN

The following summary was created from excerpts and summaries of the documents submitted for the Applicant's Operational Plan.

Plan Summary

Alhambra Preparatory Academy is a non-profit corporation, located in Phoenix, AZ, that was created in November 2012 for the purpose of funding Madison Highland Prep, with two directors: Kerry Clark and Paula Wilson. One founding director, Gordon Griller, resigned from the corporate board on 6/18/2013. The proposed school governing body and corporate board are the same and have been established for the purpose of providing educational services.

The proposed corporate board/school governing body currently includes two members, Kerry Clark and Paula Wilson. Both will serve in leadership roles with the school. The corporate board will expand to five members and potential candidates have been identified. The application package states that the board is charged with "managing and governing Madison Highland Prep." This will include oversight of all operational, financial, and pedagogical issues. The director of operations and director of academics will report directly to the board, and there will be a "standing advisory committee known as the School Policy Council" to provide advice and counsel to the school leadership team.

MHP proposes opening with five administrative personnel including an assistant principal, business manager, and special education coordinator. The proposed opening enrollment with 9th and 10th grade students will require 12 classroom teachers. The description of the administrative roles includes specific responsibilities for school operation including instruction, curriculum and assessment, staff development, financial management, contracted services, personnel, grants management, and the student accountability system. Contractual relationships are identified for payroll, accounting, special education services, legal services and 401K plan administration.

The table below delineates the composition of the school governing body as described in the narrative:

School Governing Body Member Type	Name
Ex-Officio Member	Kerry Clark
Ex-Officio Member	Paula Wilson
Other	TBD
Other	TBD
Other	TBD

Principal Background Information

Authorized Representative and Principal: *Kerry Clark*
Confirmed Education History: Educational Doctorate in Educational Leadership, Northern Arizona University, 2013
Confirmed Employment History: Principal/Strategic Planning Consultant, Imagine Schools, February 2012-present; President, Strategic Educational Services, October 2011-present; Western Regional Vice President/Principal, Leona Group, July 1997-October 2011
Arizona FCC Expires: 11/01/2017
Current or Past Charter Affiliations[1]: School Principal, Imagine Prep Superstition; School Principal, South Ridge High School; School Principal, Peoria Accelerated High School

Principal: *Paula Wilson*
Confirmed Education History: Bachelors of Arts in Education – Secondary Mathematics, Arizona State University, 2011
Confirmed Employment History: Curriculum/Data Consultant, Imagine Schools, May 2012-June 2013; Data Specialist/Curriculum Coach/Assistant School Leader, Leona Group, February 2007-May 2012
Arizona FCC Expires: 3/11/2016
Current or Past Charter Affiliations[1]: None

Operational Plan Findings

	Preliminary TRP Scores		Revised TRP Scores	
Operational Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	No	21 of 24	Yes	24 of 24
Number of "Falls Below" ratings	0		0	
Number of "Approaches" ratings	3		0	

Analysis of Operational Plan

The Operational Plan meets the standard for approval as expectations were met in all areas. The Applicant's governance structure details an appropriate division of duties with the school leadership focused on management and operation, and the board focused on governance. The reporting structures presented in the application package support this alignment. Board responsibilities are clear, focusing on policy, finance, management oversight, and leadership evaluation.

The proposed Operational Plan details the establishment of a comprehensive five person administrative structure. Particular delineation is noted between the principal, who oversees school performance; a director of curriculum, who supports teaching and learning; and an assistant principal, who aids the principal with the

[1] *In this section, "Current or Past Charter Affiliations" refers to a leadership or decision-making role in an existing charter school operation, such as charter representative, charter principal, or school site leader.*

executive management of the school. Respective roles are clearly defined, and specific responsibilities are assigned for each administrative position. The critical skills and experiences align with the administrative responsibilities. For example, the principal must possess the skill to "use data to identify and plan for needed changes in the instructional program." This aligns with the key responsibility to "oversee and manage disaggregation of school-wide academic data collection, analyze and report results, and develop and report implementation of interventions to all stakeholders."

