AGENDA ITEM: NEW CHARTER APPLICATION – DESERT STAR ACADEMY, INC.

Desert Star Academy, Inc. submitted a complete charter application package for the Board's consideration. The revised application package does not meet the requirements set by the Board for the 2013-2014 application cycle. This report contains:

1. A brief introduction to the application package,
2. An overview of each section of the application package, including:
    a. A description of the proposed education plan,
    b. A description of the applicant's organization with a summary of information submitted regarding applicant education and experience,
    c. A description of the applicant's business plan, and
    d. Information from the in-person interview,
3. The overall score for the application package,
4. Staff's recommendation regarding this application package.

Additional items in the portfolio include:

- A copy of the final scoring rubric which confirms the application package does not meet the requirements as demonstrated through the review of the preliminary application package submitted on June 30 (including the technical assistance provided to the applicant) and review of the revised application package submitted on December 21, and
- Each section of the revised application package.
- A copy of the applicant's request that the revised application package not meeting the scoring criteria move forward for Board consideration.

A link to the audio recording of the in-person interview is found on agenda item M. 2.

APPLICATION INTRODUCTION

Desert Star Academy, Inc. is an Arizona non-profit corporation formed in 2011. The authorized representative for the corporation is Margie Montgomery. The proposed school, Desert Star Academy, will serve grades K-6 in the area south of Bullhead City, Arizona and north of the Fort Mojave Indian Reservation, encompassing the unincorporated cities of Fort Mohave and Mohave Valley, Arizona.

Mission Statement

The stated mission of Desert Star Academy is as follows: Desert Star Academy's mission is to educate all children in the community with a rigorous curriculum rich in technology to become successful students in junior high, high school and beyond. Each scholar will become productive family members, outstanding citizens and effective leaders.

Target Population

Desert Star Academy will serve the community south of Bullhead City and north of the Fort Mojave Indian Reservation, encompassing the unincorporated cities of Fort Mohave and Mohave Valley. The applicant characterized the target population as consisting of two distinct demographic groups. One is described as bordering the Fort Mojave Indian Reservation and consisting of a culturally diverse group that is predominantly low income and includes a transient population employed by seasonal agricultural jobs. The other group is described as being predominantly white with low to middle income and employed in small to medium sized business in the Fort Mohave community.

Student Count

Year	Grades Served	# of Students	# of Sites
1	K-6	85	1
2	K-6	140	1
3	K-6	215	1

School Calendar
Standard, 144 days

A. EDUCATION PLAN

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

Educational Philosophy
The narrative states that Desert Star Academy believes that successful accomplished scholars must excel in academics, be productive citizens within their community and be leaders among their peers. The applicant provided the list of the following items as elements that support their educational philosophy:

- *Rigorous Academics*: Scholars will engage in a data-driven curriculum appropriate to their learning strengths and modalities that will close the achievement gap among scholars falling below grade level and challenge excelling scholars to apply knowledge in solving global situations and problems in all content areas including Science, Social Studies.

- *Family Involvement*: Students will participate with their families on class assignments, projects and monthly activities at the Academy that are designed to nurture and strengthen each scholar and form a parent and school partnership.

- *Community Partnerships*: Students will engage in community projects, events or organizations through partnerships with Desert Star Academy. Community leaders will be invited to make presentations that promote and involve each scholar in a club, organization or event.

Program of Instruction
Framework: The narrative states that Desert Star Academy will offer a curriculum as outlined in the Core Knowledge Sequence for K-6 aligned to the Common Core Standards. The Language Arts curriculum will include use of the MacMillan McGraw-Hill "Imagine It" and "Treasure" resources. Saxon Math will be the primary resource used for mathematics instruction. The applicant states that additional resources will be added to ensure that all scholars master the Common Core Standards in the area of mathematics. The applicant states that the Core Knowledge Sequence will provide teachers with instruction resources for science and social studies.

Methods of Instruction: The narrative lists the following to be used as methods of instruction:
- Differentiated Small Group Instruction
- Oral Comprehension Strategies
- Cooperative Learning Projects

Methods of Assessment: The narrative lists the following to be used as their methods of assessment:
- Formative Assessment
  - Acuity Software – beginning, middle and end of year assessments
  - Weekly reading assessments

- Embedded Saxon Math assessments
- Formal and informal observations
- Project presentations
- Formal and informal written assessment
- Performance assessments
- Student self-assessments

- Summative Assessment
  - Measure mastery of Common Core Standards
  - Data will be linked to formative data results
  - Results will be used to guide staff development

PMP
The Performance Management Plan (PMP) for new applicants is for the purpose of ensuring the school's curriculum, instruction, monitoring of student achievement, and professional development are ready to be implemented.

