AGENDA ITEM: La Tierra Community School, Inc.

La Tierra Community School, Inc. submitted an application package for the Board's consideration. This report contains:

- A staff overview and summary of the application package, including a description of the proposed education plan, a description of the applicant's organization with a summary of information submitted regarding applicant education and experience, and a description of the applicant's budget plan.
- A copy of the scoring rubric which confirms the application package does meet the requirements as demonstrated through the review of the preliminary application package submitted on July 1, 2010, the technical assistance provided to the applicant, and a review of the revised application package submitted on December 1, 2010.
- The application package submitted by the applicant.

La Tierra Community School, Inc. is an Arizona non-profit corporation. The authorized representative for the corporation is Anita Fernandez. The proposed school, La Tierra Community School, will serve grades K through 5 in Prescott. La Tierra Community School's mission statement is as follows: "La Tierra Community School will provide an active, transformative educational experience and values a respect for diversity, academic rigor and a commitment to social and environmental justice. Our program uses the natural and cultural resources of the Southwest to foster local, relevant connections for children through learning expeditions. We value children's sense of curiosity and discovery as well as their ability to think critically, reflect upon their world and promote positive change in their community."

A. EDUCATION PLAN

Educational Philosophy	**Philosophical approach** In the narrative, the applicant states that La Tierra's program will incorporate Expeditionary Learning and use the natural and cultural resources of the Southwest to foster local, relevant connections for children through learning expeditions. **Rationale** The narrative states that Expeditionary Learning has been scientifically researched over the years by independent educational researchers and respected educational organizations being proven a model of school reform that assists students in learning with depth and quality.
Target Population	The boundary area for this school will be the Prescott Unified School District and the tri-city area. There are no other elementary schools in the area that have been partnered with Expeditionary Learning Schools. The school intends to attract a diverse population of students to enhance the learning community.
Program of Instruction	**Framework** In the narrative, the applicant states that active pedagogy will be at the core of the instructional methods used at La Tierra Community School. In Expeditionary Learning Schools, curriculum is framed around Learning Expeditions, which are in-depth, multi disciplinary investigations of a rich, compelling topic. **Methods of Instruction** Learning Expeditions are built using Arizona State Standards as the foundation and long-term learning targets as the defined objective. Long-term targets help direct the learning and teaching. The Learning Expeditions are broken down into investigations, learning experiences, and ultimately daily lesson plans. **Methods of Assessment** Standards-based assessment is used at La Tierra Community School. Using long-term targets as the assessment measure, students are evaluated on the level at which they meet the target. Teachers at La Tierra Community School use both Assessment For (formative) learning and Assessment Of (summative) learning. Both formative and summative

	assessments are fully integrated into the teaching and learning. The summative assessments will range from quizzes and tests, to rubrics, oral evaluations, and performances.
School Calendar	Standard 180 Days
Student Count	
PMP	**Reading Target - Year 1:** 75% proficient; **Year 2:** 80% proficient **Math Target - Year 1:** 75% proficient; **Year 2:** 80% proficient ***2010 AIMS State Average Percent Proficient*** K-8 Reading: 74% K-8 Math: 59%

Year	Grades Served	# of Students	# of Sites
1	K-3	46	1
2	K-4	71	1
3	K-5	93	1

B. ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

La Tierra Community School, Inc. is a non-profit corporation, located in Prescott, AZ, that was created July 29, 2009 for the purpose of offering Expeditionary Learning to elementary students in Prescott, AZ. La Tierra Community School has five Directors: Dr. Anita Fernandez, Mr. David DenHartog, Dr. Paul Burkhardt, Mr. Francisco Lisbona, and Ms. Bev Santo.

Recruitment of Board Members

Any vacancy on the LTCS Governing Body occurring by reason of an increase in the number of Board members shall be filled by a majority vote cast at any regular or special meeting of the Board. In the event any LTCS Governing Body member is no longer willing or capable of serving, is disqualified or removed from office, or otherwise must vacate the office, a majority vote of the remaining members may elect a new Board member to fill the unexpired portion.

Roles and Responsibilities

Corporate Board	Governing Body
• Approve the annual budget • Approve facility purchases • Approve lease agreements	Roles and responsibilities of all Board members include, but are not limited to: • Determine school policy • Advocate good external relations with the community, school districts, media, neighbors, parents, and students • Hire and evaluate the Director • Practice strategic planning • Manage school resources effectively • Assess the organization's performance

Background Information

Corporate Principal	Education History	Employment History	FCC	Notes
Anita Fernandez (Authorized Representative)	Ph.D. Language, Reading and Culture University of Arizona	2005-Present Professor of Education/Education Program Coordinator Prescott College	Valid	There were no concerns identified through the background, internet or credit check.

David DenHartog	Ed.D. Pursuing Educational Leadership Degree Drake University	2005-Present School Designer Expeditionary Learning Schools Outward Bound	Valid	There were no concerns identified through the background, internet or credit check.
Francisco Lisbona	B.A. History Colorado State University	2003- 2006, Present Social Studies and Spanish Teacher Kestrel High School	Valid	There were no concerns identified through the background, internet or credit check.
Paul Berkhardt	Ph.D. 1999 Comparative Cultural & Literary Studies University of Arizona	2005 – present Chief Academic Officer Prescott College	Valid	There were no concerns identified through the background, internet, or credit check.
Bev Santo	Ph.D. Interdisciplinary Studies Union Institute and University	2009-Present Prescott College Instructor	Valid	There were no concerns identified through the background, internet or credit check.

Current and Prior Charter Performance

Authorized Representative	
Anita Fernandez	No association with a charter at this time.

C. BUSINESS PLAN

Site Information

Proposed School	School name: La Tierra Community School The school has an optional site located at 885 Sunset Avenue in Prescott. This site includes 6-8 classrooms, 2 offices, and a multipurpose room. It has approximately 8 thousand square feet.

Budget

Budget	Year one operating budget is based on 89% of anticipated student enrollment of 46 students. Annual budgets as presented indicate adequate resources to meet projected expenditures.
Secured Funds	The amount identified for start-up has been confirmed as having been secured.

Findings

Education	The revised application did not address 1 of the requirements in the education section of the application. See A.6g of the scoring rubric.
Organization	The revised application did not address 1 of the requirements in the organization section of the application. See B.4.2c of the scoring rubric.

Business	The revised application did not address 1 of the requirements in the business section of the application. See C.4c of the scoring rubric.

Staff Recommendation
Approve the application and grant a charter to La Tierra Community School, Inc. to establish La Tierra Community School.