B. Organization Description: B.1 Applicant Organization

Organization's history

StrengthBuilding Partners (SBP) is a 501(c)(3), non-profit training, coaching and mentoring organization that works with children, families, schools and businesses to create success for children, adolescents, adults and families through the powerful tool of StrengthBuilding™. Founded in 1999, SBP's initial focus has been working in disadvantaged school communities. Through StrengthBuilding, adults and children learn how to identify and build upon their strengths and how to recognize and appreciate the strengths of others. The result is greater student attachment to school and academics, decreases in absences and tardies, and a higher level of academic achievement.

SBP was originally incorporated under the name of RPM 2000 in April 1999 and received the EIN number of 86-0954216 in May 1999. In June of 2000 an amendment to the Articles of Incorporation was made to change the corporation's name to StrengthBuilding Partners. In March of 2000, SBP made the request for Exempt Organization Determination Letter (501(c)(3) status). The final approval of SBP's exempt status was made on September 11, 2003.

SBP was co-founded by Pamela Clark-Raines and Regina Murphy-Darling and the first board was established in 2000 guided by the Articles of Incorporation and the By-Laws (see legal documentation exhibit).

Since its incorporation, SBP has worked in partnership with over 12 schools in two school districts and with the Catholic diocese in Tucson. Currently, SBP provides services in Tucson, Arizona and rural areas surrounding Tucson, including rural Native American reservations providing StrengthBuilding Training, Coaching and Mentoring services founded on the principals of StrengthBuilding®

The results that SBP obtained in its work with schools have proven the effectiveness of StrengthBuilding in impacting the quality of life for children, families, and individuals in academics and their lives. However, repeatedly, SBP ran into a barrier that prevented the accomplishment of its purpose: the transient nature of the leadership of schools and school districts. Research strongly confirms that systemic change takes five years to achieve. With the revolving doors of school leadership, SBP experienced an interruption, shift and/or a need to re-new its partnership with schools. The impact of StrengthBuilding became diluted, even sometimes tossed out as the new school leadership decided to begin with a "clean slate." The exception to this experience was in its work with STAR Academic Center in Sunnyside Unified School District. Working continuously with its director and a relatively stable staff for over eight years StrengthBuilding, through StrengthBuilding Training and Coaching with staff and students, was instrumental in creating a marked increase in parental engagement, and in the school moving from underperforming to "exemplary" status awarded by the Arizona Department of Education.[i]

Armed with the knowledge that StrengthBuilding works and its extensive experience with schools, SBP began to seek opportunities to take on a more assertive role in overcoming this barrier to accomplishing its mission and purpose. After careful exploration and discussion, SBP and the director of STAR, Pamela Trotter Cornell, realized that the most effective plan of action to achieve SBP's mission was to team up and open its own charter school designing it with StrengthBuilding as its foundation and implementing the cutting edge academic practices that Cornell had brought to STAR. Thus, SBP intends to be the sponsoring entity which will hold the charter for the Model Community Learning Center (MCLC). Its Board of Directors will be functioning as the Founding Governing Board of the school (Exhibit 1 two organizational charts: year1 and years 2 & 3 combined and title page).

Reporting Structure as it relates to organizational chart

The StrengthBuilding Partners Board of Directors will take on the duties and responsibilities of the MCLC Governing Board once the Charter is established. Under the direction of the Governing Board, the Academic Leader of the MCLC, Pamela Trotter Cornell, and the Community StrengthBuilding Leader, Pamela Clark-Raines, will work as a team responsible for managing the school policies, regulations and procedures to ensure that all students receive the highest quality educational experience in a safe learning environment. They will work collaboratively with school staff, families and community partners to ensure effective communication, interactions and learning opportunities that prepare all students to graduate as college, career and community ready individuals. However, both Cornell and Clark-Raines will have primary responsibility for specific areas of operations at the MCLC.

As Academic Leader, Cornell will have the overall responsibility for the academic areas associated with the operations of the school as well as the personnel associated with the functional activities of that area. Cornell has extensive experience as the principal and director of a multitude of schools across the country as well as in the start-up and development of schools. Cornell will be responsible for the following: Curriculum, instruction, and assessment; professional development (with the professional learning community, (PLC) of the school); the office manager/registrar (responsible for the Student Accountability Information System (SAIS)); and contracted academic services (these include: psycho-educational evaluations, and speech-language therapist/physical therapist/occupational therapist/interpreter for the hearing impaired).

