



DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Thursday, June 4, 2009

900 Grant Street

4:30 PM

AGENDA

1st Floor Board Room

4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Staff Recommendations for New Schools

6:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

District School Improvement and Accountability
Council Recommendations for New Schools

6:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT – 2009-2010 Proposed Budget
(<http://budgetandfinance.dpsk12.org>)

Denver Public Schools

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To: Members, Board of Education
From: Marc Waxman, Executive Director, Office of School Reform and Innovation
Subject: Recommendation concerning the Denver Green School Performance School Proposal
Date: June 4, 2009

Recommendation: Approve

On April 13, 2009 Denver Public Schools received a proposal from the Denver Green School for a new Performance School. The proposed school would provide an innovative ECE-8 school that integrates project-based learning and community service with an overall focus on developing student skills for green jobs and a sustainable future.

The Office of School Reform and Innovation staff and the cross-disciplinary Applicant Review Team conducted rigorous and comprehensive reviews and evaluations of the proposal to determine the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would meet the district priorities and criteria described in the Request for Proposals. Based on these evaluations the superintendent is recommending that the application be approved.

The rationale for the approval, as detailed in the attached staff report, is summarized below.

- The applicant demonstrates evidence of a well-developed educational plan that meets the application criteria outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*) and the proposed education plan is likely to address the DPS goals outlined in the Request for Proposals of creating high performing secondary schools that will improve student achievement, improve graduation rates, and improving college readiness (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Priority Needs, p 2*).
- The applicant demonstrates strong evidence of school leadership as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant has a diverse design team that has the skills and capacity necessary to start and operate the proposed school.
- The applicant demonstrates capacity for serving special education students.
- The applicant demonstrates capacity for serving English language learners.
- The applicant provides adequate evidence that the proposed school would be financially viable.

Superintendent's Recommendation to the Board of Education
Regarding the Denver Green School Performance School Proposal
(2010-2011 Cycle)

June 4, 2009

Recommendation: Approve

Overview

The Superintendent recommends that the performance school application received from the Denver Green School be approved. This recommendation is based on comprehensive and rigorous analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal conducted by the Applicant Review Team (a cross-disciplinary team of analysts) and district staff to evaluate the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school meets the priority needs and criteria identified in the Request for Proposals.

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant demonstrates evidence of a strong leadership team, evidence of a well-developed education plan, and evidence that the proposed school will be financially viable. Based on these analyses, the superintendent is recommending that the application be approved. The rationale for the recommended approval is outlined in the following report.

Education Plan

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant has an effective education plan that shows promise of being able to address the DPS needs outlined in the Request for Proposals of creating high performing secondary schools that will improve student achievement, improve graduation rates, and improving college readiness (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Priority Needs, p 2*). The RFP described the following criteria for an effective education plan:

- *A comprehensive and **research-based curriculum and assessment program** designed to hold all students to high-achievement goals, including those with disabilities and specialized needs and abilities.*

The Applicant Review Team and staff analysis concluded that the applicant did not provide evidence of a comprehensive curriculum or assessment program. First, the applicant is proposing a project-based, service learning model that builds upon DPS curriculum and the overall theme of preparing students for green jobs and a sustainable future. The applicant demonstrates evidence of well-thought-out curriculum to support this model and community partnerships (e.g. EarthForce) to provide professional development and support in implementing the proposed model. Furthermore, the applicant provided a plan for conducting

formative and summative assessments to evaluate student progress and achievement within the competency-based framework.

In addition, the applicant adequately demonstrates their capacity to serve special education students and English language learners. The Applicant Review Team analysis concluded that the applicant demonstrated capacity for serving special education students and articulated how the state-mandated Response to Intervention would be utilized to serve students prior to referral and as a means for identifying and referring students in need of special education services. In addition, the applicant demonstrated staff capacity for serving English language learners.

Leadership

The DPS 2010-2011 Request for Proposals for new schools outlines the following leadership criteria for new schools proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- *Candidates currently operating schools will demonstrate track records of proven success. **Candidates not currently operating schools will possess a school leadership team with a track record of success in increasing student achievement.***
- *Applicants should have a strong and well-organized leader committed to educational reform. This **individual will have a track record with the proposed educational plan and student profile.** The district will heavily weight strength of school leadership in the decision process.*

The applicant provides evidence of a robust and diverse leadership team with the capacity to start and operate the proposed school. In addition the applicant has the school leaders for the elementary and secondary school in place and they have been involved in the design of and planning for the proposed school.

Budget

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant provided adequate evidence that the proposed school would be financially viable.

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To: Members, Board of Education
From: Marc Waxman, Executive Director, Office of School Reform and Innovation
Subject: Recommendation concerning the Denver Language School Charter School Proposal
Date: June 4, 2009
Recommendation: Approve (with conditions)

On April 13, 2009 Denver Public Schools received a proposal from the Denver Language School for a new Charter School. The proposed schools would serve students in K-8 in a language immersion program offering immersion in Mandarin and Spanish.

The Office of School Reform and Innovation staff and the cross-disciplinary Applicant Review Team conducted a rigorous and comprehensive reviews and evaluations of the proposal to determine the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, district and community (CRS 22-30.5-108). Based on these evaluations the superintendent has determined that approving this school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be approved with conditions to ensure its success.

The rationale for the approval, as detailed in the attached staff report, is summarized below.

- The applicant demonstrates evidence of school leadership as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant has a diverse design team that has the expertise necessary to start the proposed school. In addition the applicant has a school leader in place for the new school.
- The applicant demonstrates evidence of effective governance as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant has a diverse board with the skills and expertise necessary to start the proposed school.
- The applicant is proposing an innovative model that fulfills the intent of the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-102 (3)). Specifically the applicant is proposing a language immersion program, offering language immersion in Mandarin and Spanish.

Superintendent's Recommendation to the Board of Education
Regarding the Denver Language School Charter School Proposal
(2010-2011 Cycle)
June 4, 2009

Recommendation: Approve (with conditions)

Overview

The Superintendent recommends that the charter school application received from the Denver Language School be approved with conditions. This recommendation is based on comprehensive and rigorous analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal conducted by the Applicant Review Team (a cross-disciplinary team of analysts) and district staff to evaluate the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district or the community (CRS 22-30.5-108).

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant demonstrates evidence of leadership, a strong governance structure, and an innovative educational model. Based on this analysis, the superintendent has determined that approving this school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be approved with conditions. The rationale for the recommended approval is outlined in the following report.

Leadership

The DPS 2010-2011 Request for Proposals for new schools outlines the following leadership criteria for new schools proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- *Candidates currently operating schools will demonstrate track records of proven success. Candidates not currently operating schools will possess a school leadership team with a track record of success in increasing student achievement.*
- *Applicants should have a strong and well-organized leader committed to educational reform. This individual will have a track record with the proposed educational plan and student profile. The district will heavily weight strength of school leadership in the decision process.*

The applicant demonstrates the necessary leadership capacity to start and oversee the proposed school. Specifically, the applicant has a robust design team that has diverse experience and skills that demonstrate the necessary capacity to develop the proposed school.

In addition the Denver Language School has a school leader in place who has been actively involved in the planning and development of the proposed school. Finally, the applicant has strong backing from the Stapleton Foundation, which brings additional resources to the development of the school.

Governance

The RFP outlines the following criteria for applicants regarding governance (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- ***A strong, knowledgeable, diverse, stable, and committed board of governance or leadership team committed to best practices in school governance and financial management. Ideally, the applicant will have a demonstrated history of successful and reliable operation grounded in solid fiscal management and stability.***

The applicant demonstrates evidence of a diverse, experienced, and committed board with the capacity to effectively oversee the start-up and implementation of the proposed new school.

Innovation

The applicant is proposing an innovative model that fulfills the intent of the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-102 (3)). Specifically the applicant is proposing a language immersion program, offering language immersion in Mandarin and Spanish. Research shows that language immersion programs can offer many benefits to students including an opportunity to develop fluency in a second language, a positive impact on student achievement overall, and a positive impact on student literacy in their first language. In addition, these programs can promote the development of 21st century skills such as cross-cultural competency and communication, problem solving, and global awareness.

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To: Members, Board of Education
From: Marc Waxman, Executive Director, Office of School Reform and Innovation
Subject: Recommendation concerning the Denver School of Science and Technology (DSST) Charter School Proposal
Date: June 4, 2009
Recommendation: **Approve**

On April 13, 2009 Denver Public Schools received a proposal from the Denver School of Science and Technology for four new Charter Schools. The proposed schools would serve students in 6-12 in a college-preparatory model with a STEM focus.

The Office of School Reform and Innovation staff and the cross-disciplinary Applicant Review Team conducted a rigorous and comprehensive reviews and evaluations of the proposal to determine the viability of the proposed schools and whether authorizing the proposed schools would be in the best interests of the pupils, district and community (CRS 22-30.5-108). Based on these evaluations the superintendent has determined that approving these schools would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be approved.

The rationale for the approval, as detailed in the attached staff report, is summarized below.

