AGENDA ITEM: New Charter Application – Seneca Preparatory Academy Foundation

Seneca Preparatory Academy Foundation submitted a complete charter application package for the Board's consideration. The revised application package does not meet the requirements set by the Board for the 2012-2013 application cycle. This report contains:

1. A staff overview 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 business plan,
2. Additional background information regarding the qualifications of the applicant, based on affiliations with current or prior charter operations, and
3. Staff's recommendation regarding this application package.

Additional items in the portfolio include:

- A copy of the applicant's request that the revised application package not meeting the scoring criteria move forward for Board consideration,
- A copy of the final scoring rubric which confirms the application package does not meet the requirements as demonstrated through the review of the preliminary application package submitted on July 1, including the technical assistance provided to the applicant and review of the revised application package submitted on December 15, and
- Each section of the revised application.

SUMMARY OF THE TITLE PAGE

Seneca Preparatory Academy Foundation is an Arizona non-profit corporation formed in 2011. The authorized representative for the corporation is Dr. Jean-Claude Abougou. The proposed school, Seneca Preparatory Academy, will serve grades K-6 in Tucson.

Mission Statement

The stated mission of Seneca Preparatory Academy is as follows: We believe that every child can learn, and with The Right Educational (RE) System can go to college and succeed; and ultimately can become successful in life and positively contribute to society. The mission of Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) is to develop and run a high-quality elementary school using The Right Educational (RE) System; and thus provide students with high school, college and career readiness. We believe that with The Right Educational (RE) System college education is made accessible to all, and especially to the traditionally underserved minority and poor populations that have always had limited access to adequate education. By being in service in underserved areas, Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) strives to increase scholastic achievement and close the achievement gap in those areas; and thus bring a message of hope and encouragement to those who live in these areas.

A. EDUCATION PLAN – The following summary was created by pulling key phrases from the narrative of the applicant's Education Plan.

Educational Philosophy	**Philosophical approach:** Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) will provide the underserved target area students with a high-quality scientifically-based elementary school program, called The Right Educational (RE) System. The RE System is anchored on the successful development and implementation of the School's RTI-Early Intervention Reading & Math Program and its associated programs. The RE System consists of a curriculum and instructional methodology inspired from the French educational system. The RE system uses direct instruction, a rigorous challenging basic curriculum and high accountability for school stakeholders. The RE System believes in children's innate ability to learn regardless of their economic, social or ethnic background.

	Rationale: SPA has indicated two main reasons for developing and using The RE System. First, The RE System was inspired from observations and experiences from members of this corporation. Second, The RE System will use scientifically-based educational programs and processes known for increasing academic achievement and for decreasing the achievement gap in socio-economically disadvantage communities in the U.S. and abroad. The RE system is modeled after the following four groups: The French primary and secondary education system; charter schools recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for successfully closing the achievement gap in several low-income and/or high minority areas; educational approaches advocated by Arizona Charter Schools Association, ASU Morrison Institute for Public Policy, and Arizona Department of Education; and Harvard University's Charter School Coherence Model.
Target Population	SPA targets a 22.53 square mile low-income inner-city area that is centrally located in Tucson and delimited by 22nd Street (north), Alvernon Road (east), Valencia Road (south) and I-19 (west). The 2008 population of the target area is estimated to be 94,344. Approximately 9,007 and 16,530 children aged 0 to 4 (kindergarten group) and 5 to 14 (primary school group) respectively live in the area. SPA will target the K-6 age group (16,530 children), of which 8,870 are elementary school students, 3,896 are middle school students and 3,814 are not attending school in their home-community. The calculated median percentage of minority students within the target area is 93 percent with 87 percent being of Hispanic descent. In addition, 90 percent of the target area students qualify for free or reduced-lunch program and 30 percent are English Language Learners. SPA indicates the school will provide the community a "Body of Shared Knowledge, Linguistic and International Awareness that prepares Students for High School, College and Career Readiness at the Elementary School Level." According to the applicant, the target community will benefit from SPA because the School will focus on the basics, will use research and Common Core State Standards-based instruction coupled with data and RTI-driven decisions and processes to produce a K-6 college-preparatory international program, filling a currently-unmet need in their high-poverty, high-minority community.
Program of Instruction – the applicant was required to describe a program of instruction that supports the educational philosophy and target population.	**Framework:** The narrative states that Seneca Preparatory Academy will use a scientifically-based program of instruction with tools and processes with a proven record of success in the traditional and/or in the underserved diverse classroom. They include: Common Core State Standards, SRA Reading Mastery Signature Edition, Core Knowledge sequence, Singapore Math, and instruction for English Language Learners. **Methods of Instruction:** The narrative lists the following to be used as methods of instruction: • Alignment to the Common Core State Standards • Backward Design Instructional Model • Direct Instruction • Instruction in Small Class Size • Differentiated Instruction • Cooperative Learning • RTI 3-Tier Instruction Delivery System

