



Arizona Charter Schools Program  
Arizona Department of Education

Mission: AZ Charter School Program Ensures High-Quality Educational Choices by  
Selecting, Monitoring, and Assisting Transformative Leaders

**Arizona Charter Schools Program  
Start-up Grant Project Years 2024-28 Subgrantee\*  
Site -Based Application**

*\* In compliance with Uniform Guidance 2 CFR §200.330, AZCSP awardees have been determined to be subrecipients of CFDA 84.282 A awarded to the Arizona Department of Education, Charter Schools Program, October 1, 2018. Subrecipients will also be known as non-federal entities.*

**Purpose**

Arizona Charter Schools Program is to, from the amount available (ESEA §4302(b)(3)), support the startup of new charter schools, the replication of high-quality charter schools, and the expansion of high-quality charter schools on a competitive basis (ESEA §4303 (b) (1)).

**Eligibility**

The applicant must apply for the startup subgrant to obtain assistance in planning, program design, and the initial implementation of its charter schools. The entity applying for this grant must be a Not for Profit organization registered and in good standing with the Arizona Corporation Commission at the time of the application submission.

Applicants can apply in 202 if they meet the following conditions:

1. the applicant has already submitted its charter application to the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (ASBCS) by June 2022 or,
2. the applicant must have an ASBCS approved replication application approved by December 13, 2022, or,
3. the applicant must have an ASBCS approved expansion application approved by December 13, 2022.
4. New Arizona State University (ASU) sponsored charter schools must also be approved by December 13, 2022.

Before the non-profit organization can receive the AZCSP application, it must complete and submit the Arizona Charter Schools Program Grant Eligibility Form and the applicant Registration Form. Both forms are available at the AZCSP website: <http://www.azed.gov/charter-school-program/>.

## Notice

1. The charter school must meet the federal definition of a charter school found in ESEA §4310(2).  
CHARTER SCHOOL —The term “charter school” means a public school that—
  - a. in accordance with a specific State statute authorizing the granting of charters to schools, is exempt from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools, but not from any rules relating to the other requirements of this paragraph;
  - b. is created by a developer as a public school, or is adapted by a developer from an existing public school, and is operated under public supervision and direction;
  - c. operates in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives determined by the school’s developer and agreed to by the authorized public chartering agency;
  - d. provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both;
  - e. is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution;
  - f. does not charge tuition;
  - g. complies with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (commonly referred to as the “Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974”), and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
  - h. is a school to which parents choose to send their children, and that—
    - i. admits students on the basis of a lottery, consistent with section 4303(c)(3)(A), if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated; or
    - ii. in the case of a school that has an affiliated charter school (such as a school that is part of the same network of schools), automatically enrolls students who are enrolled in the immediate prior grade level of the affiliated charter school and, for any additional student openings or student openings created through regular attrition in student enrollment in the affiliated charter school and the enrolling school, admits students on the basis of a lottery as described in clause (i);
  - i. agrees to comply with the same Federal and State audit requirements as do other elementary schools and secondary schools in the State, unless such State audit requirements are waived by the State;
  - j. meets all applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety requirements;
  - k. operates in accordance with State law;
  - l. has a written performance contract with the authorized public chartering agency in the State that includes a description of how student performance will be measured in charter schools pursuant to State assessments that are required of other schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school.
2. The proposed school shall meet one of the following definitions of educationally disadvantaged:
  - a. A school serving at least 40% racially and ethnically diverse students; or
  - b. A school serving at least 40% economically disadvantaged students eligible for federal lunch program support; or
  - c. A school serving at least 40% students with disabilities; or
  - d. A school serving at least 40% English Language Learners (ELL).Select one of the four categories on page 3 of the accompanying AZCSP Eligibility Form.

3. To receive a replication or expansion subgrant, the applicant must demonstrate that it is a high quality charter school as per ESEA §4310 (8).

**HIGH-QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOL.** —The term “high-quality charter school” means a charter school that—

- a. shows evidence of strong academic results, which may include strong student academic growth, as determined by a State;
- b. has no significant issues in the areas of student safety, financial and operational management, or statutory or regulatory compliance;
- c. has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students served by the charter school; and
- d. has demonstrated success in increasing student academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for each of the subgroups of students, as defined in section 1111(c)(2), except that such demonstration is not required in a case in which the number of students in a group is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or the results would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student.

*The mission statement of the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (“Board”) is: “To improve public education in Arizona by sponsoring charter schools that provide quality educational choices.” In the fall of 2006, the Board approved an application process for the replication of existing high-quality charter schools. Thus, AZCSP adopts the Board’s replication eligibility criteria to define “High-Quality Charter School” that meets all criteria described below.*

### Academic Performance Criteria

*An academic dashboard for each school operated by the charter holder is available through the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (ASBCS) online system.*

*The academic framework includes two indicators. Schools are evaluated by one of the following indicators:*

1. *State Accountability: State Accountability is the default indicator used to evaluate the academic performance of all charter schools sponsored by the Board. This indicator includes two measures:*
  - *The letter grade of each school operated by the charter holder as assigned through Arizona’s A–F Letter Grade Accountability System, and*
  - *State designations for school improvement.*
2. *School-Specific Academic Goals: A charter holder that operates a school that serves a special population that does not have an achievement profile established by the State Board of Education for state accountability pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-241(I) may petition the Board to adopt unique, school-specific academic performance standards. Only charter schools that have been approved by the Board to use the substitute indicator of school-specific academic goals will be evaluated under this indicator.*

### **Free Standing Charter School**

- *A minimum Overall Rating of “Above Standard” on the academic dashboard in each of the last two years when data are available that includes the grade levels operated.*

**Charter Management Organization (CMO) or Network Schools**

- 75 percent or more of the schools operated by the charter holder must have a minimum Overall Rating of “Meets Standard” in the most recent fiscal year presented on each school’s academic dashboard.
- If the Board determines that one or more certain Associated Schools are excluded for academic purposes, then 100 percent of the remaining Associated Schools must have a minimum Overall Rating of “Meets Standard”.

**Financial Performance Criteria**

A financial dashboard for the charter holder is available through ASBCS online system.

**Free Standing Charter School**

The charter holder has no measure rated “Falls Far Below Standard” for the most recent fiscal year presented on the charter holder’s dashboard.

**Charter Management Organization (CMO) or Network Schools**

75 percent or more of all Associated Charters have no measure rated “Falls Far Below Standard” for the most recent fiscal year presented on the Associated Charters’ dashboards. If one or more Associated Charters are excluded for financial performance purposes, then 100 percent of the remaining Associated Charters must have no measure rated “Falls Far Below Standard” for the most recent fiscal year presented on the Associated Charters’ dashboards.

**Operational Performance Criteria**

An operational dashboard for the charter holder is available through ASBCS online system.

**Free Standing Charter School**

The charter holder meets the operational performance standard for the most recent completed fiscal year and the current evaluated year.

**Charter Management Organization (CMO) or Network Schools**

75 percent or more of its Associated Charters meets the operational performance standard for the most recently completed fiscal year and the current evaluated year.

**Compliance Criteria**

The charter holder and its Associated Charters must be in compliance with its charter, other contractual agreements with the Board, and all applicable federal and state laws as evidenced by Compliance Checks Policy Statement conducted by the Board.

4. A subgrant may be no more than 5 years of which no more than 18 months can be used for planning and program design. ESEA §4303(d)(1)(B) & 4303(h)(1)(B).
5. AZCSP encourages applicants to propose academic programs and instructional practices that work for all students including serving students in rural communities.

6. Allowable costs are described in the Budget Narrative Section G. Instructions for describing Planning and Implementation activities are in the Budget Narrative Section G.

### **Application Evaluation**

The AZCSP grant is aligned with the US Department of Education Charter Schools Program Priorities and the submitted application will be scored in light of these priorities. All applicants will be subject to review of previous state and federal education performance. *2 CFR §200.205 (1)* The Evaluation Criteria are provided to assist in meeting the expectations of the application. It is not the application.

### **Application Submission**

In preparing the application for submission, use 12-point Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri font, double line spacing, and 1-inch margins. Tables may be in an 11-point font.

Submit in pdf format to [AZCharterSchoolProgram@azed.gov](mailto:AZCharterSchoolProgram@azed.gov)

Application deadline is **October 11, 2022, 11:59 PM (MST)**

Capacity interview will be held during the week of November 14, 2022.

### **Application Assistance**

In-person application assistance is available in public trainings provided by AZCSP staff. Locations and dates are posted on the AZCSP webpage: <http://www.azed.gov/charter-school-program/>. Important written information regarding the application, its policies and procedures are also located on the AZCSP web page. AZCSP recommends applicants to attend the public training opportunities and to use the resources provided.

Note: Select highlighted boxes [ ] to insert your responses.

## AZCSP 2024-28 Application

- The term *District* in Grants Management Funding Applications refers to the charter LEA.
- The following application is a Site-based Application.
  - Sections A – D are *District* level questions. All questions regarding governance refer to the District.
  - Sections E – G are *School-site* level questions.
- All questions in this application must be answered.

### District questions:

**A. ESEA Part C 4303 Compliance – Total Points Possible: 10 points** *(It is recommended that applicants review the following citations from ESEA Title IV, Part C Expanding Opportunity Through Quality Charter Schools. Failure to address them accurately and completely will disqualify the application from consideration. Links to ESEA Title IV, Part C, 4301 et. al, CSP Nonregulatory Guidance, and Office of Management & Budget Uniform Guidance can be found at the AZCSP Website.)*

### Scoring Section

1. A description of how school governance is prepared to continue to operate once the subgrant funds are no longer available. **(1 point)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(A)(vi)(II)*  
Explore Academy - Peoria (“Explore Academy”) will be a tuition-free public charter school that provides students in grades 6-12 with a personalized educational experience. As a public charter school, once operational, Explore Academy - Peoria will receive public education funds from the state of Arizona in addition to other local and federal revenue sources based on student and school eligibility.

In addition to public school funding, Explore Academy - Peoria is supported by Explore Learning Systems (ELS), the school’s contracted Educational Service Provider (ESP). ELS will help support the Academy from start-up to operations and has played a key role in securing facilities for the Academy with backing from American Charter Development, which is one of the largest financial hardships

facing charter schools. Explore Academy - Peoria's governing board and parent committee's will be involved in local fundraising efforts to support locally identified school programming needs.

Please see Appendix A for Explore Academy's 3-year financial plan and letters of support that demonstrate the Academy's ability to sustain operations after the grant's end.

2. A description of how the eligible applicant will support recruitment and enrollment practices to promote inclusion of all students, including by eliminating any barriers to enrollment for educationally disadvantaged students including foster youth and unaccompanied homeless youth. **(2 points)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(A)(viii)(I)*

### **Equal Access to Enrollment and Participation in School Programs**

All students, including educationally disadvantaged students (EDS), will have equal access to enrollment at Explore Academy - Peoria, as well as equal access to participate in school programs. In accordance with Ed Code Section 47605.6(e)(1), Explore Academy does not discriminate on the basis of the characteristics listed in Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics).

All content areas will be available to all students at each grade level. In addition, after school programs will be available to all students. Students, particularly EDS who are not mastering the content being taught, will have the opportunity to extend their school day by participating in before school or after school tutoring. Students will be able to select from student club options offered to all students during the school day. Providing a time for clubs during the school day will allow all students to attend a club without need for after transportation or added cost. Clubs will range in content, from board games and sign language to dance and robotics.

### **Student Recruitment**

Explore Academy seeks to educate a diversity of students with varied learning styles. Within its formative and feedback-based system of learning, the school's academic model focuses on recruiting and supporting students who continually seek to improve their learning and skill-building. Its vast curricular offerings and customization accommodates all students, regardless of background or skill-level, allowing students to choose the manner in which they receive their education and supporting diversity of its student population.

Marketing and recruitment for Explore Academy - Peoria will formally launch in February 2023 and will target families of all racial/ethnic demographics with age-appropriate students and who reside within the Maricopa and Yavapai counties. Recruitment efforts will be aimed at:

- families whose children attend failing schools
- students who live in areas where there are few educational choices
- students and families who are seeking a continuous 6 - 12 environment.

Recruitment efforts will not be limited to the area immediately surrounding the School, but will seek to attract students from across the counties in order to achieve a mix that is representative of the local demographics. The School will not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national ethnic origin, or any other such characteristic in the admission of students.

Explore Academy - Peoria received some start-up funding from American Charter Development (ACD) and has dedicated a solid portion of the budget towards marketing and community outreach.

The budget allows for:

- \$12,000 towards community outreach (\$2000 per month for 6 months prior to opening for a contracted individual)
- \$41,333.33 towards Marketing, including:
  - \$29,000 social media
  - \$5,000 direct mail



- \$5,000 ad campaigns for search engine placement and news publications
- \$1,333.33 website maintenance
- \$1,000 rental facilities for informational meetings for families

Through the application and planning process for Explore Academy, the founding team has sought, and continues to seek, feedback from parents, students, and community members in and around Peoria about a variety of topics including curriculum, school choice opinions, student transport needs, current education status, desire for a school using the Explore Learning model, and interest in attending or becoming involved in the school’s launch and operation.

The School is committed to reaching all age-eligible students and families in and around the Peoria area, with a community awareness plan that will reach:

- individual residents and resident groups
- churches and places of worship
- community and recreation centers (Peoria Community Center, Rio Vista Recreation Center, City of Peoria Parks and Recreation, etc.)
- homeless and foster youth organizations (Homeless Youth Connection, AASK, etc)
- homeowner association groups

The School will provide copies of its promotional materials and announcements in English and Spanish to make all families and students—including bilingual or Spanish speaking households, single parent families, and low socio-economic households— aware of the School, its mission and their eligibility to apply for enrollment. In addition, we plan to have bilingual site-based staff members to help with the admissions process with these families.

In order to publicize the opening of Explore Academy - Peoria and promote inclusion of all students, the team will target our recruitment efforts as follows:

- **Radio:** Prepare a public service announcement for broadcast on local radio in both Spanish and English, highlighting its college prep approach.
- **Press Releases:** Issue press releases to all of the major print media in the counties so that the general public can be made aware of the enrollment period and location of the school.
- **Flyers:** Post flyers in local public facilities such as the post office, community centers, and other locations of public access, in order to reach students and parents to inform them of the educational opportunity available.
- **Community Outreach:** Work closely with parents and other non-profits and community groups that serve families who may not yet know of school options outside of private school and the traditional district. The options and benefits of Explore Academy programs will be conveyed to these individuals and groups, as well as invitations and opportunities to engage and be brought into school planning and development. The community groups include but are not limited to the Peoria Community Center, Rio Vista Recreation Center, and Homeless Youth Connection, all of whom the school has engaged for assistance with community outreach.
- **Accessibility:** The School offers translation services, experts for SPED, EL, and other special programs, whom parents and students can talk to from the moment they apply.
- **Informational meetings and open houses:** Conduct general information meetings, held at public venues and at the school site (once available for use). These will be open to the public and announced through public service announcements.
- **Enrollment events:** Prior to opening, Explore Academy will host enrollment events with food, refreshments, and Wi-Fi, where families and students can physically attend to enroll.
- **Local Business Outreach.** Coordinate communication and recruitment efforts (through handouts and email) with local businesses, creating a mutually beneficial relationship to offer employees

strong educational options. This will add to the beneficial partnerships to be built with the organizations.

- **Collaboration with Other Schools**

Explore Academy will work to partner with K-5, K-7, and K-8 schools in the Peoria area for transition entry points at grades 6 and 8, since these students will need to transition successfully into a new school. These schools could include: Archway Classical Academy Glendale (K-5); Legacy Traditional (K-7 This a great option since Explore Academy starts high school curriculum in grade 8); Candeo Peoria (K-8); AMS Peoria (K-8). Explore Academy staff will collaborate with these schools and meet with parents to share information on the model and also gain greater parent insight into need. In addition to engaging with transition schools, staff will collaborate with other charter models to offer families on waiting lists an alternative and ensure all families in the area are served by the model that best fits their needs.

- **Social Media:** Provide information on social media platforms to bring awareness regarding the School’s model and opportunity for enrollment. Social media platforms will additionally be utilized to provide live interactive sessions with parents or students who are unable to attend in-person information meetings.

In all marketing and recruiting for the School, including flyers, videos, and website, Explore Academy will include information about available financial services, which would specifically address the needs of foster youth and unaccompanied homeless youth. Families and students therefore will know that **Explore Academy is accessible to everyone and will cover any financial barrier to attendance,** including, but not limited to: paying for all uniform apparel; providing a school Chromebook; and buying school supplies.

Existing social media and the School’s website will be updated regularly. After the first year of the School’s operation, educational results will be posted on the website. The Academy will continue with

recruitment using the same strategies mentioned above every year with the addition of word-of-mouth as a driver for increasing enrollment for each subsequent year.

### **Meeting the Needs of All Students**

Once enrolled, leadership and teachers will review the individual curriculum adopted for each content area and grade level to assess the English, math, social studies, and science curricula's ability to meet the needs of all student subgroups, especially those that are underrepresented or at risk academically or otherwise.

The teachers and leadership team will also analyze the adopted curricula to identify areas in which modifications or adjustments are necessary to ensure equitable access for all students, particularly those who are at-risk, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, and free and reduced lunch students. This may include adopting supplemental programs or curricular materials such as texts, media, or learning tools. It may also include expanding the curriculum to include Universal Design for Learning components that allow the curriculum to be more accessible such as Co:Writer and Snap&Read.

The approved curriculum will be supplemented and enhanced, with documentation on the Term Standards and Calendar forms as well as in the Google Classroom page to ensure implementation and full integration into the daily instructional practice of all teachers. Additionally, the leadership team will provide teachers with a report each term that lists all students who have IEPs and other documented learning plans along with all accommodations and modifications that go beyond the general equity and accessibility review, further ensuring access and quality instruction and curriculum for all students, particularly those who are English learners, qualify for free and reduced lunch, belong to underrepresented racial and/or ethnic groups, or are otherwise at-risk of academic struggles.

3. A description of how the eligible applicant will support all students once they are enrolled to promote retention and reduce the overuse of discipline practices. **(1 point)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(A)(viii)(II)*

### **A Model of Support**

The Explore education model was developed with specific intentions to support student academic and emotional growth with annual student retention a key to this success as a continuous 6-12th grade school. The Explore philosophy is grounded in building student trust and confidence in themselves and their school community, with independence and ownership over student learning as the overall goal. We implement this shared philosophy within a positive behavior model to encourage and support independent decision making, growth, and retention which benefits the individual student and the school community.

Explore Academy provides students with the power of academic choice, allowing each student to create a unique educational pathway in preparation for a college future. At Explore Academy, our goal is for all students to master the Arizona Academic Standards in core subjects through three fundamental design elements: **greater student accountability; selectivity and student choice; and college preparation.**

Across the curriculum, students will engage in differentiated learning seminars and “flavors.” These shorter, seminar-style courses are inherently elective in nature, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and Arizona State standards and tailored to a student’s choice in study. Using a student-centered approach to learning prepares students for long-term academic success by helping them gain content knowledge as well as cognitive and non-cognitive skills required for college and beyond.

At the forefront of the Explore Academy program is the *Choice Theory model of education* that sees students as active learners who, increasingly, become responsible for their own education. Students learn to make effective choices and take ownership over their learning, becoming more empowered,

successful students. This learning approach, as well as Explore Academy leadership and teachers, work together to create a safe, welcoming and dynamic environment for all students that is focused on retaining students in the classroom.

To this end, the teacher's role becomes pivotal in engaging students through thematic "flavor" offerings, while also tethering instruction to the subset of academic standards in question. Teachers function as both instructor and facilitator, promoting open inquiry and discussion and ultimately allowing students to drive the learning process within the classroom environment.

In order to elevate academic learning, support students and promote retention of skills and content, Explore Academy teachers implement the following:

- Design thematic flavored seminars aligned with academic standards for the seminar in question
- Create engaging learning environments, driven by the flavor, to provide immersive student experiences in learning the academic standards
- Provide and facilitate student-driven learning experiences
- Assess student comprehension in the standards continuously throughout the term, providing feedback on any and all student work
- Monitor student progress in the standards in question, providing remediation as needed in order to ensure students demonstrate mastery within the timeframe of the term in question
- Report student progress to parents, students, and administration through weekly progress reports

At the end of the seminar, students complete exit exams (aligned with standards) before moving on to their next seminar. This approach aligns with the Explore Academy mission and vision: students are the drivers of their learning plans and rely on their teachers for academic support and interventions when they demonstrate need.

### **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)**

Explore Academy will utilize the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) that integrates assessment and intervention to maximize student achievement. MTSS provides teachers with a collaborative, school-wide method to identify struggling students and provide appropriate interventions beyond classroom instruction, such as after-school tutoring and individual counseling. Grant funds will be used to train staff on MTSS so they can intervene early and help students struggling with behavioral or academic issues.

MTSS uses four components to address issues: screening, progress monitoring, a multi-level (or tiered) prevention system, and data based decision making. Explore Academy will use a school-wide approach, where teachers, counselors, and other specialists work as a team to assess students and plan interventions. Parents/guardians are also involved in the program, so they can understand the interventions and provide support at home.

MTSS' three-tier model aligns with Explore Academy's overall approach to instruction, since teachers integrate whole-group, small-group and individualized instruction into daily lesson plans. The MTSS tiers include: Tier 1—all students are taught with methods that research has shown to be effective; Tier 2—those students who are not responding to strategies receive more targeted support in small groups; and Tier 3—individualized and intensive support. In addition to MTSS training for teachers, Grant funds will also be used to support a group of school leaders to monitor student progress for meeting behavior expectations and continue to improve behavioral intervention strategies for individual students.

The data driven practices of MTSS improve student outcomes through increased academic achievement, low suspension and expulsion rates, and a safe school campus.

### **Discipline Policies**

Explore Academy places a strong importance on personal responsibility, respect, accountability, and commitment to mature and professional behavior. Through its procedures, learning methods,

leadership, and teachers, Explore Academy is focused on promoting a positive learning environment and protecting the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community. For clarity, and to prevent behavioral issues, discipline policies that clearly describe discipline expectations will be printed and distributed annually as part of the Student and Family Handbook. Teachers will actively engage students in learning the discipline policy and behavior expectations.

### **Implementation of Intervention and Support Services**

The interventions and support services that are available and will be implemented at Explore Academy - Peoria are all components of the Explore Learning model, and the ELS team has years of experience training teachers and administrators in the implementation and operation of these systems. To ensure effective implementation, a comprehensive professional development calendar that has sessions dedicated to the intervention and support systems will be used. This will include hands-on training as well as templates and deliverables that allow teachers to be effective in their classroom. The training will include:

- differentiation strategies for special ed and all learners
- flavor training to stimulate motivation
- seminar teaching and learning strategies to involve all students
- levels of questioning to spark deep thought
- positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) to redirect behaviors.

