
AGENDA ITEM: Arizona Secondary Charter School, Inc. Application

Arizona Secondary Charter School, Inc. submitted an application package for the Board's consideration. This report contains:

- Background information regarding the qualifications of the applicant,
- A copy of the scoring rubric which confirms the application package meets the requirements as demonstrated through the review of the preliminary application package submitted on August 3, 2009, the technical assistance provided to the applicant, and a review of the revised application package submitted on December 18, 2009, and
- Staff's overview and summary of the application package.

The following background information is provided for your consideration.

Arizona Secondary Charter School, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation that was created on December 14, 2007 for the purpose of conducting public education with three (3) directors: Mary Searcy Bixby became a member 12/19/2007; Owen Sweeney became a member 12/19/2007; and Jane Gawronski became a member 12/19/2007.

Arizona Secondary Charter School, Inc. is a subsidiary corporation of Altus Institute (Altus), a California nonprofit public benefit corporation. As a parent corporation, Altus shall elect annually the directors for ASCS. ASCS board vacancy or vacancies shall be filled by the parent corporation. By-laws may be amended or repealed only by Altus. Altus allows ASCS to operate as an independent entity under the direction of ASCS's board members.

Background Information

Corporate Principal	Education History	Employment History	FCC	Notes
Mary Searcy Bixby	Master's degree in Curriculum & Instruction	President/CEO, The Charter School of San Diego. Ms. Bixby is also a board member for Audeo Charter School (San Diego USD) and Mirus Secondary School (Hesperia USD).	Valid	There were no concerns identified in the background and credit check.
Owen Sweeney	Master's degree in Public Administration	Self-employed operating Sweeney Financial Services and a board member for The Charter School of San Diego (San Diego USD), Audeo Charter School (San Diego USD), and Mirus Secondary School (Hesperia USD).	Valid	There were no concerns identified in the background and credit check.
Jane Gawronski	Doctorate degree in Education	Director of Assessment & Outreach, San Diego State University Center for Research & Mathematics from September 2000 - June 2009. Dr. Gawronski's resume indicates that she is retired as of June 30, 2009. She serves on the Board of Directors for The Charter School of San Diego and Audeo Charter School.	Valid	There were no concerns identified in the background and credit check.

Lynne Alipio is the designated charter representative	Master's degree in Business Administration	CFO and Director of Business & Fiscal Services, The Charter School of San Diego.	Valid	There were no concerns identified in the background and credit check.
---	--	--	-------	---

Current and Prior Charter Compliance

Corporate Principal	Compliance Information
<p>Mary Searcy Bixby Owen Sweeney Jane Gawronski</p> <p>Lynne Alipio, designated charter representative</p>	<p>The individuals identified in this application package are associated with charter schools in California as operators, board members, or employees: The Charter School of San Diego, Audeo Charter School, and Mirus Secondary School.</p> <p>Staff spoke with the authorizers of the above charters. Both the San Diego and Hesperia district stated that the charters are financially sound, however, academically, they are not. The Charter School of San Diego is in year one program improvement, met the state but did not meet the federal academic progress requirements. Audeo Charter School did not meet the state but met federal academic progress requirements.</p> <p>The Academic Performance Index (API) is a number between 200 and 1000 that reflects a school's performance on statewide student assessments. Hesperia Unified School District stated that Mirus Secondary School has the worst in the district with an API score of 517.</p> <p>Additionally, on April 21, 2009, the applicants were denied a charter by the Grossmont Union High School District. See Appendix A</p>

School Governing Body

Member Type	Number	Name
Organization Principals	3	Mary Searcy Bixby, Owen Sweeney, and Jane Gawronski

Roles and Responsibilities

Applicant	Governing Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select and remove offices, agents, and employees Conduct, manage and control affairs and activities of corporation Borrow money and incur indebtedness Carry on a business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve Substantive policy issues Approve major contracts Design general policies Approve and monitor financial procedures and fiscal affairs
Corporate Board and Governing Body have same membership.	

Program of Instruction

Mission	Altus – The Charter School of Arizona (ACSA) will implement personalized educational programs to facilitate student achievement. These educational programs will demonstrate that standards-based educational reform can provide a prototype for changing the way teachers teach and students learn in the future.
Description of Community and Target Market	ACSA was founded with a vision of personalized instruction for each student. This vision drives the program that proposes to serve students who are not succeeding in traditional schools with the goal of assisting them in transitioning

	back into their former school or graduating from ACSA. The target market resides within the West Phoenix and Tolleson area and the intentions are to serve students in grades 7-12 who have dropped out of traditional schools or are at great risk of dropping out; or those students that are seeking a nontraditional school environment. The drop-out rates for the seven (7) existing district schools in the target area range from 1.3% to 3.7%.																
Comprehensive Program of Instruction Summary	In the narrative, the instructional program is identified as a standards-based curricula reinforced by best-practices in the three core classes scheduled every nine weeks. The primary method of instruction will be independent study supplemented with seminars, workshops, guest speakers, tutoring, technology assisted instruction, and field trips. A collection of standardized and performance-based assessments provide meaningful insight of each student's achievement. Remediation will be provided to any student who falls far below mastery of academic content through small group workshops, tutoring, modified assignments or basic skills development.																
School Calendar	Standard - 180 days/5 day week																
Student Count	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Grades Served</th> <th># of Students</th> <th># of Sites</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>7-12</td> <td>100</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>7-12</td> <td>120</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>7-12</td> <td>120</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Grades Served	# of Students	# of Sites	1	7-12	100	1	2	7-12	120	1	3	7-12	120	1
Year	Grades Served	# of Students	# of Sites														
1	7-12	100	1														
2	7-12	120	1														
3	7-12	120	1														
Findings	The application met the minimum requirements in the Comprehensive Program of Instruction.																

Business Plan/Budget

Budget	The applicant has designated \$75,000 in a secured loan from Altus Institute, Inc. for start-up purposes. Years one through three of the operating budget are based on 100% of the anticipated student enrollment. Projected annual budget balances are: Year One - \$17,192, Year Two - \$59,104, and Year Three - \$141,760. At the end of each month during the first year revenue exceeds expenditures.
Secured Funds	The secured funds as stated by the applicant have been confirmed as available.
Findings	The application meets the minimum requirements, although the following areas scored an approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate personnel for implementation

Site Information

Name of Proposed School	Altus-The Charter School of Arizona
Location	Unconfirmed location: Arizona Secondary Charter School, Inc. proposes to lease building space in the vicinity of the Phoenix Union and Tolleson Union High School Districts, as well as the Cartwright and Fowler Elementary School Districts in the West Valley. Some identified lease options are: 7610 W. Indian School road, 91 st and Camelback, 6601 W. Indian School Road. 9550 w. Van Buren, and 9616 W. Van Buren.
Secured Facility	The anticipated site will comprise of 2,600 square feet that includes office space, a conference room, and two (2) bathrooms.

Scoring Rubric Summary

Preliminary application package scoring rubric results: 18% of the scoring areas did not meet the criteria.

Revised application package scoring rubric results: 1% of the scoring areas did not meet the criteria.

Staff Recommendations

Reject the application and the request for a charter of Arizona Secondary Charter School, Inc. to establish a charter school for the reason that the applicant is not sufficiently qualified to operate a charter school due to the applicant's Principals' academic history in operating other charter schools.

Unless the Board determines that the application should be approved. In which case, the Board may approve the application package and grant a charter to Arizona Secondary Charter School, Inc. to establish Altus-The Charter School of Arizona.