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

- School-wide Screenings and Benchmarks using the Diagnostic Online Reading and Math Assessment (DORA and DOMA).
- Classroom observations
- Ongoing formal curriculum-based formative assessments, such as quizzes
- Use Curriculum-Based formative assessments to implement a daily Classroom Learning and Performance Management Cycle
- Benchmark Assessments (i.e. graded class work, assessments from SRA Reading, Core Knowledge and Singapore Math curriculum)
- Teacher or school-made summative assessments
- AIMS, Stanford 10 or AZELLA
- The DORA/DOMA platform for summative assessments

School Calendar

Standard, 183 days

Student Count

Year	Grades Served	# of Students	# of Sites
1	K-4	244	1
2	K-5	320	1
3	K-6	376	1

The above data is located on page 2 of the Personnel narrative.

Curriculum Samples

Curriculum samples for Seneca Preparatory Academy were provided for grades K-6. 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. No revised curriculum samples were submitted with the revised application package.

Grade	Math	Reading	Writing	Science
K	-	-	-	
1	-	-	+	
2	+	-	-	
3	+	+	-	
4	-	-	-	-
5	+	-	-	
6	+	-	-	

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 in place and appropriate for providing a quality education for each student it serves. It is also intended to focus the school on meeting the Board's level of adequate academic performance. The table below indicates the criteria in the revised PMP that met Board requirements (+), or had deficiencies (-). Details can be found in the attached Scoring Rubric.

Evaluation Criteria	Math	Reading
Predicted Baseline for percent passing in AIMS	46%	55%
Aligns with the applicant's Education Plan.	+	+
Presents a viable plan for managing student academic performance that includes a predicted baseline and annual benchmark targets for the first two years of operation which reflect incremental progress toward the end target.	+	+
Identifies action steps, timeline, responsible party, evidence of meeting action steps, and budget for accomplishing all four prescribed strategies.	+	+
Reveals a progression of actions from start to finish for each strategy that are sequential, timely, and contribute to the school's ability to meet the identified end target.	+	+
Creates action steps that complement and support the other strategies to the extent appropriate.	+	+
Includes artifacts that provide evidence of the implementation of each action step.	+	+
Provides adequate resources, i.e. time, money personnel, etc. to implement the action steps that support the strategies.	+	+
Reflects costs from the Performance Management Plan in the Start-Up and Three-Year Operational Budget.	+	+

For reference, FY 2011 AIMS State Average Passing Percentage is provided below. Parentheses indicate change from FY2010 State Average Passing Percentage.

K-8 Math: 61% (+2%) K-8 Reading: 76% (+2%)

Education Plan Findings

Preliminary application package: 34/60 scoring areas did not meet the criteria.

The revised application, for which consideration is being given, did not meet Board requirements in 29 of the 60 scoring areas in the Education Plan section. Details of the scoring areas that did not meet, listed below, can be found in the attached Scoring Rubric.

