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**AGENDA ITEM: Opportunities for Youth, Inc. Application**

Opportunities for Youth, Inc. submitted an application package for the Board’s consideration. This report contains:

- Background information regarding the qualifications of the applicant,
- A copy of the scoring rubric which confirms the application package meets the requirements as demonstrated through the review of the preliminary application package submitted on August 3, 2009 the technical assistance provided to the applicant, a review of the revised application package submitted on December 18, 2009 and
- Staff’s overview and summary of the application package.

The following background information is provided for your consideration.

Opportunities for Youth, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation that was created on February 5, 2007 for the purpose of conducting public education with 2 officers and directors: Jill Gaitens became a member 02/05/2007; Dennis Gaitens became a member 02/05/2007.

**Background Information**

Corporate Principal	Education History	Employment History	FCC	Notes
Jill Gaitens	Master’s degree in Educational Administration and Supervision	Operator of Vista Leadership Academy 01/2009 – present.  Principal at LEAD Charter Schools 09/2007 – 06/2009  Self-employed grant writer 11/2003 - present	Valid	There were no concerns identified in the background check.
Dennis Gaitens	Bachelor’s degree in Information Technology	JROTC Instructor at Gilbert Public Schools 2006 – present.  JROTC Instructor at Ray Unified School District 2005 – 2006.  PE Teacher at Primavera Online High School 2004-2005.  Military Enrollment Counselor at University of Phoenix Online 02/2004 – 08/2004.	Valid	There were no concerns identified in the background check.

**Current and Prior Charter Compliance**

**Compliance Information**

These individuals are also identified as corporate principals for 1 other charter sponsored by the Board:

**Opportunities for Youth, Inc.** operates one school site, currently serving grades 7-9. Opportunities for Youth, Inc. was granted a charter on January 12, 2009. Vista's Leadership Academy began providing services on August 10, 2009. The current contract states "We encourage a seamless and smooth transition from middle school to high school level curriculum, maximizing the continuity that one may not find in the traditional 7-12<sup>th</sup> grade system. SVLA will add grades 10-12 after year one of operation if facilities arrangements can be made on a separate but convenient campus for these grade levels."

The address identified for the school site for this application package is the same site currently being operated by the applicant.

There were no issues of concern identified at their first-year site visit.

Fiscal year 2010 is the first year of operation for the Board's existing contract with Opportunities for Youth, Inc. The organization's first audit will be due in November 2010.

There were no compliance issues identified for the charter above.

**School Governing Body**

Member Type	Number	Name
Organization Principal	1	Jill Gaitens
School Staff	1	Dennis Gaitens
Parents	1	TBA
Community	1	TBA
Other	1	

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Applicant	Governing Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full fiduciary authority for Vista's Leadership High School</li> <li>• Appoint members of the governing body</li> <li>• Approve items such as the school calendar and handle teacher, parent, and student issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make all policy direction for the school</li> <li>• Responsible for selecting the principal and overseeing the staffing of the schools</li> <li>• Be the responsible entity for such issues as compliance, reporting, staffing, and disciplinary hearings.</li> </ul>

**Program of Instruction**

Mission	Vistas Leadership High School will create agents of change who will positively impact our communities. VLHS graduates will be self-confident, self-disciplined, successful proactive leaders who will excel in college and beyond.
Description of Community and Target Market	The target market area is the southeast valley. The school site is in east Mesa less than a half mile from Gilbert. The target districts are Mesa Unified, Gilbert Unified and Apache Junction. These districts are within a five mile radius of the campus. About 60 percent of the population is in the prime school age from 3 to 18 years old. The site selected for the school is located in East Mesa on Guadalupe just west of Hawes. It is surrounded by new development including Arizona State University's Polytechnic Campus, the Chandler/Gilbert Community

	College Campus, Gateway Airport, and the General Motors Proving Ground, which will soon be a master community. The school will draw on a large population of parents seeking a smaller, more personal learning environment in the south east valley.					
Comprehensive Program of Instruction Summary	<p>In the narrative, the applicant proposes to provide a rigorous and standards based curriculum in math, science, language arts, social studies, health and physical education with a focus on project-based learning using EdVisions School Improvement Model.</p> <p>EdVisions Schools is a Gates Foundation intermediary whose focus is creating and sustaining small, innovative, secondary schools. Two of their design essentials are project-based learning and advisory grouping.</p> <p>VLHS will emphasize authentic learning strategies involving the construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry, and meaningful application.</p> <p>The methods of assessment will be varied in order to best align with instructional approaches and individual learning activities in a given area.</p> <p>Remediation will take place in the classroom with modified assignments and practice activities.</p>					
School Calendar	Standard – 180 days					
Student Count		Year	Grades Served	# of Students	# of Sites	
		1	9-10	120	1	
		2	9-11	140	1	
		3	9-12	160	1	
Findings	<p>The application met the minimum requirements, although the following areas scored an approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruction: 1 of 4 grade levels (10<sup>th</sup>)</li> <li>• Monitoring: 1 of 3 areas (timeframe of monitoring)</li> </ul>					

**Business Plan/Budget**

Budget	<p>The applicant has designated \$30,000 in start up funds. Vista's Leadership Academy was awarded a three year Charter School Program grant of \$450,356. VLHS will also apply for federal grant funding.</p> <p>Years one through three of the operating budget is based on 100% of the projected student enrollment. Projected annual budget balances are: Year One-\$22,563, Year Two-\$42,099, Year three-\$61,866. At the end of each month during the first year revenue exceeds expenditures.</p>
Secured Funds	The secured funds as stated by the applicant have been confirmed as available.
Findings	<p>The application met the minimum requirements, although the following area scored an approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating expenses</li> </ul>

**Site Information**

Name of Proposed School	Vistas Leadership High School
Location	Confirmed location: 8257 E. Guadalupe Rd. Suites 11-13 Mesa, AZ 85212
Secured Facility	The school will be located on land and in facilities leased from RBI in Mesa, Arizona. The existing school (Opportunities for Youth-Vistas Leadership Academy) occupies space at the same address. Over 22,000 SF is available. The site will be shared with the East Valley Boys and Girls Club who will provide an afterschool teen center, youth sports, and a summer program for youth on the same campus.

**Scoring Rubric Summary**

Preliminary application package scoring rubric results: 45% of the scoring areas did not meet the criteria.  
Revised application package scoring rubric results: 4% of the scoring areas did not meet the criteria.

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**Staff Recommendations**

Approve the application and grant a charter to Opportunities for Youth, Inc. to establish Vistas Leadership High School charter school.