The structure of the instructional team is well defined in the application package. Teachers are supported by an instructional coach to ensuring a "focus on relevant and timely professional development for all instructional staff members."

Proposed contractual relationships for services are supported by descriptions of each service and basis for determining costs. The three year operating budget includes each identified service and aligns with the Contracted Services portion of the application package.

C. BUSINESS PLAN

The following summary was created from excerpts and summaries of the documents submitted for the Applicant's Business Plan.

Plan Summary

The governing board proposes a relationship with the Madison Elementary School District enabling MHP to locate within the Madison Park Middle School facility. The target enrollment scales over three years from 300 to 450 students and can be accommodated with the available space. Documentation is provided detailing the available square footage necessary for the number of identified classrooms and support spaces required. The application package notes a five year renewable lease with the Madison School District paying for all capital improvements and providing general maintenance, phone access, internet, technical services, and utilities. Proposed financial arrangements are detailed including office lease costs, fees, permits, insurance, and an annual lease payment based on 15 percent of generated revenues and any additional state assistance.

Advertising and promotion for MHP is noted as having begun through the Madison Elementary School District Superintendent's announcement regarding the collaborative partnership. District marketing strategies will be utilized for the school including newsletters, postcard mailers, web site, social media, and press releases. The application package includes advertising and promotion timeline with strategies, associated costs, and revenues utilized to pay for expenses.

The application package presents a staffing plan demonstrating the scaling of the school over a three-year period including the growth from 13 full time instructional roles to 18. Further, it states that "all teachers are highly qualified as defined by No Child Left Behind" and possess "a valid Arizona Teaching Certificate." The Applicant notes the alignment of these positions to the staffing pattern. The compensation plan is described as competitive with high quality schools of similar size and population. The personnel section includes a timeline for recruitment and hiring, process for hiring, and description of training. The training components include a three-day summer *Spring Board* curriculum materials and resources training for English and math teachers as well as a summer professional development week for all instructional personnel.

Facility Information

Proposed School Name:	Madison Highland Prep
Proposed Location:	Unconfirmed location: 1431 E. Campbell Avenue in Phoenix
Facilities Requirements:	In year 1 the facility will consist of 12 classrooms (20, 944 square feet) and shared facilities (outdoor courts and recreation facilities, cafeteria, gymnasium, and common areas) on the campus of Madison Park Middle School. Additional classrooms will be added to the lease in years 2 and 3.

Budget Summary

The applicant has secured an AZ CSP grant from the Arizona Department of Education for start-up purposes. The secured funds, in the amount of $230,000 per year for three years, as stated by the applicant, are available as confirmed by Arizona Department of Education Grants Management. The three-year budget projections provide for a minimum three percent contingency/surplus, and 72 percent of all expenditures are in the areas of administration, instruction, and support.

The table below presents a summary of the budgets by year:

	Startup Period	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Projected Full Enrollment:	N/A	300	350	400
# Students Budget Based On:	N/A	255 (85%)	315 (90%)	360 (90%)
Total Revenue:	$230,000	$1,971,309	$2,185,849	$2,498,237
Total Expenditures:	$226,948	$1,908,017	$2,091,673	$2,292,237
Ending Balance:	$3,052	$63,293	$94,177	$206,542

Business Plan Findings

	Preliminary TRP Scores		Revised TRP Scores	
Operational Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	Yes	29 of 29	Yes	29 of 29
Number of "Falls Below" ratings	0		0	
Number of "Approaches" ratings	0		0	

Analysis of Business Plan

The Business Plan meets the standard for approval as expectations were met in all areas. The Applicant presents a plan to lease space within Madison Park Middle School as part of a collaborative partnership with the Madison Elementary School District. The Facilities Acquisition narrative and accompanying layout of space are aligned with the estimated enrollment and detail of necessary instructional spaces. The proposed financial arrangements align with the Three Year Operational Budget.

Multiple strategies for the advertising and promotion are included, and leverage assistance from the Madison Elementary School District. The identified advertising and promotion expenses align with the Start-Up Budget.