A.3.1b	A.3.1c	A.3.1d	A.5.Kc	A.5.Kd	A.5.1a	A.5.1b
A.5.1c	A.5.1d	A.5.2a	A.5.2b	A.5.2c	A.5.2d	A.5.3a
A.5.3b	A.5.3c	A.5.3d	A.5.4a	A.5.4b	A.5.4c	A.5.4d
A.5.5a	A.5.5b	A.5.5c	A.5.5d	A.5.6a	A.5.6b	A.5.6c
A.5.6d						

B. ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

Seneca Preparatory Academy Foundation is a non-profit corporation, located in Tucson, Arizona, that was created on April 29, 2011 for the purpose of operating a public charter school with three Directors: Dr. Jean-Claude Abougou, Donka Dyer-Abougou, Bitaya Mulato.

Roles and Responsibilities

Corporate Board	Governing Body
Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) Foundation Corporate Directors will have the following roles and responsibilities: • Formulate the Corporation's vision and/or modify the educational vision expressed in The Right Educational (RE) System; • Formulate and implement Seneca Preparatory Academy Adult Learning Program. • Supervise all financial activities involving the Corporation; • Appoint and remove, employ and discharge, and, except as otherwise provided in the bylaws, prescribe the duties and fix the compensation, if any, of all officers, agents, and employees of the corporation; • Supervise all officers, agents, and employees of the corporation to assure that their duties are performed properly; • Work with the School Governing Board to ensure the successful implementation of The Right Educational (RE) System; • Nominate, vote, and/or appoint new School Board Members or approve the membership renewal of incumbent ones; • Involve in activities and interaction with major stake holders such as the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools; or Tucson, Sunnyside, Amphitheater, Palo Verde and Vail Unified School Districts; • Involved in decisions related to the location, relocation or expansion of the School; • Involved in decisions related to major logistic changes such as school and/or classroom size, and changes in the student-to-teacher ratio. The President, Vice-President, and Secretary also have specific responsibilities associated with their position on the Corporate Board.	The School Governing Board shall be responsible for the policy decisions of Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA). In keeping with the Bylaws the School Governing Board shall: • Select the School Director/Principal; and support and review his/her performance. • Monitor the successful implementation of The Right Educational (RE) System. • Approve Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) short and long-term academic objectives. • Monitor the implementation of the Performance Management Plan (PMP) and/or SPA yearlong academic plan. • Work in partnership with the School Director/Principal on the development and successful implementation of SPA Fund Raising Program. • Enhance SPA public standing by serving as ambassadors, advocates and community representatives of the school. • Carry any duties imposed on them collectively or individually by the articles of incorporation or by the bylaws.

The President supervises the Foundation's business affairs and is responsible for the day-to-day running of the SPA Foundation. The Vice-President will perform all the duties of the president in the absence of the President. The Secretary is responsible for taking and keeping the minutes of all Board meetings and for reviewing these minutes before presentation to the Board of Directors. The Secretary also sees that all minutes and all unanimous consents, the Bylaws, and all other records are properly kept as required by law.	

Establishment of Governing Body

The School Governing Board shall have a minimum of seven and a maximum of eleven members. Three of these seats shall be permanent seats held by the Seneca Preparatory Academy Foundation (SPAF) Board of Directors. One seat will be filled by the Head of the Parent Advisory Board with the remaining filled by community members. The SPAF board will develop and maintain a list of potential Governing Board members to fill any vacancies using recruiting and development tools described in B.3.

School Governing Body

Member Type	Number	Name
Organization Principal(s)	3	Dr. Jean-Claude Abougou, Donka Dyer-Abougou, Bitaya Mulato

Charter Principal Background Information

Principal Name	Confirmed Education History	Confirmed Employment History	FCC	Notes
Dr. Jean-Claude Abougou	University of Arizona, PhD, Nutritional Biochemistry	2007-Present: Teacher, Desert Rose Academy 2006-2010: Founder President CDS Memory Care Center	Valid	There were no concerns identified with the background and internet checks.
Donka Dyer-Abougou	Methodist Hospital School of Nursing, RN Diploma	1986-Present: Staff Nurse, Carondelet St Mary's Hospital	Valid	There were no concerns identified with the background and internet checks.
Bitaya Mulato	University of Arizona BS, Speech and Hearing Science	2006-Present: Speech Therapist, STARS (Student Therapies and Resource Services)	Valid	There were no concerns identified with the background and internet checks.

