

AGENDA ITEM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Application for New Charter

Request

Science Technology Engineering and Math Arizona (“Applicant”) submitted a new charter application package on June 23, 2017. The Applicant is requesting a charter to serve grades K through 8 in Tucson. The Technical Review Panel (“TRP”) evaluated the application package and determined that the revised application package exceeds the minimum scoring requirements set by the Board for the 2018-2019 application cycle.

APPLICANT SUMMARY

Mission Statement

Da Vinci Tree Academy’s mission is to provide students with a challenging, well-rounded learning environment with special emphasis on (STEM) Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Literacy to inspire creative, analytical thinking that prepares them for college and improves their opportunities in a global technological economy.

Proposed School Name	Target Start Date	School Location	Grade Levels	School Calendar
Da Vinci Tree Academy (DaVTA)	August 6, 2018	Tucson	K-8	200 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 narrative.

The majority of households in the East Tucson region have a median income between \$19,235 - \$37,761. The next largest group by percentage has a median household income of \$37,762 - \$56,288. There are significant pockets of lower income neighborhoods in the region whose median household income is only \$708 - \$19,234 per annum. According to the 2010 American Census Bureau report, Tucson’s racial composition was predominately made up of Whites and Hispanics. Additionally, DaVTA’s current learning center operations at Storybook Cottage Daycare and Preschool have seen about 10% of the population come from the African American and Native American communities. DaVTA expects a similar number of students coming from African American and Native American households. Given the ethnic diversity and large number of low-income families in the target area, DaVTA will recruit and attract students from both non-white and low-income families.

Proposed Locations:

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

- 8055 East 22nd Street, Tucson
- 1677 South Research Loop, Tucson
- 9071 East Old Spanish Trail, Tucson

Program of Instruction

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

The Applicant stated that: “In Core Academic areas, DaVTA provides students with consistent, meaningful, data-driven feedback about their own learning in line with best practices outlined in *Driven by Data*. The following details DaVTA’s curriculum alignment to Arizona Standards for the core academic content areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Foreign Language. Texts to be used align to AZ K-12 Standards and Learning Objectives and are culturally relevant of students’ ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds. There is an emphasis on non-fiction cross-curricular STEM texts in all grades.”

Governance

Corporate Board and School Governing Body Members	Type
David Beyer	Charter Organization
Maura Cotter	Charter Organization
Daniel Lithgow	Charter Organization
Bernice Roll	Charter Organization
Matthew Roll	Charter Organization
Vivian Ruskowitz	Charter Organization

See G: Principal Resumes



Three Year Plan

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Grade Levels	K-8	K-8	K-8
Enrollment	60	95	124

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		No	
		<u>Percent Meets</u>		<u>Percent Meets</u>
Educational Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	No	90%	Yes	98%
Operational Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	No	78%	Yes	100%
Business Plan Score ≥ 95% Meet standard?	No	77%	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.

TRP Qualitative Analysis Summary

The TRP recommends that the revised application package for Science Technology Engineering and Math Arizona be approved because its Operational and Business Plans obtained perfect scores in meeting the Board’s criteria. The concerns about its Educational Plan were allayed during the Capacity Interview. The TRP recommends that the application be approved without any reservation.

In-Person Capacity Interview Summary

Four out of the five Charter Principals were present and participated equally in the interview. All interviewees were able to respond readily to questions about all parts of the application. Though the TRP was impressed with the overall quality of the written plan, they had concerns about its data system proposed in the Academic Systems Plan. The TRP had questions about its data system, Hierarchy of Assessment Data Relevance (“HADR”), a term unfamiliar to the TRP (Educational Plan A.5: Academic Systems Plan, page 20). However, the concern was allayed during the interview. The Applicant articulated well and explained that HADR is a data system to track students’ academic progress based on their strengths and weaknesses (Capacity Interview, 50:56). The TRP is confident that the Applicant has the capacity in launching a charter school.

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: David Beyer

Current Affiliation(s): 10 years as Trainer for Apple (Phoenix).
 Past Affiliation(s) of Note: None.

Principal Name: Maura Cotter

Current Affiliation(s): 5 years as PhD Candidate Physiological Sciences at University of Arizona
 Past Affiliation(s) of Note: 2 years as Graduate Students/Research Assistant at University of New Mexico.



Principal Name: Daniel Lithgow

Current Affiliation(s): 4 years as Teacher at Tucson Unified School District.

Past Affiliation(s) of Note: 1 year as Language Arts/History Teacher at Tucson International Academy.

Principal Name: Bernice Roll

Current Affiliation(s): 2 years as Director/Owner of Storybook Cottage Preschool (Tucson).

Past Affiliation(s) of Note:

- 2 years as Kindergarten/1st grade Teacher at Tucson International Academy.
- 3 years as Kindergarten Teacher at TAG Charter School

Principal Name: Matthew Roll

Current Affiliation(s): 6 years as Business Expert/ Specialist at Apple Inc.

Past Affiliation(s) of Note:

- 1 year as Teacher at Tucson International Academy West.

Principal Name: Vivian Ruskowitz

Current Affiliation(s): 1 year as First Grade Teacher at Desert Springs Academy

Past Affiliation(s) of Note:

- 3 years as 2nd/3rd grade Teacher at Tucson International Academy
- 2 years as Spanish/6th grade Teacher at TAG Charter School

