B.1 Applicant Organization

Rising Schools, Inc.'s Mission, History, and Evolution

Rising Schools, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation organized and operated for educational purposes. RSI was formed to found The Rising School, a Tucson charter school, and any future replication schools. As stated in RSI's corporate bylaws (Article I, Section 3): "The Corporation's mission is to provide education to children within Pima County as a charter school and supporting educational activities commensurate with same and such other lawful business as permitted under the laws of the State of Arizona which is not inconsistent with the tax-exempt status of the Corporation." The Rising School's mission statement is:

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.

In 2011, RSI began as a concept by George Rising. Dr. Rising had 16 years of experience as an educator in Tucson, including serving as Head of School and Principal at two local charter schools (in April 2012, he was hired as Principal at a third charter school, beginning in July 2012). Encouraged by his colleagues and other educators, Dr. Rising decided to take what he had learned working at some of the best schools in Tucson and combine it with his own research and convictions about how to create a great academic institution. He chose the name "The Rising School" in homage to his alma mater, The Roeper School, one of the top college-prep schools in Michigan, and he named the management organization "Rising Schools, Inc."

In August 2011, Dr. Rising entered the University of Arizona's Educational Leadership graduate program to further his professional knowledge of school leadership. Completing the 30-unit program will enable him to earn his Arizona principal's certification in August 2012. It also furthered his knowledge of leading school operations by allowing him to take courses in the superintendency and by completing in spring 2012 a 270-hour internship with Dr. Vicki Balentine of Amphitheater Unified School District, one of the top superintendents in Arizona.

Dr. Rising's wife, Stephanie, helped with the business and marketing side of founding The Rising School. Ms. Rising had many years of relevant experience. For 10 years, she worked at a multimillion dollar corporation in Tucson, Northcott, Bellow, and Associates, where she served as director of marketing and general manager. Northcott and its subsidiary, Stratford Management, served a clientele of nonprofit corporations, giving her valuable experience for working with RSI. Since 2006, she has been CEO/owner of Canyon Concepts, a Tucson firm specializing in business coaching and marketing for small businesses, again supplying her with relevant experience for helping with RSI. Ms. Rising, a fulltime business owner, has no official role with RSI or The Rising School. Instead, she and Canyon Concepts will donate business-and-marketing service to RSI. She also brings extensive business, marketing, finance, and vendor

connections to RSI from her long career as a Tucson businesswoman and through her service as president of her local chapter of Business Networking International.

In August 2011, the Risings participated in the Arizona Charter Schools Association's "How to Start a Charter School" introductory webinar. In September, RSI applied to the ACSA's New School Development (aka, "Charter Starter") training program. On November 7, 2011, after two rounds of interviews, RSI was accepted in to the ACSA's training program. George and Stephanie donated $1,000 to pay for RSI's participation in the program.

Throughout late 2011, RSI developed its business plan. The plan specified RSI's proposal for its organization, served as the basis for the charter application, and solicited financing. In late 2011 and early 2012, several advisors separately reviewed and commented on iterations of the business plan:

- Ann Hopman, Charter School Financial Partner, Denver Public Schools
- Marian C. Abram, attorney, Karp & Weiss
- Dante DeWitt, Chief Information Officer, Bank of Montreal
- Steve Kirkpatrick, commercial lender, People's Mortgage
- Donna M. Cotlow, Vice President, Sr. Business Development Officer, Wells Fargo
- Sean P. Murray, Senior Business Relationship Manager and Vice President, Wells Fargo Bank.
- Jeremy Sharpe, owner of Jeremy Sharpe Consulting, and Director of Strategic Communications at Rancho Sahuarita Company
- Irene Carroll, Principal, Funding The Gap, LLC

The reviewers were impressed with RSI's business plan (e.g., Ms. Cotlow of Wells Fargo described it as an "A+ business plan"), and their feedback was helpful in revising the plan.

On June 11, RSI secured a $150,000 revolving line of credit from Wells Fargo Bank through Sean P. Murray, Senior Business Relationship Manager and Vice President. In addition, George Rising donated $6,000 to RSI and pledged to donate up to $4,000 more.

RSI was formalized as a corporate entity in early 2012. In December 2011, RSI retained as its attorney Marian C. Abram, J.D., of the law firm Karp & Weiss. On January 17, 2012, Ms. Abram helped RSI secure a business license as a corporation by the Arizona Corporation Commission. Also on January 17, RSI was granted the trade-name rights to The Rising School. On February 8, RSI was assigned its Employer Identification Number (EIN): 45-4488256. That same day, RSI published its articles of incorporation in a local newspaper, the *Ajo Copper News*. On February 29, RSI used funds donated by George and Stephanie Rising to open checking and savings accounts at Tucson Federal Credit Union. On March 29, RSI's bylaws and board policies were finalized based on drafts by Ms. Abram. On April 20, George Rising approved Board Resolution No. 1, which added Gregory J. Berger, J.D., and Rosie Garcia, M.Ed., to the Governing Board.

During the first half of 2012, the RSI team wrote its charter application for The Rising School. This process was facilitated by RSI's participation in the Arizona Charter Schools Association's New School Developer ("Charter Starter") program. From January through April 2012, the RSI team traveled every two or three weeks to Phoenix to attend all seven of the ACSA's training sessions. The focus of the training was helping organizations, such as RSI, write an effective charter application for the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools.

Also throughout early 2012, RSI marketed The Rising School to the Tucson community, garnering advisors and supporters. In January, the school started a Facebook page, and Dr.

