B.1 Applicant Organization _____

A. Applicant History

Julia Meyerson, the proposed Executive Director and authorized representative for Vista College Preparatory ("Vista College Prep"), solidified her interest and commitment to education in 2005 during her two years in Teach For America where she taught first grade in the South Bronx. The formal planning for Vista College Prep began in July 2010, when she attended her first meeting with the Director of Talent Recruitment for Building Excellent Schools. Ms. Meyerson applied for the competitive Building Excellent Schools Fellowship in December 2010 and was accepted in January 2011. Her year-long Fellowship began in August 2011 and continues through August 2012. Starting in August 2011, Ms. Meyerson began meeting with key community and business leaders across the state as she worked to build a high-capacity founding governing board.

Vista College Prep is founded by a committed and diverse group of professionals from the Phoenix community, who bring the variety of skill sets needed to effectively govern and lead the start-up and implementation of a highly successful charter school. Each founding board member shares core beliefs about education. First, the group believes that there is a serious need for a kindergarten through fifth grade alternative in South Phoenix. Second, all members believe in the educational philosophy of the school – setting high expectations with the structures and supports for every student to meet them, and building the foundational knowledge and skills for students to engage in a rigorous college preparatory curriculum. Third, all members believe in teaching and developing the leadership and character values that each student will need to succeed in middle school, achieve in high school and graduate from college. This shared vision has brought us together and is guiding our efforts.

Vista College Prep's founding board began its work in October 2011 and has remained engaged in the school's development through regular and thoughtful conversation. The full founding group established standing monthly meetings in Phoenix starting in February 2012, reviewing progress on the charter application and developing the community support for the proposed school. We intend to use future meetings to proceed with the broader school start-up process and ensure that each individual is focused on high-impact activities most central to the start-up and governance of the school. During the 2012-2013 planning year, we anticipate a need to increase the frequency of our meetings to twice per month as the school prepares for opening. Collectively, the founding board member brings the following skills and expertise: Finance, Development/Fundraising, Community Organizing, Facilities, Law, Human Resources, Business/Strategic Planning, Networks, Governance/Board Experience, Education, and Policy. Lead Founder Julia Meyerson, Fellow with Building Excellent Schools, is leading the charter application process and is the proposed Executive Director.

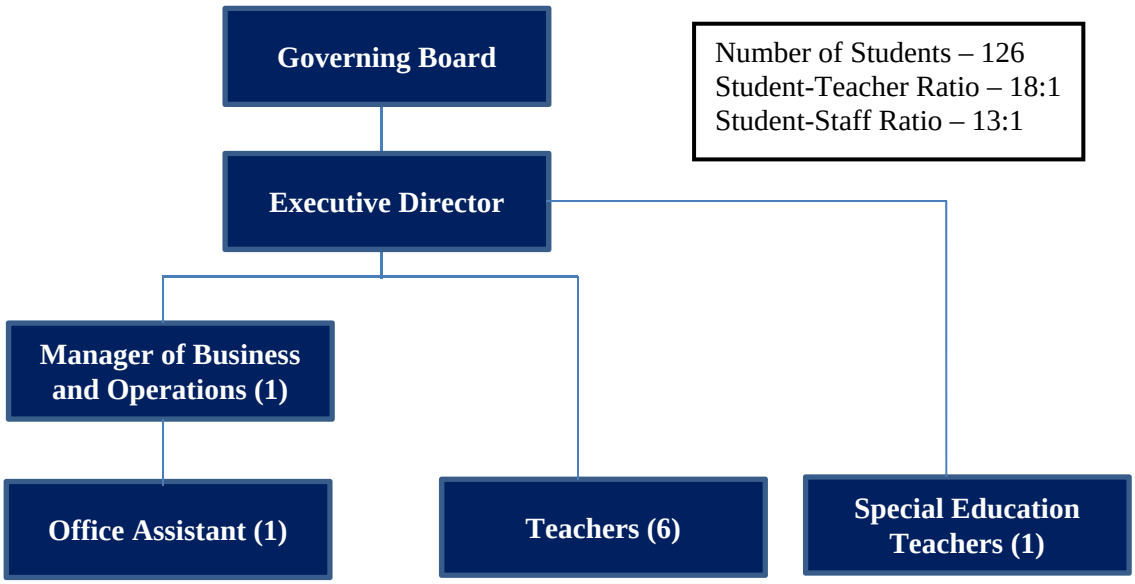
Vista College Preparatory, Inc. is an Arizona non-profit corporation whose mission is to educate K-5 students for success in middle school, achievement in high school, and graduation from college. This organization has been formed for the explicit purpose of founding Vista College Prep.

