

AGENDA ITEM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Application for New Charter

Request

The French American School of Arizona (“Applicant”) submitted a new charter application package on June 22, 2017. The Applicant is requesting a charter to serve grades K through 5 in Tempe. The Technical Review Panel (“TRP”) evaluated the application package and determined that the revised application package does not meet the minimum scoring requirements set by the Board for the 2018-2019 application cycle. The French American School of Arizona has requested that the revised application package not meeting the scoring criteria move forward for Board consideration.

APPLICANT SUMMARY

Mission Statement

The French American Academy of Arizona offers a challenging academic environment of language immersion designed for elementary students to progress in scholastic achievement concurrently in the languages of French and English. The Academy’s educational philosophy of “Learning for Life” means an emphasis on not only superior academic achievement but also the development of character, respect for oneself and the value of others, and the appreciation of learning.

| Proposed School Name | Target Start Date | School Location | Grade Levels | School Calendar |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| The French American Academy of Arizona | August 1, 2018 | Tempe | K-5 | 149 days |

Target Population

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

The Applicant stated that: “The target population of the French American Academy of Arizona is:

- Students seeking a full, dual-language immersion program
- Students seeking a French-English dual language program
- Students of families working in international companies in the East Valley which are currently underserved in choice of multi-language international schools
- Students seeking a more rigorous, traditional, teacher-led program than their local school provides”

Proposed Locations:

Unconfirmed locations (see Business Plan C.1: Facilities Acquisition)

- 2222 South Price Road, Tempe
- Carriage Lane Plaza, 2655 West Guadalupe Road, Mesa
- 1950 East Southern Avenue, Tempe
- Shalimar Square – Building B, 3280 South Country Club Way, Tempe
- 2651-2667 West Baseline Road, Mesa

Program of Instruction

The following summary was excerpted from the Applicant’s Educational Plan A.3: Program of Instruction narrative.

The Applicant states: “FrenchAm Academy strives to provide a comprehensive core curriculum in both French and English simultaneously from which teachers can build and expand on the universal themes selected for a given month or year in order to align our educational philosophy with Arizona State and French National standards. All core academic areas of the curriculum are taught in English and French. English curriculum is aligned and based on Arizona State curriculum standards for English, Math, Social Studies, and Science. The French curriculum is aligned and based on the required program of the French National Ministry of Education for French, Math, Social Studies, and Science.”

Governance

| Corporate Board and School Governing Body Members | Type |
|---|--------------|
| Corinne Arnout | School Staff |
| Patrice Arnout | School Staff |
| Amy Shaw | School Staff |

See H: Principal Resumes



Three Year Plan

| | FY 2019 | FY 2020 | FY 2021 |
|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grade Levels | K-5 | K-5 | K-5 |
| Enrollment | 70 | 99 | 142 |

TRP Recommendation and Scoring

The TRP assessed each application package against the published evaluation criteria. 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 qualitative evaluation information in support of the recommendation by the TRP based on the revised application package and the capacity interview.

Overall Scoring Results

| | <u>Preliminary TRP Scores</u> | | <u>Revised TRP Scores</u> | |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Any Falls Below the Expectations ratings? | No | | No | |
| Any section in which more than one evaluation area scored Approaches ? | Yes | | Yes | |
| | | <u>Percent Meets</u> | | <u>Percent Meets</u> |
| Educational Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard? | No | 21% | No | 81% |
| Operational Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard? | No | 61% | No | 87% |
| Business Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard? | No | 50% | No | 86% |

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.

TRP Qualitative Analysis Summary

The TRP recommends that the revised application package for The French American School of Arizona be denied because all three plans did not meet the Board’s criteria for approval.

Critical issues related to Educational Plan:

The Applicant intends to turn the existing private school into a charter school to provide free public education to families of students who seek to learn English and French (Educational Plan A.1: Educational Philosophy, page 3). No evidence and research data were presented to demonstrate the needs in the community of offering English and French dual language program other than the needs of the existing private school parents and students. In addition, due to the limited details to support the needs of target student population, the Applicant did not provide sufficient details to link its philosophical approach to the needs of the target population.

Critical issues related to Operational Plan:

The TRP had serious concerns about the proposed governance structure. Two of the three board members, holding the positions of President and Vice President of the Board, are related. Though the Applicant expressed its intention to comply with Open Meeting Law during the interview, neither policy nor process was proposed to ensure compliance. Per the Open Meeting Law, “all meetings of any public body shall be public meetings and all persons so desiring shall be permitted to attend and listen to the deliberations and proceedings.” A.R.S. § 38-431.01(A) and “It is the public policy of this state that meetings of public bodies be conducted openly and that notices and agendas be provided for such meetings which contain such information as is reasonable necessary to inform the public of the matters to be discussed or decided.” A.R.S. § 38-431.09. With the fact that the President and the Vice President are a married couple, it is difficult to ensure the public that any matter related to the school will not be discussed unless a public meeting is held.

Critical issues related to Business Plan:

In the revised application the Applicant proposed to use the existing school facility. No details were provided to demonstrate whether the facility is adequate to accommodate the anticipated students. Additionally, the budget lacked allocations for building improvement even though additional facility options must be explored if the existing facility is



inadequate. The personnel staffing plan in grade K is inadequate to support the implementation of the program of instruction because no English teacher positions are projected in grade K in Year One.

In-Person Capacity Interview Summary

All three charter principals and the board secretary were present in the interview. The TRP initially had serious concerns about all three plans during the evaluation of the written application, but the Applicant demonstrated its ability to present a much-improved revised application. However, after the interview, the concerns about the needs of the target population (Capacity Interview, 10:59) and its current board structure were not resolved (Capacity Interview, 43:45). The facility plan was the area of concern in the written application. The Applicant revised its initial proposed plan in the resubmission. Based on the revised application, the Applicant intends to use the existing facility in Year One. However, the number of total students that the existing facility can hold was not given. The general cost per square foot provided did not explain if that includes costs for build-outs and improvements. The budget does not include allocations for building improvement when other options must be explored if the existing facility is inadequate. If the Applicant does not use the existing facility, but rather facility option 2 or option 3, no amount is identified in the budget to develop a playground. During the interview, the Applicant expressed its intention to do whatever it takes to provide a safe and adequate facility to implement the programs. However, due to the discrepancy between the proposed budget, with no funds allocated for building improvement, and Applicant assumptions of having a playground to support its program, concerns regarding implementation remained (Capacity Interview 1:08:10).

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: Corinne Arnout

Current Affiliation(s): 7 years as Headmaster of French American School of Arizona (Tempe).

Past Affiliation(s) of Note: None

Principal Name: Patrice Arnout

Current Affiliation(s): Head Administrator at French American School of Arizona (Tempe).

Past Affiliation(s) of Note: None

Principal Name: Amy Shaw

Current Affiliation(s): 4 months as Brand Ambassador for French American School of Arizona (Tempe)

Past Affiliation(s) of Note: 3 years as Ballroom Coordinator/Moderator at Square Egg Entertainment/Phoenix Comicon.