The applicant did not meet the criteria in one scoring area: A.5k. The applicant did not provide adequate resources to implement the action steps that support the described professional development for Math and Reading.

Curriculum Samples
Curriculum samples for Desert Star Academy were provided for grades K-6. 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.

Grade	Math	Reading	Writing	Science
K	+	+	+	
1	+	+	+	
2	+	+	+	
3	+	+	-	
4	+	-	+	+
5	+	+	-	
6	+	+	-	

EDUCATION PLAN FINDINGS

PRELIMINARY WRITTEN APPLICATION PACKAGE:
46/81 scoring areas (57%) did not meet the criteria.

During the in-person interview the applicant responded to the questions regarding the submitted Education Plan.

The individuals who participated in the interview answered questions with responses that restated information found in the preliminary written Education Plan, resulting in no additional or clarifying information being obtained.

The TRP provided the applicant with written technical assistance based on its review of the preliminary written application package and responses provided during the interview.

REVISED WRITTEN APPLICATION PACKAGE:
8/81 scoring areas (10%) did not meet the criteria.

B. ORGANIZATION PLAN

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

Desert Star Academy, Inc. is a non-profit corporation, located in Mohave Valley, Arizona, that was created on June 3, 2011 for charitable, scientific and educational purposes with two Directors: Margie Montgomery and William Hookstra.

Education Service Provider
Desert Star Academy, Inc. does not intend to contract with or have a governance relationship with an Educational Service Provider.

School Governing Body
Pursuant to A.R.S. 15-183 (E)(8), a School Governing Body separate from the corporate board will be established. The Corporate Board will appoint the founding Governing Board. After the founding Governing Board has been established the Governing Board and School Director will make recommendations for appointments to fill vacancies. The Corporate Board will make the final selection from the list of recommendations.

School Governing Body Member Type	Number	Name
Organization Principal(s)	1 (Non-voting member)	Margie Montgomery
School Staff		
Parent(s)	1	Nikki Smith
Community	6	Barry Bower, Nick Economou, Andrea Economou, Steve West, 2 TBD
Other-Business Community		
Other – Institute of Higher Education		

Roles and Responsibilities

Corporate Board	Governing Body
• Review financial documents • Review governing board meeting minutes • Monitor legal and financial procedures • Set the salary of the School Director	• Recruit, manage and hire the School Director • Provide guidance and support to the School Director in the execution of the mission and vision of the school. • Set all school policies • Delegate appropriate responsibility and authority to the School Director to lead Desert Star Academy • Ensure the school is meeting its intended

	objectives as evident in student test scores and academic achievement • Approve the annual budget. • Approve job descriptions and responsibilities for the administrative and instructional staff • Determine compensation plans for the School Director • Approve compensation plans for the administrative and instructional staff • Authorize fund transfers of more than $15,000 between categories in the annual budget • Review and approve curriculum • Ensure compliance with all state, federal, and grant laws and stipulations (e.g. Open Meeting Laws) • Attend annual Board training

Charter Principals Background Information

Authorized Representative: *Margie Montgomery*
Confirmed Education History: Master of Education in Educational Leadership, Northern Arizona University, 2001
Confirmed Employment History: School Director, Desert Star Preschool, 9/2011 – Present, Special Services Director, Mohave Accelerated Learning Center, 8/2007 – 6/2011, Special Education Teacher, Mohave Valley Elementary District #16, 8/2004 – 6/2007
Arizona FCC Expires: 06/15/2017
Review of Individual Financial Position: No follow-up required
Current or Past Charter Affiliations: None

Principal Name: *William Hookstra*
Confirmed Education History: Master of Arts in School Psychology, Alliant International University – San Francisco, 2004
Confirmed Employment History: School Psychologist and Special Education Director, Mohave Valley School District #16, 07/2006 – Present,
Arizona FCC Expires: 9/6/2018
Review of Individual Financial Position: No follow-up required
Current or Past Charter Affiliations: None

ORGANIZATION PLAN FINDINGS

PRELIMINARY WRITTEN APPLICATION PACKAGE:
1/24 scoring areas (4%) did not meet the criteria.

