

# AGENDA ITEM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Application for New Charter

## Request

New Horizon High School, Inc. (“Applicant”) submitted a new charter application package on May 9, 2017. The Applicant is requesting a charter to serve grades 9 through 12 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. New Horizon High School, Inc. has requested that the revised application package not meeting the scoring criteria move forward for Board consideration.

## APPLICANT SUMMARY

### Mission Statement

Our mission is to enable our students to realize their unique talents while mastering core academic skills and developing the social-emotional strengths required for student success in the 21st century.

Proposed School Name	Target Start Date	School Location	Grade Levels	School Calendar
New Horizon High School	August 6, 2018	Tempe	9-12	180 days

### Target Population

*The following summary was created from excerpts and summaries of the information submitted for the Applicant’s Educational Plan A.2: Target Population section.*

New Horizons High School (“NHHS”) proposes to locate a charter high school within a 10-mile radius of Phoenix-Tempe-Mesa border, specifically within the 85281, 85282, 85201, 85202 and 85210 ZIP codes. New Horizon Youth Homes Inc. has experience serving young people who live on the Gila River Indian reservation. The western boundary, at the I-10 freeway, provides access for Native American high school students. In the eastern direction, a boundary at State Route 87 provides easy access for the Gila River Indian Community, where according to the Arizona Department of Health Services only 10.3% of the population holds a college degree, compared to 36% in Arizona. According to U.S. Census data, at 23%, the “percentage of people within the 85210 ZIP code that did not graduate from high school is among the highest in the nation.” Combined with the percentage of people who only graduated with a high school diploma (51%), there is a need for a quality high school that will help students break this cycle. The target population reflects the broader Tempe/Mesa community area and varies economically and ethnically. Within the community, 22.2% of the residents live below the poverty level, well above Arizona’s average of 17.9%.

### Proposed Locations:

Unconfirmed locations (see Business Plan C1: Facilities Acquisition)

- 8058 South Priest Drive, Tempe
- 10027 South 51<sup>st</sup> Street, Phoenix
- 3345 North 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Phoenix
- 1726 West Camelback Road, Phoenix
- 3615 North 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Phoenix

### Program of Instruction

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

The Applicant states: “New Horizon High School’s educational philosophy is to offer an innovative research supported school model to define student achievement barriers in order to identify desired student outcomes, provide intensive interventions, and support all types of learners. The Program of Instruction is based on Talent Development Secondary Blueprint of curriculum, instruction and assessment which includes backwards planning, student-centered lessons plans, delivery, and classroom environment. Instruction at NHHS and Talent Development Schools implements high-impact, research-based strategies that provide appropriate support for students at all levels of proficiency and with various learning styles; however, these strategies are proven more beneficial for minority students from low-income backgrounds. Instruction is reinforced by teacher and student modeling and role-playing as well as teacher monitoring during partner, team, and class activities. To help students learn to work cooperatively, NHHS teachers will receive professional development in explicitly teaching cooperative social skills, such as active listening, staying on task, clarifying ideas, and negotiating.”



Governance

Corporate Board and School Governing Body Members	Type
<b>Thomas Granado</b>	Charter Organization
<b>Mindy Leon</b>	Charter Organization
<b>AMee Vermeire</b>	Charter Organization

See H: Principal Resumes

Three Year Plan

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
<b>Grade Levels</b>	9	9-10	9-11
<b>Enrollment</b>	100	200	300

**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 <b>Falls Below the Expectations</b> ratings?	No		No	
Any section in which more than one evaluation area scored <b>Approaches</b> ?	Yes		Yes	
		<u>Percent Meets</u>		<u>Percent Meets</u>
Educational Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	No	92%	Yes	100%
Operational Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	No	39%	No	87%
Business Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	No	69%	No	93%

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 be approved because the educational plan is academically rigorous and includes structural supports in the curriculum, schedule, and intervention plan that should benefit the target population; the Applicant team demonstrated, in the Capacity Interview, capacity to implement the program; the operational plan, with the exception noted below, is detailed and thorough; and the business plan is conservative and supported by the resources of the existing social service organization.

New Horizon High School plans to serve the significant number of low-income and academically challenged teens in Tempe, west Mesa, north Chandler, and southwest Phoenix who have few educational options in the area targeting their needs. NHHS proposes a program of education that includes a research-based curricular framework that has been successful with a similar demographic, a structure that provides extended learning opportunities and data-driven interventions, and opportunities for internships with local businesses and partnerships with community colleges to facilitate continuing post-secondary education. The proposed school leader has extensive experience leading charter schools targeting a similar demographic, and impressed the TRP during the capacity interview with her knowledge and thoroughness.

While the business plan missed the threshold for meeting the criteria by two percent, the issues were restricted to some errors in calculating State revenue. These did not impact the overall viability of the plans, and were satisfactorily addressed by the Applicant during the Capacity Interview.

The primary concern of the TRP is with the operational plan, which did not meet the criteria set by the Board. The primary issue is that the entity listed as the Applicant (New Horizon Youth Homes, Inc. or NHYH) is not the entity for which all the



required documentation was submitted; bylaws and articles of incorporation were also submitted for New Horizon High School, Inc., a subsidiary of NHYH, which acts as the sole corporate member. New Horizon Youth Homes is an existing non-profit with 15 years of experience operating 8 residential youth homes around the Valley, and operational and financial support of the organization will provide strong support in helping the school weather any difficulties in the early years. Aside from the entity issue, the operational plan was deemed sound and viable. As described in more detail in the Operational Plan section (See Recommendation Report, pages 5-6), the TRP recommends approval of the application under the condition that the entity approved to hold the charter is NHHS, rather than NHYH.

### In-Person Capacity Interview Summary

Three of the four members of the Applicant team were present at the Capacity Interview and were able to respond readily to questions about all areas of the application. The TRP was impressed by the description of the educational plan, and by the Applicant's ability to describe how implementation of the program of instruction would meet the needs of the target population in a way that was not readily available among the educational options currently available in the target area (Capacity Interview 14:30; 16:35). The experience of the Applicant team in working with at-risk youth in the community, and their description of how that experience can be combined with the curricular and structural elements of the school to improve outcomes, was compelling to the TRP (Capacity Interview 18:00).

The TRP had significant concerns about the corporate structure of the Applicant, and the apparent confusion in the application between the parent company New Horizon Youth Homes, Inc. (NHYH) and its subsidiary, New Horizon High School, Inc. (NHHS). The Applicant team clarified that their intent was that the subsidiary, NHHS, would hold the charter and operate the school, that following the initial start-up period the boards of the parent and subsidiary would have only one common member (Mr. Granado), and that the financial controls of the two companies would be kept separate and transparent (Capacity Interview 25:12). They also clarified that NHYH would provide back-office business support to NHHS as a contracted service (Capacity Interview 28:30). These answers addressed the concerns of the TRP regarding the corporate structure. The Applicant team also addressed concerns regarding revenue projections in the budget, and described adjustments that would be made to address these concerns (Capacity Interview 53:15).

## 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: Thomas Granado**

Current Affiliation(s): 16 years as Executive Director of New Horizon Youth Homes, Inc. (Chandler).

Past Affiliation(s) of Note: None.

**Principal Name: Mindy Leon**

Current Affiliation(s): 11 years as Administrative Director of New Horizon Youth Homes, Inc. (Chandler).

Past Affiliation(s) of Note: None.

**Principal Name: AMee Vermeire**

Current Affiliation(s): 6 years as Clinical Director at New Horizon Youth Homes (Chandler).

Past Affiliation(s) of Note: None.