

AGENDA ITEM: Verde Secondary Academy Public Charter High School Application Overview

Verde Secondary Academy Public Charter High School submitted an application for a new charter school on July 29, 2008.

- Verde Secondary Academy Public Charter High School is a 501c3 not-for-profit corporation that was created on July 28, 2008 with the purpose of conducting public education. The charter operations would be managed by the Leona Group, Inc.
- The name of the school is Verde Secondary Academy and will be located in Tucson, Arizona.
- The applicant will initially serve grades 9-12 and have an enrollment cap of 300 in the first year and grow to 500 by year three while serving the same grade levels.
- The applicant has MET all the substantive eligibility criteria as documented in the following pages and in the [attached scoring rubric](#).
- Fingerprint clearance cards and background information including credit, employment and education have been verified for all corporate principals.
- Related party operations of note:
 - 12 schools operating: 8 Performing, 1 Underperforming, 3 new schools

Verde Academy Public Charter High School	
Instructional Program	
Mission	To provide each student a diverse education in a safe and supportive environment that promotes respect, self-discipline, creativity, academic excellence and service to the community.
Description of Community and Target Market	Located in the northwest section of Tucson bordering Oro Valley and Marana and comprised of a widely diverse population. Verde Academy will serve students in grades 9-12 who seek an alternative to the larger higher high school in the surrounding area and/or that is able to better meet their needs.
Methods of Instruction	The integration of a well articulated curriculum implemented consistently by all teachers through the use of nine instructional elements (Pollack, Hunter), followed with benchmark assessment and remediation as needed to ensure mastery.
School Calendar	Alternative, 144 days in 4 blocks of instruction
Organizational Structure	
Corporate Principals	William Coats, Michele Kaye
Governing Body	Charter organization- 1, William Coats; no others identified
Site Information	
Location	To be constructed within a 1-mile radius of Thornydale Road and Magee Road in Tucson.
Unsecured Facility	Three classroom buildings each consisting of 5-900 ft ² classrooms, restrooms and storage totaling 6,000 ft ² , and one administrative office housing 7 offices, staff kitchen/workroom, reception and restrooms in a 2,000 ft ² facility.

Year	Grades Served	# of Students	# of Sites
1	9-12	300	1
2	9-12	400	1
3	9-12	500	1

The following information is being provided for consideration:

Applicant’s Background Information:

1. The corporation has two members, with one serving on the governing board
 - Dr. William Coats: Founder and CEO of the Leona Group, Dr. Coats currently serves as Sole Incorporator, Director and President of Verde Secondary Public Charter High School. Dr. Coats oversees 72 charter schools across six states. Dr. Coats is a former superintendent and earned his doctorate in Research and Data Analysis.
 - Michele Kaye: Currently serves as the Chief Operating Officer for the Leona Group since 2004. She has served in a variety of roles with the Leona Group and within the charter school arena for the past 10 years. Ms. Kaye holds a Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership from Northern Arizona University.
2. The AZ LEARNS profiles and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) designations for the existing campuses under the Leona Group Inc. are as follows:

School Name	AZ LEARNS	AYP
Arts Academy of Mesa	FY09 First Year	FY09 First Year
Gilbert Arts Academy	FY09 First Year	FY09 First Year
Liberty Arts Academy	FY09 First Year	FY09 First Year
Apex Academy	1 st year Underperforming	Yes
El Dorado High School	Performing	Yes
Maya High School	Performing	No
Montezuma Middle School	Performing	Yes
South Pointe Public Charter Elementary School	Performing	No
South Pointe Junior High School	Performing	Yes
Summit High School	Performing	Yes
Tempe Accelerated High School	Performing	No
Tucson Accelerated High School	Performing	No

New Charter Application Background:

Comprehensive Program of Instruction/Curriculum

Short description:

Verde Secondary Academy will implement its program of instruction based on the body of research on effective schools which established seven-correlates to produce high student achievement.

Verde Secondary Academy staff believe that all children can learn but at different rates. Verde Secondary Academy program of instruction will have as its core high yield strategies which will result in significant improvement in student achievement. These high yield strategies include:

- Standards-based course alignment
- Curriculum mapping
- Assessment of the pre and post test nature in conjunction with regularly occurring formative testing
- Cooperative learn and differentiated instruction to guarantee 100% participation
- Technology integration
- System-wide benchmark testing

Instructional staff will be trained to implement nine instructional elements as defined by J. Pollock. These nine elements incorporate the required articulated curriculum standards, planning and pacing and delivery of instruction, varying assessments and criterion-based feedback.

The application meets the minimum requirements for all areas of the Program of Instruction.

Business Plan/Budget

Short description:

The applicant has designated \$600,000 for start-up purposes. Nearly 30% of the expenses associated with the start-up are designated for instructional supplies and training for instructors.

The operational budget is based on 100% of the projected enrollment. The application has a sufficient amount of budget balance should it be required. No categorical or grant revenues have been included in the operating budget.

The business section meets the minimum scoring requirements for all the areas within the Business Plan.

Motion Notes for Verde Academy Public Charter High School:

- The application includes all required curriculum samples to operate a grade 9-12 program on an alternative schedule.
- The application met the scoring criteria in both the Program of Instruction and Business sections.