

AGENDA ITEM: Opportunities for Youth, Inc. Application Overview

Opportunities for Youth, Inc. submitted an application for a new charter school on July 22, 2008.

- Opportunities for Youth, Inc. is a 501c3 not-for-profit corporation that was created on February 7, 2007 with the purpose of conducting public education.
- The name of the school is Superstition Vista’s Leadership Academy and will be located in Mesa, Arizona.
- The applicant will initially serve grades 7-9 and have an enrollment cap of 120 in the first year and grow to 160 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: None

Opportunities for Youth, Inc.	
Instructional Program	
Mission	The mission of Superstition Vista’s Leadership Academy is to engage students in critical thinking and teamwork that empowers them toward life-long learning and global citizenship as community leaders.
Description of Community and Target Market	The demographics of the Superstition Vista service area represent an extremely diverse mix. Income levels of families within the projected 5-mile service area of schools are comprised of middle class and below. The target population is junior high students primarily from Mesa, Gilbert and Apache Junction.
Methods of Instruction	Instruction will be based on the US Department of Education recognized EdVisions Model focused on emphasizing rigorous and relevant content, developing smaller learning communities, project-based learning and advisory grouping and service learning.
School Calendar	Standard; 183 instructional days.
Organizational Structure	
Corporate Principals	Jill Gaitens, Dennis Gaitens
Governing Body	Charter Organization members- 2, Jill Gaitens, Dennis Gaitens, School staff, Parents, Community, Other, all yet to be determined.
Site Information	
Location	Desert Haven Community Church, 3065 S. Ellsworth Road, Mesa, AZ, 85212
Unsecured Facility	The Commons Room, 6,000 ft ² as the intellectual hub of the school; 4- multipurpose Seminar rooms- 1,800 ft ² each; 4-Muti-purpose rooms, 1,800 ft ² ea; shared teacher work area; 2-Specialty labs, 900 ft ² each (technology); outdoor learning space

Year	Grades Served	# of Students	# of Sites
1	7-9	120	1
2	7-9	140	1
3	7-9	160	1

The following information is being provided for consideration:

Applicant's Background Information:

1. The corporation has two members, with both serving on the governing board:
 - **Jill Gaitens:** Currently serves as a compliance director for LEAD Charter Schools and principal of Leading Edge Academy at East Mesa. Mrs. Gaitens has a Bachelor of Science degree: HRM, 1990, Concentration in Training and Development and a LEE Masters degree in Educational Administration and Supervision, ASU West 2006. In addition, Mrs. Gaitens completed course work in a variety of areas.
 - **Dennis Gaitens:** Currently serves as a Marine Corps JROTC teacher at Mesquite High School, Gilbert Public Schools since 2006. Mr. Gaitens served in a similar position in Ray Unified School District from 2005-2006 and at Primavera Technical Learning Center as a Physical Education/Health Teacher, Chandler, from 2004-2005. Prior to entering the field of education, Mr. Gaitens served in the US Marines from 1983-2004.

New Charter Application Background:

Comprehensive Program of Instruction/Curriculum

Short description:

Superstition Vista's Leadership Academy will offer an instructional program organized from the eight key elements of the EdVisions Inc. model in a grade 7th-9th grade configuration. Special emphasis in the EdVisions model is on physical, emotional, social and cognitive development. These elements are implemented through curriculum and instructional methods aligned to Arizona State Standards with outcomes designed for students to develop as self-directed life-long learners.

All curriculum samples provided were consistent with knowledge and skill development required by Arizona Academic Standards.

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

Business Plan/Budget

Short description:

Opportunities for Youth, Inc. will build on land and facilities leased from Desert Haven Community Church in Mesa, AZ which has provided its commitment pending charter signing. The applicants have been awarded a 2-year U.S. Department of Education Grant for Planning Implementation of Charter Schools in the amount of \$312,900 for FY09 and FY10. As seasoned leaders in charter school operations, Opportunities for Youth, Inc. principals have contributed a verified financial commitment of \$50,000.

The operational budget is based on 100% of the projected 120 student FY09 enrollment. The application has a sufficient unallocated amount of budget capacity should an adjustment be required.

The business section has one areas that does not meet the scoring criteria. The following area remains deficient:

Area 2.3b: Weekly Schedule

- The re-submitted application continues to lack sufficient clarity regarding the instructional time allocated for the daily core academic areas.

Motion Notes for Opportunities for Youth Inc.:

- The application includes all required curriculum samples to operate a grade 7-9 program.
- The application meets the scoring criteria in both the Program of Instruction and the Business Plan sections.