Vista College Preparatory, Inc. was approved and incorporated as a non-profit in the state of Arizona on March 21, 2012. The corporation is a presumed tax-exempt non-profit; we are in the process of applying to the Internal Revenue Service for our 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. We have received our Employer Identification Number: 45-4825961. All supporting documents are attached including the relevant required exhibits: Vista College Preparatory, Inc. Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation and changes to the Articles of Incorporation. As stated in the Bylaws, the Board of Directors will be referred to as the Governing Board ("the Board") and will serve as the governing body for Vista College Prep.

B. Organizational Chart and Reporting Structure

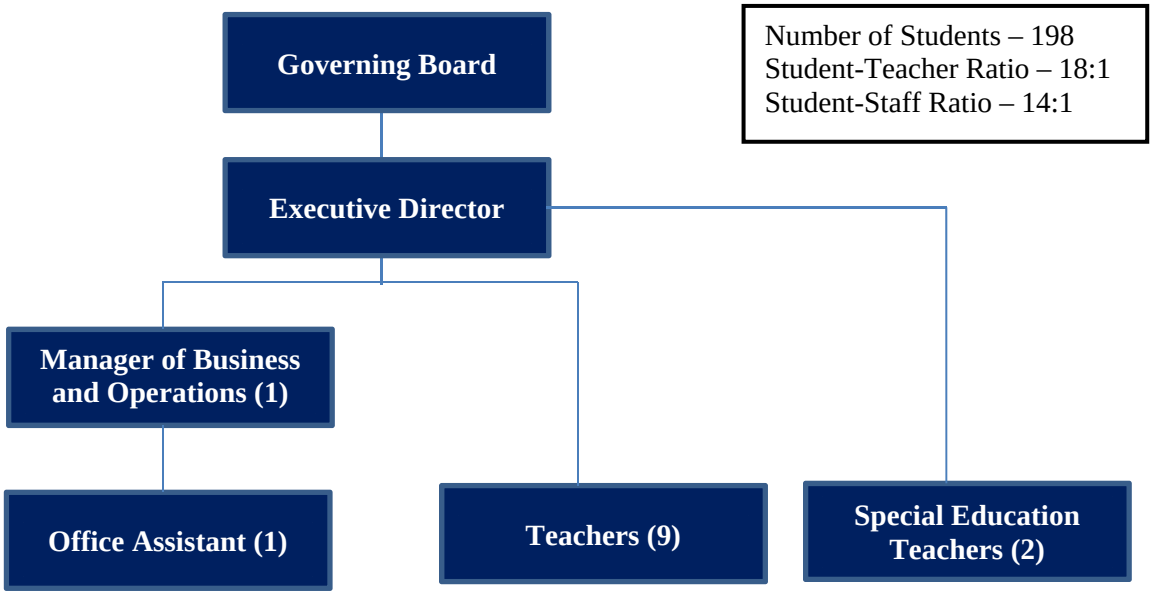
The school's organizational charts (see **Figures B.1.1-B.1.3**) outline the reporting relationships of the Governing Board, Executive Director, and all school staff for the first three years of operation. Below the organization charts are brief narratives of each individual's role within the organization (years one to three).