Under PBIS training, Explore will focus on Tier 1 practices and systems that establish a foundation of proactive support in order to prevent unwanted behaviors. Tier 2 training will highlight practices that support students who are at risk for developing more serious problem behaviors prior to those behaviors starting. Tier 3 training will develop interventions that deliver more intensive, individualized support to improve students' behavioral and academic outcomes.



Professional development on creating formal assessments help to determine a student's need and therefore the level of intervention and support needed. These supports help students develop the skills they need to benefit from core programs at the school. Explore Academy is committed to training staff on these universal supports that all students, school-wide will receive. The school will also ensure that all reporting system and support system documents are in place and prepared in August each year, allowing the school staff to plan for interventions and support to begin the first week of school without any implementation delay period.

In addition, starting with Year 2 of the budget, the school is running a small surplus. This will allow the school administrators the ability to determine where the greatest needs are based on student enrollment. For example, if there is a need for more ELL or SPED help, additional teachers can be hired; if students are lagging in math or reading proficiency, specialists in these areas can be hired. This aligns with the budget and allows us to meet the needs of enrolled students.

4. A description of how the eligible applicant will support the use of effective parent, family, and community engagement strategies to operate each charter school that will receive funds under AZCSP. **(2 points)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(C)(i)(VI)*

Parents and the community members are integral to the Explore Academy community, influencing the school's culture and environment, as well as its program design and instructional implementation. In order to ensure that the parent and community voice and perspective are reflected in the school and interwoven into the implementation of the model, Explore Academy will provide opportunities throughout the school year for parents to receive information, gain insights, and provide feedback to influence school programming. Opportunities include:

- Parent-teacher conferences
- Weekly progress reports
- Participation in school committees

- Attending parent and Board meetings
- Volunteering
- Completing stakeholder surveys at least quarterly
- Active Parent-Teacher organization
- Annual comprehensive needs assessments

### **Parent-Teacher Engagement**

Explore Academy recognizes that the collaborative effort among teachers, students and parents will empower students to take ownership for their growth and development, creating a positive and practical format for parents to have a voice in their children’s education. Teachers will communicate frequently with parents about student performance and work collaboratively to identify remedial strategies to improve student achievement. This includes *weekly progress reports* for all students with teacher feedback for students and their parents.

*Parent-teacher conferences* will be held during the first and second semester, and on an as-needed basis. Teachers will share the student’s academic, social, emotional, and physical progress with parents, including assessment results from State or local benchmark assessments. Teachers will also use this time to discuss any issues or concerns parents and students may have. Student performance information will always be available to parents via the school’s online grade book, which parents will receive training to use.

Parents are encouraged to *volunteer* at Explore Academy. One way to do this is as a guest speaker to foster “real world connections” related to seminars. Other opportunities include: volunteering in the classroom, chaperoning field trips, and attending and/or participating in the planning of fundraisers. The parents’ presence on campus influences students’ behavior and engagement resulting in a positive school culture and a family-oriented climate.

In addition, the Board at Explore Academy - Peoria intends to add a fifth member, a member position reserved for a parent of an enrolled student(s).

### **Overcoming Barriers**

Explore Academy recognizes that two-way communication between parents and school staff is critical for school success. Fostering and building those relationships is built into the educational program at Explore Academy. However, there can still be barriers to a parent's involvement in a child's education. For example, parents who do not speak fluent English may feel reluctant to participate in school events due to concern over the language barrier. At Explore Academy, those barriers can be removed through community partnerships, parent workshops and trainings, hiring of bilingual staff, and comprehensive multilingual survey systems so that all parents can feel comfortable and included when engaging in school activities.

Another barrier which may prevent on-going parental involvement is that some parents feel they lack the knowledge and skills to help their children in school. Through consistent parent-teacher conferences, weekly progress reports, and communications, and opportunities to be involved in the classroom, families will receive information about what students are learning and feel included in their child's education. In addition, parents will be offered trainings and workshops on topics that include: understanding assessment data, helping children with their homework, and effectively utilizing the school website. All training materials will be available in multiple languages.

Parents and stakeholders will have access to various school-wide documents including the charter petition, School Safety Plan, the COVID Safety Plan, etc.. English and Spanish hardcopies will be available in the front office and digital documents are on the school website. Parents will receive training on utilizing the school website to actively engage in their child's education, as well as access crucial documents in order to stay informed about the school. Computers will be available in the front office for any parent to use who may not otherwise have access to technology or internet at home.

Bilingual office staff will also be available to provide translation for any community member, especially EL parents. The combination of frequent school communications through emails and newsletters, continually updated grades, constant teacher contact, and solid parental and community engagement, ensures that Explore Academy will develop into a successful school model that proudly serves its students, families, and community.

### **Community & Stakeholder Involvement**

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) and Equity Council (EC) will be part of the stakeholder groups that participate in the governance of the school by providing input into the curriculum/instructional practices of the school. These groups help monitor and evaluate the efficacy of parent and community involvement and provide the school with guidance and feedback to improve its outreach and involvement practices.

Explore Academy will convene a PAC comprised of school administrators, teachers, and parents or community members. PAC members, as well as any parents who would like to attend, will meet monthly to discuss school issues, events, fundraising, community involvement, etc.

In anticipation of the school serving an English learner population, Explore Academy-Peoria's Equity Council (EC) will provide another means for parent engagement in school decision-making and governance. The EC is a school-level committee comprised of parents, staff, and community members that focuses on English learner services. They will meet at least two times a year and will be responsible for:

- advising the principal or designee and staff on program and services for at-risk student subgroups such as ethnic and racial minorities, English learners, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, etc.
- assisting in the school's annual language census

- offering suggestions to the school administration on the most effective ways to ensure regular school attendance
- participating in the school's needs assessment by students, parents, and teachers
- soliciting and encouraging community participation
- providing input to administration on the most effective ways to support full participation of all students in school activities.

Explore Academy will distribute a *stakeholder survey* each quarter (in English and Spanish with other language translations as needed) to parents, teachers, and students reflecting on school connectedness and whether strategies implemented at the school are effective. Stakeholder surveys will solicit feedback regarding topics including, but not limited to: school safety, curriculum, workload, classroom environment, student engagement, and support services. The results of the survey will be analyzed by administration each quarter and will serve as one tool for making informed decisions about the school environment. This monitoring and evaluation of data ensures the school remains connected to its stakeholders and makes course corrections quickly and purposefully.

5. A description of the roles and responsibilities of eligible applicants, partner organizations, and charter management organizations, including the administrative and contractual roles and responsibilities of such partners. **(1 point)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(C)(i)(I)*

As an independent charter school, governed by an independent, incorporated nonprofit Board of Directors, Explore Academy has complete autonomy over its daily operations and policies, staffing, budgeting, personnel, and expenditures, and governing board. Explore Academy maintains absolute autonomy over all board level decisions and policy-making.

The Board is independently appointed and is the ultimate policy-making body that establishes and adopts the curriculum, academic path, budget and financial processes, and operation(s) of Explore Academy. The Board is responsible for providing continued oversight of school operations, including

fund management, ensuring special populations have access to the program, parental and community outreach, strategic planning, and compliance with all state and federal regulations. The Board is solely responsible to its Authorizer, and enrolled students, for the fulfillment of the charter agreement.

The Board understands that it is the policy-making body, with the responsibility for the oversight of the affairs and management of the School and its operations, and that it is directly responsible to the Authorizer for the fulfillment of the terms of the Charter Agreement. The board is responsible for adopting the policies of the School and hires a Principal to implement those policies. The Board will consult with educational, legal and tax experts, as may be required, for the effective execution of its mission and policies, and to ensure that it is in compliance with all legal and financial requirements.

Explore Academy is responsible for fulfilling its mission and vision, educating and supporting students and their families, and maintaining a good working relationship with the board of education and the authorizer.

### **Explore Learning Systems**

The Education Service Provider (ESP) for Explore Academy - Peoria (the “School”) will be Explore Learning Systems (“ELS”), which is a limited liability corporation formed in the state of New Mexico to provide support for schools, including those within the Explore Learning Network. With its expertise in start-up operations and effective implementation of the Explore learning model, ELS will provide support in the areas of the education model, student recruitment, finance, operations, and human resource coordination. ELS will also support the School’s leaders in the areas of curriculum and instruction.

ELS currently manages three schools, two in New Mexico and one in Nevada, and has strong back office policies and procedures. For a new charter school, these back office activities (budgeting, accounting, professional development, HR, marketing, data collection and analysis, compliance reporting, marketing, and recruitment) can be a daunting task. By contracting with ELS, the School can

ensure that administrators are working on developing relationships and educating students and not worrying about compliance and reporting on a day-to-day basis. The Principal will meet regularly with representatives from ELS, who will support the Principal in the hiring of the School's employees. All employees working for the School will be employees of the School itself, not of ELS. An added benefit to contracting with ELS is that the staff from ELS fully understands the School's education model, which is very different from traditional models. Hiring personnel in the areas of professional development, HR, marketing, and finances can be prohibitive for a small start-up charter school. By using this cost effective model of contracting these services out to an ESP that is responsible for the development and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the model, Explore Academy-Peoria can dedicate its time and resources to students and teachers.

Overall, ELS will provide many value-added activities to the functioning of the School. They will work closely with the Governing Board and the Principal and will be a steadfast support during school start-up and implementation. By employing the education model, ELS will assist the School in meeting the needs of the target population, which includes economically disadvantaged, special education, and ELL students. This model has been shown to produce higher proficiency rates in all students. Services to be provided to the School by ELS are: Budgeting and Finance, Curriculum and Instruction, Teacher Training and Support, Data and Compliance, Marketing and Enrollment, and Facilities acquisition support. Below is a detailed account of services:

### ***1. Budgeting and Finance***

Budgeting ELS will develop, in concert with the Treasurer of the Board and the Principal, the annual budget. This budget will be approved by the Board following a public hearing, as required by Arizona law, and submitted to ADE by the statutory deadline.

Accounting ELS will provide all accounting services to the School, including payroll and accounts receivable. The school will contract with an independent auditor to monitor annual accounting and finances.

## 2. ***Curriculum and Instruction***

Curricular Setup Prior to opening, Explore teachers and leaders will be fully trained in the education model and provided with ongoing support from ELS staff. ELS will provide Academy staff with:

- Teacher curricular/course development and tiering within the curricular framework
- Construction, formatting, and design of the school's course catalog
- Guidance for writing course descriptions
- Master scheduling based on credit/section need and teacher schedules
- Structuring of majors seminars
- Managing vertical and horizontal alignment within the curriculum
- Exit exam review/modification/approval
- Setup credit analysis for new students
- Importing of term schedules in conjunction with IT director
- Coordination of staffing plan with school leader and business manager

Continual Evaluation of Explore Academy Curriculum. Education is a constantly moving, improving field and there must be continual evaluation of all aspects of the curriculum. This will be ongoing.

- Continual reevaluation of exit exams, with modification as needed
- Analysis of seminar success based on the varying themes of the seminar's respective flavors. Reports to department heads.

## 3. ***Teacher Training and Support***



Teacher Training This is key to teachers being able to implement the Education Model.

Training will begin prior to the start of the school, annually, with ongoing curriculum support throughout the year. Training in the Explore model will include:

- Seminar-based instruction, student-driven learning
- Explore Academy's flavor-based instruction
- Implementation of technology in teaching
- Assessment strategies (formative and summative) and developing quality assessments
- Bloom's Taxonomy and student cognition
- Standards-based grading
- Frontloading instructional practice
- Test security and assessment confidentiality procedures

New Teacher Mentoring and Support The focus of this mentoring is to provide new teachers with additional support.

- Support and feedback for new classroom teachers (first-year teachers)
- Support and feedback to new Explore Academy teachers
- Guidance in writing course descriptions

Staff Support. Successful professional development and training requires ongoing follow up and support. Explore Peoria staff will receive ongoing training and retraining on the Model and will have numerous opportunities to share feedback as ELS works to continuously monitor and improve the education model.

- Monitor professional/instructional reflection based on monthly term summative data (student surveys, exit exam results)
- Develop and implement data-based instructional adjustments and development of interventions (both teacher-specific and schoolwide) based on term data

- Teacher-specific support based on academic data and student survey results, identify and implement instructional measures based on at-risk students
- Facilitate continued professional development based on data-derived perceived need
- Review student credit data and credit standing (in conjunction with school counselor)
- Gradebook setup and troubleshooting
- Exit exam scoring and standards weighing support
- Facilitate standardization of exit exam construction, implementation

#### 4. *Data Analysis and Compliance*

ELS will provide services to the School that will assist the School in maintaining compliance with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations. ELS will provide the School with data and data analysis relevant both to compliance and Explore Learning model adherence. The School will use the data provided by ELS to adhere to the model and remain in compliance at all times. The data-related services include, but are not limited to:

##### Data Analysis

- Collection, analysis, and reporting of term-based data including flavor effectiveness, seminar pass rates and comparisons across flavors of each specific seminar – report to admin
- Specific reporting for sub-groups including students with special needs, ELL, and FRL– report to admin
- Student survey data disseminated to teachers
- Identifying at-risk students each term – report to admin
- Remediation rates for students identified as at-risk from the previous term – report to admin
- Reporting of all items each month

### State/Authorizer Compliance

- Prepare summative reports for ASBCS, as required
- Assist School in preparing for site visits and interval reviews
- Ensure monitoring of compliance with all ASBCS requirements
- Prepare and submit all required documents for charter school renewal
- Prepare and assist with administration of state-mandated standardized tests

### 5. *Marketing and Enrollment*

ELS will provide services to the School that assist the School with branding, advertising, marketing, and enrollment on behalf of the School. ELS will provide materials to assist the School leader and the School staff in the areas of marketing and enrollment. The marketing and enrollment services include, but are not limited to:

#### Marketing and Advertising

- Develop and maintain school's social media platforms in conjunction with the School
- Continual connection with community groups through Explore Academy branding
- Provide materials (flyers, mailers, slide presentations, social media posts) that promote Explore Academy and its ideals
- Provide to the School drafts of press releases and news pitches for local media

#### Enrollment

- Perform enrollment lottery as needed
- Parent outreach/engagement via weekly emails and school newsletter
- Assistance with planning monthly recruiting events (family info nights)
- Provide materials to assist with recruitment such as flyers, slide presentations, etc.

## Partnerships

Explore Academy is in the early stages of developing local partnerships with area youth support organizations. Much of the local partnership work will be developed once the school site staff are hired and we have an enrolled student body. It's extremely important to the success of the school that school partners reflect the needs and interests of the school culture and our leadership and staff are integral to identifying and building relationships with those partners.

The Explore-Peoria governing board and ELS will be instrumental in securing partner relationships for dual enrollment opportunities and working with organizations such as the Arizona Charter Schools Association, who will provide guidance, strategies, and networking as the school navigates the startup process.

6. A description of how the eligible applicant will solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of each charter school that will receive funds under AZCSP. **(1 point)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(C)(i)(IV)*

Explore Academy takes a multifaceted approach to gathering input from parents and other community resources to help guide and inform the implementation and operation of the school. These methods occur at various points in the implementation process and at regular intervals throughout operational years and include:

- parent-teacher organization participation
- community information night discussions
- comprehensive survey systems
- community partnerships
- social media community engagement and education

The PTO members and other interested parents will discuss topics raised in their meetings as well as topics presented by the school for parental input. This two-way communication between parents and

the school is particularly important for topics related to the operation of the school and learning model as seen from the parent and family experience; their perspective is essential for school success.

The school also uses online surveys, optimized for access through many types of devices, which allows quick feedback from various groups of stakeholders. These surveys can range from simple questions about start times or apparel sizes to more detailed questions, such as term break activities and the annual calendar.

In addition, the school team and the Board will leverage their community partners and keep a pulse on the needs and input of the community as it relates to the school and its mission success. This includes: aligning dates and remaining cognizant of events that may conflict with or complement other community activities; meeting community needs for soft skills or wellness on site (when possible); utilizing partnerships that combine and pool resources across various organizations and groups in order to benefit Explore students and the overall community. Through these avenues, the school staff and Board will be able to gather information on school initiatives and procedures, and ensure that the parent and community voice and perspective are reflected in the school and interwoven into the implementation of the model.

Explore Academy will distribute a stakeholder survey annually (in English and Spanish) to parents, teachers, and students in order to gather information on the effectiveness of school programs and procedures, etc. The results of the survey will be analyzed by administration and will serve as one tool for making informed decisions about the school environment and model.

Finally, social media resources will be used to engage the community and share the Explore Academy model. Digital marketing campaigns will include engaging families in informational sessions, offering resources about the model, and soliciting feedback on curriculum design.

Throughout development and operation of the school, the governing board and school leadership will continue to build partnerships with parents, business owners, and local nonprofit agencies, in order to assess the impact of the model and align its programs to the needs of its students and community.

7. A description of how the eligible applicant will consider and plan for the transportation needs of the school's students. **(1 point)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303 (f)(1)(E)*

In community outreach and feasibility studies, an intentional focus was placed on transportation. The research showed strong support for having adequate transportation for students within a 10-mile range. Further, studying the populations of other charter schools in the area, it is evident that parents are finding means for transportation. It is hypothesized parents are combining travel to work and school. The availability of high-quality schools in the area is an appeal to the community industry. Using this data, at the outset, Explore Academy will not provide transportation. However, each year the decision will be evaluated against new information, including parent input and enrollment trends, to ensure that transportation is not a barrier to enrollment. Options for before and after school care will be available to meet the schedules of working families

A description of the administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency including how the school's performance in the State's accountability system and impact on student achievement will be one of the most important factors for renewal or revocation of the school's charter, and how the authorized public chartering agency involved will reserve the right to revoke or not renew a school's charter based on financial, structural, or operational factors involving the management of the school. **(1 point)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303 (f)(1)(C)(i)(II)*

Explore Academy - Peoria is bound by a signed charter agreement with the Arizona State Board of Charter Schools to meet annual and long-term educational performance targets. The school and its authorizing representatives will work together to set, monitor and evaluate performance goals with regular compliance monitoring and support to meet contractual goals. The school's ability to exist and

operate largely rests on meeting state standard performance targets, financial stability and fiduciary compliance and operating within the state and federal laws set for public school operations.

ELS, Explore Academy - Peoria's educational service provider, has dedicated staff that work specifically on school compliance and reporting requirements with AZ authorizing staff. This allows the Academy site based leadership and teachers to focus on teaching and learning, establishing and growing a supportive school culture and building a community school for long-term successful learning. This division of responsibilities between Explore Academy - Peoria site staff and ELS staff, increases the ability to launch a new school with a focus on curriculum and instruction and meet performance goals. This school has a team of experts—with a track record of successful academic outcomes—supporting the start-up, implementation and ongoing operations.

## Assurances

By submitting this Application Form, the applicant organization agrees to the following:

**Type your initials in the box provided.**

- [ JB ] a. The applicant will make following information publicly available, consistently with the dissemination requirements of the annual State report card, including on the website of the school, information to help parents make informed decisions about the education options available to their children, including –
- i. Information on the educational program;
  - ii. Student support services;
  - iii. Parent contract requirements (as applicable), including any financial obligations or fees;
  - iv. Enrollment criteria (as applicable); and
  - v. Annual performance and enrollment data for each of the subgroups of students, except that such disaggregation of performance and enrollment data shall not be required in a case in which the number of students in a group is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or the results would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student. ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303 (f)(2)(G)
- [ JB ] b. The applicant will annually provide AZCSP such information as may be required to determine if the charter school is making satisfactory progress toward achieving the objectives.
- [ JB ] c. The applicant will obtain technical assistance provided by AZCSP to meet the proposed objectives. *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303 (f)(2)(D)*
- [ JB ] d. The applicant will cooperate with AZCSP in evaluating the program assisted under this subpart.

- [JB] e. Such other information and assurances as AZCSP may require.
- [JB] f. The applicant will comply with the State’s open meetings and open records laws. *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(F)*.
- [JB] g. The applicant shall ensure that a student’s records and, if applicable, a student’s individualized education program as defined in IDEA, are transferred to a charter school upon the transfer of the student to the charter school, and to another public school upon the transfer of the student from a charter school to another public school, in accordance with applicable State law. *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4308*.
- [JB] h. The applicant will use financial management systems, including records documenting compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award, that are sufficient to permit the preparation of reports required by general and program-specific terms and conditions; and the tracing of funds to a level of expenditures adequate to establish that such funds have been used according to the Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award. *2 CFR §200.302&303*
- [JB] i. The organization and its school leaders and faculty will actively participate in AZCSP Technical Assistance for the life of the grant.
- [JB] j. The applicant agrees that all cost charged to the grant are direct costs throughout the life of the grant. There are NO indirect costs.

The charter holder, if part of a network of schools, will abide by the following:

- [JB] k. The charter holder contract with its charter management organization does not cede charter school control of funds and operations to the management organization.
- [JB] l. The charter holder has appropriate internal controls between the two entities to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of CSP dollars (for example, preventing related-party transactions, preventing conflict of interest, ensuring appropriate segregation of duties between schools and management organizations).
- [JB] m. The charter holder has Conflict of Interest policies published in its Articles of Incorporation, its By-Laws, and its internal operational policies of the school.

LEA Authorized Representative

Title

Justin Baiardo

Executive Director, ELS

**eSignature** of LEA Authorized Representative

Date



10/11/2022

Applicant Organization

Date Submitted

Explore Academy - Peoria

10/11/2022



**B. Abstract - Non-Scoring Section.** (Max 300 words)

Provide an abstract narrative that includes objectives, expected outcomes, and impacts.

Explore Academy - Peoria will be a tuition-free public charter school serving students in grades 6-12 using a choice-based curriculum. Students will engage in differentiated, shorter (22 or 44 day) learning seminars focused on a particular theme or “flavor” aligned to Next-Generation Learning Standards (NGLS) and Arizona State standards. The fundamental philosophy is that **increased student choice, accountability and a seminar-based model of instruction** best prepares students for the structure, rigor, and content of college-level learning.

The seminar structure provides content knowledge and cognitive and non-cognitive skills required for college and beyond. To demonstrate proficiency, students only move to the next course in a subject after achieving 70 percent on an exit exam aligned to Arizona standards. Therefore, Explore Academy students are held accountable for demonstrating knowledge on *each* standard individually, and receive a more complete and comprehensive education.

A primary objective at Explore Academy is to close the achievement gap for Peoria’s lowest performing subgroups— English Learner, socio-economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities. The seminar structure, formative grading, and growth-mindset at Explore Academy will allow students to work through the material at their own pace with constant feedback and support from teachers, creating their own individual educational path. This is specifically ideal for addressing the needs of disadvantaged students, and prepares all students for the structure, rigor, and content of college-level learning.