- The applicant demonstrates strong evidence of proven school leadership as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant has a diverse design team that has a proven track record of starting and opening the original DSST school and has already hired and is training school leaders for the school proposed to open in 2010.
- The applicant demonstrates strong evidence of effective governance as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant board has a proven track record of starting and overseeing the original DSST school and has developed a strategic plan and proactively built its capacity to oversee the proposed replication schools.
- The applicant demonstrates strong evidence of a well-developed educational plan that meets the application criteria outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). In addition the applicant has a proven track record of addressing the DPS goals outlined in the Request for Proposals of creating high performing secondary schools that will improve student achievement, improve graduation rates, and improving college readiness (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Priority Needs, p 2*) and also meets the State's statutory intent of "strengthening the performance of secondary public school pupils" (CRS 22-30.5-102 b). The applicant has a demonstrated track record of performance and results and has been rated as "Distinguished" on the DPS School Performance Framework and "Excellent" on the State Accountability Report.
- The applicant demonstrates strong evidence of community support and community demand as outlined in the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-106 c). Specifically the enrollment lottery at the existing school generated 800 applicants for 270 slots.
- The applicant demonstrates strong evidence of financial viability and sustainability as outlined in the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-20.5-106 g).

Superintendent's Recommendation to the Board of Education
Regarding the Denver School of Science and Technology (DSST)
Charter School Proposal
(2010-2011 Cycle)
June 4, 2009

Recommendation: Approve

Overview

The Superintendent recommends that the charter school application received from the Denver School of Science and Technology be approved. This recommendation is based on comprehensive and rigorous analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal conducted by the Applicant Review Team (a cross-disciplinary team of analysts) and district staff to evaluate the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district or the community (CRS 22-30.5-108).

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant demonstrates a proven track record of leadership, strong governance structure, a comprehensive educational model with proven results, strong community support, and a financially viable model. Based on these analyses, the superintendent has determined that approving these schools would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be approved. The rationale for the recommended approval is outlined in the following report.

Education Plan

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant has an effective education plan and a proven track record of addressing the DPS goals outlined in the Request for Proposals of creating high performing secondary schools that will improve student achievement, improve graduation rates, and improving college readiness (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Priority Needs, p 2*) and of meeting the State's statutory intent of "strengthening the performance of secondary public school pupils" (CRS 22-30.5-102 b). The RFP described the following criteria for an effective education plan:

- *A comprehensive and **research-based curriculum and assessment program** designed to hold all students to high-achievement goals, including those with disabilities and specialized needs and abilities.*

The applicant has a proven track record of success with their educational model. DSST is the only high school in DPS to be rated "Distinguished" on the School Performance Framework. The current DSST school has demonstrated results in addressing DPS's goal of improving

academic achievement. Specifically, 90% of DSST 10th grade students scored proficient or above in reading (compared to a district average of 45.79%) and 55% of 10th graders scored proficient or above in math (compared to a district average of 15.55%). Finally, DSST has demonstrated success in improving college readiness. DSST students have an average score of 23.8 on the ACT (compared with a district average of 16.3). Last year DSST had 100% of its graduates accepted into college and of those who have chosen to attend college all have been fully college ready (i.e. no one has needed remedial courses).

Leadership

The DPS 2010-2011 Request for Proposals for new schools outlines the following leadership criteria for new schools proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- ***Candidates currently operating schools will demonstrate track records of proven success. Candidates not currently operating schools will possess a school leadership team with a track record of success in increasing student achievement.***
- ***Applicants should have a strong and well-organized leader committed to educational reform. This individual will have a track record with the proposed educational plan and student profile. The district will heavily weight strength of school leadership in the decision process.***

The applicant demonstrates significant and proven leadership capacity in the operation of the current DSST school and evidence that they have built the capacity necessary to successfully open and operate the proposed new schools. Specifically, the applicant has a robust design team that has experience and a proven track record in developing and implementing the existing DSST school. In addition, the applicant has already hired new leaders for the proposed school from within DSST and has a well-developed plan for the current DSST school leader to mentor them as they assume their new roles within the new school proposed to open in 2010. Finally, the applicant has demonstrated an ability to cultivate internal leaders from within DSST and provide the coaching and mentoring necessary to support those individuals in assuming greater leadership roles within the Charter Management Organization and the new schools. This will help ensure that the culture of DSST and integrity of the educational model is maintained throughout the replication.

Governance

The RFP outlines the following criteria for applicants regarding governance (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- ***A strong, knowledgeable, diverse, stable, and committed board of governance or leadership team committed to best practices in school governance and financial management. Ideally, the applicant will have a demonstrated history of successful and reliable operation grounded in solid fiscal management and stability.***

The applicant demonstrates evidence of a diverse, experienced, and committed board with the capacity to effectively oversee the development of the Charter Management Organization and the start-up and implementation of the proposed new schools. The DSST board has a track record of opening and overseeing the successful operation of the current DSST school and has engaged in significant strategic planning to prepare for the proposed expansion. The board is proactively working with consultants and engaging in board development to continue to build its capacity to provide successful oversight to the new schools.

Community Support and Demonstration of Demand

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant meets the applicant criteria for demonstrating community support for the proposed school or demonstrate student demand for the proposed school as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*) and in the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-106 c). Specifically the RFP criteria for community support are as follows:

- *A strong understanding of the community that the proposed school will serve and demonstrated community support. **Ideally, the school will have strong community connections, a track record of service, and a demonstrated measure of student demand or need.***

The applicant has provided evidence of strong community support and a demonstrated measure of student demand. Specifically, the current DSST's recent lottery generated 800 applicants for 270 available slots. In addition, DSST has developed significant community partnerships to support the operation of the current and proposed schools including a partnership with the University of Colorado's Health Sciences Center. Finally, a recent community survey of Green Valley Ranch residents found that the number one priority (41% of respondents) for new schools was a school focused on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). DSST is planning on locating within the Green Valley Ranch community and would meet this community-identified priority.

Budget

The applicant provides evidence of a sound financial plan and that the proposed organization and schools will be financially sustainable as outlined in the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-106 g). Specifically, the applicant has secured grant funding to support the development of the Charter Management Organization and has developed an economic model that will allow the schools and the Charter Management Organization to be self-sustaining within five years. In addition, the applicant has secured significant funding from philanthropic organizations including the Gates Foundation.

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To: Members, Board of Education
From: Marc Waxman, Executive Director, Office of School Reform and Innovation
Subject: Recommendation concerning the Denver Standards and Challenges Center
Performance School Proposal
Date: June 4, 2009

Recommendation: Deny

On April 13, 2009 Denver Public Schools received a proposal from the Denver Standards and Challenges Center for a new Performance School. The proposed school would provide educational services for profoundly gifted and talented students, highly gifted, and talented students, and twice exceptional students.

The Office of School Reform and Innovation staff and the cross-disciplinary Applicant Review Team conducted rigorous and comprehensive reviews and evaluations of the proposal to determine the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would meet the district priorities and criteria described in the Request for Proposals. Based on these evaluations the superintendent is recommending that the application be denied.

The rationale for the denial, as detailed in the attached staff report, is summarized below.

- The applicant does not demonstrate evidence of a well-developed educational plan that meets the application criteria outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*)
- The applicant does not adequately demonstrate capacity for serving the special education needs of twice-exceptional students
- The applicant does not adequately demonstrate capacity for serving English language learners
- The applicant does not provide adequate evidence that the proposed school would be financially viable

Superintendent's Recommendation to the Board of Education
Regarding the Denver Standards and Challenges Center
Performance School Proposal
(2010-2011 Cycle)

June 4, 2009

Recommendation: Deny

Overview

The Superintendent recommends that the performance school application received from the Denver Standards and Challenges Center be denied. This recommendation is based on comprehensive and rigorous analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal conducted by the Applicant Review Team (a cross-disciplinary team of analysts) and district staff to evaluate the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school meets the priority needs and criteria identified in the Request for Proposals.

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant demonstrates evidence of parental involvement and community demand. However, the application does not demonstrate evidence of an adequate educational plan or adequate capacity to serve English language learners, and does provide evidence that the proposed school is financially viable. Based on these issues, the superintendent is recommending that the application be denied. The rationale for the recommended denial is outlined in the following report.

Education Plan

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant is proposing to serve a need in the community and demonstrates strong parental support. However, the proposal ultimately does not provide evidence of a well-developed educational plan that meets the application criteria outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). The RFP described the following criteria for an effective education plan:

- *A comprehensive and **research-based curriculum and assessment program** designed to hold all students to high-achievement goals, including those with disabilities and specialized needs and abilities.*

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant did not provide adequate evidence of an educational model or assessment program that will adequately meet the academic needs of the target population of students. Specifically, the applicant is proposing to serve several different populations – profoundly gifted, highly gifted, and twice exceptional which all have different needs. However, the applicant does not provide an adequate plan for differentiating instruction to meet the needs of these different populations.

For example, the applicant is proposing individual learning plans for each student and the provision of individualized instruction but does not provide an adequate plan for how this will be managed with a projected enrollment of 400 students. In addition, the applicant does not demonstrate adequate capacity for serving the special education needs of the twice exceptional students they are proposing to serve. Likewise, the applicant does not demonstrate adequate capacity for recruiting, assessing, or serving English language learners. Finally, the applicant does not provide an adequate research base to support the proposed model of serving profoundly gifted, highly gifted and twice exceptional students in a self-contained school.

