AGENDA ITEM: NEW CHARTER APPLICATION – RISING SCHOOLS, INC.

Rising Schools, Inc. submitted a complete charter application package for the Board's consideration. The revised application package meets the requirements set by the Board for the 2013-2014 application cycle. This report contains:

1. A brief introduction to the application package,
2. An overview of each section of the application package, including:
    a. A description of the proposed education plan,
    b. A description of the applicant's organization with a summary of information submitted regarding applicant education and experience,
    c. A description of the applicant's business plan, and
    d. Information from the in-person interview,
3. The overall score for the application package,
4. Additional information regarding affiliations with current or prior charter operations, and
5. Staff's recommendation regarding this application package.

Additional items in the portfolio include:

- A copy of the final scoring rubric which confirms the application package does meet the requirements as demonstrated through the review of the preliminary application package submitted on June 24, 2012 (including the technical assistance provided to the applicant) and review of the revised application package submitted on December 19, 2012, and
- Each section of the revised application package.

A link to the audio recording of the in-person interview is found on agenda item N.3.

APPLICATION INTRODUCTION

Rising Schools, Inc. is an Arizona non-profit corporation formed in 2012. The authorized representative for the corporation is George Rising. The proposed school, The Rising School, will serve grades 6-12 in Tucson.

Mission Statement

The stated mission of The Rising School is as follows: The Rising School is a high-quality college-prep school that prepares Tucson-area 6th-9th grade students for success in school, college, and 21st century careers. At the Rising School: • Students, parents, and teachers are treated with respect and enjoy being a part of a safe, caring community. • Classes are engaging and relevant; teachers are experts in curriculum and instruction; and standards and assessments are rigorous. • Students create quality projects; surpass state and national standards on assessments; and mature alumni who are successful scholars and professionals engaged with their community and the world.

Target Population

The Rising School will serve central Tucson, centered at the intersection of Grant Road and Campbell Avenue. The Rising School's targeted community has demographic profile that is marked by low median income (between 4th and 22nd percentile) and high concentration of Hispanics (90%+). The Rising School will meet student and community needs by providing a superior education that will enable them to succeed in college and professional careers.

Student Count

Year	Grades Served	# of Students	# of Sites
1	6-9	100	1
2	6-10	175	1
3	6-11	280	1

School Calendar

Standard, 180 days

A. EDUCATION PLAN

The following summary was created from excerpts and summaries of the documents submitted for the applicant's Education Plan.

Educational Philosophy

The narrative states that The Rising School's philosophical approach to improving pupil achievement in the target population includes seven major principles, which are fundamental to the school's proposed program of instruction: Strong leadership; skilled teachers; challenging classes; personal attention for all students; extra help for students who need it; a safe and orderly environment; and family and community involvement. The narrative describes research which shows that these principles have correlated with academic success for students in an urban, underserved population.

Program of Instruction

Framework: The narrative states that The Rising School will provide a Program of Instruction designed to increase students' academic achievement, college acceptance and graduation rates, life opportunities, and civic and economic contributions. This will include:

- *Math*: Students will take a required math course each year, aligned to the Arizona's College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) or to the AP standards. Additionally, students in grades 6-11 assessed in the bottom quartile in math achievement will take an additional math intervention course designed to remediate math deficiencies.
- *ELA*: In grades 6-9, all students will take two ELA courses each year, Humanities and English Composition. In grades 10-12, all students take one ELA course each year. In alignment with CCRS, 50% to 70% of assigned texts will be informational nonfiction, with the course's informational texts aligned with state standards for social studies in grades 6-9. In grades 10-12, these texts will align with AP English Language standards. In grades 6-11, students in the bottom quartile in reading will take an additional ELA intervention course designed to remediate ELA deficiencies, including ELL students.
- *Social Studies*: The Rising Schools social-studies program will be aligned with Arizona or AP standards. The courses are closely integrated with the ELA program.
- *Science*: The Rising School's science program is aligned with state or AP standards. All grade level objectives are developed in a manner that spirals the content. Students will be exposed to concepts multiple times and each grade level will build off the foundation of the previous grade.

