ARIZONA STATE BOARD FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS

NEW CHARTER APPLICATION RECOMMENDATION REPORT 2017

NOVEMBER 20, 2017

New Charter Application for the operation of

The French American Academy of Arizona

Submitted by

The French American School of Arizona

Report Summary

			Recommendation:	Deny	
Applicant Name:	The French American School of Arizona				
Proposed School Name:	The French American Academy of Arizona				
Grades Served Year 1:	K-5	Grades Served Year 2:	K-5	Grades Served Year 3:	K-5
Location:	2222 S Price Rd., Tempe, AZ 85282				
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.				

Section Scores

A substantively complete application package meets the following scoring requirements:

- No evaluation criteria receive a score of falls below the expectations; and
- No more than one evaluation area in each section is scored as approaching; and
- 95 percent of the evaluation areas in each plan (educational, operational, business) score at the meets level.

	Preliminary TRP Scores		Revised TRP Scores	
Any falls below the expectations ratings?	No		No	
More than one evaluation area in each section scored approaches?	Yes		Yes	
		Section Score		Section Score
Educational Plan Score ≥ 95%?	No	21%	No	81%
Operational Plan Score ≥ 95%?	No	61%	No	87%
Business Plan Score ≥ 95%?	No	50%	No	86%

In-Person 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).

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.

Educational Plan

	Preliminary TRP Scores				Revised TRP Scores			
Educational Plan Score ≥ 95%?	No	9	Of	42	No	34	of	42
Number of "Falls Below" ratings	0				0			
Number of "Approaches" ratings	33				8			

Plan Summary

The Applicant proposed to serve students in grades K-5 seeking a full English and French dual language immersion program. Its educational philosophy is Learning for Life. Students not only learn logical reasoning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, but also develop character, respect, and appreciation for learning through a comprehensive, rigorous curriculum designed around universal themes to engage and inspire the whole child. Instructional strategies include direct, teacher-led instruction, the teacher model/inquiry method, project-based learning for reinforcement of the lesson, and multisensory instruction designed to support individual learners in the classroom (Educational Plan A.1: Educational Philosophy, page 1).

The Applicant proposed 149 days for the school calendar based on 6 hours per day, 4 days per week. Friday is a planning day for teachers; an optional day for students wishing to participate in clubs, tutoring or Kids Club. Hours of instruction are calculated with 50% in English and 50% in French (Educational Plan A.3: Program of Instruction, page 2).

The proposed English curriculum in English, Math, Social Studies, and Science is standard-based and aligned with the Arizona Standards. The curriculum contains: McGraw-Hill for English, Singapore Math, Discovery of the World for Social Studies, Science Inquiry for 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 (Educational Plan A.3: Program of Instruction, page 1). Formative assessment will be conducted continuously throughout the lesson, and summative assessment at the end of the unit study (Educational Plan A.3: Program of Instruction, page 6).

Analysis

The educational plan approaches the criteria for approval because the Applicant failed to meet the criteria. The TRP had initial concerns about the Applicant's understanding of its target population. The needs of the target population were inadequately described to the extent that the rationale of offering French-English dual language for the target population was absent. This concern remained after the interview (Capacity Interview 10:59). It is not evident that the Applicant has a policy consistent with the State requirement to determine student mastery and promotion based on adequate criteria. Per the written application, "students must obtain 65% on the French Evaluation set by the French National Ministry of Education which demonstrates the required level of proficiency to move forward. In addition, students must have a cumulative average of 70% in each English language subject and a cumulative average of 70% in each French language subject on their final report card of the year to pass to the next grade. If a student scores below 70% in either language on the final report card or below 65% on the French evaluation, it will be recommended to the parents that the student repeats the grade" (Educational Plan A.3.1: Mastery and Promotion, page 1). The Applicant was unable to address the TRP's concern to provide convincing rationale to support its criteria that an Arizona student must pass the French evaluation for promotions (Capacity Interview 38:46). The proposed Weekly Schedule for Grades 1-3 failed to include sufficient instructional minutes to meet the requirements

established for Arizona Move On When Reading literacy plans (Educational Plan A.4: School Calendar and Weekly Schedule, page 1), despite the fact that the Applicant expressed its intention to ensure compliance during the interview. Due to the limited details in the needs of target student population, the Applicant provided insufficient details in implementing Academic Systems Plan addressing the needs of the target population including its subgroups. The TRP recommends the Applicant to further develop its academic plan with clearly defined target population and its needs, convincing rationales to support its proposed promotion criteria, and an adequate literacy plan to secure a favorable charter contract later.

Operational Plan

	Preliminary TRP Scores				Revised TRP Scores			
Operational Plan Score ≥ 95%?	No	14	of	23	No	20	of	23
Number of "Falls Below" ratings	0				0			
Number of "Approaches" ratings	9				3			

Plan Summary

The corporate board of The French American School of Arizona will act as the French American Academy of Arizona's Governing Body. The board oversees the followings: mission, policy, and strategic planning, financial; legal and regulatory compliance, school administration, student achievement, and promotion, accountability to the public (Operational Plan B.2: School Governing Body, page 1). The Applicant intends to contract the legal services, financial services, student information system, IT, special education, substitute teaching, food service, custodial maintenance, auditor services, and property/liability insurance (Operational Plan B.3.2: Contracted Services, page 1). The organizational chart for the first three years was sufficiently detailed with a clear reporting structure (Operational Plan B.1: Applicant Entity, page 1). The Chief Administration Officer and the Chief Education Officer report to the governing board; the Director of Operations reports to the Chief Administration Officer and all teachers report to the Chief Education Officer.