Budget

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant did not provide adequate evidence that the proposed school would be financially viable. Specifically, the budget submitted does not include all the costs associated to operating such a specialized school and therefore it was not possible for the Applicant Review Team or staff to adequately assess the viability of the proposed school.

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To: Members, Board of Education
From: Marc Waxman, Executive Director, Office of School Reform and Innovation
Subject: Recommendation concerning the Girls Athletic Leadership School Charter School Proposal
Date: June 4, 2009
Recommendation: Deny

On April 13, 2009 Denver Public Schools received a proposal from the Girls Athletic Leadership School for a new Charter School. The proposed school would serve girls in grades 6-12 with an Expeditionary Learning model that incorporates physical health and wellness, leadership, and a college preparatory emphasis.

The Office of School Reform and Innovation staff and the cross-disciplinary Applicant Review Team conducted rigorous and comprehensive reviews and evaluations of the proposal to determine the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, district, or community (CRS 22-30.5-108). Based on these evaluations, the superintendent has determined that approving this school at this time would not be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be denied.

The rationale for the denial, as detailed in the attached staff report, is summarized below.

- The applicant does not meet the application criteria for providing evidence of proven school leadership as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant has not identified an instructional school leader nor do they have individuals with proven experience in starting or leading a successful school either on the proposed board or design team
- The applicant is relying heavily on a contracted educational vendor for the development and implementation of their educational model. However, the applicant does not provide an MOU or detail the services to be provided by the vendor to support the program. This lack of a detailed plan coupled with the lack of expertise in expeditionary learning, school start-up and leadership on the design team and board and the related budgetary concerns, led the Applicant Review Team and staff to conclude that the applicant does not currently provide sufficient evidence of capacity to develop and implement the proposed educational program
- The applicant does not provide a detailed plan that adequately demonstrates capacity for serving special education students
- The applicant does not provide a detailed plan that adequately demonstrates capacity for serving English language learners
- The applicant does not provide sufficient evidence that the plan for the charter school is economically sound (CRS 22-30.5-106 g). Specifically:
 - The proposed administrative structure is not financially sound, with administrative positions comprising 44% of the personnel budget

- The proposed budget relies on fundraising to support approximately 1/3 of the proposed expenditures in years 1-2, making the school financially risky at start-up and potentially unsustainable

Superintendent's Recommendation to the Board of Education
Regarding the Girls Athletic Leadership Academy Charter School Proposal
(2010-2011 Cycle)

June 4, 2009

Recommendation: Deny

Overview

The Superintendent recommends that the charter school application received from the Girls Athletic Leadership School be denied. This recommendation is based on comprehensive and rigorous analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal conducted by the Applicant Review Team (a cross-disciplinary team of analysts) and district staff to evaluate the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community (CRS 22-30.5-108).

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that while the proposed school contains several promising and innovative elements such as an all-girls environment and the integration of health and wellness and leadership, there are significant concerns regarding the viability of the leadership and governance, the education plan, and the budget. Based on these issues, the superintendent has determined that approving this school at this time would not be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be denied. The rationale for the recommended denial is outlined in the following report.

Leadership and Governance

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that while the applicant's board and design team contain a diversity of expertise in business, public policy, and health and wellness, it lacks critical experience in Expeditionary Learning or in starting or operating a successful school capable of increasing student achievement. The DPS 2010-2011 Request for Proposals for new schools outlines the following leadership criteria for new schools proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- *Candidates currently operating schools will demonstrate track records of proven success. Candidates not currently operating schools will **possess a school leadership team with a track record of success in increasing student achievement.***
- *Applicants should have a strong and well-organized leader committed to educational reform. This **individual will have a track record with the proposed educational plan and student profile.** The district will heavily weight strength of school leadership in the decision process.*

The Applicant Review Team (ART) and staff analyses of the applicant's design team found that on the whole the members lacked experience in starting or leading a successful school with a track record of increasing student achievement. The design team includes one member with experience starting several charter schools in DPS and in other districts in Colorado. The DPS charter school that this individual was responsible for starting does not demonstrate evidence of meeting the criteria for a high performing school and to the contrary is rated as "Accredited on Probation" on the DPS School Performance Framework. Furthermore none of the core, non-consultant members of the board or design team demonstrate significant experience with the proposed core educational model, Expeditionary Learning (EL). In addition, the applicant does not provide an MOU or detail the services to be provided by the vendor to support the program. This lack of a detailed plan coupled with the lack of expertise in expeditionary learning, school start-up and leadership on the design team and board and the related budgetary concerns, led the Applicant Review Team and staff to conclude that the applicant does not provide sufficient evidence of capacity to develop and implement the proposed educational program.

In addition, the applicant has not secured a qualified instructional leader. Therefore the Applicant Review Team and DPS staff have concluded that the applicant design team and board do not have the demonstrated expertise necessary to successfully develop and implement the school or ensure that the proposed school will meet the DPS goals outlined in the RFP of creating high performing secondary schools that will improve student achievement, improve graduation rates, and improving college readiness (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Priority Needs, p 2*) nor meet the State's statutory intent of "strengthening the performance of secondary public school pupils" (CRS 22-30.5-102 b).

Education Plan

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that while the proposed school includes several innovative practices including an all-girls environment and an integration of health and wellness, that it lacks a well-developed education plan and relies heavily on a contracted educational vendor for the development and implementation of the educational program without the financial and management resources to support the full development of the proposed model. The applicant is proposing to develop the majority of the curricular aspects of the educational program using the Expeditionary Learning model. This model requires extensive experience and skill in developing 10-12 week "expeditions" in which the majority of academic content is learned through an integrated, project-based format. The applicant has budgeted \$64,000 per year for a professional development contract with Expeditionary Learning Schools to support the development and implementation of the proposed model. The applicant did not specifically outline what services would be provided by Expeditionary Learning and how that would support the full development of the proposed model. Lastly, the applicant has indicated that if they are unable to raise the full budgeted amount for the school, they will cut back on the professional development as one of four line items, further jeopardizing their ability to fully develop and implement the proposed educational programming. Given the concerns noted above about the lack of educational expertise in Expeditionary Learning present in the board and design team and the concerns

noted below about the budget, the Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant does not demonstrate sufficient evidence of capacity to fully develop and implement the proposed educational program.

In addition, the applicant does not provide an adequately detailed plan to demonstrate their capacity to serve special education students and English language learners. The Applicant Review Team analysis concluded that the applicant submitted a superficial plan for serving special education students and did not articulate how the state-mandated Response to Intervention would be utilized to serve students prior to referral and as a means for identifying and referring students in need of special education services. In addition, the applicant only budgeted \$20,000 and \$20,600 for a Director of Special Education in years 1 and 2 respectively, which will be insufficient to attract and retain appropriate staffing for this position. Finally, the Applicant Review Team also determined that the plan for serving English language learners was insufficiently detailed to demonstrate capacity for providing appropriate services to English language learners who are not succeeding in the immersion model proposed. The applicant proposes hiring bi-lingual staff to help address this need but does not provide a plan for identifying, recruiting, and retaining these staff. The lack of demonstrated capacity to serve English language learners is particularly concerning given the fact that the applicant has indicated that they intend to serve up to 50% English language learners.

Financial Viability

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant does not provide sufficient evidence that the plan for the charter school is economically sound (CRS 22-30.5-106 g). Specifically the analyses found that the proposed budget puts the school at significant financial risk due to an unusually high cost for administrative personnel and a reliance on fundraising to support approximately 1/3 of the budget in the start-up years 1-2. First, the applicant is proposing an administrative structure that includes seven administrative positions including: Executive Director, Head of School, Business Manager, Development Director, College Director, Dean of Students, and Health and Wellness Coordinator. Together these proposed positions account for approximately 44% of the personnel budget and the Applicant Review Team has concluded this level of administration will likely not be financially viable in a school with projected enrollment of 110 students at start-up and 350 students at full capacity. Secondly, the applicant is proposing to raise approximately 1/3 of the total budget in years 1 and 2 from grants, individuals and other funding sources that have not yet been secured. This puts the proposed school in potential financial jeopardy during the critical start-up years.

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To: Members, Board of Education
From: Marc Waxman, Executive Director, Office of School Reform and Innovation
Subject: Recommendation concerning the Global Outreach Charter Academy Charter School Proposal
Date: June 4, 2009
Recommendation: Deny

On April 13, 2009 Denver Public Schools received a proposal from the Global Outreach Charter Academy for a new Charter School. The proposed school would serve students in grades K-8 in a dual-language Russian-English program.

The Office of School Reform and Innovation staff and the cross-disciplinary Applicant Review Team conducted rigorous and comprehensive reviews and evaluations of the proposal to determine the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, district and community (CRS 22-30.5-108). Based on these evaluations the superintendent has determined that approving this school would not be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be denied.

The rationale for the denial, as detailed in the attached staff report, is summarized below.