Methods of Instruction: The narrative lists the following to be used as methods of instruction:

- All teachers will use the nine instructional strategies shown to be have the highest correlation with student success (Marzano, 2001):
    - Identifying similarities and differences;
    - Summarizing and note-taking;
    - Reinforcing effort and providing recognition;
    - Homework and practice;
    - Nonlinguistic representations;
    - Cooperative learning;
    - Setting objectives and providing feedback;
    - Generating and testing hypotheses; and
    - Cues, questions, and advance organizers.
- Teachers also will use proven instructional techniques associated with Uncommon Schools (Lemov, 2010), such as:
    - No opt out;

- Right is right;
- Stretch it;
- Format matters;
- Circulate;
- Cold call;
- Wait time;
- Everybody writes;
- 100 percent;
- Strong voice;
- Do it again;
- Positive framing; and
- Joy factor.

Methods of Assessment: The narrative lists the following to be used as their methods of assessment:

- The school will focus on using the following methods frequently: constructive feedback, clear learning goals aligned to standards, assessments aligned to standards, and student tracking of their progress.
- The wide range of targets and skills that can be addressed in classroom assessment requires the use of a variety of assessment formats, including pen-and-paper tests, oral reports, interviews, performance tasks, checklists, investigative reports, and portfolios.
- In the development and use of assessment tools, teachers will consider these criteria: purpose and impact, validity and fairness, reliability; significance, and efficiency (Marzano, 2009).
- To demonstrate mastery of a standard, students must score 80% or higher on the assessment of that standard. To pass a course, students must demonstrate mastery of 60% of standards or higher.
- Teachers will create unit plans with daily objectives to indicate what students need to master each day to be on track to demonstrate mastery on the summative unit assessment at the end of the month and cumulative summative assessment at the end of the year.

PMP

The Performance Management Plan (PMP) for new applicants is for the purpose of ensuring the school's curriculum, instruction, monitoring of student achievement, and professional development are ready to be implemented.

The applicant submitted a PMP that met the criteria in all areas for both Reading and Math.

Curriculum Samples

Curriculum samples for The Rising School were provided for grades 6-12. The table below indicates which curriculum samples in the revised application package met all Board requirements (+), and which had deficiencies (-). Details can be found in the attached Scoring Rubric.

Grade	Math	Reading	Writing	Science
6	+	+	+	
7	+	+	+	
8	+	+	+	+
9	+	+	+	+
10	+	+	+	
11	+	+	+	
12	+	+	+	

EDUCATION PLAN FINDINGS

PRELIMINARY WRITTEN APPLICATION PACKAGE:
19/85 scoring areas (22%) did not meet the criteria.

During the in-person interview the applicant responded to the questions regarding the submitted Education Plan.

The individuals who participated in the interview were able to answer questions with responses that provided clarification or added detail to the preliminary written Education Plan.

The TRP provided the applicant with written technical assistance based on its review of the preliminary written application package and responses provided during the interview.

REVISED WRITTEN APPLICATION PACKAGE:
0/85 scoring areas (0%) did not meet the criteria.

B. ORGANIZATION PLAN

The following summary was created from excerpts and summaries of the documents submitted for the applicant's Organization Plan.

Rising Schools, Inc. is a non-profit corporation, located in Tucson, Arizona, that was created on January 19, 2012 for the purpose of providing education to children within Pima County as a charter school, with three Directors: George Rising, Gregory Berger (became a director 6/6/2012), and Rosie Garcia (became a director 6/8/2012).

Education Service Provider
Rising Schools, Inc. does not intend to contract with or have a governance relationship with an Educational Service Provider.

