

AGENDA ITEM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Application for New Charter

Request

ARCHES Academy (“Applicant”) submitted a new charter application package on May 25, 2018. The Technical Review Panel (“TRP”) evaluated the application package and determined that the revised application package meets the minimum scoring requirements set by the Board for the 2019-2020 application cycle. The Applicant also attended a capacity interview conducted by the TRP. Upon consideration of the application package and results of the capacity interview, the TRP recommends that the revised application package for the Applicant be denied.

Applicant Summary

Proposed School Name	Target Start Date	School Location	Grade Levels	School Calendar
ARCHES Academy	August 5, 2019	Apache Junction	K-8	180 days

Mission Statement

Our mission is to help each learner achieve mastery of the standards by use of authentic learning experiences, coaching and mentoring, freedom of choice, service to others, and personal responsibility. Students will learn academics and life skills in a value-rich environment stressing Honor, Courage, Strength, and Discipline. We believe that our methods will produce outstanding individuals who not only have acquired exceptional literacy in the arts and sciences, but mastery over self and true leadership ability.

Target Population

The following was excerpted from the Applicant’s Educational Plan A.2: Target Population narrative.

The Apache Junction Unified School District, within which ARCHES Academy plans to locate, reports a current Average Daily Membership of 3855. District-wide, they report the following percentages of students in various ethnicities: 63% White, 31% Hispanic/Latino, 1.5% African American, less than 1% Asian and Pacific Islander, and 2.4% that identify as more than one race. Per the enrollment report provided by the Department of Education website as of November 2016, of those that identify as Hispanic/ Latino 9.42% are English Language Learners. In addition, a full 70% of the total student population within the Apache Junction Unified School District qualifies for the Free/Reduced Lunch Program and 17% are identified as disabled.

Three Year Plan

	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Grade Levels	K-6	K-7	K-8
Enrollment	250	300	350

Proposed Location (see Business Plan C.1: Facilities Acquisition):

Unconfirmed Locations:

- Arizona Vedic Cultural Center, located at 1150 W. Superstition Boulevard, Apache Junction
- Desert Chapel United Methodist Church, located at 462 N Palo Verde Drive, Apache Junction

Program of Instruction

This summary is based on information submitted for the Applicant’s Educational Plan A.1: Educational Philosophy and A.3: Program of Instruction narratives.

ARCHES stands for "American Revolutionary Classical Holistic Educational System". The Applicant’s philosophy focuses on applying the ideals and methods of the Boy Scouts of America in an educational setting. These ideals include choice, hands-on learning, cooperative learning, recognition, leadership and community involvement. According to the Applicant, “classes are assigned and schedules designed to meet students where they are and provide the best possible outcomes for each enrolled student. Content classes are designed to accommodate short attention spans and to provide focused environments and plenty of movement for students.” The Applicant proposes to use Standards-aligned curricula for all core subjects, with teachers using a “backwards design” method to plan lessons and units. Teachers will also utilize the Core Knowledge Sequence for Science, Social Studies, Music and Fine Arts curricula. The Applicant also plans to implement a leadership program using the Warrior Ethos and The Leader-in-Me programs.

Corporate Board and School Governing Body Members	Type
Jessica Droppo	Charter Organization
Michelle Edwards	Charter Organization
Nathan King	Charter Organization
Rachel Lautenschlager	Charter Organization
Richard "Jason" Mow	Charter Organization
Quinn Thacker	Charter Organization

See Charter Principal Resumes in Appendix B.

TRP Recommendation and Scoring

The TRP assessed the application package against the evaluation criteria published in the New Charter Application Instructions. Approval is based on either receiving 95% or higher for each plan (Educational, Operational, and Business) and/or through showing capacity throughout the interview process. The following is a summary of the evaluation information in support of the recommendation by the TRP based on the revised application package and the capacity interview.

Overall Scoring Results

	Preliminary TRP Scores	Revised TRP Scores
Any Falls Below the Expectations ratings?	No	No
Any section in which more than one evaluation area scored Approaches?	Yes	No

	Percent Meets		Percent Meets	
Educational Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	No	75%	Yes	95%
Operational Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	Yes	100%	Yes	100%
Business Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	No	94%	Yes	100%

The TRP provided the Applicant with written technical assistance based on its review of the preliminary written application package and the revised written application package prior to the in-person capacity interview.

TRP Recommendation

Based on the Applicant’s application package and the in-person capacity interview, the TRP recommends that the revised application package be denied. A full explanation of the TRP’s recommendation is provided in Appendix A. Recommendation Report.

Applicant Background Summary

Additional data is provided in relation to the Applicant’s principals’ experience and qualifications, as an indicator of the Applicant’s ability to implement a charter or operate a charter school.

Principal Name: Jessica Droppo

Current Affiliation(s): None

Past Affiliation(s) of Note:

- 3 years as a Kindergarten Instructional Assistant at American Leadership Academy
- 1 year as First Steps Intern/Lead PM Teacher at Bridges Preschool and Kindergarten

Principal Name: Michelle Edwards

Current Affiliation(s): 2 years as a teacher at Happy Valley School-East Campus

Past Affiliation(s) of Note:



- 1 year as a teacher at Leading Edge Academy-Mountain View
- 1 year as a teacher and team lead at Avalon Charter School
- 3 years as a teacher and team lead at American Leadership Academy

Principal Name: Nathan King

Current Affiliation(s): 7 years as an Academic Counselor at University of Phoenix

Past Affiliation(s) of Note: None

Principal Name: Rachel Lautenschlager

Current Affiliation(s): 5 years as Senior Evaluator/Faculty at Western Governors University

Past Affiliation(s) of Note:

- 7 years as an Online Teacher with Educate Online (Baltimore, MD)
- 7 years as a teacher with Mesa Public Schools

Principal Name: Richard "Jason" Mow

Current Affiliation(s): 5 years as owner of Ethos Productions

Past Affiliation(s) of Note:

- 9 years as a Police Officer with the City of Phoenix

Principal Name: Quinn Thacker

Current Affiliation(s): 26 years as Adjunct faculty at Maricopa Community College

Past Affiliation(s) of Note: None