Explore Academy - Peoria will be part of a regional network of schools built on the same model. The first school in Albuquerque (established 2014) is consistently named one of the best schools in New Mexico for academic achievement and growth, earning the highest accolades in the state’s A-F grading system. Following the same model, it is expected that the Peoria school will achieve the same success, increasing student proficiency, attendance, and retention rates.

**C. Charter Entity Founders – Total points possible: 40 points**

1. Provide a clear and concise mission statement aligned with the needs of educationally disadvantaged students - **Non-Scoring Section.** (Max 75 words)

Explore Academy's philosophy is that increased student choice and a seminar-based mode of instruction best prepares students for the structure, rigor, and content of college-level learning. The mission of Explore Academy will be to provide each student with a personalized educational experience through the power of student choice, allowing each student to create a unique educational pathway in preparation for a college future.

2. Describe the background of the applicant's founders and school leaders and their past experience to support the successful planning and implementation of the school. *2 CFR §200.205 Non-Scoring Section.*

**Role of Each Principal of the Corporate Board**

Board members were recruited and selected based on their expertise. As indicated in the brief bios below, the board is diverse and members have skills in the areas of education (early childhood through post-secondary), leadership, diversity, community service, students with disabilities, and mental health.

There are four Principals of the Corporate Board who are listed with the ACC. Below are their qualifications. All of these Board members will also serve on the School Governing Board. The Board intends to add a fifth member to include a parent of its new student population prior to the opening of the school.

**Nona Jayne Shaw, Chairperson**

The Board Chair will have experience in K-12 or knowledge of education, particularly charter schools and/or not-for-profit experience. This individual will have the capacity to understand the intricacies of educational law and regulations at the state and federal level and will understand the

complexity of integrating these laws and regulations into the day to day activities of a school.

Further, the chairperson will understand the budgeting process and how budgeting and programming are intertwined.

Ms. Shaw has the ideal combination of skills and proven experience to provide leadership to a new school. She is currently a member of the Integrated Education Services, where she oversees the finances of the organization as well as focuses in the area of special education. She has served as a Superintendent of two charter schools, a district special educator, and a Director of Programs for the education of adjudicated males. Ms. Shaw has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education with an emphasis in Special Education and has completed work towards a Master's in Organizational Management.

**Joshua McCarty, Vice-Chairperson**

The Vice-Chair will have experience with not-for-profit organizations and may have experience in education. This individual will have experience in one of the identified fields of interest to the Board: legal, education, community, facilities, or finances. This person will run meetings when the Board Chair is not available.

Mr. McCarty is a dynamic and results-driven Human Resources Professional (PHR) with over 10 years' experience and substantial success in overseeing HR operations, talent management, employee and labor relations, benefit and compensation, performance management, leadership development, and organizational effectiveness in diverse sectors including retail, tech, government, and education. His organizational skills and experience will serve the School well. Mr. McCarty has a Bachelor of Arts in Music, Vocal Performance, a Master of Public Administration - Government Policy, and a Bachelor of Science - Business Administration, Minor in Marketing.

**Sherry Hawn, Treasurer**

Although ELS, working closely with the Treasurer and Principal and Assistant Principal of the School, will develop the annual budget, support the School in keeping all financial records and conduct the day-to-day fiscal transactions of the School, the Treasurer will have qualifications in the field of management, accounting or having held positions where overseeing budgeting and accounting practices was a major responsibility. The person will have been involved in education and will understand budgeting in the academic environment and will have experience with external audits and the requirements of such audits.

Dr. Shaw has extensive experience in all these areas and will bring a wealth of knowledge to the Board. She is by training a CPA and tax attorney with an MBA. Further, she is the former CFO of community colleges, and Chief Administrator at the New York City Department of Education Beyond Classroom Teaching in Special Education. She has the knowledge of education, operations, and finances to provide the leadership needed in this situation.

**Hilary Kirsch, Secretary**

Working with ELS, the Secretary will have qualifications in any area of concern for a Board: legal, facilities, education, community, etc. This individual will be highly organized and will have an understanding of the state and federal legal reporting requirements. This individual will ensure that notices of all Board meetings will be posted and that minutes of all meetings are kept and posted publicly.

Ms. Kirsch is a current teacher who has been teaching for over six years. She has worked with students with disabilities, specifically autism, in her practice and leads several committees in instruction, technology, equity, and recruitment and enrollment of students. Ms. Kirsch has a Master's of Arts in Education. Her experience as a classroom teacher and working on committees as a teacher will be a major contribution to the work of the Board.

**Role of Explore Learning System (ELS)**

The Education Service Provider (ESP) for Explore Academy - Peoria will be Explore Learning Systems (“ELS”). As noted above, ELS will provide support and educational materials, and is responsible for preparing the budget and compliance reports. The Board must approve all reports prior to submission and will have the last say, by means of Board vote, on all processes and programs which impact the School, including the annual budget. ELS is there to implement the Education Model and support staff and the Board on operations at the school. As the governing body, the Board is responsible to the Authorizer.

### **Justin Baiardo - Executive Director**

In 2014, founder Justin Baiardo and a team of talented teachers opened the first Explore Academy campus in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and later co-founded Explore Learning Systems. As a science teacher, Baiardo recognized the significant impact that talented teachers have on student engagement and learning outcomes. The Explore Learning model, therefore, supports teacher professionalism and leadership in developing the school culture and delivery of content towards the school wide central goal of student independence and growth.

As a National Board Certified educator, Mr. Baiardo spent ten years as a science teacher in New Mexico teaching biology, forensics, pathology, genetics, and microbiology courses for high school students. His development of a student research laboratory set Rio Rancho High School apart in developing the first Biological Safety Level II laboratory at the high school level in the country. Over the past several years, he has worked to bring the beginning network of Explore Learning schools into existence while implementing a novel and innovative educational model seen nowhere else in the country.

### **Elisha Baiardo - Director of Operations**

Elisha Baiardo is a founding member of Explore Academy - Albuquerque and co-founder of Explore Learning Systems. She has worked to develop, adjust, and streamline the operational

systems of Explore Academy, applying her in depth knowledge of the innovative Explore Learning model paired with her experience in charter school operations.

Elisha has a BA in English and Spanish and an MA in Curriculum and Instruction. She taught high school English, Spanish, and language development courses, and is a licensed NM Level 3 teacher endorsed 6-12 in language arts, TESOL, modern, classical, and native languages, and bilingual education. Her passion for research, assessment, and technical writing allows her to effectively oversee operational components of ELS and Explore Academy campuses. She has experience with a wide variety of educational and operational writing including grants, funding applications, audit reports, budget narratives, textbooks, handbooks and manuals, bylaws, policies and procedures, compliance documentation, assessments, reports, and templates.

**Kimberly DiMiceli - Director of Secondary Instruction**

Kimberly has 26 years teaching experience in the areas of humanities, social studies, English, and electives such as human rights, science fiction, film studies, and creative writing. She was the Mentor Program Director, English and social studies content lead, and cooperating teacher for many new to the profession during her teaching span for one of the largest districts in the state of New Mexico. Kimberly has a bachelor of arts in secondary English education as well as a master's degree in curriculum and instruction.

Currently she enjoys building curriculum and training new and seasoned Explore Academy staff. Her passion lies in creative, student-centered teaching and learning. She is the Equity Council Lead for the school district and believes that all students should have equal and important roles in creating their educational destiny.

**Karen Woerner - Director of Compliance**

As a lifelong educator and learner, Karen Woerner is a licensed NM school administrator and licensed NM Level 3 teacher endorsed K-12 in mathematics, technology, and TESOL. She has

over 25 years of service in education, including 12+ years of classroom teaching. Prior to joining Explore Learning Systems, she was Executive Director of Information Technology for a traditional school district in NM (with ~17,000 students) and then Deputy Director of the Options for Parents and Families Division (OPFD) of the NM Public Education Department. OPFD is the division that oversees and monitors all state charter schools for compliance, including charter contracts and academic/organizational/financial performance frameworks, as well as state statutes, regulations, and policies. Karen has extensive experience working with charter authorizers and school leaders, providing support while holding schools accountable.

**Daniele Knee - Director of Special Education**

Daniele has been a special education teacher and administrator with experience in all grades K-12. She is a certified non-violent crisis intervention (NVC)I trainer and has experience in all aspects of special education including diagnostics, IEP process, discipline process for students with IEPs, mediation, etc. She served as the special education teacher and director for the Albuquerque Explore Academy campus for three years, learning the Explore Learning model in depth and helping develop the model-aligned special education procedures and resources.

**Hannah Peria - Director of Primary Instruction**

She began her education career through Teach for America as a second and third grade teacher in rural South Louisiana, then continued teaching at an independent elementary school in Santa Fe. She also was an instructional coach for new teachers at a large public elementary school in the South Bronx. For over five years, Hannah worked at the New Mexico Public Education Department directing two nationally-recognized turnaround initiatives: Principals Pursuing Excellence (PPE) and Teachers Pursuing Excellence (TPE). She shepherded the redesign and implementation of the state's school and district improvement planning system, the NM DASH, and created the New Mexico High School Redesign Network. During her tenure, she visited and

coached 44 local education agencies and over 130 schools across New Mexico through the PPE and TPE networks, which radically closed the achievement gap between participating schools and state proficiency averages.

Most recently, Hannah has worked as a Senior Program Officer at the Everyone Graduates Center, the research and development unit at Johns Hopkins University's School of Education led by Dr. Robert Balfanz. At JHU, she supported state, district, and school leaders to plan and implement evidence-based high school redesign in widely varying contexts across the country. Hannah was raised in Northern California, and is an alumna of the University of Virginia (BA, History) and the University of New Mexico (Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellow in Education Leadership).

#### **Brittany Lovato - Director of Administrative Services**

Brittany brings over fifteen years of dedicated customer service experience and has worked closely with customers and colleagues for her entire career. She has mastered various computer programs and is a skilled communicator via telephone, text, internet, mail, and in person, allowing her to represent ELS through any platform required. Her skill set in managing information and communication allows her oversight of the front office operations at each Explore Academy campus allows each site to run seamlessly.

#### **Felicia Boatman - Director of Logistics**

Felicia Boatman grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico for 18 years before attending Arizona State University where she became a Certified Athletic Trainer. After being certified to teach Math, Science, PE and Health, she resided in the Valley for 14 years. Working for the Chandler and Gilbert Unified school is where she became a Head ATC, Teacher and Head Girls Varsity Basketball Coach. After teaching a variety of subjects, Felicia moved back to New Mexico to be closer to her family. There is where she continued to grow her passion for teaching math and



coaching basketball. She has been teaching for the past 22 years and teaching at Explore Academy for the past six years.

3. Participate in a Capacity Interview<sup>1</sup> to be scheduled by AZCSP. **(15 points)**

Founding board members and Explore management staff are eager to participate in the interview with AZCSP.

4. Using the most recent data available, select the appropriate option below to demonstrate the quality of the applicant serving educationally disadvantaged students. *2 CFR §200.331 (b)(1)*  
**(15 Points)**

**Option C – Freestanding or Expansion/Replication affiliated with out-of-state CMO**

Demonstrate the academic achievement results (including annual student performance on statewide assessments, annual student attendance and retention rates, student academic growth, high school graduation rates) for educationally disadvantaged students (defined by AZCSP) served by the charter schools currently operated or managed by the applicant comparable to the average academic achievement results for such students served by surrounding public schools in the State and the State average.

*Provide source documentation to support the submission in the above table.  
Data will be verified by the AZCSP staff.*

Explore Academy is chartered to operate a 6-12 public charter school, whose goal is to close the achievement gap for Peoria’s largest and lowest performing subgroups— English Learner (EL), socioeconomically disadvantaged students (SED), and students with disabilities (SPED).

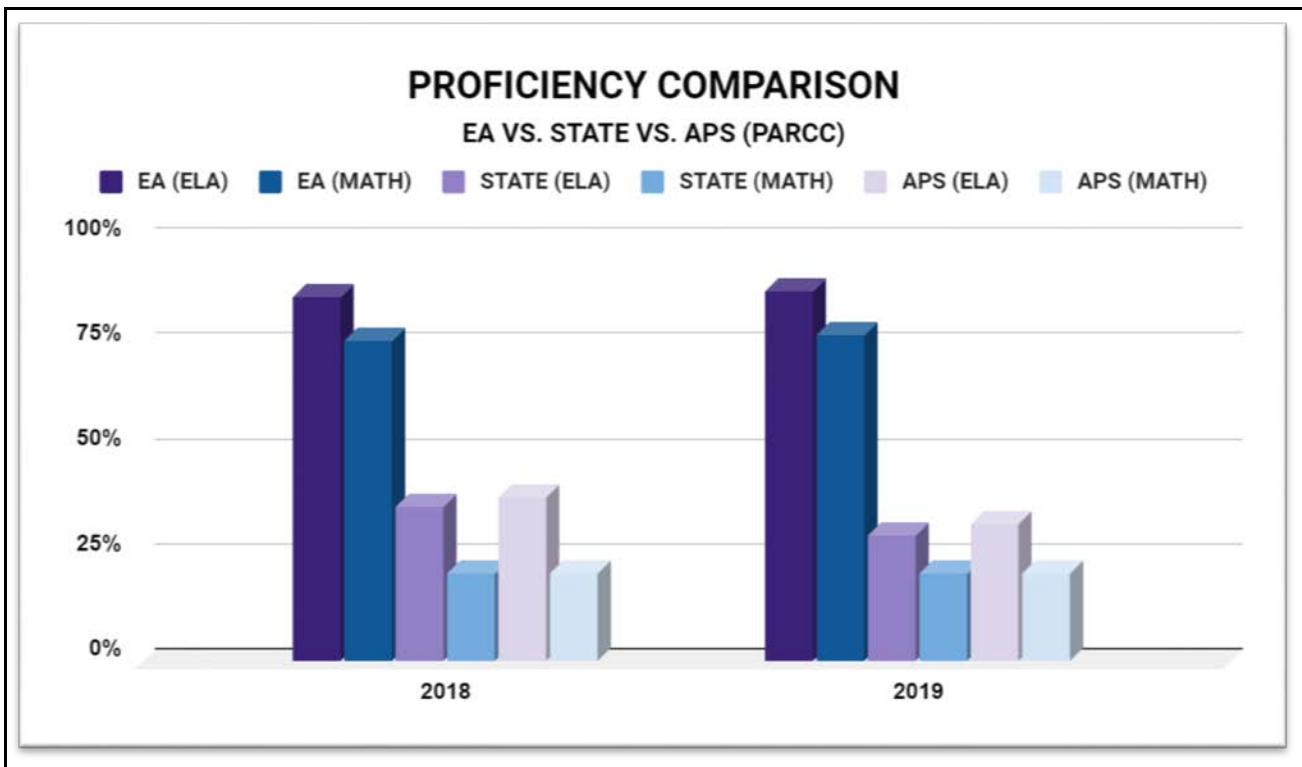
**Explore Academy - Albuquerque Comparisons**

ELS, the school’s CMO, has also contracted with Explore Academy - Albuquerque (since 2014) to provide the same services that it will be providing to Explore Academy - Peoria. The New Mexico school has a successful track record. They have been identified as a Spotlight School under the New Mexico ESSA accountability system, placing them in the top 25% of all schools, the highest

<sup>1</sup> A standardized interview conducted to gauge the applicant’s actual or potential ability to perform.

designation provided to New Mexico schools. For the years prior, under the state’s former A-F Grading System, Explore Academy - Albuquerque consistently earned an “A” rating. The school has further been awarded the Designation of Excellence in Reading, Math, and for ELL students. The Albuquerque school has demonstrated the highest student growth metrics of any school in the state of New Mexico.

Explore Academy - Albuquerque continues to outperform its neighboring school district (Albuquerque Public Schools) and the state of New Mexico as a whole. In the chart below, data from PARCC (New Mexico’s state assessment with the most recent data) is shown for Explore Academy, the state of New Mexico, and the surrounding district (Albuquerque Public Schools, or APS).



NM State summative assessment - Spring							
ELA - Low Income	2018	2019	2022	Math - Low Income	2018	2019	2022
State	33	28	24	State	16	15	<20
APS	28	21	<20	APS	13	11	<20

Explore	62	55	30	Explore	50	33	29
<b>ELA - Sped</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Math - Sped</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2022</b>
State	14	12	<20	State	7	8	<20
APS	9	8	<20	APS	5	5	<20
Explore	33	28	22	Explore	18	19	23
<b>ELA - Ethnic Minority</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Math - Ethnic Minority</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2022</b>
State	40	34	30	State	24	21	21
APS	37	31	28	APS	22.5	21	24
Explore	56	47	42	Explore	40	36	37
<b>ELA - All Disadv Students</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Math - All Disadv Students</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2022</b>
State	29	24.6	22	State	15.6	14.6	<20
APS	24.6	20	<20	APS	13.5	12.3	<20
Explore	50.3	43.3	31.3	Explore	36	29.3	29.6

\*Spring 2020 and Spring 2021 data not available due to pandemic

\*\*Spring 2022 data based on new NM test; comparison to previous years discouraged

\*\*\*EL proficiency not consistently reported by NMPED due to number of testers/school size

<b>Achievement Results for Explore Academy - Albuquerque</b>					
<b>Attendance %</b>		<b>Retention %</b>		<b>Graduation % (started senior year at Explore &amp; graduated)</b>	
2018	93	2018	93	2018	93
2019	90	2019	95	2019	94
2020	91	2020	72	2020	96
2021	84	2021	81	2021	91
2022	92	2022	89	2022	95

**Peoria Comparisons**

Peoria was selected as an ideal location for Explore Academy, based on its striking similarity to the population of students at Explore Academy in Albuquerque.

While the graduation rate in Peoria is almost 96% (AZreportcards, 2021) the reading and math proficiency rates are substandard. Proficiency rates for the Peoria Unified School District are as follows:

School	Proficiency - ELA	Proficiency - Math
Peoria High School	27%	38%
Cactus High School	36%	46%
Ironwood High School	41%	54%
Centennial High School	39%	46%
Sunrise Mountain High School	46%	63%
Liberty High School	48%	66%
<b>District Average</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>52%</b>

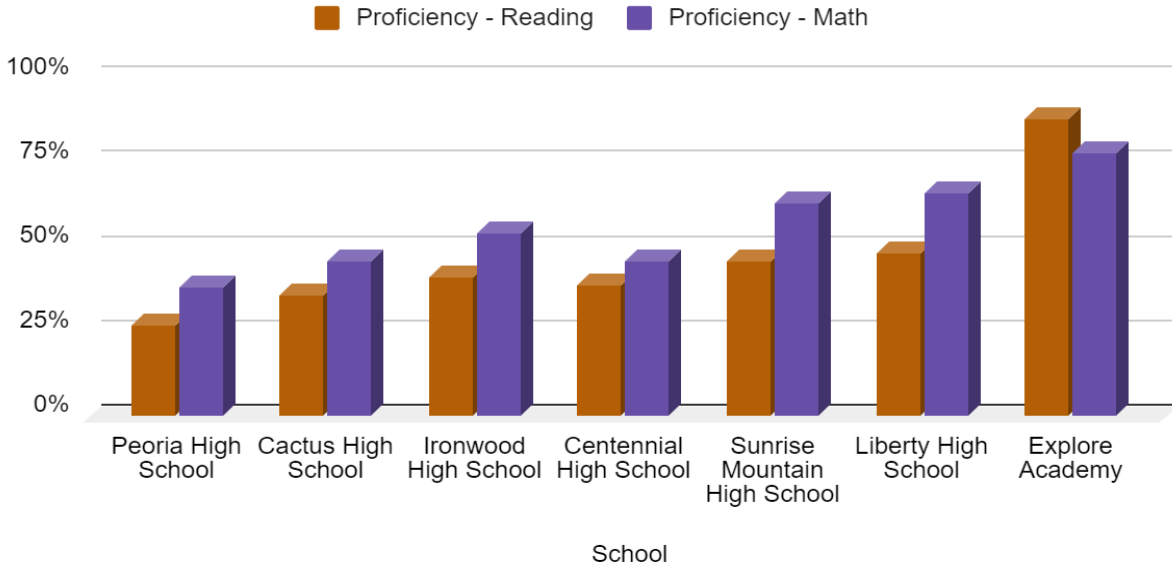
While not an exact comparison, the data belows shows Explore Academy - Albuquerque proficiency rates, based on PARCC (New Mexico’s most recent state assessment with consistent data):

School	Proficiency - ELA	Proficiency - Math
Explore Academy	88%	78%

The graphical comparison of Explore Academy - Albuquerque vs. Peoria Unified School District is shown in the chart below:

## PROFICIENCY RATES - READING / MATH

Peoria Unified School District vs. Explore Academy



**Subpopulations:** Concerning the specific subpopulations of students who are economically disadvantaged and those who have disabilities, the data shows that there is a benefit that the Explore Academy model can provide the community, given its success with those populations. The data table below shows the Peoria Unified School District (Peoria Unified) compared with Explore Academy (Albuquerque).

**Students with Disabilities—Peoria vs Explore Academy - Albuquerque:**

District / School	Proficiency - ELA	Proficiency - Math
Peoria Unified School District	8%	9%
Explore Academy	28%	20%

**Economically Disadvantaged**

District / School	Proficiency - ELA	Proficiency - Math
Peoria Unified School District	26%	35%
Explore Academy	53%	33%

**English Language Learners** – The Explore Academy learning model can have a particularly powerful impact for English language learners. At Peoria Unified, only 2.75% of ELL (Plus FEP 1-4) met proficiency on the ELA assessment; in math, only 12% of ELL (Plus FEP 1-4) met proficiency (AZreportcards, 2021).

**Attendance** – Across Peoria Unified District Schools, 4,348 students were documented as being chronically absent in SY 2018-18. Explore has a strong record of improving attendance among its students, which is the first critical step to helping them become successful students (AZreportcards, 2021).

**School Letter Grades** – In 2019, three of the three of the Peoria Unified high schools earned a “B” for their overall school performance, three earned no grade, and four earned an “A”. The letter grade incorporates measures year to year student academic growth, proficiency in English language arts, math and science. It also includes the proficiency and academic growth of English language learners, indicators that a high school student is ready for success in college.

## **Goals**

Based on this data, the Explore Academy - Peoria Board has established the following goals:

- School wide Achievement Math – In Year 1, 57% of Explore-Peoria students will meet or exceed proficiency on the AASA and ACT Aspire math assessments (grades 6-9 only in Year 1).
- School wide Achievement ELA – In Year 1, 55% of Explore-Peoria students will meet or exceed proficiency on the AASA and ACT Aspire ELA assessments (grades 6-9 only in Year 1).
- ELL Growth and Proficiency – In Year 1, Explore-Peoria will score the maximum points possible for increasing student performance from their prior year proficiency level (grades 6-9 only in Year 1).