- The applicant does not meet the application criteria for providing evidence of proven school leadership as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant does not have individuals with proven experience in starting or leading a successful school on the design team
- The applicant does not meet the application criteria for effective governance as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant has not developed a local board that is capable of entering into the legal charter contract with the district or providing oversight to the proposed school
- The applicant does not demonstrate evidence of a well-developed educational plan that meets the application criteria outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*) The proposed education plan is not likely to address the DPS needs outlined in the Request for Proposals of creating high performing secondary schools that will improve student achievement, improve graduation rates, and improving college readiness (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Priority Needs, p 2*) nor meet the State's statutory intent of "strengthening the performance of secondary public school pupils" (CRS 22-30.5-102 b).
- The applicant does not provide a detailed plan that adequately demonstrates capacity for serving special education students

Superintendent's Recommendation to the Board of Education
Regarding the Global Outreach Charter Academy Charter School Proposal
(2010-2011 Cycle)

June 4, 2009

Recommendation: Deny

Overview

The Superintendent recommends that the charter school application received from the Global Outreach Charter Academy be denied. This recommendation is based on comprehensive and rigorous analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal conducted by the Applicant Review Team (a cross-disciplinary team of analysts) and district staff to evaluate the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community (CRS 22-30.5-108).

The Applicant Review Team and staff analysis concluded that while the proposed school demonstrates community support and meets a community-identified need for serving Russian speaking students it does not demonstrate adequate leadership, adequate governance, or an adequate educational plan. Based on these issues, the superintendent has determined that approving this school would not be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be denied. The rationale for the recommended denial is outlined in the following report.

Leadership

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant design team lacked the necessary experience in starting or operating a successful school capable of increasing student achievement. The DPS 2010-2011 Request for Proposals for new schools outlines the following leadership criteria for new schools proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- *Candidates currently operating schools will demonstrate track records of proven success. Candidates not currently operating schools will **possess a school leadership team with a track record of success in increasing student achievement.***
- *Applicants should have a strong and well-organized leader committed to educational reform. This **individual will have a track record with the proposed educational plan and student profile.** The district will heavily weight strength of school leadership in the decision process.*

The Applicant Review Team (ART) and staff analyses of the applicant’s design team found that on the whole the members lacked experience in starting or leading a successful school. The applicant states that one member of the founding team was the founding principal of Grant Community Outreach Academy in Sacramento, California and served in this capacity from 2000-2003. The school in question was an affiliate of the California Charter Academy (an education management organization), which was closed in 2004 under serious allegations of financial mismanagement, ultimately culminating in the indictment of several individuals associated with this organization. At the time of the closure the school in question was turned over to the Grant Community Charters Authorizer (now called Gateway Community Charters). While there is no suggestion that the applicant was involved in the collapse of the education management organization, it is unclear what role the applicant had in the management of the affiliate school in question during the time preceding the closure. In addition, the current school Grant Community Outreach Academy does not demonstrate evidence of improving student achievement and is performing well below state averages in English Language Arts and science and above state averages in math. Finally, while the identified school leader has experience in higher education, she does not have experience starting or leading a school.

Therefore the Applicant Review Team and DPS staff have concluded that the applicant design team does not have do not have the demonstrated expertise necessary to ensure that the proposed school will meet the DPS needs outlined in the RFP of creating high performing secondary schools that will improve student achievement, improve graduation rates, and improving college readiness (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Priority Needs, p 2*) nor meet the State’s statutory intent of “strengthening the performance of elementary and secondary public school pupils” (CRS 22-30.5-102 b).

Governance

The RFP outlines the following criteria for applicants regarding governance (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- **A strong, knowledgeable, diverse, stable, and committed board of governance or leadership team** committed to best practices in school governance and financial management. Ideally, the applicant will have a demonstrated history of successful and reliable operation grounded in solid fiscal management and stability.

The Applicant Review Team and staff analysis concluded that the applicant has not demonstrated adequate evidence of the existence a local board that is capable of entering into the legal charter contract with the district nor of providing oversight to the proposed school. The applicant has identified five potential board members for the proposed school. However, the proposed board is in a very early formative stage and the identified members do not include individuals with sufficient expertise in education or school governance.

Education Plan

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that while the proposed school demonstrates a strong cultural understanding of the needs of the Russian-speaking community

the proposal ultimately does not provide evidence of a well-developed educational plan that meets the applicant criteria outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). The proposed education plan is not likely to address the DPS needs outlined in the Request for Proposals of creating high performing secondary schools that will improve student achievement, improve graduation rates, and improving college readiness (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Priority Needs, p 2*) nor meet the State's statutory intent of "strengthening the performance of elementary and secondary public school pupils" (CRS 22-30.5-102 b). The RFP described the following criteria for an effective education plan:

- ***A comprehensive and research-based curriculum and assessment program designed to hold all students to high-achievement goals, including those with disabilities and specialized needs and abilities.***

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant did not provide evidence of a comprehensive curriculum or assessment program. First, while the applicant identifies a number of potential textbooks and instructional strategies the proposal does not demonstrate evidence of a comprehensive, research-based curriculum or education plan. In addition, the applicant does not provide an adequate plan for conducting formative and summative assessments and using the resulting data to drive instruction and interventions with students as outlined in the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-106 e.5 and f).

Finally, the applicant does not provide a plan to demonstrate their capacity to serve special education students. The Applicant Review Team analysis concluded that the applicant did not submit an adequate plan for serving special education students and did not articulate how the state-mandated Response to Intervention would be utilized to serve students prior to referral and as a means for identifying and referring students in need of special education services. In addition, the applicant did not submit an adequate plan for implementing the proposed dual-language model.

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To: Members, Board of Education
From: Marc Waxman, Executive Director, Office of School Reform and Innovation
Subject: Recommendation concerning the Global Village Academy Charter School Proposal
Date: June 4, 2009
Recommendation: Approve (to open in 2011)

On April 13, 2009 Denver Public Schools received a proposal from Global Village Academy for a new Charter School. The proposed schools would serve students in K-6 in a language immersion program offering immersion in Mandarin and Spanish.

The Office of School Reform and Innovation staff and the cross-disciplinary Applicant Review Team conducted a rigorous and comprehensive reviews and evaluations of the proposal to determine the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, district and community (CRS 22-30.5-108). Based on these evaluations the superintendent has determined that approving this school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be approved.

The rationale for the approval, as detailed in the attached staff report, is summarized below.

- The applicant demonstrates evidence of proven school leadership as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant has a diverse design team that has a proven track record of starting and opening the Global Village Academy in Aurora, which the proposed school would be replicating. In addition the applicant has a proven school leader in place for the new school.
- The applicant demonstrates evidence of effective governance as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant board has a proven track record of starting and overseeing the original Global Village Academy Charter School in Aurora and is proactively building its capacity to oversee the proposed replication school.
- The applicant demonstrates evidence of an educational plan that meets the application criteria outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). In addition, the applicant has promising evidence that their model is generating positive academic outcomes for students which meets the State's statutory intent of "strengthening the performance of elementary public school pupils" (CRS 22-30.5-102 b).
- The applicant is proposing an innovative model that fulfills the intent of the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-102 (3)). Specifically the applicant is proposing a language immersion program, offering language immersion in Mandarin and Spanish.

Superintendent's Recommendation to the Board of Education
Regarding the Global Village Academy Charter School Proposal
(2010-2011 Cycle)
June 4, 2009

Recommendation: Approve (to open in 2011)

Overview

The Superintendent recommends that the charter school application received from the Global Village Academy be approved. This recommendation is based on comprehensive and rigorous analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal conducted by the Applicant Review Team (a cross-disciplinary team of analysts) and district staff to evaluate the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district or the community (CRS 22-30.5-108).

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant demonstrates a track record of leadership, strong governance structure, and an innovative educational model with promising results. Based on these analyses, the superintendent has determined that approving this school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be approved. The rationale for the recommended approval is outlined in the following report.

Education Plan

The applicant demonstrates evidence of a well-developed educational plan that meets the application criteria outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). In addition the applicant has a promising track record of generating positive academic outcomes for students which meets the State's statutory intent of "strengthening the performance of elementary public school pupils" (CRS 22-30.5-102 b). The RFP described the following criteria for an effective education plan:

- *A comprehensive and **research-based curriculum and assessment program** designed to hold all students to high-achievement goals, including those with disabilities and specialized needs and abilities.*

The applicant is proposing to replicate the Global Village Academy in Aurora. Global Village Academy in Aurora is a new school and has limited performance data to date. However, Global Village Aurora has demonstrated preliminary promising results in addressing DPS's goal of improving academic achievement. Specifically in SY 2007-2008 33% of 3rd graders, 67% of 4th graders (compared to 41% Aurora district average), and 74% of 5th graders (compared to 50% Aurora district average) scored proficient or advanced in reading. In math 32% of 3rd graders (compared to 47% Aurora district average), 52% of 4th graders (compared to 49% Aurora district

average), and 70% of 5th graders (compared to 50% Aurora district average) scored proficient or advanced.

