2013-2014 Application Cycle – Results of the In-Person Interview
Southwest Leadership Academy, Inc.

The Technical Review Panel (TRP) conducted an interview of the applicant, Southwest Leadership Academy (SLA) on November 6, 2012 for the following purposes:

- To evaluate the capacity of the applicant to successfully implement the plan to operate a high-quality charter school,
- To provide the applicant team the opportunity to demonstrate how well they understand and have thought through the plan presented in the written application.

The applicant team present for the interview included the following members of the corporate board: Harriet Caruso, Michael Gantt, and Barry McBride, as well as representatives from Rite of Passage, the Educational Service Provider (ESP): Brian Heath, C. J. Bower, and Lisa Broman.

The interview questions posed by the interview panel addressed the Education Plan, Organization Plan, and Business Plan. The results of the in-person interview are divided into sections aligned to scoring areas of the application. Each row begins with an overall rating for that portion of the interview. The rating options for each section are:

- The applicant provided additional information that improved the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.
- The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.
- The information provided by the applicant raised additional questions and/or concerns in the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.

The last column provides a summary of the responses given by the applicant in italics, and includes the primary questions asked by TRP members.

Rating	Section	Interview Summary
The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	Education Plan	1. Describe a typical day in the life of a 10th grade student at your school. • You talked about the behavior mentors but specifically you understand that the teachers need the relationship with their students, so what are some of the elements that will make that happen? *SLA described the daily schedule of 10th grade students consistent with the written application package. The ESP added details about how the schedule was aligned to the target population, including transportation options and behavior mentors. The ESP described teachers developing relationships through leading extracurricular activities, and receiving professional development weekly on addressing the needs of the students. SLA described other structures for developing teacher-student relationships.*

Rating	Section	Interview Summary
The applicant provided additional information that improved the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	Education Plan	2. What does your program provide throughout the day for a student who enters below grade level in reading and in math? *Both SLA and the ESP described a number of specific programs and structures to support student achievement.* <u>The applicant provided information in the interview which should be incorporated in the narrative.</u>
The applicant provided additional information that improved the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	A.2 Target Population	3. Your Target Population narrative cites research promoting small class sizes as a factor in preventing dropouts. How many students will be in a typical core academic class? • How do the class sizes you just described align to this research? • How will core area teachers individualize instruction for this many students, especially in the larger classes? *Both SLA and the ESP described specific details regarding class sizes, staffing levels, and intervention programs, and how these support student achievement.* <u>The applicant provided information in the interview which should be incorporated in the narrative.</u>
The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	A.4 School Calendar and Weekly Schedule	4. Your Calendar and Schedule narrative states that PLC meetings will take place every two weeks, but only one day a month is identified as a Professional Development early release schedule. When will the other meetings take place? • Please give us more detail regarding what occurs during the Friday Learning Lab or Exploratory Hour Activity? • Who organizes and supervises that time period? *The ESP described time after school in the daily schedule for professional development, and how the Friday schedule supports both enrichment and remediation.*

Rating	Section	Interview Summary
The information provided by the applicant raised additional questions and/or concerns in the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	A.6 Curriculum Samples	5. How does your instruction address the increasing rigor of the Common Core standards, particularly in your 11th grade Writing sample? *The ESP described the process for developing curriculum aligned to the Common Core standards, but did not provide detail regarding how the 11th grade Writing sample provided instruction aligned to the rigor of the standard.*
The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	A.6 Curriculum Samples	6. How will your teachers individualize instruction in writing? • RTI (Response to Intervention) has come into the discussion as a response to several of our questions. What are the quantity measures or cut scores that would reference students to have to go to RTI for Math and for Reading? *SLA and the ESP described individualization strategies consistent with the written application package. The ESP provided details regarding the RTI program consistent with the written application package.*
The information provided by the applicant raised additional questions and/or concerns in the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	A.6 Curriculum Samples	7. Could you describe how you will establish and maintain inter-rater reliability between teachers on grading the Language Arts summative assessments? • Were you the main writer of the education plan for this application? *SLA stated that as board members, they would ensure that teacher and principal evaluations included student performance data as required in statute. The ESP described how the team that wrote the application included all present, as well as teachers from other schools operated by the ESP. The ESP stated that inter-rater reliability was very important, but indicated that this was an area they would need to consider in the future.*