Figure B.1.1: Organizational Chart (Operational Year One)



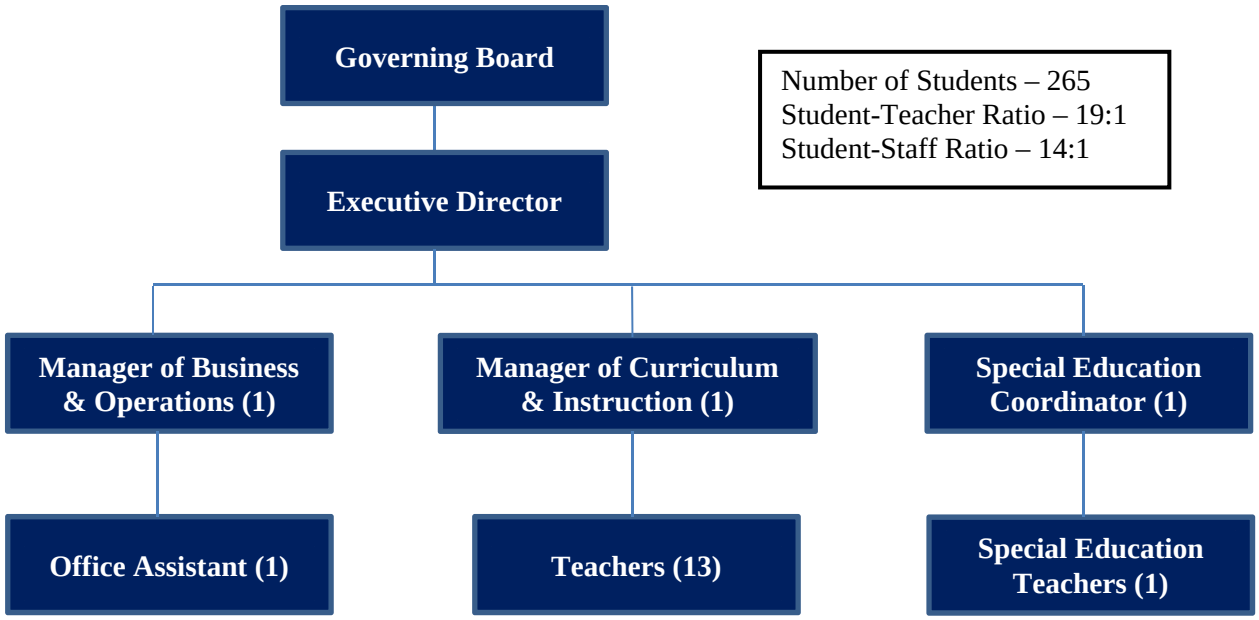
Vista College Prep proposes to open with two key administrators including the Executive Director and Manager of Business of Operations, and one Office Assistant. We will open with kindergarten and first grade, requiring four first-grade teachers and three kindergarten teachers, one of whom is certified in special education. The school will actively recruit interns, all with fingerprint clearance cards, to assist the Office Assistant and other personnel.

Figure B.1.2: Organizational Chart (Operational Year Two)



By Y2, our student population has increased by 57% as we add four second grade classrooms, which means we have recruited and hired four new teachers, one of whom is certified in special education.

Figure B.1.3: Organizational Chart (Operational Year Three)



Y3 marks the most significant change in staffing structure with the addition of two members of the leadership team, including a Manager of Curriculum and Instruction and Special Education Coordinator. While we anticipate a rigorous application process, we hope to be able to promote from within. Our student population has increased by 34% as we add three new classrooms and three third grade teachers.

Reporting Structure Narrative

The narrative defines the reporting structure for each position listed in the organizational charts above. The responsibility to hire, evaluate, and terminate employees belongs solely to the Executive Director. Likewise, in all years, the responsibility to hire, evaluate and terminate the Executive Director belongs to the Governing Board.