Organization Description Findings

Preliminary application package: 9/23 scoring areas did not meet the criteria. The revised application did not meet Board requirements in 2 of the 23 scoring areas in the Organization Description section of the application. Details of the scoring areas that did not meet, listed below, can be found in the attached Scoring Rubric. B.4a B.4.2d

C. BUSINESS PLAN

Site Information

Proposed School Name	Seneca Preparatory Academy
Proposed Location	Unconfirmed locations: Tucson, AZ (office building at 4370 S. Fremont, near Park Ave. and Ajo Rd.) Tucson, AZ (former call center building at 3160 E. Transcon Way, near Country Club Rd. and Valencia Rd.) Tucson, AZ (office/warehouse building at 1501 E. 21st St., near Campbell Ave. and Aviation Pkwy.)
Proposed/Secured Facility	The facility will consist of 18,500 SF – consisting of 2 kindergarten classrooms (500 sf each) 12 classrooms (625 sf each), 3 offices (120 sf each), 1 resource room (150 sf) , 1 receptionist room (300 sf), 1 Grand Purpose Room (2,000 sf), 1 library and computer lab (1,250 sf), 4 student bathrooms (250sf each), 3 staff bathrooms (120 sf each), 1 teacher workroom (250 sf), 1 healthcare room with bathroom (300 sf), 1 resource room (150 sf), and storage space (250 sf), teacher lunch room (200 sf) . According to the applicant, as of the submission of the revised application no facility arrangement had been made.

Budget

Secured Funds	The applicant has secured a loan from Jean-Claude Abougou for start-up purposes. The secured funds, in the amount of $10,000 as stated by the applicant, are available as confirmed by Vantage West Credit Union. The applicant has secured a loan from Donka Dyer-Abougou for start-up purposes. The funds, in the amount of $60,000, are available as documented by corporate board minutes of November 18, 2011, and an account statement of June 30, 2011 (see Budget Documents in Section F – Business Plan). No Verifiable Proof of Secured Funds form was submitted for this funding source.
Start-up Budget	The start-up budget, in the amount of $62,150, includes expenditures for Director salary for six months, Assistant Director salary for one month, Office Manager salary for one month, salary for one clerk for one month, instructional supplies, purchased services (contracted services, accounting services, legal, consultants, etc.), Curriculum and Resource Materials, SAIS Software, governance and board training, consultant fee for pre-service training, marketing and advertising, supplemental marketing and advertising, property/casualty insurance, liability insurance, utilities – deposits, phone/communications/internet deposit, other leases/loans (security/copiers, etc.), other administrative/ secretarial expenses. At the end of the start-up period, revenue equals expenditures.
Annual Operating Budgets	Year one operating budget is based on 90% of anticipated student enrollment of 244 students, with a projected per-student equalization funding of $6,069. Projected annual budget balances are: Year One – $93,073; Year Two – $190,939; and Year Three – $452,291. At the end of each year revenue exceeds expenditures.

Business Plan Findings

Preliminary application package: 14/22 scoring areas did not meet the criteria. The revised application did not meet Board requirements in 1 of the 22 scoring areas in the Business Plan section of the application. Details of the scoring areas that did not meet, listed below, can be found in the attached Scoring Rubric. C.3d

Scoring Rubric Summary

Preliminary application package: 54% of the scoring areas did not meet the criteria.
Revised application package: 30% of the scoring areas did not meet the criteria.

Board Options:
Option 1: The Board may approve the application. The following language is provided 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 and grant a charter to Seneca Preparatory Academy Foundation to establish Seneca Preparatory Academy charter school to serve grades K-6.

Option 2: The Board may deny the application package. Staff recommends the following language 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 and deny the request for a charter of Seneca Preparatory Academy Foundation to establish a charter school for the reason(s) that its application package failed to meet the requirements of Title 15, Article 8 due to:

1. Lack of an Education plan as stated in the scoring rubric,
2. Lack of an organizational plan as stated in the scoring rubric,
3. Lack of a business plan as stated in the scoring rubric,
4. Other specific reasons the Board may have found during its consideration including…