Clark-Raines, the Community StrengthBuilding Leader, will be responsible for providing StrengthBuilding Training and Coaching to the MCLC community which includes the Governing Board, all school personnel, students, families and community partners as well as assist in the integration of StrengthBuilding into the systems of the school. She is the co-founder and president of SBP as well as the author of StrengthBuilding®. Clark-Raines has designed and been director of the StrengthBuilding Partners Mentoring Program for over 10 years and will be

responsible for the development and implementation of the Family Mentoring Program. This program will be the venue through which the MCLC will engage families as an integral component of the school community and help prepare students for college. Clark-Raines has been an adjunct professor at Arizona State University School of Social Work – Tucson Component for eleven years and has served as a field supervisor for students while completing their student internships for almost as long. She will lead a team of social work students whose field placement is the MCLC. Community partnerships are key to the development of a community school and Clark-Raines will be responsible for overseeing the development of these partnerships as the community partners volunteer their time with MCLC students and families. In addition, she will provide oversight to contracted business services such as: financial management, IT, accounting and legal services.

It is important to note that despite the fact that Cornell and Clark-Raines are ultimately responsible to the governing board for the areas as noted above, the MCLC will utilize the team of school staff, students, families and community partners in many processes of school operations such as the design team for curriculum planning, the professional learning community to plan and develop the professional development agenda and schedule and the entire team as participants in program planning and development.

- StrengthBuilding Partners does not have any subsidiary relationship to another organization.
- StrengthBuilding Partners has never operated a charter school in any capacity.

Role of each principal in the organization

The SBP Board of Directors will adhere to the roles and responsibilities as defined in the attached Articles of Incorporation and will serve as the Founding Governing Board of the school (see exhibit). The roles and responsibilities of the principals will be as follows:

The Chairperson: Allison Ewing-Cooper, PhD

The Chairperson presides at all meetings of the Board of Directors/School Governing Board and the Executive Committee. The Chairperson shall, when required to do so by the Board of Directors, sign or countersign, as Chairperson, on behalf of the Corporation, all instruments, papers and documents to be executed by the Corporation. Dr. Ewing-Cooper will be instrumental in the Governing Board oversight of the operations and quality of education at the MCLC. Dr. Ewing is Coordinator of Undergraduate Programs in the John and Doris Norton School of Family and Consumer Science at the University of Arizona. Her areas of expertise are: teacher-child relationship quality and child development. She will provide valuable insight and direction in the development and operations of the MCLC.

Acting Secretary/ Employed Officer: Pamela Clark-Raines, LCSW, ACSW

Ms. Clark-Raines is the acting secretary of the Board of Directors. The functions of Secretary of the Board include: The Secretary shall execute such documents, keep the minutes of Board of Directors/School Governing Board meetings, have such other responsibilities and shall perform such other duties as prescribed by the Board of Directors from time to time. The Secretary will act as the parliamentarian and shall chair the nominating committee. Ms. Clark-Raines, as the President of SBP, is the general manager and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Corporation. She shall make reports on the affairs and conditions of the Corporation to the Board of Directors at any meeting thereof when required to do so by such meeting and shall have, subject to the control of the Board of Directors, the general management of the affairs of the Corporation as well as the school. The President shall primarily be responsible for generating revenue to support the organization and for overseeing the program design and operation. As such, unless otherwise prohibited by resolutions of the Board of Directors without specific authorization thereof, she will execute on behalf of the Corporation all contracts and agreements incident to the carrying on of the routine business of the Corporation. She may also perform such other duties as may be properly required of them by the Board of Directors. Ms. Clark-Raines has extensive experience working with schools both as an employee of SBP and in her +30 years as a social worker prior to co-founding SBP. Her experience with schools includes years of writing curriculum and facilitating training for both school staff and students. Most recently she authored StrengthBuilding Training and Coaching (SBTC) and has been the primary staff facilitating SBTC in the Tucson area schools. She also designed the SBP Mentoring Program and has served as its Program Director since its inception in 2002. Additionally, Ms. Clark-Raines has been the business leader for SBP, handling the business affairs of the corporation as well as writing and managing its grants.

Director: Anna Rivera, PhD

Directors of the Board shall attend all meetings, participate in discussion and decision-making as well as promotion and growth of the organization. They will assist in generating revenue and providing input regarding program design and operation. Dr. Rivera is a retired educator with years of knowledge and experience in the academic world.

- None of the Principals of StrengthBuilding Partners have ever operated a charter.

---

[i] LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc. *Identifying Best Practices: The Already Familiar 15 Nationally Identified Strategies,* 2008.