- **Governing Board:** The Governing Board holds the charter and is legally and ethically responsible for the school. Comprehensively, the board is responsible for all governance issues. Specifically, they oversee:

  a) **Mission, policy and strategic planning** - Articulate and ensure alignment with the school's mission, vision and charter, create and update policy related to the mission and governance, set the strategic direction and review progress against articulated goals over time
  b) **Financial oversight** - Ensure the school's financial health, review and approve the annual budget and ensure adherence to it, participate in fundraising and help secure external funding sources as needed
  c) **Legal and regulatory compliance** - Ensure compliance with all laws and regulations and review compliance on a regular basis, ensure filing of all legal and regulatory documents
  d) **Executive Director (ED) oversight** - Select, manage, support, and evaluate the ED who will be responsible for the school's day-to-day management, evaluate ED regularly based on

agreed-upon, clearly outlined performance criteria, set ED compensation annually, offer guidance and support

e) **Promotion and accountability to the public** - Promote the school to the public, expand the school's networks and relationships, respond to community and stakeholder concerns, and participate actively in the South Phoenix neighborhood.

- **Executive Director (Y1-Y3)**. The Executive Director oversees school performance, provides executive management and ensures organizational viability. The Executive Director leads external issues, works with Board, reports to/interfaces with Arizona State Board for Charter Schools, conducts fundraising, PR, and oversees finance/operations. In Y1-Y2, the Executive Director manages the Manager of Business and Operations, administrative personnel, and teachers. In Y3, the Executive Director manages the Manager of Curriculum and Instruction, the Manager of Business and Operations, administrative personnel, and teachers. The Executive Director equally shares supervisory responsibilities of teachers with the Manager of Curriculum and Instruction in year three. By year four, full management of teachers rests with Manager of Curriculum and Instruction. The Executive Director manages special education compliance with the special education teachers in years one and two. The Executive Director manages the Special Education Coordinator in year three. The Executive Director is hired by, reports to, and is evaluated by the Governing Board.

- **Manager of Curriculum and Instruction (Y3).** The Manager of Curriculum supports teaching and learning - developing curriculum, overseeing the assessment system, and observing teachers in conjunction with the Executive Director. The Manager of Curriculum and Instruction is trained by the Executive Director to lead professional development, manage teachers, deliver instructional written and verbal feedback, and develop curriculum. The Manager of Curriculum and Instruction reports to and is evaluated by the Executive Director.

- **Manager of Business and Operations (Y1-Y3).** The Manager of Business and Operations manages daily operations and provides financial/programmatic oversight. S/he ensures financial records are accurate and up-to-date and programmatic guidelines for reporting and implementation are followed. In addition, with the Executive Director, s/he manages the tracking of data. The Manager of Business and Operations reports to and is evaluated by the Executive Director.

- **Special Education Teacher(s) (Y1-Y2).** The SPED teacher maintains special needs records, oversees the IEP process, ensures that special needs students receive accommodations and/or modifications within the classroom, and will be AZ certified in special education. The SPED teacher is hired by, reports to and is evaluated by the Executive Director.

- **Teachers (Y1-Y3).** Teachers develop and implement curriculum and support all students in reaching clear academic goals. All teachers are Highly Qualified as defined by No Child Left Behind. Teachers are hired by the Executive Director with the input of the Manager of Curriculum and Instruction (starting in Y3), report to the Executive Director (Y1-Y2) and both the Executive Director and Manager of Curriculum and Instruction (Y3), and are evaluated by the Executive Director, with the input of the Manager of Curriculum and Instruction (Y3).

- **Office Assistant (Y1-Y3).** The Office Assistant oversees office operations. S/he develops office procedures/policies, files and maintains records, and trains staff members in procedures, systems, and equipment. The Office Assistant is hired by the Executive Director with the input of the Manager of Business and Operations. The Office Assistant reports to and is evaluated by the Manager of Business and Operations with the input of the Executive Director.

C. Subsidiary Relationships and Prior Charter Operation

Vista College Preparatory does not have a subsidiary relationship with any other organization. Vista College Preparatory is not currently and has not previously been involved with a prior charter operation.