Leadership

The DPS 2010-2011 Request for Proposals for new schools outlines the following leadership criteria for new schools proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- ***Candidates currently operating schools will demonstrate track records of proven success. Candidates not currently operating schools will possess a school leadership team with a track record of success in increasing student achievement.***
- ***Applicants should have a strong and well-organized leader committed to educational reform. This individual will have a track record with the proposed educational plan and student profile. The district will heavily weight strength of school leadership in the decision process.***

The applicant demonstrates leadership capacity in the operation of the current Global Village Academy in Aurora. Specifically, the applicant has a robust design team that has experience and a proven track record in developing and implementing the existing Global Village Academy. Global Village Academy already has a proven school leader in place to oversee the new school, who has experience as the leader of the current Global Village Academy. In addition, the applicant is developing a leadership pipeline to cultivate new leaders such as the current Global Village Academy Dean of Students who will be assuming the position of principal in the existing school. In addition, the applicant recently received a federal StarTalk grant to support the recruitment and training of mandarin teachers, which will help support the recruitment and training of potential new teachers and leaders for the replication school.

Governance

The RFP outlines the following criteria for applicants regarding governance (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- ***A strong, knowledgeable, diverse, stable, and committed board of governance or leadership team committed to best practices in school governance and financial management. Ideally, the applicant will have a demonstrated history of successful and reliable operation grounded in solid fiscal management and stability.***

The applicant demonstrates evidence of a diverse, experienced, and committed board with the capacity to effectively oversee the start-up and implementation of the proposed new school. The Global Village Academy board has a track record of opening and overseeing the successful operation of the current school and is working to build its capacity to provide successful oversight to the new school.

Innovation

The applicant is proposing an innovative model that fulfills the intent of the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-102 (3)). Specifically the applicant is proposing a language immersion program, offering language immersion in Mandarin and Spanish. Research shows that language immersion programs can offer many benefits to students including an opportunity to develop fluency in a second language, a positive impact on student achievement overall, and a positive impact on student literacy in their first language. In addition, these programs can promote the development of 21st century skills such as cross-cultural competency and communication, problem solving, and global awareness.

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To: Members, Board of Education
From: Marc Waxman, Executive Director, Office of School Reform and Innovation
Subject: Recommendation concerning the KIPP Academy Middle School Charter School Proposal
Date: June 4, 2009
Recommendation: Approve (to open in 2011)

On April 13, 2009 Denver Public Schools received a proposal from the KIPP Academy Middle School for a new Charter School. The proposed schools would serve students in 6-8 in a college-preparatory model.

The Office of School Reform and Innovation staff and the cross-disciplinary Applicant Review Team conducted a rigorous and comprehensive reviews and evaluations of the proposal to determine the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, district, or community (CRS 22-30.5-108). Based on these evaluations the superintendent has determined that approving this school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be approved.

The rationale for the approval, as detailed in the attached staff report, is summarized below.

- The applicant demonstrates evidence of proven school leadership as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant has a diverse design team that has a proven track record of starting and opening the original KIPP Sunshine Peak Middle school.
- The applicant demonstrates strong evidence of effective governance as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant board has a proven track record of starting and overseeing the original KIPP Sunshine Peak Middle school and is proactively building its capacity to oversee the proposed replication school.
- The applicant demonstrates evidence of a well-developed educational plan that meets the application criteria outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). In addition the applicant has a promising track record of addressing the DPS needs outlined in the Request for Proposals of creating high performing secondary schools that will improve student achievement, improve graduation rates, and improving college readiness (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Priority Needs, p 2*) and also meets the State's statutory intent of "strengthening the performance of secondary public school pupils" (CRS 22-30.5-102 b). The applicant has a promising track record of performance and results and has been rated as "Meets Expectations" on the DPS School Performance Framework.
- The applicant demonstrates evidence of community support and community demand as outlined in the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-106 c).
- The applicant demonstrates strong evidence of financial viability and sustainability as outlined in the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-20.5-106 g).

Superintendent's Recommendation to the Board of Education
Regarding the KIPP Academy Middle School Charter School Proposal
(2010-2011 Cycle)
June 4, 2009

Recommendation: Approve (to open in 2011)

Overview

The Superintendent recommends that the charter school application received from the KIPP Middle School Academy be approved. This recommendation is based on comprehensive and rigorous analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal conducted by the Applicant Review Team (a cross-disciplinary team of analysts) and district staff to evaluate the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community (CRS 22-30.5-108).

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant demonstrates a track record of leadership, strong governance structure, a comprehensive educational model with promising results, community support, and a financially viable model. Based on these analyses, the superintendent has determined that approving this school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be approved. The rationale for the recommended approval is outlined in the following report.

Education Plan

The Applicant Review Team and staff analysis concluded that the applicant has an effective education plan and a promising track record of addressing the DPS needs outlined in the Request for Proposals of creating high performing secondary schools that will improve student achievement, improve graduation rates, and improving college readiness (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Priority Needs, p 2*) and of meeting the State's statutory intent of "strengthening the performance of secondary public school pupils" (CRS 22-30.5-102 b). The RFP described the following criteria for an effective education plan:

- *A comprehensive and **research-based curriculum and assessment program** designed to hold all students to high-achievement goals, including those with disabilities and specialized needs and abilities.*

The applicant has a promising track record of improving results for students with their educational model as compared with other DPS schools. The current school, KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy is rated as "Meets Expectations" on the School Performance Framework. The current KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy school has demonstrated progress in addressing DPS's goal of improving academic achievement. Specifically, in 2007 58% of KIPP 7th grade students scored proficient or advanced in reading (compared to a district average of 40%) and 55% scored proficient or advanced in math (compared with a district average of 40%). In 2008, 52%

of KIPP's 7th grade students scored proficient or above in reading (compared to a district average of 45.56%) and 31% of 7th graders scored proficient or above in math (compared to a district average of 26.6%). In addition, students who have graduated from KIPP schools nationally have shown a 65% matriculation rate into college.

Leadership

The DPS 2010-2011 Request for Proposals for new schools outlines the following leadership criteria for new schools proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- ***Candidates currently operating schools will demonstrate track records of proven success. Candidates not currently operating schools will possess a school leadership team with a track record of success in increasing student achievement.***
- ***Applicants should have a strong and well-organized leader committed to educational reform. This individual will have a track record with the proposed educational plan and student profile. The district will heavily weight strength of school leadership in the decision process.***

The applicant demonstrates significant and proven leadership capacity in the operation of the current KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy Middle school. Specifically, the applicant has a robust design team that has experience and a proven track record in developing and implementing the existing KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy Middle school. In addition KIPP has a well-developed leadership program, the Fisher Fellows Program, which is in place to support the new school leader once that person is hired.

Governance

The RFP outlines the following criteria for applicants regarding governance (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- ***A strong, knowledgeable, diverse, stable, and committed board of governance or leadership team committed to best practices in school governance and financial management. Ideally, the applicant will have a demonstrated history of successful and reliable operation grounded in solid fiscal management and stability.***

The applicant demonstrates evidence of a diverse, experienced, and committed board with the capacity to effectively oversee the development of the Charter Management Organization and the start-up and implementation of the proposed new school. The KIPP board has a track record of opening and overseeing the successful operation of the current KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy middle school and is working to build its capacity to provide successful oversight to the new school.

Community Support and Demonstration of Demand

The Applicant Review Team and staff analysis concluded that the applicant meets the applicant criteria for demonstrating community support for the proposed school or demonstrate student demand for the proposed school as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*) and in the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-106 c). Specifically the RFP criteria for community support are as follows:

- *A strong understanding of the community that the proposed school will serve and demonstrated community support. **Ideally, the school will have strong community connections, a track record of service, and a demonstrated measure of student demand or need.***

The applicant has provided evidence of strong community support and a demonstrated measure of student demand. Specifically, the current KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy had a waiting list of 250 students last year.

Budget

The applicant provides evidence of a sound financial plan and that the proposed organization and schools will be financially sustainable as outlined in the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-106 g).



To: Members, Board of Education
From: Tom Boasberg, Superintendent
Subject: Recommendation concerning the SOAR Charter School Proposal
Date: June 4, 2009
Recommendation: Approve

On April 13, 2009 Denver Public Schools received a proposal from SOAR for a new Charter School. The proposed schools would serve students in K-5 in an academically rigorous, enrichment focused program.

The Office of School Reform and Innovation staff and the cross-disciplinary Applicant Review Team conducted a rigorous and comprehensive reviews and evaluations of the proposal to determine the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, district and community (CRS 22-30.5-108). Based on these evaluations the superintendent has determined that approving this school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be approved.

The rationale for the approval, as detailed in the attached staff report, is summarized below.

- The applicant demonstrates evidence of proven school leadership as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant has a diverse design team that has a proven track record of starting and opening the FLI Charter School in Harlem, NY.
- The applicant demonstrates evidence of effective governance as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant has developed a board with the depth of expertise necessary to start up and oversee the proposed school.
- The applicant demonstrates evidence of a well-developed educational plan that meets the application criteria outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). In addition the applicant has a proven track record of generating positive academic outcomes for students which meets the State's statutory intent of "strengthening the performance of elementary public school pupils" (CRS 22-30.5-102 b). The applicant is proposing to replicate the FLI Charter School in Harlem which has consistently outperformed the district and been recognized as a high performing charter school by the district.