School Governing Body
Pursuant to A.R.S. 15-183 (E)(8),the corporate board for Rising Schools, Inc. will act as the School Governing Body. The process for filling vacancies on the board is described in the Rising Schools, Inc.'s (RSI) corporate bylaws. RSI's board intends to add two to four members by the time The Rising School opens in August 2013.

School Governing Body Member Type	Number	Name
Organization Principal(s)	3-7	George Rising, Gregory Berger, Rosie Garcia, TBD
School Staff		
Parent(s)		
Community		
Other - Business Community		
Other – Institute of Higher Education		

Roles and Responsibilities

The Corporate Board shall be the Governing Body, with duties including:

- Supervising and managing the person or persons who report directly to the Board including, the person(s) holding to position of "Principal" or such other similar designation.
- Evaluating the Corporation's programs/services to ensure they are consistent with their objectives, the goals, and the Corporation's mission.

- Reviewing and keeping up to date the corporate documents.
- Accounting to the public for the educational services offered by the Corporation as required by law.
- Approving all school policy.

Charter Principals Background Information

Authorized Representative: *George Rising*
Confirmed Education History: Doctor of Philosophy in History, University of Arizona, 2003
Confirmed Employment History: Head of School, International School of Tucson, November 2012-present; History Teacher, Accelerated Learning Laboratory, September 2012-November 2012; Principal, AmeriSchools Academy, June 2012-July 2012; Full-Time Student, Educational Leadership Master's Program, University of Arizona, July 2011-May 2012; Principal, Western Institute for Leadership Development, February 2011-July 2011; Head of School, BASIS Tucson, August 2006-December 2010
Arizona FCC Expires: 06/02/2018
Review of Individual Financial Position: Follow-up completed – met requirements
Current or Past Charter Affiliations: None

Principal Name: *Gregory Berger*
Confirmed Education History: Juris Doctor, University of Arizona, 2001
Confirmed Employment History: Trial Attorney, Pima County Public Defender, January 2006-present
Arizona FCC Expires: 06/12/2018
Review of Individual Financial Position: No follow-up required
Current or Past Charter Affiliations: None

Principal Name: *Rosie Garcia*
Confirmed Education History: Master of Education in Secondary Education, University of Arizona, 1982
Confirmed Employment History: Spanish Teacher, Sunnyside Unified School District, August 1975-present
Arizona FCC Expires: 03/08/2017
Review of Individual Financial Position: No follow-up required
Current or Past Charter Affiliations: See Additional Background Information

ORGANIZATION PLAN FINDINGS

PRELIMINARY WRITTEN APPLICATION PACKAGE:
0/24 scoring areas (0%) did not meet the criteria.

During the in-person interview the applicant responded to the questions regarding the submitted Organization Plan.

The individuals who participated in the interview were able to answer questions with responses that confirmed the ability to implement the well described Organization Plan.

The TRP provided the applicant with written technical assistance based on its review of the preliminary written application package and responses provided during the interview.

REVISED WRITTEN APPLICATION PACKAGE:
0/24 scoring areas (0%) did not meet the criteria.

C. BUSINESS PLAN

The following summary was created from excerpts and summaries of the documents submitted for the applicant's Business Plan.

Site Information

Proposed School Name:	The Rising School
Proposed Location:	Unconfirmed location: within central Tucson in an area bordered by River Road (north), Swan Road (east), Broadway Boulevard (south), and I-10 (west).
Proposed Facility:	The facility for start-up and Year 1 will consist of 6,400 Sq. Ft., with 4 classrooms, two offices, a staff workroom, lobby, and multi-purpose room. Three facilities that meet the criteria have been identified, including: • 6,500 Sq. Ft. space in Amphi Plaza, 825 E. Ft. Lowell Rd. • 6,480 Sq. Ft. space in First Prince Plaza at 3650 N. First Ave. • 6,400 Sq. Ft. space at 4037 N. Oracle Rd. near Tucson Mall.