D. Principals

Our Founding Board members represent a diverse group of civic leaders with vast expertise and an array of leadership experience that will be essential to the strong governance of Vista College Prep. **Figure B.1.4** provides an outline of the each member's area of expertise and officer status. Resumes for each principal are attached.

Figure B.1.4: Principals of Vista College Prep

Founding Board Member	Area of Expertise	Proposed Officer Status
Julia Meyerson Fellow Building Excellent Schools	School Leadership Curriculum Instruction Assessment Policy	Lead Founder Non-voting, *Ex-officio* Executive Director Authorized Representative
Charles Mitchell CEO All About People	Executive Leadership Business Law Finance	Board Chair
Cassie Hilpman Breecher Director, Alumni Affairs Teach For America	Education Community Relations	Vice Chair
Kelly McManus Policy Director Stand For Children	Education Education Policy Development	Secretary
Katherine Cecala Chief Operating Officer Valley of the Sun United Way	Operations Finance Governance Human Resources Law	Treasurer
Dawn Kennedy Executive Director (ret.) Brophy Community Foundation	Development Fundraising Non-Profit Management	Director
Christopher Dang Associate Attorney Quarles and Brady	Law Education	Director

Proposed Executive Director and Authorized Representative

Julia Meyerson, Lead Founder, Building Excellent Schools Fellow (Proposed Executive Director). Ms. Meyerson joined Teach For America (TFA) upon college graduation and taught in the South Bronx as a first grade teacher. During her two years in the classroom, she achieved solid academic gains with her first-graders. Later selected as a Corps Member Advisor, she was responsible for managing incoming TFA corps members and training them to become successful teachers. Realizing the tremendous impact of state and local policy on transforming education, Ms. Meyerson went on to join the Democratic Governors Association. Starting as the Assistant to the Executive Director, Ms. Meyerson was promoted each year, and most recently served as the organization's Policy Director where she had a unique opportunity to work with innovative governors, business leaders and policy experts on the pressing issues facing state and local government. In 2011, Ms. Meyerson was accepted into the highly selective Building Excellent Schools Fellowship, and is also participating in the Arizona Charter Schools Association Charter Starter Program. Eager to make a positive contribution to her home state of Arizona, Ms. Meyerson is the proposed Executive Director for Vista College Prep and *ex officio* non-voting member of the Governing Board. Ms. Meyerson earned a BA at the University of Southern California and a MS in Teaching at Pace University.

Description of the Building Excellent Schools Fellowship: The mission of Building Excellent Schools is to develop and support school leaders who have the capacity to lead consistently high performing schools and who view solid academic achievement as a necessity for transforming children's lives. BES develops in leaders the skill to: articulate a powerful vision; translate vision into reality; develop their own skills; develop the skills of others; drive student achievement.

The Fellowship includes the following elements: individual in-school observations and consultations with school principals and their senior staff, written evaluations and recommendations, an off-site retreat with leadership teams from all participating schools, development by leadership teams of building-level action plans, follow-up visits and retreats to confirm progress and update action plans. BES, in collaboration with participating schools across the country, has documented best practices and has developed leadership training materials.

In addition to the services described above, Building Excellent Schools included the following programmatic components:

- Dedicated training space for leadership seminars and off-site school "action team" meetings.
- Opportunities for cross fertilization of ideas and best practices with other BES participants through a regular series of informal events and focused workshops.
- Development of additional leadership trainers, recruited from the graduates of Building Excellent Schools.

Unlike most other school leadership training programs, which are delivered in an academic environment over a period of days or at most weeks, BES has provided participating charter school leaders with regular, sustained feedback and support, grounded in practice and customized to the specific circumstances of each school. This approach ensures that the concepts of effective leadership are not left on a college campus.