During the in-person interview the applicant responded to the questions regarding the submitted Organization Plan.

The individuals who participated in the interview answered questions with responses that restated information found in the preliminary written Organization Plan, resulting in no additional or clarifying information being obtained.

The TRP provided the applicant with written technical assistance based on its review of the preliminary written application package and responses provided during the interview.

REVISED WRITTEN APPLICATION PACKAGE:
0/24 scoring areas (0%) did not meet the criteria.

C. BUSINESS PLAN

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

Site Information

Proposed School Name:	Desert Star Academy
Proposed Location:	Unconfirmed Location: In the South Fort Mohave / North Mohave Valley area, the midpoint between the two identified target communities.
Proposed Facility:	Option 1: Modular buildings with classrooms and a bathroom rented from the Head Start Program. Classrooms are 900 Sq. Ft. Application states that the buildings are built and coded for school use. Option 2: Rent space in strip mall location currently being negotiated for use by Desert Star Preschool. Classrooms are 1190 Sq. Ft. Option 3: Rent four classrooms from the local Methodist Church. Each room is 700 Sq. Ft.

Budget

Start-up Budget
The start-up budget, in the amount of $7,000, covers the costs described in the Start-Up Budget Assumptions narrative with revenue that has been verified. At the end of the start-up period, verified revenue exceeds expenditures.

Secured Funds
The applicant has secured a loan from Margie Montgomery for start-up purposes. The secured funds, in the amount of $7,000 as stated by the applicant, are available as confirmed by Chase Bank.

Annual Operating Budgets
The operating budget for Year One is based on 95% of anticipated student enrollment of 85 students, with a projected per-student equalization funding of $6,382 as calculated based on FY2012 revenue worksheets, including base support level weights, and weighted students counts, and additional assistance multipliers. At the end of each year revenue exceeds expenditures, with the following year-end balances: Year 1 ($34,926); Year 2 ($30,542); Year 3 ($62,647).

BUSINESS PLAN FINDINGS

PRELIMINARY WRITTEN APPLICATION PACKAGE:
7/28 scoring areas (25%) did not meet the criteria.

During the in-person interview the applicant responded to the questions regarding the submitted Business Plan.

The individuals who participated in the interview were able to answer questions with responses that provided clarification or added detail to the preliminary written Business Plan.

The TRP provided the applicant with written technical assistance based on its review of the preliminary written application package and responses provided during the interview.

REVISED WRITTEN APPLICATION PACKAGE:
0/28 scoring areas (0%) did not meet the criteria.

OVERALL SCORE

Preliminary application package: 41% of the scoring areas did not meet the criteria.

Revised application package: 6% of the scoring areas did not meet the criteria.

BOARD OPTIONS

Option 1: The Board may approve the application package. The following language is provided 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 Desert Star Academy, Inc. to establish Desert Star Academy charter school to serve grades K-6.

Option 2: The Board may deny the application package. Staff recommends the following language 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 Desert Star Academy, Inc. 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:

- Lack of an Education Plan that presents a rationale for the selected approach including research that meets the Board's criteria as stated in the scoring rubric and demonstrated through responses to interview questions, and
- Lack of an Education Plan that includes a PMP with adequate resources to implement the action steps that support the described professional development for Math and Reading that meets the Board's criteria as stated in the scoring rubric, and
- Lack of a Reading and Writing curriculum aligned to state standards as stated in the scoring rubric.

Option 3: 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 Desert Star Academy, Inc. 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: (state all the reasons given in Option 2) and, (member making the motion should select all that apply and complete the sentence where necessary).

- ❑ Lack of an Organization Plan that meets the Board's criteria as stated in the scoring rubric and/or demonstrated through responses to interview questions,
- ❑ Lack of a Business Plan that meets the Board's criteria as stated in the scoring rubric and/or demonstrated through responses to interview questions,

And/or I move to reject the application package and deny the request for a charter of Desert Star Academy, Inc. to establish a charter school for the reason(s) that:

- ❑ The applicant is not sufficiently qualified to operate a charter school based on (insert the facts from the background/fingerprint/credit report of the specific Officers, Members, Directors, or Partners that form the basis for the decision).
- ❑ The applicant is not sufficiently qualified to operate a charter school based on the (insert the facts from the financial, operational and/or academic performance of associated schools that form the basis for the decision).