- Letter Grade – Based on the current Arizona School Report Card model, Explore-Peoria will earn a letter grade of B or higher in Year 1.

5. Define the geographical and demographic community the charter school will serve; provide the supporting data on how the applicant would address the needs of the defined community; and name community partners and how they will assist the planning and implementation of the school. **(10 points)**

a) What are the distinctive characteristics of the target community?

Arizona is rated as one of the fastest growing states in the US, and Peoria is the 8th largest city in AZ (World Population Review, 2022). Since the 2010 census, the Peoria community has expanded rapidly, with an increase of the school-age population by more than 3,000 students. (Census.gov, 2020). Peoria has one of the largest (top 1%) student bodies in Arizona (Public School Review, 2022). This rapid growth continues each year and has not been adequately accommodated by local district schools, where there is need for student seats and school choice.

An effort to expand the school district to accommodate the area's extensive growth pattern has been met with failure, with the most recent three district bond measures being voted down in the last four years. This has resulted in no new school locations in Peoria, and rapidly increasing school crowding. Explore Academy - Peoria will offer an alternative to students and families who seek a school where the learning process is driven by creativity, individual student choice, and high academic standards.

When considering the target population to be served, the Peoria area was selected based on its notable similarity to the community served in the greater Albuquerque area, where Explore Academy has the longest track record of serving students (7 years). The alignment across communities is strong, including a large Hispanic/Latino population. It can therefore be surmised that expansion into Peoria would achieve similar success.

Although it is possible that students could attend from anywhere in Peoria and the surrounding areas, the baseline figures are aligned to a specific, smaller, more probable target population area located in the geographic area of north Peoria and the immediately adjacent communities. The demographic comparison between school communities is shown below.

School	Peoria USD	Explore Academy (Albuq.)
White	53%	52% (-1%)
Black / African American	5%	4% (-1%)
Hispanic / Latino	34%	36% (+2%)
Asian	3%	2% (-1%)
American Indian / Native	1%	4% (+3%)
Other or Mixed Race	4%	2% (-2%)

As the data in Tables (1) and (2) below show, Explore Academy students have increased proficiency rates by over 20 percent. Beyond these populations, Explore Academy students nationally, as measured by the PARCC assessment used by states across the country, outperform the average student proficiency for at-risk populations by greater than 30 percent in most districts, illustrating an opportunity for the families in the area.

*Table 1. Student Proficiency as Measured by PARCC (Explore, Albuquerque, New Mexico)*

	<b>EA (ELA)</b>	<b>EA (Math)</b>	<b>State (ELA)</b>	<b>State (Math)</b>	<b>APS (ELA)</b>	<b>APS (Math)</b>
<b>2016</b>	80%	61%	37%	20%	36%	21%
<b>2017</b>	79%	73%	37%	20%	34%	20%
<b>2018</b>	87%	77%	37%	21%	39%	21%
<b>2019</b>	88%	78%	30%	21%	33%	21%



**Table 2. Subgroup Math Proficiency as Measured by PARCC**

	<i>SPED</i>	<i>ECON</i>	<i>ELL</i>
<b>2016</b>	56%	57%	N/A
<b>2017</b>	69%	63%	N/A
<b>2018</b>	76%	81%	25%
<b>2019</b>	68%	70%	43%

**Table 3. Subgroup ELA Proficiency as Measured by PARCC**

	<i>SPED</i>	<i>ECON</i>	<i>ELL</i>
<b>2016</b>	70%	80%	100%
<b>2017</b>	67%	81%	100%
<b>2018</b>	84%	87%	25%
<b>2019</b>	78%	83%	71%

Performance highlights from the above data are noted below. Through our tiered intervention

coursework for lower-performing students, we expect Peoria-area students to make similar gains.

- Economically disadvantaged students achieved 83 percent proficiency in ELA and 70 percent in Math. Among those students, 25 percent exceeded expected growth in ELA and 12.5 percent in Math.
- Students qualifying for special services achieved 78 percent proficiency in ELA and 68 percent in Math. In Math, 13 percent met or exceeded expected growth.
- The differential between the percentage of economically disadvantaged students achieving proficiency status in ELA and those without the classification was 5 percent. The differential between students with disabilities and those without was 10 percent. Similar trends are present in Math.

The Explore Academy - Peoria Board reviewed demographic and student outcomes data for the grades 6-12 schools currently serving the Peoria community: 30 elementary schools serving students in grades K-8 and 10 high schools, with the Sunflower Center serving grades K-12 (Peoria Unified, 2022).

**Proficiency Levels** – The 2018-2019 aggregated proficiency rates for students in grades 6-12 for the schools in northern Peoria are as follows (AZ report cards, 2022):

<b>2018-19 Target Area Performance*</b>			
<b>Reading</b>		<b>Math</b>	
6	57%	6	59%

7	55%	7	59%
8	54%	8	58%
9	59%	9 (Alg I)	65%

**English Language Learners** – We believe we can have a particularly powerful impact for English language learners. Only 18.2% of ELL (Plus FEP 1-4) met proficiency on the ELA assessment. In math, only 39% of ELL (Plus FEP 1-4) met proficiency. The school’s goal will be that at least 30% of its ELs will reach proficiency in ELA and 50% will meet proficiency in math (AZ report cards, 2022).

**School Letter Grades** – In 2019, of the nine (9) schools serving grades 6-12 in Peoria, six (6) earned an “A” for their overall school performance and three (3) earned a “B”. The letter grade incorporates measures year-to-year student academic growth, proficiency in English language arts, math and science. It also includes the proficiency and academic growth of English language learners, indicators that a high school student is ready for success in college. Explore Academy - Albuquerque, the original campus using the Explore Learning model, earned an A using the NM letter grade system, a framework that was almost identical to that of Arizona.

In 2019, New Mexico transitioned to a new school evaluation system. In this new system, the top performing schools in the state are designated as Spotlight Schools. Explore Academy - Albuquerque earned a Spotlight School rating in 2019 thanks to its unprecedented student growth and proficiency in math, language arts, and science. At Explore Academy - Albuquerque, students 6-12 demonstrate, annually, higher rates of growth than is seen in any other school in New Mexico. This performance track record of success speaks to the learning model’s ability to show demonstrable success and earn a distinguished grade or qualification from the state while also providing students with a customized, choice-based educational option not currently available in north Peoria or the surrounding area.

**P-SAT Scores**

The P-SAT is given to students in grade 10 and grade 11 at the Explore Academy - Albuquerque campus in New Mexico. Student scores for P-SAT in both grades show performance above local, state, and national averages in both ELA and math. Additionally, there is little variance among subgroups at Explore Academy (-14% or less for any given tested grade or subgroup).

### **Crime**

The crime stats for Peoria are varied. According to NeighborhoodScout's exclusive analysis of FBI crime data, the crime rate in Peoria is considerably higher than the national average across all communities in America, yet, compared to similar sized cities across America, Peoria has a crime rate that is noticeably lower than comparably sized cities. However, the violent crime rate in Peoria is still, unfortunately, higher than the majority of communities in the US (CrimeGrade.org).

### **Income**

The median household income in Peoria is \$76,423, ranging from a low of \$22,636 to a high of \$184,181 in some neighborhoods. The overall poverty rate in Peoria is 8.55%, with the Latino/Hispanic poverty rate in Peoria at 12.95% (World Population Review, 2022).

*b) What are the needs including academic needs of the community supported by data? What are the major challenges the charter school would face? What is the plan to address those challenges?*

- b) What are the needs including academic needs of the community supported by data? What are the major challenges the charter school would face? What is the plan to address those challenges?

### **Diversity of Student Population, Subpopulations, and Learning Styles**

Explore Academy offers a unique approach to engaging students by matching the delivery of instruction to the learning style of individual students. This makes the Explore Learning Model ideal for addressing concerns for diverse student populations, including English Learner (EL), socioeconomically disadvantaged students (SED), and students with disabilities (SPED). By offering

small, seminar-style classes, student choice in topics, and accountability through exit exams, students are supported in creating personalized pathways to learning and achieving not only proficiency, but mastery and college aligned skills.

In order for the School to be successful, it is essential to provide community education to help families understand the unique and effective approach that Explore Academy offers. At Explore Academy, the focus on mastery of individual standards and unique scheduling of coursework requires a commitment to *family education*—in order to build confidence in the effectiveness of the model.

### ***Addressing the Needs of EL students***

During initial enrollment at Explore Academy - Peoria, all new students will complete a Home Language Survey pursuant to AAC R7-2-306(B)(1),(2)(a-c), unless such a form already exists in the student's permanent record and is provided to the School. The Home Language Survey and other forms for English learners will be acquired from the [OELAS official site](#) and will only be edited when allowed (azed.com, 2022). The Home Language Survey is not allowed to be modified. The revised Home Language Survey, also found on the [OELAS site](#) (azed.com/oelas, 2022) has three basic questions:

1. What language do people speak in the home *most* of the time?
2. What language does the student speak *most* of the time?
3. What language did the student first speak or understand?

If a student is determined, based on the Home Language Survey, to have a PHLOTE (primary home language other than English), they are considered a potential English learner (EL). The student will need to be assessed to determine their English proficiency level.

If a student is determined to be an active EL based on the EL70 report or previously completed Home Language Survey, they are considered a potential EL.

All AZELLA reporting information for incoming students will be reviewed in order to evaluate each potential EL and their placement and reassessment history. If a student is identified as an EL through their placement score or their last AZELLA assessment score, they are identified as an EL and entered into the ELL program.

[The AZELLA Placement Test Flow Chart](#) (azed.com, 2022) outlines the identification process Explore Academy - Peoria will utilize for identification of English learners and planning for required curricular adjustments and services.

The School will employ ESOL-endorsed or certified staff and identify a content teacher with this certification to serve as the ESOL coordinator. This staff member will assume additional responsibilities that include developing and updating EL Plans for each English learner, including keeping records of parental contact. The ESOL Coordinator will also be responsible for the following:

- Inform the student, parent, and teachers on the students' ESOL language level
- Monitor students' progression
- Establish meetings between the teachers, the parents, and the students to discuss progress
- Provide methods for evaluation and provisions for monitoring and reporting students' progress
- Provide for parental and teacher involvement to ensure students are being properly serviced.
- Provide for student exit from and reclassification into the program.
- Schedule meetings to review the students' progress and make recommendations after thoroughly reviewing all necessary data.
- Invite parent(s)/guardian(s) to attend all meetings, discuss and explain all recommendations
- Ensure that the parent(s)/guardian(s) understand the proceedings of the meeting, which may include arranging for an interpreter for the parent(s)/guardian(s) whose native language is other than English

- Organize meetings in a timely manner and record recommendations in the students' Individual ELL Plan
- File in the ELL folder a copy of a letter inviting parents to attend the ELL Committee meeting
  - Organize an ELL committee for students with six semesters or more in the ESOL program
  - Organize an ELL committee for students exited from the ESOL program within the two-year monitoring period who demonstrate academic concerns

With the coordination of the ESOL coordinator and administration, students identified as English learners will have an individual EL Plan, which will be maintained in accordance with state and district mandates. The plan will be part of the permanent student cumulative record folder upon entry into the ESOL program. Core instruction and intensive individualized interventions with a focus on academic/behavioral strategies will be utilized to support our culturally and linguistically diverse students. Progress monitoring and regular data analysis will occur to measure progress or lack thereof. Based on the data collected, including exit exam and AZELLA scores, changes to instructional and curricular practices will be made. The EL Plan will include biographical student information (name, grade, and home language); initial assessment and placement data; ESOL program and updated information program participation; amount of instructional time and/or schedule; exit information; post program review; ELL committee information, and Progress Monitoring Plan, if needed.

***Addressing the Needs of Students with Disabilities***

Students who enroll at Explore Academy - Peoria and provide an IEP, notify the school of an IEP, or are otherwise identified as a student with a disability are identified and the special education teacher will locate the student IEP and review it in depth. This allows the teacher, in collaboration with content PLCs, to plan for and implement instructional and curricular strategies to meet the needs of all students with disabilities.

For students who are in the general education population and are not currently identified as having a disability, teachers continually identify potential areas of concern at the classroom level by utilizing performance data. Classroom observations and performance data review will allow the teacher to determine if there is a universal concern (large group problem) that needs to be addressed using Tier 1 universal supports, or a more individualized concern that may require Tier 2 or Tier 3 additional or intensified supports for a specific student based on the Multi-Tiered System of Supports instructional system. A student identified in this manner is referred to the MTSS Team for further evaluation and possible referral to special education evaluation.

Similarly, a student with a physical, mental, or health impairment that substantially limits life activities may be entitled to Section 504 accommodations. Any student who is experiencing difficulty in the classroom, or for whom a disability is suspected, will be immediately referred to the MTSS team so that proper procedures may take place to determine appropriate accommodations and/or services.

Explore Academy - Peoria will follow the special education flowchart outlined by [Exceptional Student Services](#) (azed.com, 2022) for students who may qualify for an IEP or 504 Plan. Progressing through MTSS, students will be monitored by the MTSS Team for at least two terms (unless the concern is severe enough to bypass this process and proceed directly to diagnostic testing for special education qualification or testing for 504 qualification). Using MTSS and standard Explore Academy metrics, student progress and performance is evaluated. After the monitoring period, a student will be either exited from the process and identified as ineligible, identified as needing further data analysis, or referred to special education evaluation. At each step of the process, parent and student rights and procedural safeguards are at the forefront of all activities, and parents are a vital component of the process. All students, both those in MTSS and those with IEPs or 504 plans, are identified and documented in order to ensure they are provided with comprehensive support and customized individual services, including ancillary and other support services.

## Proficiency Levels

Academic performance in the Peoria School District is in the top 50% of state averages, with a graduation rate at the top 1% (as of 2022, 96% of students graduated in Peoria USD) (Peoria Unified, 2022). However, with state averages at 45%, outperforming state averages still means that 50 percent of all students are below proficiency (Public School Review, 2022). This lack of proficiency would be particularly true for students within subgroups including ELL, special education, and economically disadvantaged students.

The 2018-2019 aggregated proficiency rates for students in grades 6-9 for the Peoria Unified School District are as follows (AZ Report Cards, 2021):

Reading:

- 48% in grade 6
- 46% in grade 7
- 44% in grade 8
- 43% in grade 9

Math:

- 48% in grade 6
- 43% in grade 7
- 44% in grade 8
- 53% in grade 9 (for Algebra I).

Based on the current performance data as noted above, students who are not testing proficient are on average one and a half grades behind grade level. These students will require additional support, typically offered as Tier II intervention in the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) employed at Explore Academy. (*See question #3, Section A above for more information about MTSS.*)



Tier II intervention at Explore Academy places students in Level 0 courses with targeted focus and scaffolds to help students access mastery. These courses are often short in duration, allowing students to quickly progress into the grade level “flavored” content courses which has led to the model’s academic success, as noted previously.

Recognizing the disparity in academic achievement across all grade levels, each course will be offered at various levels (i.e. 100, 200, 300) based on student placement data. This approach allows students from across grade levels to easily engage around content standards using the student choice model, while also ensuring adequate support is in place to close achievement gaps. Students will be able to move fluidly between levels across various core subject areas, through a customized plan for every student that is informed by short-term data cycles.

Explore Academy believes that adequate progress over the course of a school year in closing gaps in reading and math proficiency should be focused on a 10% increase across grade levels. Therefore the Year 1 proficiency targets for students in grade 6-9 are as follows:

#### Reading

- 58% in grade 6
- 56% in grade 7
- 54% in grade 8
- 53% in grade 9

#### Math

- 58% in grade 6
- 53% in grade 7
- 54% in grade 8
- 63% in grade 9 for Algebra I.

## **Addressing Academic Proficiency Deficits: The Exit Exam**

In order to improve academic performance and proficiency and address different learning needs for the diverse population, including educationally disadvantaged students, Explore Academy has a built-in short-cycle assessment system to track student comprehension for each student, each term. Each seminar will conclude with an *exit exam*, analogous to a short-cycle assessment that is required to gain credit for the given seminar and its inclusive academic standards. The exit exams, numbering 40 per year per student (students take 40 seminars per year), assesses each student's competency in each of the academic standards set forth by the state.

The key difference between a typical short cycle assessment and Explore Academy exit exams is that students will be required to demonstrate proficiency in *each* standard to pass the exit exam, and the exit exam will be required to gain credit. The exit exams:

- *Track student progress over time, yielding data that can be disaggregated by content, time of year, time of day, standard, Bloom's (Taxonomy) level, etc.* This provides ample information about student, individual, subgroup, and school wide academic progress that can be used to drive instruction, curriculum, assessment, and other school decisions.
- *Can be grouped across seasonal and annual checkpoints just like other short cycle assessments that are administered in the fall, winter, and spring, resulting in three main data collection points for review.*
- *Are interwoven into the fabric of each seminar, so they are given more frequently (eight times per year), and in more content areas (language arts, math, science, social studies, art, music, PE, and foreign language).* In contrast, other short cycle assessments, such as NWEA, generally test two to three times per year in language arts and math only, with occasional science options.

Thus, when compared to traditional short cycle assessments which are typically only administered two to three times annually, and only in math and language arts, the Explore Academy exit exams provide a more detailed picture of individual and school wide academic progress, since they are administered *eight times annually and in each subject*.

While each seminar concludes with an exit exam, the work done throughout the seminar will be formative in nature. This allows students the time to work through specific standards that may be more challenging than others, and it allows teachers time to effectively remediate with struggling students. Feedback will be constant in order to provide the student the best evaluation as to where they are in the learning process. Any work performed, be it for practice of a learning target, project-based activities, or assessment, will be done for the purposes of providing each student with a measure of where they are in the learning process. This provides students the flexibility and time, not only to make mistakes, but to correct their errors and overcome deficits in their understanding without the penalty of poor grades which would otherwise be calculated into the final course grade.

Formative assessments will be administered on a weekly basis to mimic the structure of the exit exam, ensuring that students become familiar with the structure they will encounter on the exit exam itself.

### **Intervention**

Explore Academy provides weekly progress reports to all students and parents to display how the student is progressing on the standards in question. The first level of intervention takes place at this weekly checkpoint. If students receive reports where academic concerns are cited, that student will be assigned to a structured flex period where support staff can help with time management, organization, and academic tutoring as needed to better intervene so as to proactively address concerns prior to the exit exam.

## **Remediation**

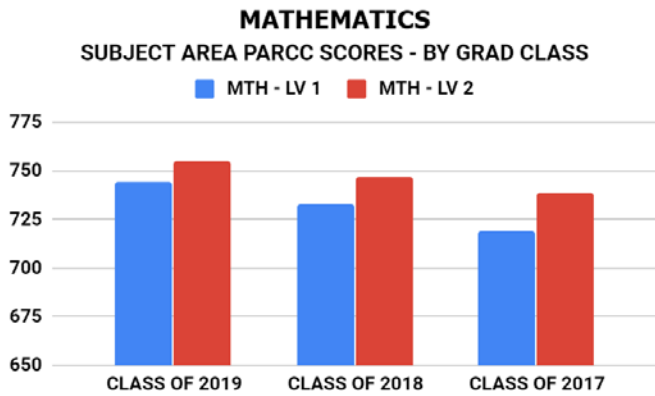
Students who do not demonstrate minimum proficiency (80%) on all included standards will be required to repeat the seminar. This manner of remediation is more specific and targeted, than the traditional model, which requires students to make up an entire semester of work, adding the burden to families in finding time and money for credit recovery options. Within Explore Academy's graduation requirements, there is a 16-credit buffer, allowing students to fail up to 16 seminars before falling off-track for graduation. Additionally, students may elect to take additional classes within the school day to make up for deficient credits without resorting to credit recovery options outside the school day. As a second level of intervention, if a student does fail a seminar, they will be placed in a structured flex period for the following term in order for support staff to help address any issues that can be corrected to prevent additional failure in the future.

## **State Testing Preparation**

Within the Explore seminar structure, students become comfortable with both the content addressed in the standards as well as the way in which they are assessed to show proficiency. Rubrics and test questions within Explore Academy seminars are intentionally formatted similar to state and national tests to provide a smooth transition for students upon taking standardized tests. Furthermore, students are tested in their seminars using the question levels with Bloom's Taxonomy, supplying extensive experience on the format of state tests that use depth-of-knowledge questions, thus improving their exposure to varied question levels in all their Explore Academy assessments, both formative and summative. Because students are continually tested using multiple question levels and task types in their seminars, they are better able to demonstrate proficiency in all standards on state tests that also utilize these same varied levels and formats.

Explore Academy seminars at all levels address crucial skills that are assessed on the state tests, such as close-reading, editing and spelling, text analysis, conceptual math knowledge, math procedures,

science processes, etc. The School uses standards-based rubrics and grading practices in all seminars to build student accountability as well as proficiency. This allows students to develop these vital skills deeply and fully, directly impacting student performance (positively) on standardized tests.



Explore Academy-Albuquerque students have demonstrated success on New Mexico state assessments, including *increasing proficiency* on the state’s standardized test (PARCC) each year as they move to higher levels within the Explore curriculum. The charts on the right show this increasing proficiency for each class of students as they are assessed on the math and ELA components of the PARCC test each year.

This trend can be attributed to the fact that, by holding students accountable for every standard, and not just an averaging of scores, the foundation for student comprehension is stronger and supports their instruction at higher levels of study.

**Limited Enrollment: Grades 6-9 for Year One**

The long-term vision for Explore Academy - Peoria is to serve grades 6-12. However, to better engage the community in determining how the model can be adaptive to best meet the specific needs of the high school students in the community, recruitment will be for grades 6-9 in the first year of operation. This may hinder enrollment, with families seeking a fully-enrolled 6-12 program, particularly with families who have children in grades between 6 and 9 (or with siblings in grades 10 - 12). The School is aware of this barrier of entry to serving students in the community and will continue to engage

families and form community partnerships with the goal of new grade levels being phased in annually, eventually allowing the school to reach 6-12 enrollment in year 4.

## **Goals**

Explore Academy will measure progress towards the mission using a combination of academic and student experiential data including the following metrics:

- **Student Proficiency.** At each grade level, at least 60% of Explore Academy students will test proficient or advanced as measured by the AASA; Of those not proficient, Explore Academy will reduce gaps between the bottom 30% of students to less than 10%, as measured by the AASA.
- **Student Growth.** Explore Academy students will have greater than the 65<sup>th</sup> percentile in growth as measured by NWEA MAP testing.
- **College Readiness.** At least 70% of Explore Academy students attending for 3-years will attain college readiness scores as measured by PSAT to be taken in 8<sup>th</sup> grade; Of those not proficient, Explore Academy will reduce gaps between the bottom 30% of students to less than 10%, as measured by the AASA.

