

AGENDA ITEM: Agape Instructional Resources Application Overview

Agape Instructional Resources submitted an application for a new charter school on June 23, 2008.

- Agape Instructional Resources is a 501c3 non-profit corporation that was created on September 13, 2007 with the purpose of raising funds and engaging in other activities for the benefit of operating a charter school.
- The name of the school is Learning Edge Academy and will be located in Maricopa, Arizona.
- The applicant will initially serve grades K-12 and have an enrollment cap of 500 in the first year and grow to 800 by year three while serving the same grade levels.
- The applicant has not met all the substantive eligibility criteria as documented in the following pages and in the [attached scoring rubric](#).
- Fingerprint clearance cards and background information for all appropriate parties were provided and verified. Additional information has been provided.

Agape Instructional Resources	
Instructional Program	
Mission	Learning Edge Academy will provide a student centered environment which promotes experiential learning. Students, parents, and the staff share responsibility for creating learning edge educational opportunities, academic excellence, and character building to inspire exciting, meaningful, real-life learning.
Description of Community and Target Market	The demographics of Maricopa reflect a highly diverse community in a growing area. Families are primarily middle class with small areas of lower socio-economic status. The target market for students is primarily the city of Maricopa.
Methods of Instruction	The school will use a student centered, experiential integrated thematic instructional model for all grade levels. Staff will develop curriculum and instruction based on the Arizona Academic Standards and focus on real world locations, situations and events.
School Calendar	Alternative, 145 instructional days, 4 day week/extended hours
Organizational Structure	
Corporate Principals	Stephanie Sharp, Todd Sharp, Julie Jimenez, Andrew Miritello
Governing Body	Two (2) Charter Organization Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephanie Sharp, Julie Jimenez Three (3) To Be Decided Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 School Staff, 1 Parent, 1 Community
Site Information	
Location	The city limits of Maricopa have been identified as the planned location for the school. Outlying areas will include the Gila River Indian Community.
Unsecured Facility	The applicant has identified needing 35,000 sq ft including: 20 Standard Classrooms (800 sq ft); 2 Special Education Classrooms (2,000 sq ft); 1 Tech/Library Classroom (2,000 sq ft); 1 Gym/Multipurpose Room (6,000 sq ft); Resource Center/Admin Office (3,000 sq ft); Restrooms, Hallways, Entryways, Mechanical/Storage Rooms (6,000 sq ft)

Year	Grades Served	# of Students	# of Sites
1	K-12	500	1
2	K-12	600	1
3	K-12	800	1

The following information is being provided for consideration:

Applicant's Background Information:

1. The corporation has four members, with two serving on the governing board:
 - Stephanie Sharp will serve as the instructional director for Learning Edge Academy and as the Authorized Representative for Agape Instructional Resources. Mrs. Sharp completed her undergraduate Bachelor's Degree in Education with a focus on Elementary Education and a Minor in History from Arizona State University. She worked for 10 years as a classroom teacher in grades five through eight. Mrs. Sharp has a Master's Degree in Organizational Management from the University of Phoenix and a second Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from Northern Arizona University. She is employed by the Maricopa Unified School District as a middle school principal. Currently, Mrs. Sharp is enrolled as doctoral student at Northern Arizona University for Educational Leadership. Pursuant to the background check, Mrs. Sharp stated on her background information sheet that she had been employed as the principal at Kingman Unified School District. The employment was verified but the position was a teacher. Upon requesting an explanation from the applicant, Mrs. Sharp provided the following; "This is a typographical error and although I did serve for six months as a principal intern during my internship program, I was employed from 2000-2004 as a teacher of 5-8th grades." Mrs. Sharp's education was validated with no concerns.
 - Todd Sharp is an ordained minister and has obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Pastoral Ministry from Nazarene Bible College in Colorado Springs. Currently, Mr. Sharp serves as the Senior Pastor at Maricopa Living Water Church of the Nazarene. He has several years of experience working with teens and youth in the educational and pastoral environment. Pursuant to the background check, Mr. Sharp's employment, education, and credit were verified with no concerns.
 - Julie Jimenez will serve as the Executive Director for the Learning Edge Academy in addition to her responsibilities on the board. Ms. Jimenez completed her undergraduate Bachelor's Degree in Social Work at Bemidji State University in Minnesota. Ms. Jimenez also has a Master's Degree in Social work from Arizona State University and has approximately 10 years of experience establishing and implementing school based support programs through a community based non-profit behavioral health agency. She remains the Director and Grant/Contract Manager for Maricopa/Ak-Chin CAASA currently in operation in the community of Maricopa, Arizona. Pursuant to the background check, Ms. Jimenez's employment, education, and credit were verified with no concerns.
 - Andrew Miritello is a certified vocational educator. Mr. Miritello has worked with the Gila River Indian Community for the past several years. He has worked primarily in the construction field and brings knowledge of both the construction and vocational fields to the corporate organization. Pursuant to the background check, a portion of Mr. Miritello's employment was unable to be verified as reported by the applicant. Staff requested verification from Mr. Miritello of employment during this period. The applicant submitted a letter stating that the company was in receivership and was not able to get into contact with the company. Mr. Miritello's credit and education was verified with no concerns.

