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Leadership for Educational Equity
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19 April 2012

Arizona State Board for Charter Schools
P.O. Box 18328
Phoenix, AZ 85009

Dear Arizona State Board for Charter School Board Members:

Arizona is in critical need of excellent school choices for children. Especially in south Phoenix, children and parents are desperately in search of a school community they are confident in. I am super excited about the opportunity that Julia Meyerson and her team are creating, Vista College Preparatory Charter School, and I strongly endorse their effort.

I would like to highlight a few unique characteristics that I feel warrant your attention. Vista College Prep will be a K-5 school, and research shows us that learning from the earliest ages are the most important. All too often, children start our in elementary school behind. According to the Children's Action Alliance, three out of every four 4th graders in Arizona cannot read proficiently. Vista College Prep will be focused on literacy, dedicating over 215 minutes of literacy instruction every day! This is a strong commitment that will help our neediest children succeed.

Vista College Prep is also dedicated to leadership development. All too often, with the heavy emphasis on high-stakes testing, schools miss out on other important responsibilities. VCP will focus on leadership development, where they will teach their students how to be leaders in their classrooms, school, local community, and world.

Finally, I think the very nature of being an elementary college prep school is intriguing, especially for a community where many adults have not had college experiences and many lack the knowledge and ambition to be focused on succeeding all the way through college. This is a unique opportunity to provide a pathway in south Phoenix from an elementary college prep to Phoenix Collegiate Academy – an established school showing promising results.

As someone who has spent the past eight years advocating for our most needy children, from inside the classroom, at the governing board, and at the legislature, I am excited to see schools like this emerge. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Thank you for your support and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carl Zaragoza

Carl Zaragoza
Director, Field Engagement