Superintendent's Recommendation to the Board of Education

Regarding the SOAR Charter School Proposal

(2010-2011 Cycle)

June 4, 2009

Recommendation: Approve

Overview

The Superintendent recommends that the charter school application received from SOAR be approved. This recommendation is based on comprehensive and rigorous analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal conducted by the Applicant Review Team (a cross-disciplinary team of analysts) and district staff to evaluate the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district or the community (CRS 22-30.5-108).

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant demonstrates a track record of leadership, strong governance, and a comprehensive educational model with proven results. Based on this analysis, the superintendent has determined that approving this school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be approved. The rationale for the recommended approval is outlined in the following report.

Education Plan

The applicant demonstrates evidence of a well-developed educational plan that meets the application criteria outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). In addition the applicant has a proven track record of generating positive academic outcomes for students which meets the State's statutory intent of "strengthening the performance of elementary public school pupils" (CRS 22-30.5-102 b). The RFP described the following criteria for an effective education plan:

- *A comprehensive and **research-based curriculum and assessment program** designed to hold all students to high-achievement goals, including those with disabilities and specialized needs and abilities.*

The applicant is proposing to replicate the FLI school in Harlem, NY which has a proven track record of achieving positive academic outcomes for students. The school being replicated, FLI has demonstrated results in addressing DPS's goal of improving academic achievement. Specifically, in 2007-2008 82% of 5th graders were proficient or above in English Language Arts, and 83% of 5th graders were proficient or above in math. FLI's most recent scores (2008-2009) continue that trend with 83% of students school-wide meeting or exceeding standards in English Language Arts (NYS's average was 82%, NYC 69%) and 84% of students meeting or exceeding standards in Math.

Leadership

The DPS 2010-2011 Request for Proposals for new schools outlines the following leadership criteria for new schools proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- *Candidates currently operating schools will demonstrate track records of proven success. **Candidates not currently operating schools will possess a school leadership team with a track record of success in increasing student achievement.***
- *Applicants should have a strong and well-organized leader committed to educational reform. This **individual will have a track record with the proposed educational plan and student profile.** The district will heavily weight strength of school leadership in the decision process.*

The applicant demonstrates proven leadership capacity in the founding and operating of the FLI charter school in Harlem, NY which has consistently outperformed the district and been recognized as a high performing charter school. In addition, the school leader from FLI will act as the school leader for the proposed school.

Governance

The RFP outlines the following criteria for applicants regarding governance (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- *A **strong, knowledgeable, diverse, stable, and committed board of governance or leadership team** committed to best practices in school governance and financial management. Ideally, the applicant will have a demonstrated history of successful and reliable operation grounded in solid fiscal management and stability.*

The applicant demonstrates evidence of a diverse, experienced, and committed board with the capacity to effectively oversee the start-up and implementation of the proposed new school. In particular the applicant has developed a strong partnership with the Public Education and Business Coalition which has representatives on the proposed school's board.

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To: Members, Board of Education
From: Marc Waxman, Executive Director, Office of School Reform and Innovation
Subject: Recommendation concerning the Southwest Neighborhood Academy Charter School Proposal
Date: June 4, 2009

Recommendation: Deny

On April 13, 2009 Denver Public Schools received a proposal from the Southwest Neighborhood Academy for a new Charter School. The proposed school would serve students in grades K-8 in a Core Knowledge program.

The Office of School Reform and Innovation staff and the cross-disciplinary Applicant Review Team conducted rigorous and comprehensive reviews and evaluations of the proposal to determine the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, district, or community (CRS 22-30.5-108). Based on these evaluations the superintendent has determined that approving this school would not be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be denied.

The rationale for the denial, as detailed in the attached staff report, is summarized below.

- The applicant does not meet the application criteria for providing evidence of proven school leadership as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant has not developed a design team with the capacity and expertise necessary to start and operate the proposed school
- The applicant does not meet the application criteria for effective governance as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant has not developed a local board that is capable of entering into the legal charter contract with the district or providing oversight to the proposed school
- The applicant does not meet the application criteria for demonstrating community support for the proposed school or demonstrate student demand for the proposed school as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*) and outlined in the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-106 c)
- The applicant does not provide a detailed plan that adequately demonstrates capacity for serving special education students
- The applicant does not provide a detailed plan that adequately demonstrates capacity for serving English language learners

Superintendent's Recommendation to the Board of Education
Regarding the Southwest Neighborhood Academy Charter School Proposal
(2010-2011 Cycle)

June 4, 2009

Recommendation: Deny

Overview

The Superintendent recommends that the charter school application received from the Southwest Neighborhood Academy be denied. This recommendation is based on comprehensive and rigorous analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal conducted by the Applicant Review Team (a cross-disciplinary team of analysts) and district staff to evaluate the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community (CRS 22-30.5-108).

The Applicant Review Team and staff analysis concluded that while the proposed school utilizes a research-based curriculum (Core Knowledge) it does not demonstrate adequate leadership, adequate governance, an adequate plan for serving special education students or English Language Learners, or adequate community support. Based on these issues, the superintendent has determined that approving this school would not be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be denied. The rationale for the recommended denial is outlined in the following report.

Leadership

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant has not developed a design team nor does the applicant demonstrate the capacity to start and operate the proposed school.

The DPS 2010-2011 Request for Proposals for new schools outlines the following leadership criteria for new schools proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- *Candidates currently operating schools will demonstrate track records of proven success. Candidates not currently operating schools will **possess a school leadership team with a track record of success in increasing student achievement.***
- *Applicants should have a strong and well-organized leader committed to educational reform. This **individual will have a track record with the proposed***

educational plan and student profile. *The district will heavily weight strength of school leadership in the decision process.*

The Applicant Review Team (ART) and staff analysis found that the application does not demonstrate evidence of a well-developed design team. In addition, the applicant does not identify a school leader. Therefore the Applicant Review Team and DPS staff have concluded that the applicant does not have the demonstrated capacity necessary to start and operate the proposed school successfully nor meet the DPS needs outlined in the RFP of creating high performing secondary schools that will improve student achievement, improve graduation rates, and improving college readiness (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Priority Needs, p 2*). nor meet the State’s statutory intent of “strengthening the performance of elementary and secondary public school pupils” (CRS 22-30.5-102 b).

Governance

The RFP outlines the following criteria for applicants regarding governance (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- **A strong, knowledgeable, diverse, stable, and committed board of governance or leadership team** committed to best practices in school governance and financial management. Ideally, the applicant will have a demonstrated history of successful and reliable operation grounded in solid fiscal management and stability.

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant has not demonstrated adequate evidence of the existence a local board that is capable of entering into the legal charter contract with the district nor of providing oversight to the proposed school. Furthermore, the applicant does not identify any potential board members in the application.

Education Plan

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the proposed school did not demonstrate capacity to provide adequate services to students with special needs or English language learners. The Applicant Review Team analysis concluded that the applicant did not submit an adequate plan for serving special education students and did not articulate how the state-mandated Response to Intervention would be utilized to serve students prior to referral and as a means for identifying and referring students in need of special education services. In addition, the applicant did not submit an adequate plan for serving English language learners.

Evidence of Community Support

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant does not meet the application criteria for demonstrating community support for the proposed school or demonstrate student demand for the proposed school as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*) and outlined in the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-106 c). Specifically the RFP criteria for community support are as follows:

- *A strong understanding of the community that the proposed school will serve and demonstrated community support. **Ideally, the school will have strong community connections, a track record of service, and a demonstrated measure of student demand or need.** In the cases where the community is not yet determined, the applicant will provide their plan to engage the community.*

The applicant is proposing to serve the neighborhoods surrounding Kaiser Elementary school, but does not provide any evidence of community support in the form of letters of support, MOU's with partner organizations, or other demonstrations of community support. Furthermore, the applicant does not provide evidence of demonstrated student demand for the proposed school in the form of intents to enroll or other demonstrable measures of student demand.



To: Members, Board of Education
From: Marc Waxman, Executive Director, Office of School Reform and Innovation
Subject: Recommendation concerning the West Denver Preparatory Academy Charter School Proposal
Date: June 4, 2009
Recommendation: **Approve**

On April 13, 2009 Denver Public Schools received a proposal from the West Denver Preparatory Academy for two new Charter Schools. The proposed schools would serve students in 6-8 in a college-preparatory model.

The Office of School Reform and Innovation staff and the cross-disciplinary Applicant Review Team conducted a rigorous and comprehensive reviews and evaluations of the proposal to determine the viability of the proposed schools and whether authorizing the proposed schools would be in the best interests of the pupils, district and community (CRS 22-30.5-108). Based on these evaluations the superintendent has determined that approving these schools would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be approved.

The rationale for the approval, as detailed in the attached staff report, is summarized below.