Rising started a blog focusing on educational issues. Dr. Rising also met individually with many advisors in education, finance, and marketing. On February 11, the school sent out its first newsletter by email to more than 100 Tucsonans. On April 7, the school had its first community meeting, attended by twenty advisors and supporters. Dr. Rising gave a presentation in which he thanked supporters, described the process for opening a charter school, discussed possible school locations in central Tucson, explained the school's mission statement, and answered questions. Supporters then signed up for marketing, fundraising, facilities, and curriculum committees. Those who signed up included: Rosie Garcia (fundraising), Margret Huebner (fundraising, facilities), Richard Huebner (facilities), Debby Kennedy (marketing), Michelle Martin (marketing), Mark Mussari (curriculum), Stephanie Rising (marketing), Bob Rose (facilities), Sandy Rose (marketing, fundraising), and Tim Warren (marketing, curriculum). The large group then broke into smaller groups to discuss educational needs of Tucson's children. The small groups then presented their ideas for schooling to the entire group. Finally, the participants brainstormed a list of 20 possible schools mascots, which the group narrowed down to three finalists. Afterwards, the school had an online vote on Facebook. Over 50 people voted, and the overwhelming choice was The Storm. On April 26, the school's second newsletter went out to over 100 supporters.

On May 14, RSI held its first Governing Board meeting. The Corporate Board of RSI is comprised of the same members as the Governing Board of The Rising School: George Rising (who also serves as Board President), Gregory Berger, J.D. (Treasurer), and Rosie Garcia, M.Ed. (Secretary). At the May 14 meeting, Board members approved several agenda items. First, they reviewed, discussed, and approved (by 3-0 vote), the Bylaws of Rising Schools, Inc. Second, they reviewed, discussed, and approved (by a 3-0 vote), the Board Policies of Rising Schools, Inc. Third, they reviewed, discussed, and approved (by a 3-0 vote) the First Amendment to Articles of Incorporation of Rising Schools, Inc., which added Mr. Berger and Ms. Garcia to the Governing Board. Fourth, they reviewed, discussed, and approved (by a 3-0 vote) Board Resolution No. 2, which selected the Board's officers: George Rising as President, Greg Berger as Treasurer, and Rosie Garcia as Secretary. Fifth, the Board reviewed, discussed, and approved (by a 3-0 vote) Rising Schools, Inc.'s application for a charter for The Rising School from the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools. The board also agreed to approach qualified candidates to apply for positions on the Governing Board.

Organizational Chart and Reporting Structure

The Governing Board of The Rising School (which is also the corporate board of RSI) is the governing body of The Rising School. The Governing Board is responsible for making policies congruent with the organization's values and mission and then, at regular intervals, evaluating whether these ends have been met. George Rising, CEO of RSI and Principal of The Rising School, is responsible developing and implementing procedures to execute the Governing Board's policies and for day-to-day management of the school's operations.

The Governing Board will supervise one employee, the CEO/Principal. All other employees of RSI and The Rising School will be supervised by and report to the CEO/Principal.

Startup (2013)

Governing Board

Chief Executive Officer/Principal

School Secretary

Year 1 (2013-14): 100 Students

Governing Board

Chief Executive Officer/Principal

School Secretary
Other Support Staff

Teachers
Tutors

Year 2 (2014-15): 175 Students

Governing Board

CEO/Principal

School Secretary
Other Support Staff

Teachers
Tutors

Year 3 (2015-16): 280 Students

Governing Board

CEO/Principal

Business/HR Manager

School Secretary
Other Support Staff

Teachers
Tutors

Subsidiary Relationship of the Applicant Organization to Another Organization

The applicant organization, Rising Schools, Inc., has no subsidiary relationship to any other organization.

Current or Prior Charter Operation by the Applicant

The applicant organization, Rising Schools, Inc., has no current or prior charter operation.

Roles of Each Principal

The principals are Gregory Berger, Rosie Garcia, and George Rising. Gregory Berger's sole role is Governing Board director and officer (Treasurer). Rosie Garcia's sole role is Governing Board director and officer (Secretary).

George Rising is the only principal who is playing a role in the daily operation of The Rising School. Dr. Rising's roles are Governing Board director and officer (President), Chief Executive Officer of RSI, and Principal of The Rising School. His qualifications for operation of a charter school include a Ph.D., 15 years of teaching experience, and leadership of three charter schools in Tucson: BASIS Tucson (where he served as Head of School), Western Institute for Leadership Development (Principal), and AmeriSchools Academy (Principal).

Stephanie Rising is not a principal because she has no official role in RSI or The Rising School. Her unofficial role is as a member of the Panel of Advisors, which is an unofficial advisory group. Also, Ms. Rising and her firm Canyon Concepts will donate marketing and business expertise to RSI.

Current or Prior Charter Operation by any Principal

Gregory Berger and George Rising (as well as Stephanie Rising) have no current or prior charter operation. From January to December 2011, Rosie Garcia was a member of the governing board of the Institute for Transformative Education, which governs the Western Institute for Leadership Development charter school. The Institute for Transformative education's charter for the Western Institute was authorized by the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools in January 2011.

B. 1 Required Exhibits

- Articles of Incorporation as a nonprofit on file with Arizona Corporation Commission
- Amendment to the Articles of Incorporation
- Annual report: **Not applicable** because the first Annual Report is due January 17, 2013.
- Documentation of director and officer changes
- Corporate Bylaws
- Organizational Chart