The staffing plan adequately specifies duties and qualifications for all personnel and describes the necessary certification requirements for instructional staff. Recruitment, hiring, and training are tied to a relevant timeline leading to the opening of the school's first year. The projected personnel costs align with the Three Year Operating Budget. The Applicant also presented plans for additional personnel incentives based on revenue availability.

The proposed Start Up Budget utilizing the secured Arizona Charter Schools Program Grant of $230,000 presents realistic projections for administrative and support personnel as well as marketing, advertising, facility lease, and equipment needs. The proposed Three Year Operating Budget is conservatively based on 85 percent projected enrollment in year one; and 90 percent in each of years two and three.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Additional data is included below to provide information related to the Applicant's principals' experience, qualifications, and current and prior charter compliance as an indicator of the Applicant's ability to implement a charter or operate a charter school.

Charter Principal Affiliations

Authorized Representative/Principal: Kerry Clark
Current Affiliation(s): School Principal, Imagine Prep Superstition (2012-2013)
Past Affiliation(s) of Note: School Principal, South Ridge High School (2006-2011); School Principal, Peoria Accelerated High School (2001-2006)
Comments: The academic performance of schools led by Dr. Clark is presented below:

- Imagine Prep Superstition:
  - 2013 - Overall Rating 71.88 (Meets)
  - 2012 - Overall Rating 83.75 (Meets)
- South Ridge High School:
  - 2012 - Overall Rating 86.88 (Meets)
  - 2011 - B (Highly Performing)
  - 2010 - Highly Performing in 2010
  - 2009 - Performing
  - 2008 - Performing Plus
  - 2007 - Performing Plus
  - No academic performance data is available prior to 2007

EVIDENCE OF CAPACITY

Applicant Summary

The table below describes the participation of the Applicant in the In-Person Interview:

Name	Role	Attended Interview?
Kerry Clark	Corporate Principal, Proposed Principal/Director of Operations	Yes
Paula Wilson	Corporate Principal, Proposed Director of Academics	Yes

Analysis of Applicant Capacity

The TRP finds that the Applicant has the range of knowledge, skills and experience needed to open and operate a high quality school, specifically as demonstrated through comprehensive responses to TRP questions across all areas of the application package.

Within the Educational Plan questions the Applicant sufficiently answered questions focusing on STEM coursework, opportunities for formative assessment, and remediation. The personalized education plan was further detailed and a Future Freshman Academy described as "an attempt to stop the gap between middle

school and high school." These and other responses confirmed a clear understanding of the students MHP will serve.

The Applicant sufficiently addressed the partnership with the Madison Elementary School District, including providing an update on the progress of the collaborative agreement. In addition the TRP found the Applicant had a competent understanding of necessary critical skills for administrative personnel.

Business Plan questions allowed the TRP to assess preparedness to fiscally manage the school. The Applicant sufficiently answered questions related to personnel, compensation, and budget projections. Responses included a prioritization process if budget reductions were necessary.

Consensus following the interview by the TRP was that all answers were thorough, detailed and demonstrated evident preparation, the necessary due diligence, and competence to open and operate Madison Highland Prep.

BOARD OPTIONS

Option 1: The Board may approve the application package. Staff recommends the following language for consideration: Based upon review of the contents of the portfolio provided for this applicant and the information provided by the representatives of the applicant during consideration, and given it is within the sole discretion of the Board to approve or deny a charter, I move to approve the application package and grant a charter to Alhambra Preparatory Academy to establish Madison Highland Prep charter school to serve grades 9-12.

Option 2: The Board may deny the application package. The following language is provided for consideration: Based upon a review of the contents of the portfolio provided for this applicant and the information provided by the representatives of the applicant during consideration, and given it is within the sole discretion of the Board to approve or deny a charter, I move to reject the application package and deny the request for a charter of Alhambra Preparatory Academy to establish a charter school for the reason(s) that its application failed to meet the requirements of Title 15, Chapter 1, Article 8 due to: (specific statement made by the Applicant during Board consideration).