

AGENDA ITEM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Application for New Charter

Request

Freedom Prep Academy - Mesa ("Applicant") submitted a new charter application package on May 10, 2019. The Technical Review Panel ("TRP") evaluated the application package and determined that the revised application package meets the minimum scoring requirements set by the Board for the 2020-2021 application cycle.

The Applicant also attended a capacity interview conducted by the TRP. Upon consideration of the application package and results of the capacity interview, the TRP recommends that the revised application package for the Applicant be approved.

Applicant Summary

Proposed School Name	Target Start Date	School Location	Grade Levels	School Calendar
Freedom Preparatory Academy	August 5, 2020	Year 1: Online Year 2 and 3: Online and Learning Center in Mesa	K-12	180 Days

Mission Statement

To provide motivated students the opportunity to achieve excellence and develop life skills in a technology-rich, career-focused, and safe environment taught by caring and knowledgeable educators.

Target Population

The following summary was excerpted from the Applicant's Educational Plan A.2: Target Population narrative.

The Applicant states that "[Freedom Prep Academy's] target demographic will be 7-12 grade students residing within a 5-mile radius of Mesa Dr. and Main St. in Mesa, AZ. The target population will include students seeking flexible schedules, small class sizes, technology-rich instructional methods, and access to STEM-related CTE courses designed to prepare students for college and career readiness—particularly in STEM fields. Based on geographic and demographic data, the target population "will likely include a range of students who come from low socioeconomic status, are at-risk for high school dropout, are English language learners, possess academic skills that are below grade level, and students in need of developing college and career skills." Ethnicity is almost equally divided between Anglo (47%) and Hispanic (39%).

Three Year Plan

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Grade Levels	7-8	7-10	7-11
Enrollment	60	300	540

If approved, the Applicant's overall enrollment cap for year four and beyond would be 720.

Proposed Location (see Business Plan C.1: Facilities Acquisition):

The Applicant intends to serve only online students during its first year of operation. The application package states that "this will require office space ranging from 1,500-2,500 square feet to accommodate seven staff members supporting an estimated 60 AOI students." This office space will be located at 111 W. Main Street in Mesa.

The proposed office space for year one "also provides possibility of expansion up to 12,240-sf for years 2 and 3." This is ideal for the Applicant because, "Beginning in year 2, FPA intends to lease approximately 11,000 square feet beginning in June or July 2021 to provide on-site instruction to campus-attending students beginning August 4, 2021."

Program of Instruction

This summary is based on information submitted for the Applicant's Educational Plan A.1: Educational Philosophy and A.3: Program of Instruction narratives.

The Applicant's philosophy is that every student should "1) Feel empowered to achieve personal success in a safe and engaging learning environment; 2) Graduate high school with a marketable vocational skill; 3) Develop life skills that promote personal responsibility and positively impact society." Students are involved with their own learning, have access to rigorous

core academic content and are able to plan a schedule that best fits their needs, whether physically on a campus, online or blend of both. The flexible learning environment can accommodate a variety of schedules and learning modes. Additionally, students will have the ability to pursue a variety of post-secondary certificates giving them access to different career paths while still in high school.

Freedom Prep Academy – Mesa will “integrate teacher supervision and instruction with Acellus Courseware.” This courseware provides video instruction and uses “Deficiency Diagnostics and Customized Personal Instruction” to offer feedback that responds to students’ interactions and modifies the curriculum to meet students’ needs. Instruction will be offered online, with “hybrid” (blended) and flipped learning options.

The Applicant proposes to open a school with an online instruction component; therefore, it was required to submit an Arizona Online Instruction additional information package (“AOI package”) as a component of its written application package. The AOI package was submitted by the deadline and forwarded to Rio Salado Community College for a substantive review and in-person demonstration. The AOI package submitted by the Applicant met the required criteria (See Appendix C: AOI).

Governance

Corporate Board Members	School Governing Body Members	Type
Brent Gardner	Dr. Robert Sterling Kellis	Ex-Officio Member
Dr. Robert Sterling Kellis	Laura Oliver	Parent
Unnamed	Delores Quintero	Community Member
	Unnamed	School Staff
	Unnamed	other

See Charter Principal Resumes in Appendix B.

TRP Recommendation and Scoring

The TRP assessed the application package against the evaluation criteria published in the New Charter Application Instructions. Approval is based on either receiving 95% or higher for each plan (Educational, Operational, and Business) and/or through showing capacity throughout the interview process. The following is a summary of the evaluation information in support of the recommendation by the TRP based on the revised application package and the capacity interview. A full explanation of the TRP’s recommendation is provided in Appendix A. Recommendation Report.

Overall Scoring Results

	Preliminary TRP Scores		Revised TRP Scores	
Any Falls Below the Expectations ratings?	No		No	
Any section in which more than one evaluation area scored Approaches?	Yes		No	
		Percent Meets		Percent Meets
Educational Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	No	80.16%	Yes	95.31%
Operational Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	No	92.86%	Yes	100%
Business Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	No	90.91%	Yes	100%

The TRP provided the Applicant with written technical assistance based on its review of the preliminary written application package and the revised written application package prior to the in-person capacity interview.

The Applicant’s capacity interview was conducted on October 23, 2019. After the in-person interview, the TRP’s recommendation is to **approve** the application package.

Details related to the capacity interview are provided in Appendix A. Recommendation Report.



Applicant Background Summary

Additional data is provided in relation to the Applicant's principals' experience and qualifications, as an indicator of the Applicant's ability to implement a charter or operate a charter school.

Principal Name: Brent Gardner

Current Affiliation(s): Two years as Assistant Principal at Red Mountain High School

Past Affiliation(s) of Note:

- One year as Academic Interventionist at Red Mountain High School
- Four years as a History Teacher at Red Mountain High School

Principal Name: Dr. Robert Sterling Kellis

Current Affiliation(s): Board Member for U-Turn Foundation

Past Affiliation(s) of Note:

- One year Assistant Dean of Technology at University of Phoenix/Apollo Education Group
- Three years Executive Enrollment Representative at University of Phoenix/Apollo Education Group
- Four years Education Specialist at University of Phoenix/Apollo Education Group
- Two year Board Member for Focus Education Services
- Two year Board Member for Excalibur Charter Schools