Based on Explore Academy's track record in improving proficiency of its students, similar goals have been achieved within the model's track record.

## **Mission Based Goals**

- **Course Pass Rate.** At least 75 percent of students will achieve mastery of identified standards for each 44-day cycle; Mastery of a standard is measured by achieving at least a 70 percent on the final seminar assessment; An additional 15 percent of students will achieve mastery within the next 44-day cycle.
- **Community Satisfaction.** 75 percent of students and parents will report high levels of satisfaction on surveys. Students will be surveyed monthly. Parents and teachers will be

surveyed quarterly. All survey data will be shared with the board allowing for fast adaptation to meet community needs.

- **Student Agency.** 75 percent of students will report having had a voice in course selection and course flavors as measured on every other student survey; 75 percent of students will report, at the end of 8th grade, confidence in their ability to pursue a career or college pathway of choice.
- **Social and Emotional Development.** At least 70 percent of students will engage in social emotional group support and/or student requested time with a mentor, social worker or other school or community professional.

- c) Who are the existing and potential community partners and how will they be involved in the planning and implementation of the school?

Explore Academy - Peoria will partner with the Arizona Charter Schools Association, who will be supporting the School with guidance, strategies, and networking in each stage of the startup process.

The school is also in discussions with a few organizations for before and after school care for students.

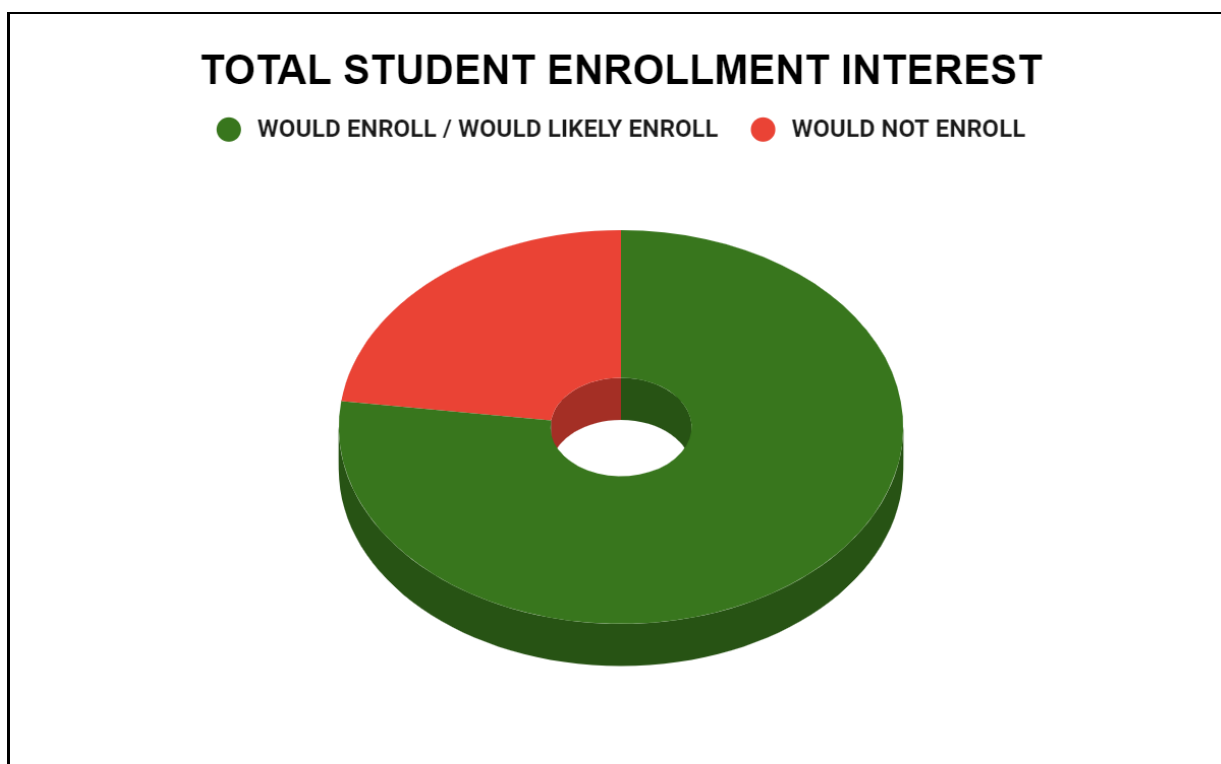
These partnerships will be solidified by the principal starting in spring 2023 with more input from families at that time. The school is also in the process of finding and securing translation services in the event that bilingual staff members are not available.

### **Student Choice and Accountability**

As the founding team examined potential locations for the school, including the populations of families that would be served, the group performed extensive market research to determine the level of interest for potential enrollment based on the ideals of the proposed charter school model, where those families would be coming from, where they would prefer to travel to a potential campus, and what grade levels have interest.

The data below is presented from the market research that was performed from a sample population of 400 respondents with school-aged children in the months of March and April of 2021.

The families polled were overwhelmingly interested in the Explore Academy model and the level of choice and accountability inherent in the model itself. The chart below shows the total interest from the respondents utilizing a scale from 1 (would not enroll) to 3 (would definitely enroll). 77% of the 308 families polled said that they would enroll, or would likely enroll at Explore Academy.



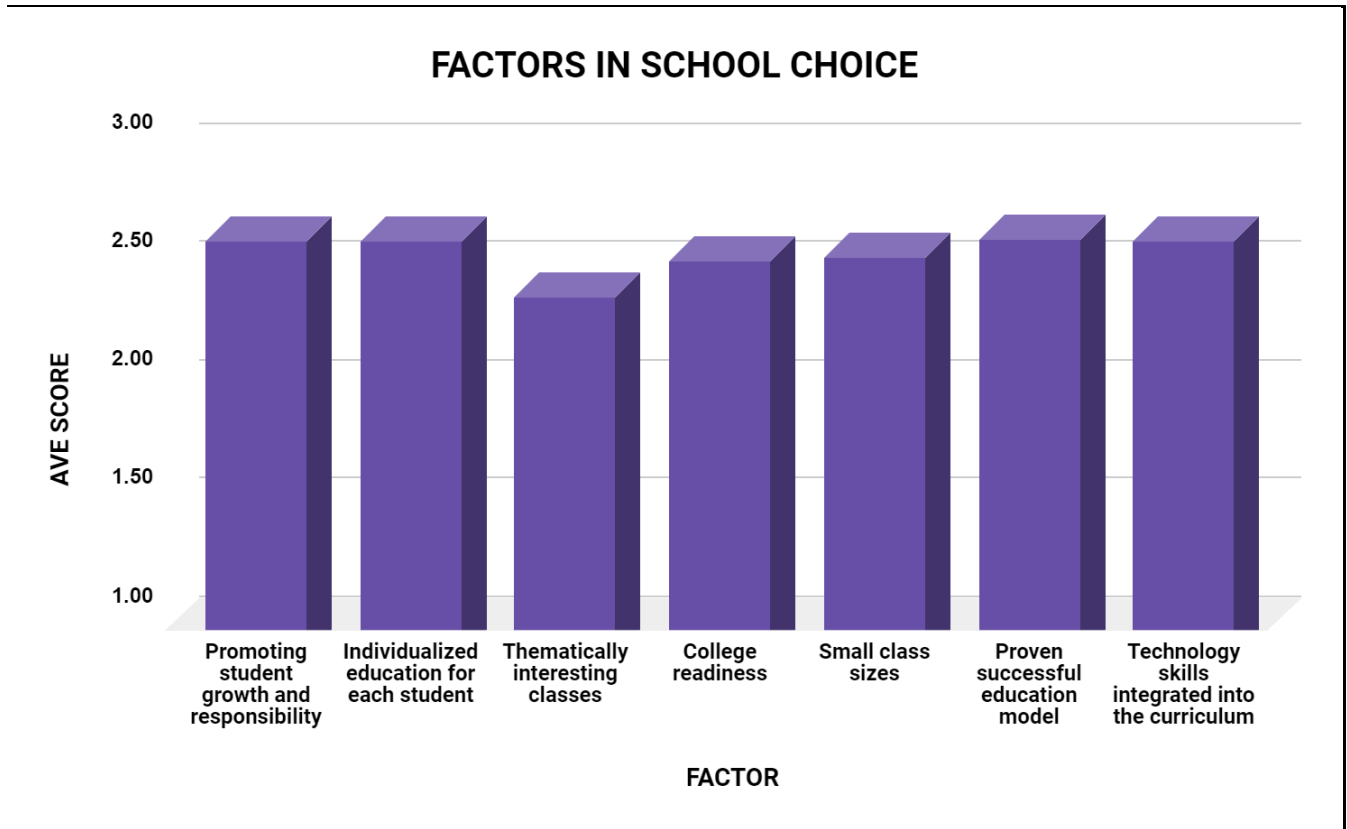
The data below is presented from the 77% from the above data set who stated that they would enroll or would likely enroll, 308 families in total.

When asking for the specific metrics for what factors participants were looking for in a school program, the factors are displayed below, again on a scale of 1 (not important) to 3 (very important). These factors are strongly tied into Explore Academy’s academic model.

With plans to open in August of 2023 serving grades 6 to 9, the following chart shows interest from families with students in grades 3 to 6 (who will be in grades 6 to 9 in the fall of 2023). Participants



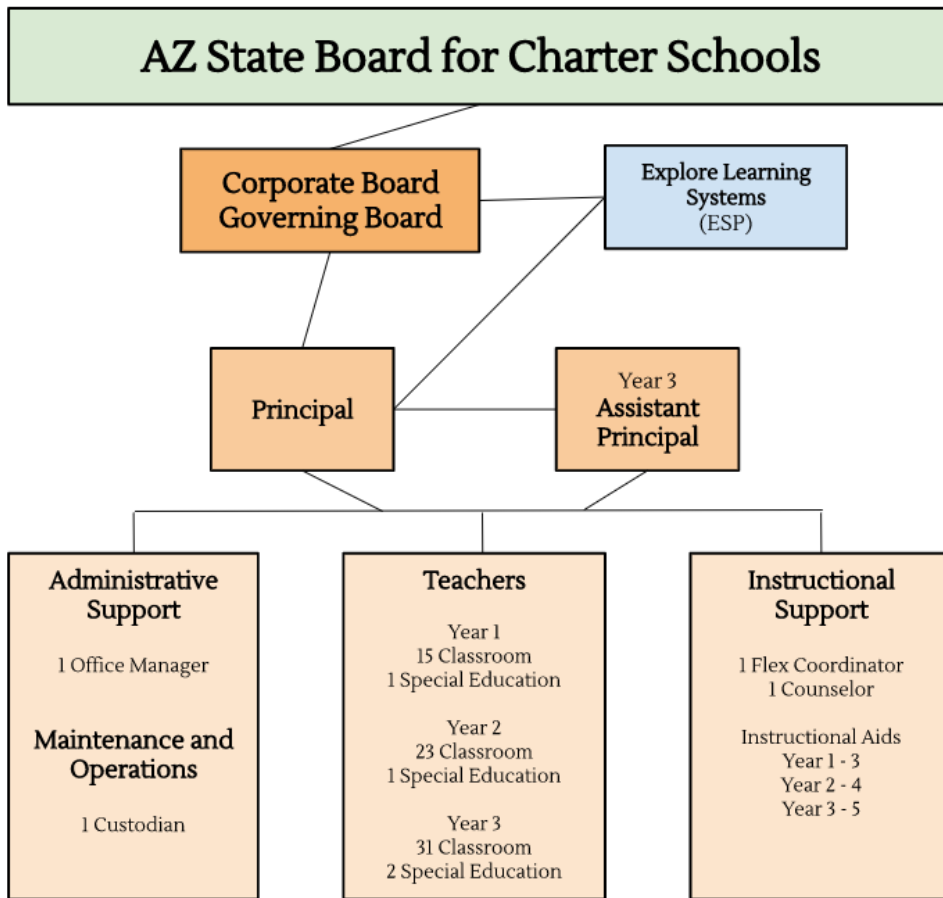
scored their interest on a scale of 1 (would not enroll) to 3 (would definitely enroll). Based on the average score for each grade level, there exists significant interest to enroll.



**D. Governance – Total points possible: 30 points**

1. Describe how the charter school will be governed and managed. An organizational structure chart shall be submitted.

The organizational chart depicting Explore Academy - Peoria’s school community and support system is below.



## **Operational Plan**

### **The Governing Board**

Explore Academy - Peoria will regularly seek and maintain a list of potential candidates to serve on the Academy Board, and intends to maintain a board of five (5) or more members, in order to avoid non-compliance should there be an unexpected resignation. Currently, there are 4 Board Members, with the 5th board member seat reserved for a parent of its new student population prior to the opening of the school.

Explore Academy Peoria will be governed by its Board and supported by the founding team and

Explore Learning Systems (ELS). Explore Learning Systems will provide support in all back-office functions in addition to hands-on support and coaching in the implementation of the academic model.

Staff recruitment, training and development will be led by the management organization. The

Academy Board will provide an annual review of the service provider, ensuring student academic and school operational outcomes are met as expected. The Board will have the option to renew the contract with ELS on an annual basis based on its annual evaluation.

As noted previously, Explore Learning Systems adds a wealth of knowledge, experience and capacity to the school model, allowing onsite professional educators to focus on student success.

### **Governing Board Hires Principal**

The Board (which is a single board structure, with the same individuals on the Corporate Governing Board and the School Governing Board) will be responsible for recruiting, interviewing, and selecting the Principal. The Board will seek highly qualified candidates who possess the certification, instructional, operational, and school leadership experience needed to properly carry out the roles and responsibilities as mandated by the Board.

In order to identify a highly-qualified leader, the Board will advertise the open position and conduct an initial screen of highly-qualified candidates by reviewing résumés, cover letters, and other application materials. A rubric detailing minimum qualifications and preferred skills will be used. All qualified candidates will move forward in the process. Next, the Board will review all qualified candidate application materials and decide on five to eight candidates to interview. The top four candidates -- based on interviews and their educational and experiential backgrounds, certifications and qualifications -- will be invited for an in-person interview with the Board. Again, the Board will use criteria to ensure the Principal can fully implement the Board's mission for the School. The Board may conduct a second in-person interview with the top two candidates if additional information is needed by any of the Board members before making a final decision and offer. ELS will provide technical and educational support throughout this entire process.

## **Principal Hires All Other Staff**

The Principal will be responsible for hiring all other staff, including instructional, administrative, and maintenance/operations. ELS will be available for support while hiring additional staff as well.

- **Assistant Principal** – In Year 3, the Principal will hire an Assistant Principal to support all aspects of instructional leadership. S/he will help oversee the development of curriculum, work with teaching staff, address student-related issues, and oversee parental involvement. The Assistant Principal will also support the Principal in making all school-based decisions, establishing and implementing procedures for the day-to-day operations of the school.
- **Flex Coordinator** -- The Flex Coordinator will be responsible for overseeing and coordinating the flex times that are built into student schedules when students are doing school work, getting tutoring, collaborating on projects, and lunch time. There will be one individual hired for this position in Year 1, and this individual will be either an experienced counselor or teacher.
- **Administrative Support/Office Manager** – Starting in Year 1, the Office Manager will help with the day-to-day operations of the School, including but not limited to, main office reception, attendance, student records, and office supply management. In addition, the Office Manager manages student enrollment, communications with parents, dissemination school-wide communications and assists with daily operations. S/he will support the Principal in all administrative functions such as administrative interactions with students, teachers, and parents of the School while ensuring a constantly welcoming and supportive environment.
- **Teachers** – The teachers carry out the curricular and instructional vision of the School. Explore Academy will staff qualified teachers corresponding to the growth of the school over the first 3 years. It anticipates hiring Classroom Teachers (Year 1 – 15; Year 2 – 23; Year 3 – 31) and Special Education Teachers (Year 1 – 1; Year 2 – 1; Year 3 – 2). In Years 1-2, the teachers will report directly to the Principal. Starting in Year 3, teachers will continue to report to the Principal,

but the Assistant Principal will begin to assume some instructional leadership responsibilities in order to help ensure the School is effectively implementing the instructional program.

- **Instructional Support**– In order to help implement the Explore Network instructional approach, the School will hire Instructional Aids (3 Instructional Aids in Year 1, 4 in Year 2, and 5 in Year 3) who will support teachers in their classrooms, particularly to help facilitate small group and individualized instruction. In Years 1-2, the Instructional Assistants will report directly to the Principal. Starting in Year 3, they will continue to report to the Principal, but the Assistant Principal will begin to assume some instructional leadership responsibilities in order to help ensure the School is effectively implementing the instructional program.
- **Maintenance and Operations**– We will hire one full-time Custodian to maintain the school facilities beginning in Year 1 and continuing in perpetuity.

### **Educational Service Provider**

The Board will contract with Explore Learning Systems (“ELS”) to serve as the School’s Educational Service provider (ESP). ELS will provide support in the areas of *education model, student recruitment, finance, operations, and human resource coordination*, as well as support to the School’s leaders in the areas of *curriculum and instruction*.

Explore Academy Bylaws allow for this type of contractual relationship to exist. The Board must approve the contract for the ESP, and as the ESP, ELS’s performance will be assessed every year by the Board using a system of reviewing student outcomes and a fidelity measure. The Board understands its independent obligation to ensure that all of the terms of the contract with ELS are in the best interest of the School.

The Academy Board will provide an annual review of the service provider, ensuring student academic and school operational outcomes are met as expected. The Board will have the option to renew the contract with ELS on an annual basis based on its annual evaluation.

## Administrative Oversight Responsibilities

Administrative Area	Person(s) Responsible	Responsibilities
i. Instruction	Years 1-2 – Principal Year 3 – Principal with support from Assistant Principal Years 1-3 -- Support from ELS	Principal is responsible for: Overseeing teacher training Implementation of Explore Learning model Assessment data report Student survey administration Teacher evaluation tool creation and implementation PDP review and approval Summative evaluations for all staff Pre and Post observation conferences Support and Growth Plans Walkthroughs
ii. Curriculum & Assessment (mandated State testing)	Years 1-2 – Principal Year 3 – Principal with support from Assistant Principal Principal will lead the initiative but curriculum, training, and assessment review will be provided by ELS	Principal is responsible for: Assessment calendar and program Assessment training Assessment data analysis and report Training staff on assessment data use Parent communication system State menu of assessment oversight Assessment accommodations for students with IEPs, 504s, ELs, and other special circumstances
iii. Staff Development	Years 1-2 – Principal Year 3 – Principal with support from Assistant	Principal is responsible for: PD plan and calendar Pre-service training management

<b>Administrative Area</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
	Principal will lead the initiative; ELS	Mentorship program PD implementation PLC use of PD concepts Contracts with PD providers PDP alignment Walkthrough data alignment Evaluation alignment Subgroup PD and alignment
iv. Financial Management	Years 1-3 - ELS; Treasurer of Board, Board, Principal	ELS develops the annual budget in cooperation with the Principal; Board approves budget; Principal implements the budget through program; ELS oversees and handles all day-to-day responsibilities for the school; ELS supports the Principal to ensure a balanced budget; Treasurer of the Board works with ELS to develop reports and oversees the external audit; Board reports to Authorizer.
v. Contracted Services	Years 1-3 - Board; ELS, Principal	Principal/ELS proposes all contracted services to the Board for approval and then oversees implementation of services; ELS manages all contracts, including payment of invoices.
vi. Personnel	Years 1-3 - Board, ELS, Principal	Board hires/retains Principal Principal hires/retains all school personnel; ELS maintains personnel files and ensures compliance with HR protocols; ELS provides HR support, including

<b>Administrative Area</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
		conducting searches, setting up and maintaining HR systems, etc.
vii. Grants Management	Years 1-3 - Board Principal & Assistant Principal	Board will designate the Principal as its representative in the approval of all grant applications, subject to the Board's direction. Board, Principal, and LES provide oversight for all grant programs; ELS and Principal identify and pursue grant opportunities and oversee implementation of all grant programs; Assistant Principal helps oversee implementation of grant programs, as pertains to curriculum and instruction; ELS manages reporting for all grant applications and active grant programs.
viii. Student Information System (SIS)	Years 1-3 - ELS, Principal, Office Manager	ELS is responsible for the development and implementation of the SIS. Principal regularly reviews SIS data to ensure compliance with all local, state and federal regulations; Office Manager inputs and/or reviews SIS data daily to ensure proper data input (e.g. daily attendance).

Explore Academy - Peoria will maintain a list of potential interested board members with ideal qualifications to be at the ready in the event of board member turn-over or the need for expansion. New board members are required to undergo board training, attend monthly meetings prior to being sworn in and commit to the mission and vision of the school as a public steward.



2. a) Create a Logic Model using the graphic organizer provided.

See below

b) Provide a brief narrative description to accompany the Logic Model. See the Logic Model Components Definitions in “Terms to Know” [CLICK HERE](#)

The Logic Model for Explore Academy - Peoria includes the inputs, outputs, and short- and long-term goals for the School. It also takes into account the assumptions being made by the School and the external factors that can influence the effectiveness of the School and its learning model.

