

AGENDA ITEM: Mesa School-Community Alliance Application Overview

Mesa School-Community Alliance submitted an application for a new charter school on July 23, 2008.

- Mesa School-Community Alliance is a non-profit organization that was created on June 5, 2008 with the purpose of owning and operating one or more charter schools, and shall engage in activities to improve pre-kindergarten, elementary, secondary and postsecondary education and to provide the opportunity for innovation in the management, curriculum and methods of instructional delivery at such schools.
- Two school sites are indicated on Attachment C. The name of the school provided is Superstition School and will be located in Mesa, Arizona.
- The applicant will initially serve grades 7-12, have an enrollment cap of 700, and operate 2 sites in the first year and will add grades 4-6 in year two. The applicant plans to grow to 1,500 students, operate 3 sites, and serve grades K-12 by year three, although the budget does not support the growth in schools or students.
- 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 including credit, employment and education have been verified for the corporate principal.

Mesa School-Community Alliance	
Instructional Program	
Mission	Mesa School-Community Alliance will provide superior educational services in small, focused learning environments incorporating technologically blended and enhanced instruction.
Description of Community and Target Market	The schools will be located within an area of rapid commercial development including large retail stores, a new hospital, and light retail expansion along a high traffic arterial. The schools will be located near new, moderately priced, single family housing developments. The target market will be all students residing within a 10 mile radius of Southern and Crismon.
Methods of Instruction	Mesa School-Community Alliance will employ differentiated instruction, direct instruction, on-line instruction, opportunities for students to apply learning to personal areas of interest, cooperative learning and group instruction.
School Calendar	K-8: Standard 180 Days 9-12: Alternative 144 Days
Organizational Structure	
Corporate Principals	Paul T. Wright, Three (3) "To Be Determined" members
Governing Body	Paul Wright, One (1) School Staff TBD, One (1) Community Member TBD, Two (2) Other Members TBD
Site Information	
Location	Primary: 1022 E. Southern Ave., Mesa, AZ 85208 Proposed: 1731 N. Country Club Dr., Mesa, AZ 85208 Proposed: 323 E. McKellips Rd., AZ 85201
Secured Facility	Total space for each property is between 16,728 sq. ft. and 25,250 sq. ft. There are between 12 and 18 classrooms, 1 office, and 1 multi-purpose room at each site.

Year	Grades Served	# of Students	# of Sites
1	7-12	700	2
2	4-12	1000	2
3	K-12	1500	3

The following information is being provided for consideration:

Applicant's Background Information:

1. The corporation has one current member that will be serving on the governing board:
 - Dr. Paul Wright is the authorized representative and Executive Director of the charter management organization. Dr. Wright holds a Doctorate in Education and a Masters in Special Education. Currently he serves as the Development Director for Mesa Public Schools. Dr. Wright previously served as Vice President for Student Services at the Leona Group. He is certified as a superintendent, principal and special education teacher. Pursuant to the background check, Dr. Wright's credit, employment and education were all validated with no concerns.

New Charter Application Background:

Comprehensive Program of Instruction/Curriculum

Short description:

Mesa School-Community Alliance will use best educational practices. The staff will provide a rigorous, relevant environment for students who wish to enrich and or accelerate their coursework within a hybrid (traditional teaching and technology) educational format. The mixed educational format will combine didactic teaching and learning through digitally-accessed curricula. The school will offer students a small school, in comparison with traditional schools.

Instructional differentiation is critical to student success. The Mesa School-Community Alliance staff will provide instructional differentiation by accommodating how students learn and how learning is assessed. Direct instruction that is research based and supports proven pedagogy provides a foundation for effective learning. This form of instruction will occur in a traditional classrooms setting and allow for student and teacher interaction. Digitally accessed instruction will be a part of each student's experience. This form of independent study will allow for individualized pace, possible remediation or acceleration, the pursuit of individual interest and the mastery of critical technology-based skills.

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

1. Area 1.2a/c: K-8/9-12 Student Achievement Goals
 - (K-8) Annual 1% increase in percentage of students who achieve mastery is an inappropriately low goal, especially given that it only applies to students with 90% attendance. The revised application does not address the above concern. No revisions were found.
 - (9-12) Annual 2% increase in percentage of students who achieve mastery is an inappropriately low goal, especially given that it only applies to students with 90% attendance. The revised application addresses the 2% increase for the reading goal by increasing the percentage to 10%. However, the goals were not revised for math and writing.
2. 1.3d: Assessment
 - The revised application provides conflicting information regarding which reading POs have been identified for mastery for grades 2 through 5. Therefore, it is still unclear if the assessments allow the students to demonstrate proficiency of the identified POs.

3. Area 1.3.10 a through d: 10th Grade Writing Sample

- The revised application did not contain any Strand(s), Concept(s) or PO(s) related to writing for this grade level, therefore the instruction, student activities and assessment could not be evaluated.

Business Plan/Budget

Short description:

Mesa Schools-Community Alliance (MSCA) is a non-profit corporation governed by a Board of Directors consisting of three voting members and one non-voting member. The voting members of the Board will be appointed by the Mesa Unified School District Governing Body. The Board of Directors will set policy and govern the operations of MSCA. The Board will appoint the Executive Director who will manage the day-to-day operations of the school. Each school will have a Governing Body in accordance with A.R.S. 15-183.E which will be referred to as a School Council.

Because MSCA is converting existing district school facilities into charter schools and utilizing existing buildings, furniture, equipment, etc., there will be minimal costs associated with the start-up period. Mesa Public Schools District has committed \$750,000 as secured funds to MSCA to cover start-up and operating costs for the first three years.

The operational budget is based on 100% of the projected first year 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 2.6a: Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws

- The 12 double-sided copies of the revised application did not contain the Articles of Incorporation or the By-Laws for the applicant. The original copy on file does contain the documents and there were no TRP concerns originally.

Motion Notes for Mesa School-Community Alliance:

- 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 instruction section, in that 10 out of 102 areas received a score of "Approaching."
- The application fails the scoring criteria in that more than one scoring area in a section scored Approaches and it failed the 95% test.