The Technical Review Panel (TRP) conducted an interview of the applicant, Desert Star Academy, Inc. (DSA) on November 19, 2012 for the following purposes:

- To evaluate the capacity of the applicant to successfully implement the plan to operate a high-quality charter school,
- To provide the applicant team the opportunity to demonstrate how well they understand and have thought through the plan presented in the written application.

The applicant team present for the interview included the following members of the corporate board: Margie Montgomery and William Hookstra.

The interview questions posed by the interview panel addressed the Education Plan, Organization Plan, and Business Plan. The results of the in-person interview are divided into sections aligned to scoring areas of the application. Each row begins with an overall rating for that portion of the interview. The rating options for each section are:

- The applicant provided additional information that improved the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.
- The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.
- The information provided by the applicant raised additional questions and/or concerns in the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.

The last column provides a summary of the responses given by the applicant in italics, and includes the primary questions asked by TRP members.

Rating	Section	Interview Summary
The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	Ed Plan	1. Walk us through a typical day in the life of a 4th grade student at your school. • A clarification was requested regarding the schedule. • The applicant stated that Science and Social Studies occurred every week, but the schedule for grades in the written application package indicates something different. • Additional clarification regarding the frequency of Science classes on the weekly schedule was requested. *DSA described the daily schedule. DSA provided information regarding the schedule for Science and Social Studies. DSA stated that Core Knowledge curriculum would be used to allow integration of Reading and Math content in the Science and Social Studies content. DSA stated that Science classes occur every other day for grades K-2, and on a daily basis starting in grade 4.*

The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	A.1 Educational Philosophy	2. Describe the rationale for selecting the core values to address the needs of the target population. • Describe how the core values will result in improved academic achievement for the target population. *DSA described the outcomes anticipated among students. DSA described characteristics of the target population as rural, with limited exposure to the community outside of their county.*
The information provided by the applicant raised additional questions and/or concerns in the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	A.4 Weekly Schedule	3. Describe how a 4-day week meets the needs of the target population. • What is the successful charter you referenced, and how did you determine that is was successful? *DSA stated that the 4-day week is designed to be structured and rigorous in academics. DSA stated that Fridays will be used for staff development, lesson planning, and data analysis. DSA stated that the fifth day of the week will be used for remediation for students below grade level and enrichment for students at or above grade level. DSA stated that the schedule is one that families were familiar with. DSA identified the local school and stated their ratings for 2012. DSA did not describe how the 4-day week meets the needs of the target population.*
The information provided by the applicant raised additional questions and/or concerns in the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	A.4 Weekly Schedule	4. The narrative describes several different activities that may occur on a Friday. Walk us through each Friday in the month of October of the first year of operation for the school describing what activities we would see students and teachers engaged in on each Friday. • A clarification was requested regarding the teachers providing intervention services for students regarding when teachers will have time to prepare intervention materials for students that they do not see on a daily basis, but will be working with on that Friday. • How would academic achievement be impacted differently if Fridays were a traditional instructional day similar to Monday through Thursday. *DSA described the schedule of a typical Friday. DSA described opportunities for teachers to collaborate. DSA stated that Friday provides extra time and reinforcement if they are not getting those concepts Monday through Thursday and for group work, projects, and activities that are related to the Common Core Standards. DSA did not describe how academic achievement would be impacted differently if Fridays were a traditional instructional day.*

The information provided by the applicant raised additional questions and/or concerns in the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	A.3 Program of Instruction	5. If I were to visit the 4th/5th/6th grade classroom, what would I see that would demonstrate that students are receiving instruction aligned to the appropriate grade level Arizona Common Core State Standards? • Do teacher create lesson plans for each grade level? • How will teachers address the fundamental difference between the 4th and 5th grade math standards and the 6th grade math standard since they are fundamentally different from each other? *DSA described the notebook system that students will use. DSA provided an example using multiple Writing activities for 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students reading the same story. DSA stated that a different lesson plan would be written for each grade level. DSA did not describe how teachers will address the fundamental difference between grade level standards.*
The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	A.3 Program of Instruction	6. What activities would I see 4th, 5th, 6th grade students engaged in the combined classroom that would demonstrate the increases of rigor in the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards from grade level to grade level. *DSA described different activities or projects that each grade level would complete.*
The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	A.3.2 Mastery and Promotion	7. Describe the process that will be used to determine grade level promotion/retention decisions. • What are the criteria for promotion from one grade level to the next? The narrative states that "numerous attempts and various strategies" will be used as part of the promotion process for struggling students. Describe some of the strategies that may be used in this process. *DSA described the criteria for promotion and the assessments used for determining student mastery.*