Rating	Section	Interview Summary
The information provided by the applicant raised additional questions and/or concerns in the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	A.6 Curriculum Samples, A.3.2 Course Offerings and Graduation Requirements	8. In your Course Offerings and Graduation Requirements, under "Course Credit and Grades," you use the terms "successful completion of the Arizona Common Core Standards," "competency of those subjects," and Teachers will determine proficiency in courses." In your reading curriculum samples, you set a mastery level of 80%. How does mastery as used in the curriculum samples align to "successful completion," "competency," and "proficiency" in awarding course credit? • The rubric used in all Reading samples lists a 1 as "Falls Far Below in Mastery of the Standard," and awards 60% to 69%. How would you handle a student who consistently fell far below on reading assessments? • You mentioned creating a problem-solving professional culture within the school. How much professional development will the school be given through Rite of Passage (the ESP). • The person providing oversight for professional development is the instructional leader? • Does Rite of Passage come in during the year to do any additional professional development? • Does that assessment occur in year one? *The ESP and SLA discussed the RTI process, but did not clearly align the mastery level on the curriculum sample rubrics with awarding course credit. The ESP described a professional development program consistent with the written application package. The ESP stated that they would be in the school throughout the year, and would annually provide an external assessment of the school, which would be reported to the board.*
The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	C.1 Facilities Acquisition	9. The Governing Body narrative states that the Governing Body would "Comply with the State's Open Meeting Laws when applicable." When would it not be applicable? *The ESP stated that they had recently received training in Open Meeting Law, and that it would always be applicable.*

Rating	Section	Interview Summary
The information provided by the applicant raised additional questions and/or concerns in the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	B.3.1 Education Service Provider	10. Describe how Southwest Leadership Academy will evaluate the performance of Rite of Passage as ESP? • What are the indicators on that dashboard? • Do you have any kind of an academic dashboard, and what are the indicators on that? • What contingency plans do you have if ROP becomes unable to provide the contracted services? *SLA described how they would evaluate the finances at every board meeting, but deferred to the ESP regarding evaluation of the ESP. The ESP described a "financial dashboard" of indicators that would be reported to the board, as well as academic indicators that would be regularly reported. SLA stated that they did not currently see any acceptable alternative to the ESP in providing services to the target population, and they anticipated any decline would be gradual and would allow time for further research. The ESP described a 28 year track record of performance.*
The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	B.3.1 Education Service Provider	11. The ESP narrative states, "Students in Rite of Passage schools have, on average, less than one year's length of education services." Do you envision SLA to be a short-term, credit recovery alternative school or a school where students would stay for their full high school careers? • What experience does ROP have with a more traditional school setting? • You stated that you are currently working with a school in Phoenix. Which one is that? *SLA and the ESP both stated that they envisioned the school as a place for students to stay long term. The ESP described being CMO for two charters in Arizona, one in Phoenix. They described specific details about their success in the short-term setting, and how SWL was envisioned as a place these students could go when they transitioned out of those programs. The ESP stated that they contracted with Mission High School in August.*

Rating	Section	Interview Summary
The applicant provided additional information that improved the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	C.1 Facilities Acquisition	12. Describe the terms of the Use Agreement for Smith Middle School. • In the years before SLA occupies the complete facility, what use will ROP make of the unoccupied portion? • What kind of community relationship have you made with Mission Charter School? *The ESP described details of their agreement with the school district for the facility. They stated that there is another charter school in the building using half the facility, as well as having room for other agencies to collocate to provide services to the students. They described a mentoring program at Mission Charter School with the League of United Latin American Citizens.* <u>The applicant provided information in the interview which should be incorporated in the narrative.</u>
The applicant provided additional information that improved the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	C.5 Three Year Operational Budget	13. In your Three year Operational Budget, you state that "SLA plans to contract with a Food Service provider who will bill directly for NSLBP. Therefore, we have not included it in the budget." Please discuss your experience with and capacity to implement the National School Lunch Program. *The ESP stated that they have the NSLBP at every campus in six states. They also described experience with other federal grant programs.*
The information provided by the applicant did not change the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	Plan Sustainability	14. Describe the succession plan for the organization to continue its mission past the involvement of the initial corporate principals. *SLA stated that they plan to identify others who would be interested in serving on the board, consistent with the written application package.*
The applicant provided additional information that improved the TRP's overall evaluation of the applicant.	Plan Overall	15. What will be the primary characteristics of the school if it is successful? *SLA described a vision for at-risk youth becoming successful in the post-secondary world.*