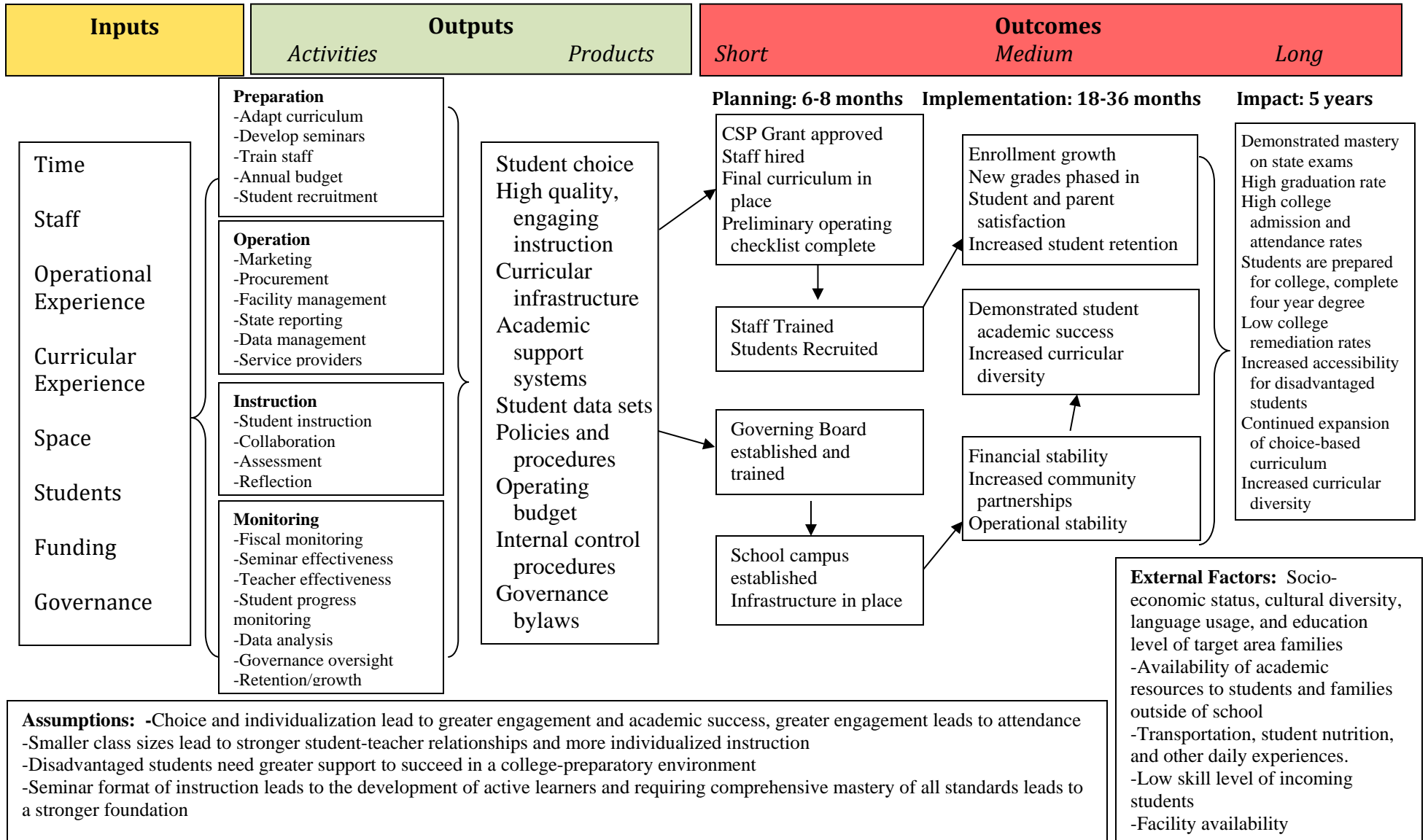
The Logic Model has built in data analysis, monitoring, and evaluation points by which the school will systematically evaluate the activities and products in relation to the outcomes. When/if the outcomes are not as expected and need improvement, the school will evaluate the quality/availability of the inputs. Then, it will make adjustments to the outputs to ensure the outcomes are attainable.

The data analysis will include monthly student and staff surveys, weekly progress reports, monthly proficiency testing in assigned standards, quarterly stakeholder feedback surveys, and comprehensive needs assessments among other metrics.

The Logic Model will be implemented and adjusted to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the students and school community.

### Arizona Charter Schools Program Logic Model

**Project's Objectives:** 1) Increase academic success of disadvantaged high school students, 2) Increase college success of students graduating from Explore Academy, 3) Expand the Explore Learning model to serve disadvantaged students in Peoria and surrounding communities



3. Describe how the governing authority will measure the impact of proposed project through Logic Model's implementation, evaluation, and revision for the life of the grant. The Governing Board of Explore Academy - Peoria will dedicate time monthly for data analysis of the use of funds, efficacy, and adherence to project goals using the logic model as a guiding document. This will allow them to monitor the implementation of the logic model and ensure that the project funding remains aligned to the project goals and ultimately serves Explore students.

The monthly data analysis will include:

- expenditures from the project with budget details
- review of project progress
- review of approved item purchases including inventory and placement in educational setting
- student progress monitoring data from the preceding month

More specific data will be included monthly as it pertains to the project or at the request of any Board member. The Board will also be provided copies of the grant application, approved budget, and logic model and will have the chance to review or ask questions about the program and its goals at any time.

4. What is the succession plan for governing body members and key school leadership to sustain the school's mission?

### **Board Succession**

The School will regularly seek and maintain a list of potential candidates to serve on the Academy Board. It is the intent of Explore Academy to maintain a board of five (5) or more members in order to avoid non-compliance, should there be an unexpected resignation.

In addition to the orientation provided to board members by The Center for Charter Schools staff, an onboarding handbook and workshop will be offered to new board members. Each board member will be required to complete at least six (6) hours of board orientation and development during their first year and three (3) hours of continued development each year after that. There will be regular training and discussion on topics such as internal control procedures, open meetings act, ethics, fiscal responsibilities, academic data, and organizational performance.

### **Leadership Succession**

Explore Academy abides by the governing policies and procedures already in place, established by Explore Learning Systems. School leadership joins the board in sustaining the mission of the school. New school leaders will be on-boarded with extensive training, supported by the veteran staff, the school/staff handbook and ELS, the management company. ELS will train and mentor new school leaders on the Explore learning model when turnover occurs.

5. What process is in place or will be in place for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210(g)(2)(ii))

The governing board, school leadership and ELS management staff will implement coordinated data collection with short term and long term reporting and evaluation timelines aligned with the logic model. Data collection will include:

- Annual survey specific to supply and furniture purchases including specialized equipment (science, art, etc.)
- Annual survey specific to technology purchases including quality, longevity, and user experience
- Monthly review of advertising and marketing efforts including return on investment, enrollment rate, outreach connections made, etc.

- Professional development surveys for all staff who participate
- Completion rate of tasks related to professional development and training
- Monthly student achievement data (all students)
- Weekly progress report data (all students)
- Quarterly stakeholder feedback data (parents, staff)

### **Continuous Improvement**

The project team will analyze the data available regularly to ensure the project funds are being used effectively. The data listed above will be analyzed regularly as it becomes available, and further data can be collected as needed to ensure that the project outcomes are being monitored in relation to the project expenditures. When the team identifies an area in need of improvement, it will use the data to make course corrections and adjust the project to better fit the needs of the students and school community.

6. Describe how the charter school that is considered a local educational agency under ARS§15-181 will comply with sections 613(a)(5) and 613(e)(1)(B) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. *ESEA, Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(A)(iii)(III)*

Students are guaranteed a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and evaluation as well as consequent placement and implementation of an appropriate individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 accommodation plan (504 Plan). The IEP or 504 Plan for each student will include measurable annual learning goals and behavioral goals that may involve the evaluation of behavior through a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and the development of a Positive Behavioral Intervention Plan (PBIP). Additionally, program components including specialized instruction and related services, goals, progress reports to parents on goals, diploma options, and curriculum, whether standard and/or modified, and assessment may also be addressed therein. Supplementary aids and related services will also be identified as well as

necessary accommodations and modifications. The accommodations and modifications outlined in each IEP or 504 Plan will specifically reflect the unique Explore model and its curriculum and instruction. This will ensure that all students with disabilities are effectively and comprehensively supported in all aspects of the curriculum.

IEPs and 504 Plans ensure that students have equitable access to the curriculum and instruction of the unique Explore Learning model and should consider the student's strengths, parent concerns, medical status, assessment results, and areas of need related to academic and developmental areas. For any student meeting, the School will ensure that an adequate meeting time is scheduled, and that it is held in a private or semi-private location. At every meeting, the School will ensure that the parent receives a copy of procedural safeguards (parent rights). The IEP or 504 Plan is a written, legal document that will include all required components and must be adhered to at all times by the school and its staff and contracted service providers.

Explore Academy - Peoria will ensure that all students with disabilities will have their IEP or 504 Plan implemented as written. Parents will be provided with a copy of the IEP or 504 Plan. Teachers will receive a list of each student with an IEP or 504 Plan in each of their seminars each term, ensuring that they are able to make all curricular and instructional adaptations, accommodations, and modifications in order to best serve each student individually. Each IEP or 504 Plan will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required, and all evaluations and re-evaluations will be completed as required by law.

Upon review of the IEP and 504 Plans of all eligible students, the school will determine the least restrictive environment for each student. There are various models to meet the needs of students with disabilities, and Explore Academy - Peoria will adjust the curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of its students. The models that are most likely include:

- Consultation Model: The general education teacher and Special Education teacher (and/or other service provider) meet face-to-face on a regular basis to plan, implement, and monitor instructional alternatives designed to ensure that the student with a disability is making appropriate progress in the general education classroom
- Push In Support Model: Services are provided to identified students in class with the Special Education teacher and/or other service provider. The Special Education teacher and/or other service provider will provide services to an individual or small group of students within the general education classroom but not as a co-teacher. A small group of students may include both students with and without disabilities. The in-class support model can be provided during regularly scheduled, intermittent, or varying times of the day and/or week.
- Pull Out Support Model: Services are provided to identified students out of class with the Special Education teacher and/or other service provider. The Special Education teacher and/or other service provider will provide services to an individual or small group of students during the student flex period or class period outside of the general education classroom. The outside of class support model can be provided during regularly scheduled, intermittent, or varying times of the day and/or week.

All students with disabilities residing in the community who are in need of special education and related services will be identified, located and evaluated, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. Explore Academy will utilize child-find procedures to identify all students who may require assessment to consider special education eligibility and related services. Explore Academy will implement the MTSS framework prior to referring a child for an evaluation under IDEA, but ensure that child-find identification occurs in a timely manner and that no procedures or practices result in delaying or denying this identification. An IEP or 504 plan will be

developed, reviewed and revised for each child with a disability who requires special education and related services. Student IEPs require varied kinds of accommodations and modifications for instruction and services based on student's needs. If a student's IEP team determines that the student requires placement outside of a general education classroom, Explore Academy will provide the necessary placement and/or services. IEP reviews will be conducted on an annual basis to assess student progress and make appropriate revisions. Explore Academy will hire appropriately-credentialed special education service providers to further assist SPED students. Explore's academic model is designed around individualized student educational pathways to create an environment based on educational equity. Through the Explore model, we can provide all students - ethnic and racial minorities, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, special education students, English learners, and gifted students - with in-depth academic support that surpasses what is often seen in public education. Explore Academy also ensures that ancillary and support services are available for all students who require such services.

### **Identification Systems**

For students who may need educational services under IDEA, such as English learners and students with disabilities, Explore Academy focuses on identifying and initiating support quickly. This process generally starts in one of two ways: (1) general education students who demonstrate academic or other struggles that may suggest program qualification and are referred to the student assistance team (SAT) for evaluation and next steps and (2) students who enroll with a history of an IEP, 504 Plan or documents and/or information about their programmatic needs and can begin receiving appropriate services immediately. This process is driven through weekly content area discussions among teacher teams as part of their regular weekly agenda and



workflow. Identified students are reported by content area leaders to the school's administrator who forms the lead on the SAT team. All federal and state guidelines regarding identification, servicing, assessing, and monitoring English Language Learners are adhered to by Explore Academy. All Special Education Rules as issued by the Arizona Department of Education are followed and IEPs are developed, revised and implemented in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act ("IDEIA") and state law and regulations.

### **Full Inclusion**

Explore Academy utilizes a full-inclusion structure, with all students sharing the same opportunities for curricular choice. Within this framework, the school provides support for all students, but the support systems are particularly effective for special populations such as students with disabilities and/or IEPs, students on 504 plans, ELL students, low-income students, and other at-risk students to provide direct and supplemental support both using push-in and pull-out services as appropriate. This support is coordinated by the school's special education teachers and extended by the network of ancillary service providers with which the school contracts to provide the necessary support services.

The school's special education staff continuously coordinates with the Explore Learning System's special education director. Additional support mechanisms operate across a multitude of dimensions, one of which is in scheduling around required supports to keep students in class as much as possible. For students that require services in the areas of social work, speech language pathology, etc., Explore Academy can provide these service hours to students during their flex periods so that they are not missing class for these crucial sessions.

Flex periods provide an additional layer of support as they allow for academic support throughout the day while the student is at school. This allows time with their special education or

English language development case manager to work individually on areas of need, learning gaps, social skills, etc., as well as to be a point of contact between content area teachers and parents to maintain communication. This flex class period, meeting on a daily basis for one hour, also allows for dedicated tutoring time, extended test-taking, and technology skill building. As a component built into the day, this time helps ensure that students are able to receive all support services they require as well as receive academic interventions, including but not limited to tutoring and individual academic progress monitoring, to allow them to be successful in their seminars for the term in question. It should be specifically noted that structured flex periods also allow time for providing targeted instruction, reading support, and interventions to general education students who do not show proficiency in their core content areas such as reading and math.

### **Response to Intervention**

Explore Academy highly integrates technology into its instructional and administrative processes, allowing staff to communicate efficiently regarding student progress and academic needs, both of which specifically benefit the level of support for the school's special populations. Progress reporting for SPED students includes the following:

#### Weekly Progress Report

At the conclusion of each week, teachers evaluate student progress and generate a progress report which identifies students who are struggling, along with metrics denoting the potential causal factors ranging from academic to behavioral. Reports from each teacher are compiled and a comprehensive report is sent to parents at the conclusion of each week detailing areas in which the student(s) may be struggling and why teachers perceive these struggles might exist. This report is further modified to provide feedback for the special education and ELL staff members

who work closely with their respective subpopulations. Using the metrics from each teacher, these staff members can provide more precise support as they work with students and liaise between teachers, students, and parents throughout the term. Students who are identified as at-risk on one or more weekly progress reports can be assigned tutoring, assigned to attend a class for a second time, or placed in a structured flex where they have added support above the classroom interventions and supports. The goal of the weekly progress report is to intervene before a student fails a seminar, allowing students with special needs and students who are at risk of failing or dropping out to get support before they reach a point where they are falling behind or failing a seminar. Because it is done on a weekly basis it can be utilized for continual monitoring and immediate intervention for students who would otherwise fall behind in their seminars.

#### Progress Toward Goals

As a component of each special education student's IEP, Progress Toward Goals (PTG) become a specific benchmark on measuring student growth. While the common practice is to measure PTG once per year, Explore Academy teachers review and provide feedback on special education goals each quarter, generating a more precise and informative dataset from which the special education staff can use in supporting students for the term ahead. These data are compiled and added into an existing report which is shared with parents for review on an ongoing basis.

#### Accommodation Reports

The effective collection, analysis, integration, and dissemination of data is a primary focus of Explore Academy and its curricular, instructional, and academic support systems. ELS has designed accommodation reports for students with IEPs, students on 504s, English learners

(ELs), and gifted/talented students to ensure that every teacher, every term, is familiar with and receives training and resources for the students in their current seminars.

### Formative Curriculum

Explore Academy's choice-based curriculum is built on the idea that students must continually work to improve in their learning. The assessment of proficiency in each seminar's standards /skills is formative throughout the term, allowing students to demonstrate learning as they make educational gains at their own pace. A student's final grade is not penalized for a score earned in week one if they demonstrate mastery on that same concept by the end of the term. This allows all students to focus on learning - and the ups and downs of learning - rather than the fear of failure.

### Structured Flex

The structured flex period provides support for special needs students, ELLs, and any student who is at risk or struggling. All students have access to a structured flex where they work closely with a mentor teacher. Each student's needs are identified and they are able to work toward making progress on their own learning gaps and academic issues during this flex period.

### Open Communication

With students moving through the classrooms of more teachers within a shorter span of time, Explore Academy creates a system where staff communicate constantly about student progress and academic needs. At the beginning of each new term, modifications and accommodations are shared with all teachers for students with modified curriculum, assessment, educational setting, etc. This open line of communication allows teachers to share best practices and experiences with each other continually, providing open dialogue about what works best for each student. The data collected each term from all seminars also allows administration and special education /

ELL case managers to monitor each student and respond quickly to any issues that may arise.

This monitoring and intervention guides the assignment of students to some of the many supports mentioned above and below. This constant monitoring and communication related to student progress also ensures that students have their needs met in all classes consistently, creating a safe and stable educational environment.

### **Additional Questions for the following:**

#### **Option C – Freestanding or Expansion/Replication affiliated with out-of-state CMO.**

7. Describe the extent to which one or more charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have closed; have had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; or have had their affiliation with the applicant revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation.

All charter schools managed by ELS are in good standing. No charter schools managed by Explore Learning Systems have closed or had a charter revoked due to mismanagement or noncompliance.

Explore Learning Systems has established four schools:

- Explore Academy - Albuquerque, NM
- Explore Academy - Las Cruces, NM
- Explore Academy - Las Vegas, NV
- Explore Academy - Livonia, MI

In addition, Explore Academy has received charters for the following schools:

- Explore Academy – Rio Rancho, NM
- Explore Academy - Peoria, AZ

8. Describe the extent to which one or more charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have had any significant issues in the area of financial or operational

management or student safety or have otherwise experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school's charter. Explore Academy-Peoria is the applicant and does not manage any other charter schools. However, the Academy's contracted education service provider, ELS, does provide services to other charter schools. All charter schools served by ELS are in good standing with no statutory or regulatory compliance issues. The most recent audit statements for Explore Academy - Albuquerque and Explore Academy - Las Vegas are included as Appendix B. Explore Academy - Las Cruces and Explore Academy - Livonia do not have completed audits at this time.

## **School Site Questions**

### **E. Preference Points - Not Required -- Total points possible: 5 points added to the total score**

Describe how the applicant will increase high school student academic achievement and graduation by participating in dual or concurrent enrollment programs or early college high schools.

At Explore Academy - Peoria, all students will be required to complete one semester of dual enrollment at a local university or community college prior to graduating. This is a graduation requirement and will be shown as "fulfilled" once completed. As a college preparatory school, this required initiation into higher education has a profound effect on all students, especially educationally disadvantaged students.

The higher level of expectations that are required to move beyond a set of standards at Explore Academy means that an extensive system of support is provided by the School for any student who may be struggling, including disadvantaged students. This system of support starts with small class size, allowing for individualized attention to facilitate each student's progress.

Additional supports include time built into each day for student collaboration and studying, on-

site tutoring for all students during the school day, weekly progress monitoring, special education and ELL services, and interventions for at-risk students. The flex class period is another built-in component at Explore Academy that allows for dedicated tutoring time, extended test-taking, and technology skill building. The flex class helps ensure that students are able to receive all support services they require as well as receive academic interventions to allow them to be successful in their seminars for the term in question.

Through these supports, Explore Academy - Peoria maintains a focus and mentorship towards college prep for all students. Having prepared all students for college, the School includes the requirement of dual enrollment opportunities to further challenge and direct students towards college, and also offers additional opportunities and encouragement for dual enrollment for all students. The requirements and expectations at Explore Academy mean that all students, including disadvantaged students, benefit from overall academic growth and are equipped for college education.

Another requirement for high school students is to complete a specific amount of “majors credits” within each content area. Majors seminars are designed to represent college majors and career pathways to provide students insight and experience in potential areas of interest for exploration prior to college. Then, at the beginning of a student’s senior year, each student will be required to declare a major. The major will consist of at least ten (10) seminars from one particular major area. Students may graduate with double and triple majors depending on the focus areas they choose to explore.

Students who are on-pace may take additional dual enrollment courses at universities or colleges (beyond the one required semester of dual enrollment). These will be counted towards their majors credit.

University coursework may be substituted for majors credits at a conversion rate of 1 semester = 3 major seminar credits. To qualify for this, a student must meet the following criteria:

- Student must be in 11 or 12th grade
- Student must be 20+ credits ahead of pace
- Students are limited to 1 class per semester to count towards majors credit. They can take more on their own, if so desired, but those will not earn high school credit.
- Limit of 3 dual enrollment courses in total, equaling 9 Explore Academy major credit hours, is allowed.

Tuition and books are covered by the school for the first college course taken by each student.

The cost of subsequent courses (up to three courses total) may also be covered by the school, but students will be responsible for purchasing the books. Students may talk to the school counselor for more information, including to discuss if there are financial hardships regarding the purchase of books.

#### **F. Leadership – Total points possible: 15 points**

1. What process is in place or will be in place to develop challenging curriculum including supplemental curriculum aligned with the state standards that meets the unique needs of disadvantaged students?

#### **Curriculum Overview**

The Explore Learning curriculum represents an innovative departure from the traditional educational structure, allowing students to take advantage of diverse curricular offerings by making purposeful choices that build a personalized education based on their individualized passions and interests. Based on Arizona academic standards, the rigorous STEM and



Humanities focused curriculum shifts learning to smaller, more manageable units of study that allow in-depth instruction to increase overall learning and retention.

Given the academic performance within the communities to be served by Explore Academy - Peoria, some students entering 6th - 8th grade will be lacking mastery of core standards. The academic gap among educationally disadvantaged student (EDS) populations is even more significant. Explore Academy - Peoria will build on student interest to engage them in the learning process and improve proficiency and outcomes. The curriculum will allow for differentiation of seminars in order to *meet student needs across all mastery levels* and students will have agency in determining the focus or 'flavors' that they will engage in. The curriculum will be a hands-on, project based, inquiry learning style that is aligned to Arizona standards and adapted to individual student interests.

The unique nature of the Explore Academy learning model includes supplemental curriculum aligned to state standards. The exit exams, which are the summative evaluation measure at the end of each seminar, clearly measure student mastery over the required standards, content, and skills covered within each class.

### **Curriculum Design**

Explore Academy - Peoria will have an entirely unique curricular framework for all academic areas; no canned or purchased curricular programs will be used. Classes (seminars) are based on a specific subset of standards that are aligned to the interests of the student population. The exit exams are built to assess, with precision, whether a student has in fact mastered the required standards within each class. The individualized focus, student accountability, required proficiency (defined as 80-89% on exit exams) and teacher engagement within the Explore learning model has been found to be particularly successful among the EDS population.

Explore Academy chooses curriculum resources based on research, national and state recommendations, and teacher input. The standards define what is to be learned and are non-negotiable, while the plan for how they will be taught at Explore Academy (the curriculum) is unique and well matched against the anticipated student population needs.

The curriculum will be designed collaboratively by a team of school leaders, teachers, and support staff and aligned to AZ state and national education standards. Explore Learning Systems (ELS), the education service provider, will provide consistent, ongoing support to the educator team and will help steer and guide curriculum development and monitor it on an ongoing basis. The ELS Director of Instruction will work with the Principal and Board to verify that each standard is represented and that appropriate vertical alignment exists for content and skills in each content area. Curriculum recommendations will be made to the Board by the team for approval.

A significant component of Explore Academy is teacher autonomy in choosing the curricular materials that fit the flavor they are creating. Teachers have the freedom to gather materials that support the teaching of the mapped standards, and the delivery, modality, and resources may vary widely. To ensure consistency and accuracy, the ELS Director of Instruction will check for content accuracy, alignment to standards, and depth of knowledge. They will also check that support materials promote effective engagement and are up to date, easy to use, student-friendly, and meet student needs.