Governing Board Members (Officers Noted)

Charles Mitchell, CEO-All About People (Proposed Board Chair)

As CEO, Mr. Mitchell oversees all company day-to-day operations, including recruitment of employees and staff, and is responsible for directing all legal efforts relating to the business. Mr. Mitchell was instrumental in leading the company from start-up to $17 M in revenue within the first three years of operation. He also serves on the local, regional and national boards representing Arizona and California for INROADS, a national internship program for talented minority youth. Mr. Mitchell was recently appointed as the Small and Local Business Advisor to Mayor Greg Stanton. Mr. Mitchell earned his BS at North Carolina A&T State University, MBA at the University of North Carolina, JD at American University, and graduated from Harvard Business School's Owner/President Management Program. As proposed board chair, Mr. Mitchell brings strong executive leadership and acumen in business, law and finance to the Governing Board of Vista College Prep.

Cassie Hilpman Breecher, **Director of Alumni Affairs-Teach For America, AZ (Proposed Vice Chair)**

As a member of Teach For America's regional Executive Leadership Team, Ms. Breecher leads development and execution of the state's organizational vision, sets priorities, and determines strategy. In addition to building relationships with external organizations, Ms. Breecher manages and facilitates direct outreach and communication with the over 600 Teach For America alumni living in Arizona. Ms. Breecher is a Flinn-Brown Fellow, which is a Fellowship program intended to help expand the cadre of future state leaders with the skills to address Arizona's long-term issues, including education. Ms. Breecher earned a BA at The Colorado College and ME in Curriculum and Instruction at Arizona State University. Ms. Breecher brings a wealth of leadership experience within education and a connection to a national network of high performing educators to the Governing Board of Vista College Prep.

Kelly McManus, Policy Director-Stand For Children (Proposed Board Secretary)

After joining Teach For America as an eighth grade Literacy teacher in Philadelphia, Ms. McManus continued her commitment to education as a Coordinator for Individual Giving and later, an Associate in the Development office for Teach For America in Arizona. After working for the Williams for Arizona campaign as Director for Research and Policy, she was promoted to Manager for Public Partnerships at Teach For America. Recently, Ms. McManus was asked to join Stand For Children as their Policy Director. Ms. McManus earned a BA at Wake Forest University and MS in Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Ms. McManus brings experience in education, education policy, and development to the Governing Board of Vista College Prep.

Katherine Cecala, COO-Valley of the Sun United Way (Proposed Board Treasurer)

Ms. Cecala leads the strategic business operations including administration, finance, pledge processing, facilities, technology, legal services, and human resources for non-profit dedicated to improving lives in Maricopa County. She serves on United Way Worldwide task forces for Economic Model and Growth, System Products and Services Redesign, and Customer Relationship Management. Ms. Cecala is active in the philanthropic community and currently serves on numerous boards as a member and as Treasurer. Ms. Cecala earned a BS at Louisiana State University and a JD at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Law. Ms. Cecala brings critical experience in business operations, finance, governance and human resources to the Governing Board of Vista College Prep.

Dawn Kennedy, Executive Director-Brophy Community Foundation, ret. (Proposed Board Member)

Ms. Kennedy recently retired as the Executive Director for the Brophy Community Foundation, where in just one year she raised over $1 million in Arizona tax credits. She is active in the philanthropic community and has led and served on numerous boards and committees including the Arizona Science Center, Paradise United Methodist Church Preschool and the Phoenix Public Library. Ms. Kennedy earned her BS from Arizona State University and her JD from the University of Arizona. Ms. Kennedy brings strong expertise in development, fundraising, and non-profit management to the Governing Board of Vista College Prep.

Christopher Dang, Attorney-Quarles and Brady LLP (Proposed Board Member)

Mr. Dang analyzes health care regulations to guide national health care providers and suppliers in their business operations. He also manages multi-state legal compliance surveys on state food and drug, professional practice, facility licensing, and business laws. Before attending law school, Mr. Dang taught 8th grade Language Arts in St. Louis with Teach For America. Mr. Dang earned a BA and JD from The University of Arizona. Mr. Dang brings an outstanding background in education and law to the Governing Board of Vista College Prep.