Analysis

The operational plan approaches the criteria for approval because the TRP has critical concerns about its current board structure. The Applicant provided organizational charts for the first three years. The roles and responsibilities of the board and each projected position were presented. The responses in Section of Management and Operation were adequate.

With the fact that the two out of three board members are related, and intend to be employees of the school, the Applicant expressed its intention to recruit more qualified board members, but it remained unclear how the Applicant would ensure compliance with Open Meeting Law and fair process of filling vacancies of the board (Capacity Interview 43:46). 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 the public meeting is held

It is unclear whether the listed costs and sources for Contracted Services are sufficient for the needs of target population, due to the fact that the needs of the target population are not clearly defined (Operational Plan B.3.2: Contracted Services, page 1). The TRP recommends the Applicant to further develop its board structure and process so that all criteria under the operation plan can be successfully met for approval.

Business Plan

	Preliminary TRP Scores				Revised TRP Scores			
Business Plan Score ≥ 95%?	No	14	of	30	No	25	of	29
Number of "Falls Below" ratings	0				0			
Number of "Approaches" ratings	16				4			

Plan Summary

Proposed Location: The Applicant proposed to lease the existing facility from the applicant entity, The French American School of Arizona located at 2222 S Price Rd, Tempe, AZ 85282. In an event that the existing facility is inadequate to accommodate the number of students, three options are proposed as below:
Option 1: Carriage Lane Plaza 2655 W. Guadalupe Rd, Mesa, AZ 85202
Option 2: Shalimar Square – Building B 3280 S Country Club Way, Tempe, AZ 85282
Option 3: Don Carlos 2651-2667 W. Baseline Road, Mesa, AZ 85202

Facilities Requirement: Year 1: a projected 70 students and 7 adults requiring 3990 sq. ft. with 4 classrooms and office space.
Year 2: a projected 99 students and 10 adults requiring 5643 sq. ft. with 6 classrooms and office space.
Year 3: a projected 142 students and 13 adults requiring 8094 sq. ft. with 8 classrooms and office space.

Budget Summary

	Startup Period	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Projected Enrollment:	0	70	99	142
Total Revenue:	11,335	346,023.00	533,273.00	760,754.00
Total Expenditures:	11,335	345,751.70	485,775.84	682,564.68
Ending Balance:	0	271.30	47,497.16	78,189.32

The business plan included one facility option located at 2222 S. Price Rd., Tempe, AZ 85252 for the first three years, where the French American School of Arizona is currently running a private school. The facility provides sufficient spaces for growth for the first three years. The timeline for securing the facility was included (Business Plan C.1: Facilities Acquisition, page 1) as well as the projected enrollment growth during the first three years. In an event that enrollment exceeds the capacity in year one, other options will be further explored.

The Applicant proposed a conservative marketing plan expecting that the majority of students will be coming from the existing private school (Business Plan C.2: Marketing and Student Enrollment, page 2).

The personnel plan provided details in describing professional qualifications and/or experience for each projected position. A chart was included outlining the staffing plan for the first three years (Business Plan C.3: Personnel, page 1). Recruitment plan and hiring process were adequately written. The majority of the expenditures in the start-up period will be covered by the existing private school (Business Plan C.4: Start-up Budget Narrative, page 1). Thus, the start-up budget only included marketing/advertising, building lease,

and utility costs. Start-up revenues is equal to the expenses. Revenue calculations for the three-year operational budget are based on 90% of anticipated full enrollment for the first three years.

Analysis

The business plan approached the criteria for approval because the TRP had concerns about its facility, budget, and staffing proposals.

The facility plan was the area of concern in the written application. The Applicant changed its initial proposed plan in the resubmission. Based on the revised application, the Applicant has intended to use the existing preschool facility in Year One. However, no number of total students that the existing facility can hold is given. General cost per square foot does not explain if that includes costs for build-outs and improvements. No amount is specified to develop a playground for Option 2 or Option 3. No budget is allocated for building improvement when other options must be explored if the existing facility is inadequate. Though during the interview, the Applicant expressed its intention to provide a safe and adequate facility to implement the programs, the discrepancy between proposed budget with no funds allocated for building improvement and assumptions of having a playground to support its program implementation remained (Capacity Interview 1:08:10). A sound financial strategic plan should be in place allocating sufficient funds with a reasonable projection anticipating any challenges that the school may face. The TRP finds the Applicant lacks the capacity in financial planning that is necessary to launch a charter school.

In reviewing the personnel staffing plan, no English teacher positions are projected in grade K in Year One. It is a concern for the TRP as to how students will meet the requirement of Move On When Reading and how the implementation of the program of instruction will be supported when English teachers are absent in the projection (Business Plan C.3: Personnel, page 7). The TRP recommends the application be denied and encourages the Applicant to further develop its capacity for a future approval.

Evidence of Capacity

Applicant Summary

Name	Role	Attended Interview?
Patrice Arnout	Authorized Representative, Charter Principal	Yes
Corinne Arnout	Authorized Representative, Charter Principal	Yes
Amy Shaw	Charter Principal	Yes
Vanessa Anstach	Secretary	Yes

Analysis

The TRP finds that the Applicant has combined experience in operating a private school. In reviewing the written application and interviewing the Applicant, the TRP concludes that the absence of some critical elements in three plans would hinder the ability of the Applicant to launch a successful charter school. These elements include a clearly defined target population and its needs so that an education plan can be designed and proposed to address the needs of the target population; an effective board structure in compliance with all policies and regulations so that an operational plan can be executed; and a sound financial strategic business plan so that sufficient funds can be allocated to support an effective implementation of its academic program. In summary, the TRP recommends that the Applicant continues to further increase its capacity to secure a favorable charter contract at a later time.