A list of Explore Network curricular resources will be available for teachers to use as a guide, though teachers are not limited to specific curriculum. For each standards-based lesson, teachers will use a planning template to guide the development of the seminar, inclusive of

documentation of the open resources utilized. The repository of vetted resources will continue to grow and be shared across all grade levels.

Teachers and leadership will receive training surrounding the curriculum requirements. This includes all templates, exemplars, and requirements, so that their curriculum adoption is successful and meets all Arizona and Explore Learning model requirements. All curriculum will be reviewed by the content team teachers as well as by the ELS team, in order to bring it up to compliance and allow it to be approved. Any curriculum that does not cover the standards, is not on grade level, is not comprehensive enough, or otherwise falls short of the high quality curriculum standards will be modified until those high standards are met so that it can receive approval.

The principal and ELS Director of Instruction will provide training and professional support for teachers during the Summer 2023 pre-service days to develop their first quarter lessons plans such that they are aligned with the scope and sequence, utilize seminar and student choice instructional approach, incorporate inquiry-based learning, and align with the Arizona State Standards.

### **Curriculum Framework**

Explore Academy's academic framework is rooted in the defined Arizona standards across all subjects. Explore Academy curriculum aligns with the school's instructional philosophy and offers resources that support all student subgroups, especially disadvantaged students. Students will be instructed in all core content areas—ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students will also have two additional “flex periods” where they can participate in PE, music, and technology seminars, and when there is structured time for intervention, enrichment, support services, and tutoring.

Explore Academy seminars are divided into tiers and skill tracks. Tiers separate content by level of understanding (level of rigor), while tracks follow a skill through increasing levels of development, as determined through the sequencing of the Arizona Standards. The skill tracks are considered independent from one another; a student may move across the 100-level seminars OR may move up from 100 to 200 to 300-level seminars within one skill (track). For example, one student, at a given point in time, may have mastered standards through the 300-level in Skill 1, but is ready for the content at the 600-level in Skill 2. Students are not limited in a skill area based on progress in any other skill area.

In order to address the needs of all students including educationally disadvantaged students, Level 0 seminars will be integrated when necessary, to provide focus on previous grade level standards not yet mastered. These intervention seminars follow the same format as the upper level seminars but are offered at a slower pace to build foundational skills.

300-Level	300s	310s	320s	330s
200-Level	200s	210s	220s	230s
100-Level	100s	110s	120s	130s
	Skill 1	Skill 2	Skill 3	Skill 4

In the end, all students must master all standards in all seminars at all levels for all skills in all content areas to graduate. However, the order and sequence in which they schedule their seminars and proceed through the curriculum becomes unique to the choices they make in the flavors they choose and when they choose to take them. As such, when considering the concept of “promotion”, students are promoted within a content area based on mastering the standards within each seminar, but overall, grade level promotion is based on total credit standing.

## **Seminars and Flavors**

In order to motivate students to learn, Explore Academy focuses on educating the individual student and offers a systemic, differentiated, choice-based curriculum. This individualized form of instruction is achieved through thematic “*seminars*” that are aligned to Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and English Language Development (ELD) standards. The seminar format represents a student-driven approach to learning, as the students choose the theme or “flavor” of *how* they are learning. This cultivates a participatory dialogue-based learning environment (“a dialogue, not a monologue” (Irvine, 2015)) where students can explore and develop as individuals while mastering standards. Because students are allowed to choose how they learn and ultimately how they will fulfill their academic requirements, every course at Explore Academy can be considered elective in nature. This makes students active participants in their education and leads them to take ownership of their learning.

The “flavored” seminars each have their own theme and unique approach to the assigned academic standards. This offers students almost endless course options. For example, a science course that covers standards of physics may be offered to students through multiple flavored seminars:

- ***Example 1: “SUPERHERO PHYSICS”***

How much energy does it take for Thor to lift his hammer? Use physics equations to calculate just how much effort it would take to be a superhero (or supervillain). Then, use your knowledge to design your own custom superhero.

- ***Example 2: “LIGHTS, CAMERA, TOTALLY INCORRECT ACTION”***

Hollywood is filled with wild action sequences, ones that look great but seem to break laws of nature. Using physics students will determine if movies show accurate physics or much too fast and a little too furious.

Both examples of flavors cover the same academic standards and learning targets for the seminar; *how* the standards are covered makes it unique.

As students progress each year, the length of a seminar becomes shorter, giving students more and more freedom and focus to choose how they fulfill their requirements, and allowing teachers to cover concepts in greater depth and tailor instruction to diverse student learning styles. The number of flavors per year depends on the grade level. In middle school (grades 6-7) the seminars are 44 days (Quarter long), whereas in high school (grades 8-12) the seminars become even shorter, term-length sessions (22 days).

### **Mastery**

At the end of the seminar, students complete exit exams (aligned with the standards) before moving on to their next seminar. At Explore Academy, students **ONLY** move to the next course within a core subject area after achieving 70 percent on a common assessment aligned to Arizona grade level standards. If a student does not achieve this goal within the seminar period, they will repeat the course. This approach aligns with the Explore mission and vision, by putting students in the driver's seats of their learning plans, and relying on their teachers for academic support and interventions when they demonstrate need.

Each student in grades 6-8 must demonstrate proficiency or mastery on all academic standards within each seminar in reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, and elective areas (foreign language, physical education, health, and fine arts) for progression from one grade to another. Proficiency is defined as 80-89% on each standard for high school and 70-89% for

middle school, while mastery is defined as 90-100%. It should be noted that performance on standards is not averaged; students are required to demonstrate either proficiency or mastery on all standards to earn credit for the seminar.

In order to determine if a student has achieved proficiency/mastery to be promoted to the next grade level, Explore Academy will analyze the student's performance on the single summative assessment for each seminar: the exit exam.

Explore Academy exit exams are administered on the final days of each seminar and are divided into two parts, each worth 50% of the exit exam grade: the core assessment, which is a shared portion provided to all students who take the seminar in question regardless of what flavor they chose, and the flavor assessment, which assesses higher-level skills and knowledge and is based on the flavor in question. Each portion separately assesses each standard within the seminar.

The standards included in each seminar and represented on each exit exam are aligned with the AASA assessments. Note: results from AASA assessments typically are issued too late for inclusion in the promotion measures but these scores will be used to verify promotion decisions and develop data-informed instructional practices as described in A.3.

While students are classified based on their total credits earned, the number of Explore Academy credits varies significantly from the traditional system given that Explore Academy seminars run 22 (high school) or 44 (middle school) days in length. A high school student, for example, will take 5 credits per term with 8 terms per year, resulting in 40 credits potentially earned within the year. Within their four years (starting as a 9th grader), a student will be promoted when they advance across the credit tiers as specified below:

LOWER CREDIT	UPPER CREDIT	GRADE LEVEL TIER
0	35	9th Grade
36	71	10th Grade
72	107	11th Grade
108	160	12th Grade

### **Curriculum Evaluation**

The School will use a continuous review approach for curriculum evaluation that includes several intensive reviews of student learning outcomes annually (to review exit exams at the close of each seminar in Year 1- every 44 days for grades 6 and 7; every 22 for grades 8 and 9). These reviews take place among professional learning communities (PLCs) in which teachers come together to use data to assess student learning, corresponding gaps in curriculum and instruction, and make appropriate modifications. In between these three intensive reviews, the PLCs meet weekly to use data-informed protocols that focus on student learning (e.g. looking at student work related to a specific lesson) to continuously review and “tune” the curriculum.

#### ***Beginning-of-Year (BOY) collaborative curriculum reviews for alignment***

During pre-service professional development days, teachers will meet in grade-level and cross-grade PLCs to review student performance from the previous year on the seminar exit exams and standardized tests, look for patterns and common areas of challenge among the students in their classes and grade, revise curriculum to address growth areas, and then plan for differentiation in the opening seminar of the school year.



### ***Middle-of-Year (MOY) collaborative curriculum reviews for alignment***

During the in-service curriculum session each January, teachers will meet in grade-level and cross-grade PLCs to review student performance on the seminar exit exams, look for patterns and common areas of challenge among the students in their classes and grade, revise curriculum to address growth areas, and then plan for differentiation in the remaining seminars of the year.

In this MOY review, teachers will also examine the weekly progress report data to identify trends and areas in need of improvement, such as study skills or attendance, which can be factors in the evaluation of the curriculum and its efficacy, ability to engage students, and quality.

### ***Weekly PLC meetings to review and “tune” curriculum***

Explore Academy - Peoria teachers will have dedicated time each week to meet as PLCs (both on grade level and in subject areas across grade levels) to review student work and outcomes through data analysis and curricular evaluation with the goal of identifying what is and is not working in the curriculum, both for individual teachers and classrooms as well as across the grade level or subject area. These frequent and focused PLC sessions will allow faculty to “tune” their curriculum and instructional practices throughout the year using time-based data.

**The cycle described above repeats annually with the End-of-Year (EOY) summative assessment data informing the Beginning-of-Year curriculum review process.** In this way, we will use assessment data to inform ongoing curriculum development rather than just measures of “success” or “achievement.” The summative data will include exit exams from each of the seminars as well as the AASA in Reading, Math, and in grade 8, Science. In addition, SAT/ACT score reviewing will take place once students begin participating in the SAT/ACT.

2. What process is in place or will be in place to design and implement instructional practices aligned with the curriculum to meet the unique needs of disadvantaged students?

### **Instructional Approach**

At the forefront of the Explore Academy learning program is the *Choice Theory model of education* (Glasser, 1998) which sees students as active learners who, increasingly, become responsible for their own education. Students learn to make effective choices, take ownership over their learning, and become more empowered, successful students. Instructional strategies will include cooperative learning, problem-based learning and project-based learning, all within a rigorous curriculum that integrates STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and Humanities (English and social studies).

Understanding the student population to be served, this approach allows for direct focus on closing gaps in grade level progression and among subgroups, while learning skills to accelerate quickly once at grade level content. Following the choice theory model of education, Explore Academy - Peoria will allow each student to choose and personalize their own educational pathway from an exceptionally diverse set of course offerings. Students learn to make effective choices, take ownership over their learning choices, and collectively become more empowered, successful students.

The Explore Academy philosophy considers all content area seminars as electives, establishing a differentiated curriculum that provides students with a diversity of educational choices from which they can create individualized educational pathways. All seminars cover a subset of Arizona State Standards, ensuring that all students receive instruction over every academic standard set forth by the state. Students are held to specific requirements that are standards-aligned. However, rather than semester-based courses, Explore Academy uses 44-day seminars

for grades 6-7, and 22 day seminars for grades 8-12, in order to focus on mastering fewer standards more thoroughly. Classes that are commonly a semester or year-long in traditional schools are divided into several shorter seminars that collectively cover the same academic standards. Over each school year, an Explore student will take either 4 (grades 6-7) or 8 (grades 8-12) seminars in each content area, which equates to a traditional year of study in each content area.

At Explore Academy, students are ONLY allowed to move to the next seminar within a core subject area after achieving 70 percent on a common assessment aligned to Arizona grade level standards. If a student does not achieve this goal within the seminar period, they will repeat the seminar with little impact on their future progression towards adequate credit hours. Using this approach, the Explore Learning system can measure levels of mastery with more accuracy, providing a clear picture on where students excel and where they need greater support.

### **Individualized Attention**

The Explore Learning model's central focus is to provide individualized attention to students. Its core philosophy is centered around providing choices to students in how they learn. With the level of curricular diversity offered to students and the frequency through which they are allowed to make choices to direct their learning, learning at Explore Academy is always individual and never stagnant; no two students will ever share the exact same educational experience.

To ensure students meet all required standards, mentors work closely with each student, directing students on required credits and parameters of which seminars can be chosen. The Academy's seminar structure, formative grading, and growth-mindset allow students to work through the material at their own pace with constant feedback and support from teachers specific to their area and level of need. This methodology is particularly beneficial for disadvantaged students.

Because students are allowed to work through their mistakes, they are provided with their own individual support structure which can range from simple progress monitoring to more intensive remediation and support (1-2 hours per day). Additionally, as described later, students have two “flex periods” (one hour each) for intervention, enrichment, support services, and tutoring—based on individual student needs.

### **Empowered and Inspired Teachers**

Explore Academy’s instructional model gives teachers autonomy to create and teach in ways that honor individual teacher strengths and content knowledge. At the same time, Explore provides teachers with the needed support and ongoing training to meet varying learner needs in the classroom. Explore leaders work hard to ensure that talented teachers who love teaching are recruited and maintained. By easing the punitive, high-stakes teaching culture that has developed in the public K - 12 education system, Explore Academy leaders have given classrooms back to their trusted educators, so they can do their jobs with integrity and fun! Explore Academy teachers still use state standards to sequence learning, but they have latitude and team support to create engaging, thematic courses to make the standards come to life for their students.

### **Structured Flex**

The structured flex period provides support for special needs students, ELLs, and any student who is at risk or struggling. All students in 6th and 7th grades have a structured flex where they work closely with a mentor teacher. Beginning in 8th grade, when a student fails a seminar they are assigned a structured flex period that serves as a study group for the following term. This intervention is put in place to prevent students from failing seminars term after term without receiving the support they need for academic success.

All structured flex periods utilize the school's tutoring staff and academic counseling staff who are available for academic support throughout the day. It also provides students who are at risk of failure or dropping out access to a teacher and tutors, one on one, every day of the week.

These services extend outside of the school day as well, with after-school tutoring or extended coursework with summer school, for families that feel the need for additional support. This individual attention means students are not lost in the system or overlooked. Each student's needs are identified and they are able to work toward progress on their own learning gaps and academic issues during their flex period. This leads to greater success in their current seminars and a decrease in the likelihood that they will fail a seminar again.

### **College and Career Readiness**

Students from Peoria and the surrounding areas with the highest interest in Explore Academy will have a new choice that will allow them to carve their own educational path and prepare for college with both rigorous academics and integrated soft skills such as:

- course registration based on offerings in a catalog
- latest and most relevant technology skills embedded into the curriculum and instruction
- email and in person communication skills that prepare them for college and career futures
- time management skills as they learn to balance academic and free time
- an accountability infrastructure that teaches them to use the support systems around them to hold themselves accountable for their own learning and success

As a college preparatory school, the commitment to students is to prepare them to be college ready when they graduate. At the middle school level, Explore Academy will re-engage students in the love of learning while closing critical achievement gaps in preparation for high school.

Student choice is encouraged, in terms of gaining content knowledge and to help them build a broader set of skills necessary for success in college.

Each content area focuses on four skills that guide students as they move through the curriculum.

While they must master the content in each seminar, they must also show mastery in the skill area specific to that seminar based on the AZ State Standards. Students may move through each skill independently from every other skill. The sixteen skills across the four content areas are shown below:

<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>Social Studies</b>
Argument/Logic	Solving Equations	Scientific Argument	Interpretation
Research/Communication	Solving Functions	Analytics	Compare/Contrast
Literature	Geometric Analysis	Investigation	Chronological Reason
Language	Statistics	Modeling	Facts vs. Opinions

### **Technology**

Technology will be a key component of Explore Academy’s instructional program. Each classroom will be equipped with state-of-the-art technology to enhance instruction, including Chromebooks, headphones, and printers. Students will have access to educational applications and software including: NearPod, Co-Writer, Snap-and-Read, Pear Deck, Google Classroom, Google Apps Google Extensions, and Zoom. Teachers will incorporate Powerpoint, Excel and videos into their lessons for research and presentations. Technology will also be used for language support such as dictionaries, translation software, text to speech, and note taking.

### **Research Supporting Instructional Design and Approach**

In the words of the memory researcher Edward Bolles, “We remember what we understand; we understand only what we pay attention to; we pay attention to what we want.” This quote closely

reflects the Explore philosophy, providing students a choice in how they receive their education. The focus of the seminar-style of instruction focuses on a two-way discourse between teachers and students, eliminating the teacher as the sole source of information. The seminar structure requires a 50/50 split in communication of information between the teacher and student, sharing the role across all participants within the class structure. Two-way discourse promotes long-term student comprehension through inherent interest, experience, and application, all of which represent the three main focal areas of the Explore Academy curriculum. Furthermore, when long-term memory is the objective, as in the creation of an educated student, research specifically details implementation of the following six actions:

- **Action One - Making Skills Relevant.** Students understand information more thoroughly when it is relevant—when they find it interesting (Borowsky, 1993; Armbruster et al, 2009). Students select their own educational pathways, working towards independence and responsibility, preparing them for college and career. Student choices and the skills they develop become relevant to their budding interests and futures.
- **Action Two - Use Low-Density Teaching Methods.** Learning outcomes are greater when the amount of content required of the learner focuses on fewer objectives (Russell, 1984; Sana et al, 2020). To maximize learning, new content is interwoven and connected to previous learning. Teaching fewer objectives, emphasizing depth over breadth, in the quality of learning and the establishment of retention (Shadmehr, 1997). Explore Academy seminars are driven by a specific content area focus and a vertically aligned skill set. Each seminar is a continuation of learning that *establishes learning connections* between seminars. The focus on lower density instruction operates outside the classroom as well.

The daily schedule is designed on a “less is more” philosophy: students attend fewer classes per day (five) compared to traditional school schedules.

- **Action Three - Use Short Classes and Shorter Teaching Modules.** Segments of learning should be as concise and specific as possible (Belding, 2004). Information overload can occur causing previous information which has not had the chance to solidify, to be replaced by new information, impeding long-term retention. Explore Academy seminars are designed to be shorter and more specific in their focus to promote the establishment of long-term knowledge.
- **Action Four - Repeat the Message Often.** Reiteration and reinforcement of information have been shown to be critical factors in the establishment of long-term memory (Karpicke and Roedigerii, 2007). Further research characterizes repetition as a key driving force in moving information from short-term to long-term memory and countering what is known as the *fading effect*, which describes the natural loss of information over time (Spitzer, 1939). Material that is retained over more extensive periods of time, termed *residual memory*, is created directly from repeated exposure and is the basis for long-term retention (Atkinson, 1971; Finn and Metcalf, 2010). Explore Academy teachers integrate information repetition across seminars by building on existing content knowledge and skill sets in each content area, creating greater cohesiveness between seminars. By providing a spiraling curriculum between seminars, information is reinforced and greater levels of long-term memory can be established.
- **Action Five - Provide the Learner with Motivation.** Learning is most effective when the learner has inherent motivation (Glasser, 1998). This notion is the basis for *choice theory*, developed by Dr. William Glasser through decades of research and practice in psychology



and counseling. The guiding principle in choice theory asserts that behavior is driven from within and that we are most successful when internally motivated. Glasser's theory describes choice-based education as one in which students are (a) provided a warm, supportive classroom environment where they are respected, (b) asked to perform only useful work, (c) pushed to do the best they can, and (d) continuously asked to evaluate their own work and improve it. A teacher in this environment steps into a mentoring role, helping to facilitate, support, and drive the learning process rather than simply disseminating information. Grades become less of a focus given that they "tend to turn the process off because the students work for your grade instead of their own judgment of quality." (Glasser, 1998). There is not one road to quality but rather several and, when given a choice, the individual will find more success on the road of their own choosing.

- **Action Six - Provide the Learner with Feedback.** Appropriate student feedback is crucial to the process of learning, especially when that feedback is: goal-oriented, ongoing, timely, and specific (Bransford, 2000; Finn and Metcalf, 2010). Explore Academy focuses on learning as a *process* and not an end in and of itself, so feedback and guidance become integral components. With the exception of the summative assessment at the conclusion of a given seminar, all student work aims for attaining proficiency through guided, experience-based learning. Assigned assessments in a given seminar, including homework, in-class work, projects, and quizzes, are formative in nature and provide feedback to students and parents. Students learn to value learning over just work completion and compliance.

As stated in *Authentic Learning and Student Choice*, "student ownership provides a sense of empowerment and helps keep students motivated and engaged" (Berry, 2012). With educational

options, personal interest and consistent engagement, students become invested in their work, apply what they've learned, and retain that knowledge over the long term. Thus, they are more adequately prepared for summative assessments such as the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) assessments or college entrance exams such as the American College Testing (ACT).

### **Learning Strategies**

Explore Academy's innovative choice-based educational program is rooted in evidence-based learning strategies that are proven to improve academic success for all students. Explore Academy focuses on collaboration, engagement through personal interest, and student choice. This educational program offers an original and systemic form of individualized instruction, and creates a school culture that promotes authentic teaching and learning, post-secondary readiness and increased accountability.

Explore Academy will incorporate research-based instructional strategies focused on academic achievement including: **Cooperative Learning; Problem-based Learning; and Project-based Learning.**

**Cooperative learning** is an instructional strategy where student groups work together on a learning activity. A study by Mercer, Wegerif, & Dawes (1999) states that when "students work collaboratively with others to discuss ideas, challenge each other's perspective, and resolve differences (they) are more likely to promote higher-order thinking and reasoning and the construction of new understandings and learning than tasks that require only basic recall and practice" (Gillies, 2007).

**Problem-based learning** allows students to learn subject matter by solving open-ended problems, typically in groups. A 2009 study followed two parallel cohorts of students in degree

programs, one taught with problem-based learning, the other by traditional methods. They found greater gains in metacognitive skills in the problem-based group (Allen, Donham, & Bernhardt, 2011).

**Project-based learning** is where students take on relevant tasks and learn to be in control of their own learning through inquiry. Using project-based learning, three Iowa elementary schools raised their IOWA Test of Basic Skills scores from “well below average” to match the district average in two schools, and to “well above the district average” in the third school (Bell, 2010). Participating in real-world projects and being authentically engaged with relevant content strengthens student learning and success and motivates students.

### **Effectiveness of Explore Academy’s Unique Approach**

Explore Academy’s program provides students profound and creative options for learning aligned with Arizona standards. The seminar-style of instruction focuses on a two-way discourse between teachers and students, lifting students into an active participant in their education and cultivating an active-learning environment where students are engaged in the entire learning process and curriculum. Each seminar is designed to engage students from day one around related and intentionally planned standards using a unique flavor to illustrate the standard.

Explore Academy-Peoria students will choose the seminar topic and be placed in the appropriate level based on assessment placement data. This intentional placement allows teachers to plan an open-source curriculum to focus on specific gap areas within the standards.

In addition, with the higher level of expectations required to move beyond a set of standards, Explore Academy provides an extensive system to support student learning, address special needs of struggling or disadvantaged students, and improve overall academic growth for all students. The system of support starts with small class sizes, allowing for individualized

attention to facilitate each student's progress. Additional supports include time built into each day for student collaboration and studying, on-site tutoring for all students during the school day, weekly progress monitoring, special education and EL services, and interventions for at-risk students.