- The applicant demonstrates strong evidence of proven school leadership as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant has a diverse design team that has a proven track record of starting and opening the original West Denver Prep school and has already hired and is training school leaders for the schools proposed to open in 2010.
- The applicant demonstrates strong evidence of effective governance as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). Specifically, the applicant board has a proven track record of starting and overseeing the original West Denver Prep school and is proactively building its capacity to oversee the proposed replication schools.
- The applicant demonstrates strong evidence of a well-developed educational plan that meets the application criteria outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*). In addition the applicant has a proven track record of addressing the DPS needs outlined in the Request for Proposals for creating high performing secondary schools that will improve student achievement, improve graduation rates, and improving college readiness (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Priority Needs, p 2*) and also meets the State's statutory intent of "strengthening the performance of secondary public school pupils" (CRS 22-30.5-102 b). The applicant has a demonstrated track record of performance and results and has been rated as "Distinguished" on the DPS School Performance Framework.
- The applicant demonstrates strong evidence of community support and community demand as outlined in the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-106 c). Specifically the enrollment lottery at the existing schools generated 320 applicants for 250 slots.
- The applicant demonstrates strong evidence of financial viability and sustainability as outlined in the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-20.5-106 g).

Superintendent's Recommendation to the Board of Education
Regarding the West Denver Preparatory Academy Charter School Proposal
(2010-2011 Cycle)
June 4, 2009

Recommendation: Approve

Overview

The Superintendent recommends that the charter school application received from the West Denver Preparatory Academy be approved. This recommendation is based on comprehensive and rigorous analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal conducted by the Applicant Review Team (a cross-disciplinary team of analysts) and district staff to evaluate the viability of the proposed school and whether authorizing the proposed school would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community (CRS 22-30.5-108).

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant demonstrates a proven track record of leadership, strong governance structure, a comprehensive educational model with proven results, strong community support, and a financially viable model. Based on these analyses, the superintendent has determined that approving these schools would be in the best interests of the pupils, the district, or the community and is recommending that the application be approved. The rationale for the recommended approval is outlined in the following report.

Education Plan

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant has an effective education plan and a proven track record of addressing the DPS goals outlined in the Request for Proposals of creating high performing secondary schools that will improve student achievement, improve graduation rates, and improving college readiness (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Priority Needs, p 2*) and of meeting the State's statutory intent of "strengthening the performance of secondary public school pupils" (CRS 22-30.5-102 b). The RFP described the following criteria for an effective education plan:

- *A comprehensive and **research-based curriculum and assessment program** designed to hold all students to high-achievement goals, including those with disabilities and specialized needs and abilities.*

The applicant has a proven track record of success with their educational model. West Denver Prep is the only school in DPS serving more than 80% low income students to be rated "Distinguished" on the School Performance Framework. The current West Denver Prep school has demonstrated results in addressing DPS's goal of improving academic achievement. Specifically, 62% of West Denver Prep's 7th grade students scored proficient or above in

reading (compared to a district average of 45.56%) and 72% of 7th graders scored proficient or above in math (compared to a district average of 26.6%).

Leadership

The DPS 2010-2011 Request for Proposals for new schools outlines the following leadership criteria for new schools proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- ***Candidates currently operating schools will demonstrate track records of proven success. Candidates not currently operating schools will possess a school leadership team with a track record of success in increasing student achievement.***
- ***Applicants should have a strong and well-organized leader committed to educational reform. This individual will have a track record with the proposed educational plan and student profile. The district will heavily weight strength of school leadership in the decision process.***

The applicant demonstrates significant and proven leadership capacity in the operation of the current West Denver Prep school and evidence that they have built the capacity necessary to successfully open and operate the proposed new schools. Specifically, the applicant has a robust design team that has experience and a proven track record in developing and implementing the existing West Denver Prep school. In addition, the applicant has already hired new leaders for the proposed schools has a well-developed plan for the current West Denver Prep school leader to mentor them during the planning year and as they assume their new roles within the new schools proposed to open in 2010.

Governance

The RFP outlines the following criteria for applicants regarding governance (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*):

- ***A strong, knowledgeable, diverse, stable, and committed board of governance or leadership team committed to best practices in school governance and financial management. Ideally, the applicant will have a demonstrated history of successful and reliable operation grounded in solid fiscal management and stability.***

The applicant demonstrates evidence of a diverse, experienced, and committed board with the capacity to effectively oversee the development of the Charter Management Organization and the start-up and implementation of the proposed new schools. The West Denver Prep board has a track record of opening and overseeing the successful operation of the current West Denver Prep school and has engaged in significant strategic planning to prepare for the proposed expansion. The board is proactively engaging in board development to continue to build its capacity to provide successful oversight to the new schools.

Community Support and Demonstration of Demand

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant meets the applicant criteria for demonstrating community support for the proposed school or demonstrate student demand for the proposed school as outlined in the Request for Proposals (*Denver Public Schools Request for Proposals: New Schools Selection Criteria, p 6-7*) and in the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-106 c). Specifically the RFP criteria for community support are as follows:

- *A strong understanding of the community that the proposed school will serve and demonstrated community support. **Ideally, the school will have strong community connections, a track record of service, and a demonstrated measure of student demand or need.***

The applicant has provided evidence of strong community support and a demonstrated measure of student demand. Specifically, the current West Denver Prep lottery generated 320 applicants for 250 slots.

Budget

The Applicant Review Team and staff analyses concluded that the applicant provides evidence of a sound financial plan and that the proposed organization and schools will be financially sustainable as outlined in the Colorado Statute (CRS 22-30.5-106 g).

Denver Public Schools



**THE DISTRICT SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY COUNCIL (SIAC)
RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS
TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
ON
CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATIONS**

JUNE 2009

Introduction

The Charter Schools Act requires the District School Improvement and Accountability Council (District SIAC) to review Charter School applications. This responsibility was delegated to a subcommittee. This report is the result of that process for the 2008-2009 school year. The persons who participated in a portion or all of the subcommittee work included the following:

Sherry Eastlund, District SIAC Subcommittee Co-Chairperson
Paula Ortlieb, DPS Parent, Chair of District SIAC, Subcommittee Co-Chairperson
Marsha Gonzales, PTSA, Community, District SIAC
Lisa Hernandez, Charter School Parent, Educator, District SIAC
Leo Smith, Community, District SIAC
Dr. Jesse Sutherland, Community, District SIAC

After the subcommittee received the 13 charter school applications on April 14, it engaged in a series of meetings in which it interviewed all the applicants that do not presently operate a school in Denver and discussed the merits of each application. That part of the process extended through most of May, and included the time necessary to review the application and make a recommendation to the Board with regard to the application of Amandla Charter Academy concerning a proposed charter to begin this Fall. Also, in late May, one applicant, Denver Community High School, withdrew its application.

On May 26, the subcommittee presented District SIAC with a progress report including an overview of its recommendations. At that meeting, District SIAC adopted a resolution supporting the work of the subcommittee.

Criteria and Analytical Process

In reviewing charter school applications, District SIAC's principal test has consistently been whether the proposed school is likely to be successful in providing its students with an educational environment that results in high levels of academic achievement. To meet this test, the school must, of course, also be functionally sound, both in terms of its educational program and its financial operation.

This test remains of critical importance and represents an initial condition that must be met before any charter application will be successful in gaining our recommendation. However, the District has embarked on a policy not only of continually adding multiple new schools of widely differing types to coexist with traditional neighborhood schools but of also dictating the location of these new schools. Because of this change of policy, District SIAC has concluded that other factors are also of vital significance to whether a proposed school should be granted a charter.

Among these additional issues are the following:

- The relationship between the proposed charter school and other nearby schools, especially when the proposed school will be co-located with an existing school;
- The relationship between the proposed charter school and any educational management company or similar parent entity that will be involved in the school's operation;
- The relationship of the proposed charter school and other District schools that are designed to serve students of a particular type or demographic character;
- Enrollment policies that may affect the access of neighborhood families to nearby schools;
- The existence of alternative arrangements, such as creating a performance school, a contract school, or redesigning an existing program that would address the circumstances underlying the proposed charter.

Recommendations

West Denver Prep (2 schools)

KIPP

Denver School of Science and Technology (4 schools)

Each of these applicants presently operates one or more schools in Denver that are proving to be successful in producing high levels of student achievement. Indeed, some of these applicants' schools have outstanding levels of success with all kinds of students. This record of success has led to these applicants having strong parental support and has enhanced the standing of the District throughout Denver and beyond.

In light of this proven and impressive track record in DPS, District SIAC believes that replication of these schools within the District would be of great value to the community. Nevertheless, it is our view that it is inappropriate under the Charter Schools Act to establish multiple schools in sequential years under one application. Also, for the present Board of Education to do so would have the effect of preempting decisions that should be made by future Boards under the circumstances that then exist.

Accordingly, District SIAC recommends that the charter applications submitted by the above applicants be granted insofar as they are for schools to begin operation in 2010.

Although conceding the success of these schools, one subcommittee member is concerned that such success is being achieved by "encouraging" low achieving students to leave the schools instead of helping them to improve.

Southwest Neighborhood Academy

This application is for a K-8 school to be co-located in Kaiser Elementary School. The school would use the Core Knowledge curriculum.