New Charter Application Background:

Comprehensive Program of Instruction/Curriculum

Short description:

Agape Instructional Resources is centered on the principles that instruction should be student centered and experiential. The curriculum focuses on immersion and being their experiences, integrated themes, meaningful thematic content and high standards and expectations for academic achievement, positive

behavior and student learning. Schooling will be student centered taking its cues from students' interests, concerns and questions. Teachers infuse into such curriculum all the skills, knowledge, and concepts.

The application fails to meet the minimum requirements in the following areas of the curriculum samples provided:

1. Area 1.1a: Needs Analysis
 - No clear evidence of demand or need. The benefit to the community is unclear. The revised application does not sufficiently address the above concern.
2. Area 1.4a: Professional Development Plan
 - Unclear how Learning Edge will recruit, develop and retain "experiential" teachers with the level of competence required by the curriculum? The revised application does not sufficiently address the above concern.

Business Plan/Budget

Short description:

The applicant has designated \$20,000 for start-up purposes. A majority of the expenses associated with the start-up are land improvements and utilities. The applicant hopes to raise additional funds through loans, donations and grants when the charter is granted. The applicant has mentioned talks with the Maricopa Living Water Church of the Nazarene and Ak-Chin Indian Community. The directors have agreed to defer any formal salary until the start of the school year.

The operational budget is based on 100% of the projected enrollment. The application has a sufficient amount of budget balance should it be required.

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

1. Area 2.9a: Start-Up Budget
 - Unrealistic timeline and cost allocations for every aspect of start-up, from marketing to facility development. Still unclear whether the school is leasing or buying the facility and where that money comes from. The revised application clarifies that the facility will be built by the school through loans. No evidence of a loan is provided.
2. Area 2.9b: Start-Up Timeline
 - The revised application sufficiently addresses the concern regarding the deferral of salaries, however the timeline does not provide secured money to acquire a facility or discuss when the building will begin to be built.
3. Area 2.9c: Start-Up Budget
 - The revised application relies on unsecured funds.
4. Area 2.9d: Start-Up Budget Assumptions
 - The revised application addresses the Dean's salary, however the \$16,000 for marketing is not accounted for.
5. Area 2.9l: Audit Expenses
 - The revised application indicates the audit is part of their accounting services and does not provide a separate cost in the audit field. Unclear if the intent is to hire the accounting service to complete audit which would be inappropriate.
6. Area 2.9o: First Year Month-by-Month Cash Flow Budget
 - The revised application's Attachment I does not contain the undocumented \$20,000 secured loan found on the Operational Budget.

Motion Notes for Agape Instructional Resources:

- The application includes all required curriculum samples to operate a K-12 program.
- The application failed to meet the scoring criteria in the program of Business Plan section; 1 area received a "Fall Below the Expectation" and 5 out of 39 areas received a score of "Approaching."
- The application fails to meet the scoring criteria due to one area scoring a falls below and more than one scoring area in each section scored approaches.