The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	A.5 PMP	8. Your PMP states that you expect a baseline of 63.5% passing Math AIMS and 74.5% passing Reading AIMS. • Describe the reasons your baseline is higher than the passing rates used to describe your target population. (55% passing Math, 70% passing Reading – page 5 of A.2) • What is your plan for meeting the needs of students that enter the school below grade level? *DSA stated that academic rigor, family involvement, and the base of students coming from the preschool were factors that led to setting a baseline higher than the passing rates used to describe the target population.*
The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	A.5 PMP	9. Consider this scenario: at the end of the 45-day screening process, a third of your students are failing at least one core academic class. Walk us through how your Performance Management Plan would structure the school's response. • Describe the process for analyzing the data *DSA stated that the first step would be to review data at a staff development session. DSA described a process for analyzing data.*
The information provided by the applicant raised additional questions and/or concerns in the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	A.6 Curriculum	10. What components will your administrators be looking for to identify an effective lesson plan aligned Arizona Common Core Standards? • Would you identify those elements in the 2nd grade Math curriculum sample? • How strongly aligned do you think this summative assessment is with the objective? • How would you change it to improve it? *DSA described elements that would be included in an effective lesson plan aligned to the Arizona Common Core Standards. DSA identified elements described in the 2nd grade Math curriculum samples. DSA stated that a team worked on the curriculum samples. DSA stated that the assessment in the 2nd grade Math curriculum sample does not meet the Common Core Standards. DSA described revisions that could be made to some assessment items.*

The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	B.1	11. Describe your strengths and challenges related to running your current preschool. *DSA described strengths as the background in special education, support for individual instruction. DSA stated that challenges were growth of preschool to 15 students in the first six months.*
The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	B.1	12. Describe how the costs associated with special education services, business consulting, and management services were determined. • Mr. Hookstra was asked to identify which services he will provide as a consultant to the school. *DSA stated that two or three consulting services were contacted and the costs were based on a quote from the selected company. Mr. Hookstra stated that his consulting services would be in the area of special education.*
The applicant provided additional information that improved the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	C.1 Facilities Acquisition	13. The start up budget states that marketing and advertising will start following charter approval in January and continuing through September 2013. The facilities narrative states that move in will occur in July 2014. Clarify the timeline for the start-up of the school. *DSA stated that the school will open in 2013. DSA stated that facilities acquisition will begin upon approval of the charter.* <u>The applicant provided information in the interview which should be incorporated in the narrative.</u>

The applicant provided additional information that improved the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	C.1 Facilities Acquisition	14. Describe the arrangements that have been made regarding the facility to be used for the school. • What relationship will the proposed school have with the preschool that is moving into the facility in July 2013? • Is the rent of the facility part of the start-up budget? *DSA described a verbal agreement with the landlord of the facility. DSA described the layout of the facility and clarified that the preschool will not share space with the proposed charter school. DSA stated that fees were not included in the start-up budget because the leasing manager of the facility will not require any upfront costs or deposits. DSA stated that any additional deposits will come out of the preschool budget.* <u>The applicant provided information in the interview which should be incorporated in the narrative.</u>
The information provided by the applicant raised additional questions and/or concerns in the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	C.3 Personnel	15. The personnel narrative indicates that in year one there will be four classrooms – 1-kindergarten, 1 – 1st grade, a combined 2nd and 3rd grade, and a combined 4th,5th,6th grade. The personnel narrative also indicates that 3 teachers will be on staff. Describe the plan to provide grade level instruction for all students with this plan. • How will special education services be provided *DSA stated that special education services would be provided by the classroom teacher, or contracted services would be provided depending on the needs of students. DSA stated that other services would be contracted to meet the specific needs of students. DSA stated implementation of the RtI model and small group instruction "eliminates a lot of special education qualifications, especially students with SLD."*

The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	C.5 Budget	16. Describe the plan for achieving financial sustainability if you do not meet your enrollment target. • What adjustments or modifications will be made to your operational budget if you do not meet your enrollment target? • DSA was asked to identify the custodial costs in the Year 1 Operational Budget. *DSA described the plan if the enrollment target is not met. DSA identified areas that could be cut or reduced in the budget. DSA identified the custodial services in the Year 1 Operational Budget.*