The applicant's stated intention would be to share the Kaiser facility until such time as the proposed school would prove so successful that Kaiser's enrollment would decrease to the point that it would need to be closed and the charter school could then take over the building. The subcommittee finds that plan to be extremely objectionable on a number of levels, including that it would almost certainly prove to be extremely divisive to the neighborhood. Some members of the subcommittee are also concerned with the apparent conflict of interest that exists by virtue of the author of the application receiving a consulting fee from the school.

Although the subcommittee generally viewed the proposed educational program as a positive element of the application, such is far outweighed by the negative implications of the applicant's attitude towards the existing neighborhood school.

Hence, District SIAC recommends that the charter application of Southwest Neighborhood Academy be denied.

Trailblazer Charter Academy Cornerstone Charter Academy

The applicant for these two schools is National Heritage Academies, Inc., (NHA) a for-profit company that operates 57 schools mostly in Michigan. These two proposed K-8 schools would be identical in educational program and in their operation with one being located in Northeast Denver and the other in the Northwest area of the city. NHA would build facilities for the two schools and would make up any operating shortfalls in the initial years with the expectation that when enrollment would reach above about 600 students the school would return a profit to NHA.

The proposed educational program in the schools operated by NHA appears to the subcommittee to be sound and reasonably successful, but not particularly innovative or compelling. However, the subcommittee's principal concern with these applications lies in the financial and operational relationship between the schools and NHA.

Under these applications, *all* revenue received by the schools from whatever source would be transferred to NHA. In return, NHA would operate the schools in their entirety. All school staff, including the principals, would be employees of NHA (meaning, among other things, that they would not be members of PERA). According to the applicant's representatives, the governing board would have the authority to terminate its contract with NHA. However, given that NHA would be the owner of the school buildings and

would have made up any operational deficits sustained by a school, that authority seems more theoretical than real.

The subcommittee finds this arrangement as unacceptable for many reasons. Perhaps most objectionable is that it appears that all operational decisions about these Denver schools, even the most mundane, would, in essence, be made in corporate offices in Michigan. And, the motivation for those decisions could well be to increase the profit of NHA, rather than for the educational benefit of the students.

In light of this essential facet of these applications, the subcommittee recommends that the charter application of Trailblazer Charter Academy and Cornerstone Charter Academy be denied.

For the above schools, the subcommittee generally reached a consensus for each of its recommendations, but for the remaining applications that unanimity eluded us.

Girls Athletic Leadership School

This application is for a 6-12 college preparatory school for girls that uses an experiential learning educational program with elements of wellness or health integrated throughout the curriculum. Although there were some concerns about the legality of the single sex nature of this school, the subcommittee generally found the proposal to be for a truly innovative and well researched program that has strong leadership. It has the potential to provide a desirable choice for some Denver families.

As a result, with one dissenting vote, it is the recommendation of the subcommittee that the charter application of the Girls Athletic Leadership School be granted.

The dissenting member of the subcommittee sees one fatal weakness in the proposal, i.e., inadequate teacher salaries. The teaching staff will be at-will employees, will be expected to participate in varied and demanding activities, and must have the skills to provide the experiential instruction called for by the school. The applicant indicated she was confident that an average salary of \$36,000 would be adequate to attract “young, enthusiastic” teachers. That may be so, but even ignoring the age discriminatory nature of this statement, it does not convince the dissenting subcommittee member that such teachers can provide the challenging type of instruction needed to make this school successful. That member is also concerned with the number of administrators to be hired by this school whose enrollment is only expected ultimately to be about 315 students. Accordingly, this member would recommend denial of the charter application.

SOAR Charter School

The applicant proposes to establish a K-5 school that would be modeled after a school that the applicant and her spouse started and operated for several years in New York City. That school enrolls primarily impoverished African-American students and has had notable success in improving their levels of academic achievement. The proposed school would have a modestly longer school week, would provide students with art or music instruction each day, and would cultivate a school environment focused on academic achievement.

Some members of the subcommittee were concerned that the applicant did not seem attuned to the different cultural and demographic circumstances that would be present in the Denver school. However, most members of the subcommittee believed that the success of the New York School could probably be replicated here.

However, there exist conflict of interest issues with regard to this application that, for most members of the subcommittee, are of overriding importance as to whether this application should be granted. Both the applicant and her spouse are senior administrative employees in the Office of School Reform and Innovation (formerly the New Schools Office). Although the applicant would resign her employment to become the principal at the school, her spouse would be the individual primarily responsible for oversight as to the continued operation of the school and its relations with DPS. Unless that circumstance can be resolved, the subcommittee is strongly of the view that approval of the charter would threaten the integrity and reputation of the District.

To its credit, the District has taken steps to assure that there is no impropriety in regard to the approval of this charter. The application is being reviewed solely by persons outside the District. That, however, does not resolve the continuing conflict of interest issues. The administration has indicated to us that they are attempting to craft a policy regarding the continuing oversight of this charter if approved, but one has not been presented to us at this juncture.

At this juncture, most members of the subcommittee are sufficiently concerned about the conflict of interest issues that would arise regarding the continuing oversight of this charter that they do not believe the charter should proceed until those issues are resolved.

Further, we note that the applicant seeks to have the school located in the new Green Valley Ranch facility that will soon be built. For this or any charter school to be so located would raise concern that, under the usual enrollment policies of charter schools, neighborhood families could be denied access to a school built with their taxes.

Accordingly, the subcommittee recommends that the charter application of SOAR Charter School be denied or held in abeyance until such time as the District formulates and adopts a policy that eliminates any potential conflict of interest issues concerning its operation.

One member of the subcommittee views the conflict of interest issues as being resolvable without halting the process and would grant the application on the basis of a commitment by the District to have an appropriate policy in place before entering a final contract with the charter.

Denver Language School
Global Village Academy
Global Outreach Academy

For these three applications, despite extended discussion, the subcommittee was unable to achieve a majority of members either in favor or opposed to the applications. **Hence, for these three schools the subcommittee makes no recommendation.**

In regard to **Denver Language School**, some members found it to be truly innovative proposal to establish a school that teaches both Mandarin Chinese and Spanish in a total immersion program. Further, they were impressed with its being developed by Denver parents and with the extensive community support that it already enjoys. To other members, however, the school's plan for total immersion goes too far by not including any English instruction during the regular school day until the student completes kindergarten and grades 1 and 2.

As to **Global Village Academy**, some members believe the school would be a replication of the existing successful school now operating in Aurora. Also, although this school's educational program is also a language immersion model, it does include some English instruction beginning in first grade, thereby alleviating members' concern about students' progress in this all important area. Other members consider it more appropriate for that school to expand at its present location. Also, the inadequacy of budgeted teacher salaries (an average of \$37.5 K in 2010) is to at least one subcommittee member a fatal flaw in the application.

As to **Global Outreach Academy**, some members view the proposed school as providing a valuable educational choice to the Russian/Slavic community in the metropolitan area and believe it would be helpful to the assimilation of that ethnic group into the Denver community. Other members are concerned that most of the community support for the school is from persons that live in the northwest suburbs of Denver while the school would be located in the southeast. Further, those members view Place Bridge Academy as the appropriate DPS school for students from foreign lands to become assimilated in our culture. Also, again, an average teacher salary of only \$35,000 is viewed by one subcommittee person as being a critical defect in the proposal.

Additional Issues

Beginning in the Spring of 2008, the Board and District embarked on a process of seeking to open new schools through a yearly RFP process that invited persons inside and outside the District to create diverse schools to be placed, at the administration's discretion, in locations throughout Denver. That policy may eventually prove to be successful in enhancing overall student achievement of DPS, but any definitive answer to that question is years away. What does seem totally apparent to the subcommittee, however, is that it would be extraordinarily unwise to continue year after year to add school after school to Denver neighborhoods without full public understanding and support of the ultimate vision that the District seeks to realize. Indeed, the RFP process is already beginning to appear to be some type of sorcerer's apprentice that continues blindly to dump new schools on astonished and recalcitrant neighborhoods.

District SIAC strongly recommends that the RFP process should be suspended until the Board and the District engage in a full, open, and genuine public discussion of the future of DPS. That discussion should address multiple issues, including the following:

- What does the Board foresee as the ultimate goal of this redesign of the District, i.e., in ten years, what percentage of DPS schools will be traditional neighborhood schools, charter schools, performance schools, and innovation schools;
- What specific policies and resources will be provided to support traditional neighborhood schools as they compete with new schools;
- How will the District maintain a consistent curriculum throughout the District so that students are not disadvantaged by moving from one neighborhood to another;
- What changes in transportation policies will be necessary to assure equitable access of all students to schools throughout the District;
- What enrollment policies should be required of new schools so as to assure that families living nearby will be able to enroll in any new schools added to their neighborhood;
- Given the long time line before most of the proposed new secondary schools will actually be enrolling student in upper grades, what assistance will be provided to schools serving the present generation of secondary students;
- What steps should the District take in order to evaluate and/or develop community support for proposed new schools *before* a new school is located in a neighborhood and what role should a lack of community support play in deciding to establish a new school in a given neighborhood.

(Note: Illness prevented Ms. Gonzales from participating and Ms. Hernandez resigned from the committee before the above discussion of Additional Issues was finalized)