Budget

Start-up Budget

The start-up budget, in the amount of $79,810.83, covers the costs described in the Start-Up Budget Assumptions narrative with revenue that has been verified. At the end of the start-up period, verified revenue exceeds expenditures.

Secured Funds

The applicant has secured a line of credit from Wells Fargo Bank for start-up purposes. The secured funds, in the amount of $150,000 as stated by the applicant, are available as confirmed by Wells Fargo Bank.

Annual Operating Budgets

The operating budget for Year One is based on 89% of anticipated student enrollment of 112 students, with a projected per-student equalization funding of $6,329.30 as calculated based on FY2012 revenue worksheets, including base support level weights, weighted students counts, and additional assistance multipliers. At the end of each year revenue exceeds expenditures, with the following year-end balances: Year 1 ($119,043); Year 2 ($309,547); Year 3 ($612,639).

BUSINESS PLAN FINDINGS

PRELIMINARY WRITTEN APPLICATION PACKAGE:

2/28 scoring areas (7%) did not meet the criteria.

During the in-person interview the applicant responded to the questions regarding the submitted Business Plan.

The individuals who participated in the interview answered questions with responses that restated information found in the preliminary written Business Plan.

The TRP provided the applicant with written technical assistance based on its review of the preliminary written application package and responses provided during the interview.

REVISED WRITTEN APPLICATION PACKAGE:

2/28 scoring areas (7%) did not meet the criteria.

OVERALL SCORE

Preliminary application package: 15% of the scoring areas did not meet the criteria.

Revised application package: 1% of the scoring areas did not meet the criteria.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Additional data is included below to provide information related to the applicant's principals' experience, qualifications, and current and prior charter compliance as an indicator of the applicant's ability to implement a charter or operate a charter school.

Charter Principal Affiliations
Principal Name: Rosie Garcia
Current Affiliation(s): None
Past Affiliation(s) of Note: Institute for Transformative Education, Corporate Board Member, 2010-2011

Comments: Academic and financial performance data are not available for Western Institute of Leadership Development, operated by Institute for Transformative Education, which opened in August 2012.

BOARD OPTIONS

Option 1: The Board may approve the application package. Staff recommends the following language for consideration: Based upon review of the contents of the portfolio provided for this applicant and the information provided by the representatives of the applicant during consideration, and given it is within the sole discretion of the Board to approve or deny a charter, I move to approve the application package and grant a charter to Rising Schools, Inc. to establish The Rising School charter school to serve grades 6-12.

Option 2: The Board may deny the application package. The following language is provided for consideration: Based upon a review of the contents of the portfolio provided for this applicant and the information provided by the representatives of the applicant during consideration, and given it is within the sole discretion of the Board to approve or deny a charter, I move to reject the application package and deny the request for a charter of Rising Schools, Inc. to establish a charter school for the reason(s) that its application failed to meet the requirements of Title 15, Chapter 1, Article 8 due to: (member making the motion should select all that apply and complete the sentence where necessary).

- ❑ Lack of an Education Plan that meets the Board's criteria as stated in the scoring rubric and/or demonstrated through responses to interview questions,
- ❑ Lack of a curriculum aligned to state standards as stated in the scoring rubric,
- ❑ Lack of an Organization Plan that meets the Board's criteria as stated in the scoring rubric and/or demonstrated through responses to interview questions,
- ❑ Lack of a Business Plan that meets the Board's criteria as stated in the scoring rubric and/or demonstrated through responses to interview questions,

And/or I move to reject the application package and deny the request for a charter of Rising Schools, Inc. to establish a charter school for the reason(s) that:

- ❑ The applicant is not sufficiently qualified to operate a charter school based on (insert the facts from the background/fingerprint/credit report of the specific Officers, Members, Directors, or Partners that form the basis for the decision).
- ❑ The applicant is not sufficiently qualified to operate a charter school based on the (insert the facts from the financial, operational and/or academic performance of associated schools that form the basis for the decision).