A critical difference between Explore Academy-Peoria and traditional educational models in the area, is that students will be *required to demonstrate proficiency in all of the required standards* within a seminar, and will thus graduate having demonstrated proficiency in all of the required state academic standards. Compared to a traditional model where grades or standards are averaged and students are not held accountable to demonstrate knowledge on each standard individually, the Explore Academy graduate will have a more complete and comprehensive level of education.

The manner in which the courses are delivered is also unique to Explore Academy. Students take five seminars a day, in addition to two “flex periods,” which are structured times for intervention, enrichment, support services, and tutoring. Teachers serve as facilitators as well as curriculum creators whose mission is to empower students as they work toward mastery. The teaching model provides students with frontloading assignments, so students learn to manage their time outside of class, develop the ability to work with curriculum independently, and come prepared to participate actively in class each day. Students are held to specific requirements that are standards-aligned and measured against common standards-aligned assessments. To support this expectation, there is flexibility to retake the seminar or a short-term Level 0 course to quickly address gaps without detrimental consequences of being held back or falling behind more. The seminar structure is reflective of high level, data-driven small group instruction.

3. What process is in place or will be in place to develop a comprehensive academic assessment system to measure the performance of disadvantaged students?

### **School-wide Performance Objectives and Methods of Assessment**

Explore academy is committed to implementing an education program to ensure all students meet academic standards, especially disadvantaged students. In order to do this, Explore Academy has set the following school-wide performance objectives for the first five years of operation. Our specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable, and time-specific annual goals are:

- To align all curriculum to CCSS in teacher teams.
- To maintain a 95% participation rate or better on the AASA, ACT, and AZSci assessments with at least 60% of students scoring proficient in ELA, math, and science as a baseline goal (to be evaluated annually for adjustment). Progress will be assessed through annual review of assessment data and testing attendance/participation records.
- At least 70% of EL students will advance one or more performance levels on the AZELLA as measured by student performance on the AZELLA.
- To have 90% parent participation in school activities/events. This will be measured using attendance at parent-teacher conferences, parent committees, and board meetings as well as participation in stakeholder surveys.
- To maintain a minimal student absenteeism rate of 3% or less, documented by attendance reports.
- To maintain a 95% retention rate.
- To maintain a low suspension and expulsion rate, of less than 1%
- 90% of students will report feeling safe and welcomed at the school as evident through analysis of the monthly student survey.

In order to ensure school wide performance objectives are achieved, Explore Academy will implement data-driven school systems throughout the year with metrics collected daily, weekly, monthly, semiannually, and annually. School administration will use data systems to guide decision making and student achievement. Explore Academy will evaluate the seminar model, will frequently evaluate student achievement data, analyze effectiveness of curriculum as well as its alignment to CCSS, assess instructional strategies, evaluate efforts toward teacher development, and effectively allocate resources toward improving student achievement. The wide range of assessments employed at Explore are depicted in the chart below, referenced from The Arizona Department of Education Assessment website - <https://www.azed.gov/assessment>:

<b>Purpose/Requirement</b>	<b>Grades/Levels</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Diagnostic, universal screener, & progress monitoring	All students	ISIP Reading & Math
Summative Assessment in ELA and Math	3-8	AASA
Science Summative	8, 11	AZSci
Summative Assessment in ELA and Math	9	ACT Aspire
Summative Assessment in ELA and Math	11	ACT with Writing
ELP Assessments	All English Learners	AZELLA

Interim Assessment	All students	Under review - currently considering NWEA MAPS
Common formative assessments aligned to grade level standards	All students	Local exit exams, peer reviewed and standards-aligned
Flavor assessments	All students	Teacher-created, aligned to standards and flavors, largely performance/project based and woven throughout the quarter/semester
Formative assessments	All students	Teacher-created daily/weekly, including observations and anecdotal notes

**Success for All Students - Assessments to Ensure Learning Growth**

Since the Explore program is tailored to the needs of every single student and rooted in the mission of providing a personalized educational experience, the development of locally-driven assessment to ensure learning growth is at the heart of the school’s approach to assessing student progress.

The entire nature of Explore’s academic model is based on individualized student educational pathways, providing students with special needs, English learners (ELs), and at-risk students with in-depth academic support that surpasses what is seen in traditional models. For students with special needs - IEPs, 504 plans, and ELs - Explore Academy follows all legal protocols to provide these students with services specific to their special needs to create an environment based around educational equity.

**Learning As the Focus**

To ensure learning is at the forefront, Explore Academy minimizes the use of summative grades and focuses more on learning. All work at Explore Academy, both in and out of the classroom, is

done for the purposes of assessing what students *know* and is thus formative in nature. Feedback on student work is continually provided to give students and parents a measure of where the student stands in the learning process, rather than simply calculated into the student's final grade in the class. As a result, the incentive is shifted away from simply completing the work—to the goal of standard mastery.

At the completion of each seminar (every 22 or 44 days), students take a common exit exam which assesses the scope of the information (standards) presented within the seminar. The score on this exam comprises the student's score and is the basis for the awarding of credit. Thus, the focus of daily work and homework is shifted to help the student measure where he or she is in the process of learning rather than using such instruments as summative assessments in and of themselves.

### **Exit Exams**

The assessment system at Explore Academy has a built-in track of short-cycle assessments (SCAs) called exit exams. These track student comprehension each term and conclude each seminar. All students must demonstrate mastery on each of the required standards, as measured by achieving a minimum of 70 percent on the exit exam, to receive credit for the seminar and move to more advanced areas of study within the skill area, allowing students to proceed through the curriculum with a stronger foundation and without gaps in understanding in any area. The exit exams:

- Track student progress over time, yielding data that can be disaggregated by content, time of year, time of day, standard, Bloom's level, etc. This provides ample information about student individual, subgroup, and school wide academic progress that can be used to drive instruction, curriculum, assessment, and other school decisions.



- Can be grouped across seasonal and annual checkpoints just like other SCAs that are administered in the fall, winter, and spring, resulting in three main data collection points for review. This allows the exit exam data to be compared to and analyzed with interim assessment (TBD, considering NWEA/MAPS) data.
- Are interwoven into the fabric of each seminar, so they are given more frequently (eight times per year) and in more content areas (language arts, math, science, social studies, art, music, PE, and foreign language). Exit exams measure proficiency (and mastery) for each academic standard separately, aligning specifically with the standards required by the state of Arizona. Students must demonstrate proficiency (70% or above) in the academic standards for the seminar in question in order to earn credit for that seminar. Proficiency on standards is only measured on the exit exams with all other evaluations functioning as formative for the purposes of feedback. As such, students who graduate from Explore Academy will have been deemed proficient in every academic standard required by the state.
- Are designed to allow the school to create standards-based assessments that become increasingly more complex and ask deeper questions as the students progress into higher levels (tiers) in each content area. This system also allows teachers to give common exit exams across all flavors of a given seminar, ensuring that students, regardless of the flavor or theme they chose, are reaching a level of proficiency or mastery on par with their peers from other sections.

This assessment structure has a compounding effect in ensuring that students are prepared to embark in post-secondary education with a comprehensive educational understanding. Feedback will be constant in order to provide students the best evaluation as to where they are in the

learning process. Any work performed, be it for practice of a learning target, project-based activity, or assessment, will be done for the purpose of providing each student with a measure of their progress in the learning process. This provides students the flexibility and time not only to make mistakes, but to correct their errors and overcome deficits in their understanding without the penalty of poor grades which would otherwise be calculated into the final grade.

All students and Explore Academy-Peoria are assessed within this same general education framework. Based on needed support identified through the tiered system, some students may be working with teacher teams and additional supports through IEPs, etc., but all students are afforded the same individualized learning path and pacing.

Combining rigor and student choice, the exit exams are designed to provide frequent data points that not only determine student achievement in a specific subset of standards, but also provide the administration and teachers with an overview of student achievement monthly while also providing longitudinal data of exit exams across longer periods of time, such as a semester, within a school year, and across school years. These data points, along with corresponding subgroup data analysis, are then used to drive professional development initiatives, instructional adjustments, school support systems, and curricular development.

### **Student Performance, Evaluation, and Assessment**

Students at the school will be encouraged to take an active role in their education by learning to monitor and evaluate their own work, highlighting the Explore Academy focus on student responsibility and accountability. The School will participate in the statewide AASA assessment program and will comply with all applicable requirements under Federal and State statutes. The use of state assessments is more than just a requirement; the Explore model thrives on data analysis and multiple sources of student metrics. The annual data from AASA, AZSci, ACT, and

other standardized assessments in and in addition to the menu of assessments are invaluable sources of guidance and program evaluation for the school.

Teachers will use assessment rubrics as teaching tools in the classroom by helping students to interpret their performance and comprehend their results during their seminars and at the exit of their seminars. If a student's performance is below target (not making adequate progress), the parent/guardian will be advised in a special conference and remedial strategies will be communicated. If a student's performance is on target for his or her immediate stage of development, the parent will be advised. Individual meetings and conferences will be held to review student performance and assessment data as part of a holistic approach to using student performance and assessment data to improve instruction and learning.

### **Monitoring of Sub-group Academic Achievement**

Explore Academy will track student progress and academic achievement through measures that generate data from the beginning to the end of the year. This includes assessing EDS and SPED students. Explore Academy will utilize the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) process that integrates assessment and intervention to maximize student achievement. MTSS is a system of support that provides teachers with a collaborative, school-wide method to identify struggling students and provide appropriate interventions beyond classroom instruction, such as after-school tutoring and individual counseling. Assessments that will be used include formal assessments such as AASA testing, the interim assessment, and AZELLA as well as informal assessments such as writing prompts, rubrics, portfolios, end of chapter tests and quizzes, project-based assignments, and check-in conversations.

Instructional staff will collect assessment data, particularly data for subgroups, and engage in critical analysis. Data will equip teachers with knowledge on the performance of individual

students and of subgroups. If a student's performance is below target (not making adequate progress), the parent/guardian will be advised in a special conference and intervention strategies will be communicated. If a student's performance is on target for their immediate stage of development, the parent will be advised. As part of a holistic approach to improve instruction and learning, individual meetings and conferences will be held to review assessment data and student performance. This collaborative effort among teachers, students and parents will empower students to take ownership for their growth and development and create a positive and practical format for parents to have a voice in their children's education.

Explore Academy will identify students who are at-risk for poor learning outcomes and:

- monitor student progress
- provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness
- identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities

Interventions may include: in class interventions, extended learning, counseling, tutoring, and school-sponsored help sessions. An instructional team will monitor and analyze data to maintain a problem-solving system that brings out the best in the school, teachers, and students.

### **Communicating Assessment Data to Parents and Students**

Assessment data will be shared with parents via email as well as in a shared document repository that is private to each student. The results can also be mailed or sent home in print format as needed. Students and parents have access to the student information system which will outline their current level of proficiency in each standard at any given time. Exit exam scores are released at the end of each term, allowing students and parents to see exact levels of proficiency and achievement in each academic standard from the completed seminars. Within the month-

long term, we utilize our weekly progress reports to measure where students are within the mastery-based focus. These reports also identify, if the student is not on-track, the reasons why (attendance, preparation for class, test preparation, behavior, etc.)

Parents will be notified when students are in danger of not meeting promotion requirements (not showing proficiency in all standards of a seminar). The School will assist students in meeting their requirements through a variety of options, which include, but are not limited to:

- In class interventions
- Extended learning
- Study hall during flex periods
- Special counseling
- Volunteer and/ or peer tutors
- School-sponsored tutoring

The Explore Academy credit analysis, which shows a monthly update on new credits the students have earned, shows their overall academic standing, graduation progress, Next Steps planning, test scores, etc. This is done at the end of each term and provides an ongoing map of all seminars completed and all seminars still yet to be taken.

### **Instructional Improvement Systems**

Explore Academy will utilize the local common exams and the interim assessment as part of its goal of continuous instructional improvement. This allows teachers to assess student's understanding of content/standards, measure student growth, and track student progress. In addition to this assessment data, other assessment tools will be used including AASA and AZELLA, writing prompts, rubrics, portfolios, end of unit/chapter tests and quizzes, project-based assignments, grades, attendance, and check-in conversations.

The data collected allows teachers, administration and special education/English Learner case managers to monitor each student and respond quickly to any issues that may arise. Instructional staff will collect, evaluate, and analyze assessment data in order to gain knowledge, make informed decisions, and determine next steps for instructional improvement on the performance of individual students and subgroups. Based on the data, teachers will be able to evaluate their lessons and instructional strategies for effectiveness, adjust instruction as needed, and develop evidence-based differentiated lessons to meet the needs of all students.

For students with special needs, Progress Towards Goals (“PTG”) is a component of the student’s IEP. PTG becomes a specific benchmark on measuring student growth. While the common practice is to measure PTG once per year, *Explore Academy teachers review and provide feedback on special education goals each month*, thus creating a more precise and workable data set from which the special education teachers can operate in supporting students for the term ahead. These data are compiled and added into an existing report which is shared with parents for review on an ongoing basis.

Parents/guardians will consistently be advised as to their student’s progress. If a student is not making adequate progress, remedial strategies will be communicated. Individual conferences will be held with parents to review both student performance and assessment data, as part of Explore Academy’s holistic approach to improve instruction and learning. This constant monitoring and communication related to student progress also ensures that students have their needs met in all classes consistently, creating a safe and stable educational environment.

Data driven decisions will also include: curriculum purchases; purchasing of supplemental/intervention materials; the PD schedule; attending conferences; hiring decisions; and support

provided to instructional staff. Instructional development and improvement systems will be reviewed annually for effectiveness.

### **Ongoing Formative Assessments**

Assessment of each seminar's standards and skills is formative throughout each term. Teachers use a standards-based item bank and test administration platform and other resources to create formative assessments frequently during each seminar. The ultimate goal of the assessment program is to assess students regularly, support continuous learning, effectively implement remediation and interventions, provide teachers with useful student data to drive their instruction daily, and work to achieve student mastery of all Arizona state standards, all while providing students with unparalleled choice and control of their own educational pathway.

The Explore educational model is heavily grounded in standards-based instruction and frequent, meaningful formative assessment. The ELS team and Explore Academy - Peoria staff, collaboratively, will develop the formative assessments using item banks, retired state and national standardized tests, and peer-reviewed assessments. With each seminar having a specific subset of standards, it is crucial that formative assessments be tailored to the exact skills and content being taught, so all assessments are customized to the seminars and the assigned standards. The ELS team has many assessment examples and peer-reviewed samples, as well as training modules, prepared to assist teachers in their ability to create and adjust formative assessments. Additionally, the school will analyze the performance on standardized tests each spring in order to identify areas in need of improvement so that formative assessments in each seminar can be more focused on areas in which students are not making adequate or expected progress towards learning targets.

## Curriculum Evaluation

The curriculum at Explore Academy is evaluated through multiple measures of proficiency and data. Empowering teachers to use OER requires ongoing evaluation of effectiveness of resources. Explore Academy uses the following methods to ensure that chosen OER materials are effective in supporting students in mastering Arizona standards.

The process of evaluation begins following every term, or every eight weeks. In this process, teams study all available data points around student progress to assess need for individualized student scaffolds or a reteach of an objective. In the case of a reteach, teachers will reflect on the instructional plan and adjust to better support students in understanding the objective.

Beyond the term evaluations, following each interim assessment cycle, all staff compare student scores with seminar performance. In this process, deep dives into trends take place to identify the breakdown around a particular standard. Often it is a mismatch between student learning preferences and the class instructional approach. For example, a self-directed class for sixth grade students may result in lower mastery levels if students are not prepared with adequate study skills.

Key data points include:

- **Formative evaluations and assessments.** Individual teachers will reflect on their students' progress towards goals with weekly quizzes, mid-term assessments, practice presentations, and verbal checks throughout the term. If students are not acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills the curriculum may need to be modified, improved, or adapted to the entire group or for individual students.
- **Mastery of daily, weekly, and term standards.** Per our mastery grading, all grades will reflect standards being achieved. Explore Academy only records standards-based grades



in our official grading system so there is a very clear understanding for teachers, students, and parents if the curriculum and delivery is effective.

- **Individual teacher assessments (flavor assessments).** All teachers create their own personalized exams regarding their flavor. This data is discerned by the teacher but is frequently brought to content meetings for discussion regarding curriculum decisions and delivery methods. The Director of Instruction is responsible for checking flavor success and materials.
- **Content team test scores on shared core assessments.** Every month, students take core assessments that are built and shared throughout the content team. All students taking a seminar regardless of the flavor, will take a common exam. The core exam data is scrutinized by not only the content lead but the Director of Instruction as well. The Director of Instruction takes that data to weekly district meetings for further review. If any scores are below expectations, action such as putting teachers on growth plans, mandatory coaching, progress monitoring, and increased observations will occur immediately.
- **Monthly student survey data.** All Explore academy students evaluate all of the seminars each month. This is on an official Google form sent by the leadership team. It details many components of the model as well as specific curriculum questions. Teachers are to reflect on these student reports in writing as part of their mandatory PDP. The Director of Instruction monitors all the student responses, along with academic data, and looks for low teacher performance. If teachers are underperforming, the Director of Instruction will meet with them immediately to discuss the circumstances, brainstorm

possible solutions, schedule an observation, and offer instructional and curricular strategies.

- **Interim assessment test scores (TBD).** Admin and teacher teams review data and scores to determine if standards have been taught appropriately via teacher curriculum. Adjustments and/or curriculum modifications will be made if there is a learning gap. School programs and curriculum choices will be evaluated if an overall deficit is noticed.
- **Standardized test scores (AASA, AZSci, ACT, etc.)** Admin and teacher teams review data and scores to determine if standards have been taught appropriately via teacher curriculum. Adjustments and/or curriculum modifications will be made if there is a learning gap. School programs and curriculum choices will be evaluated if an overall deficit is noticed. Should a misalignment between the interim assessment and benchmark assessment be identified, the team will evaluate potential causes of the misalignment.

### **Aligning to Arizona Standards**

The Director of Instruction of ELS will examine the Arizona State Standards to certify that every standard is mapped to a seminar within the instructional framework and to ensure that the vertical alignment for skills and content knowledge have appropriate prerequisites addressed. This work will create the Curriculum Crosswalk and Curriculum Alignment Plan. The Explore Academy - Peoria Governing Board will take an active role in learning and understand how the Explore model overlays on and fulfills all AZ standards and requirements. For standards that require assignment to a given seminar, these gaps will be identified and resolved.

4. What process is in place or will be in place to monitor and measure educator effectiveness?

### **Curricular and Teacher Review**

Each month, the principal and the ELS Director of Instruction will observe teachers and classrooms, review teacher materials, review student materials, and review approved curriculum plans (Flavor Planning, Term Standards and Calendar, Google Classroom materials). This review will allow the leadership to ensure that the approved curriculum, that includes the required Arizona standards and grade level skills, are being integrated into all classrooms as approved in the scope and sequence and adopted curricular materials. Any teacher or classroom in which this is not happening will receive support and mentorship, in addition to any necessary PD, to ensure that they can adjust their classroom practice to be more successful.

As a standards-based school, it is critical that the approved curriculum and all required standards are consistently integrated into all classes, so this review process will be done more frequently in terms 1 and 2 to identify any areas in which teachers may be struggling. The leadership team will then monitor all teachers on a monthly basis using walkthroughs, material reviews, exit exam scores, student surveys, and teacher PD sessions and PLCs to further examine the implementation and integration of the curriculum as adopted and approved for each grade level and content area course.

### **Observation & Teacher Tiering**

To support teachers throughout the year, there are several methods of data collection and teacher effectiveness monitoring. Site leadership will conduct frequent walkthroughs as well as formal observations to evaluate teacher effectiveness and provide support for teachers when they are struggling with any aspect of the position. These are meant to be both formative and summative in nature, allowing for reflection and improvement, but also holding teachers accountable for

their performance and for student progress. All teachers receive observations by the principal and the Explore Learning Systems Director of Instruction.

Observation frequency will depend on teacher tiering, which is based on observation scoring from the previous year in accordance with the following structure:

- Tier 1
  - New teachers to profession
  - New teachers to Explore (Sem 1 minimum then based on scoring)
  - Teachers with average score below 3.0 (on a 1-4 observation scoring scale)
  - **Requirements:** Biweekly observations and observation follow up meetings
- Tier 2
  - Teachers with ave score between 3.00-3.49
  - **Requirements:** Monthly observations and observation follow up meeting
- Tier 3
  - Teachers with ave score 3.50-3.74
  - **Requirements:** Two annual observations, follow up meeting as needed. If observation score is significantly lower than tier, a second observation will be performed within one month
- Tier 4
  - Teachers with ave score 3.75+
  - **Requirements:** One annual observation, follow up meeting as needed. If observation score is significantly lower than tier, a second observation will be performed within one month

Along those lines, students are surveyed at the end of each term about the seminar and the teacher for that term. These surveys provide valuable insight into the efficacy of the teacher, the flavor, and the instruction for the term. This data is compiled and given to teachers in order to

promote reflective practices that lead to improved instruction and therefore improved student achievement.

### **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)**

During the summer 2023 pre-service period, the Principal will establish professional learning communities (PLCs) among teachers for all grade levels and subject areas. These PLCs will provide peer support for day-to-day implementation of the curriculum, as well as evaluation and modification of the curriculum. PLCs allow teachers to collaborate, share data and best practices, remove barriers to success, and focus on results. PLCs are critical in that teachers consistently review data and monitor instruction and curriculum to focus on each student and each student's learning targets and progress toward goals. These groups are set up annually by the principal and all staff members are a part of PLCs that pertain to their grade level and content area.

The principal, in coordination with the ELS learning model team, will present the PLCs to the teaching staff and provide the motivation for organizing into PLCs. "As the school moves forward, every professional in the building must engage with colleagues in the ongoing exploration of three crucial questions that drive the work of those within a professional learning community:

- What do we want each student to learn?
- How will we know when each student has learned it?
- How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?" (ASCD, 2022)

The school will utilize PLCs to proactively create a culture of collaboration among staff and a culture that is driven by data. The training modules are summarized below:

- **PLC Protocols** - arrive on time, remain courteous to others who are speaking and while speaking, promote active listening, remain solutions-focused, follow the agenda, remain on topic, and promote positivity
- **Data Systems** - weekly progress reports, prior year exit exam data, prior year state assessment data, placement exams (as applicable), formative assessment data, current year exit exam data, current year state assessment data (as available), and other data collected by teachers and administration (as applicable)
- **Teacher Expectations** - assess students using formative assessments covering seminar standards frequently, collect assessment data regularly, provide students with detailed feedback designed to facilitate improvement and growth, bring data
- and analysis back to PLCs, document formative and anecdotal findings for presentation in PLCs,
- **Support Materials** - Assessment training module, staff handbook, data reports, ESL team support sessions, instructional coaching, PLC templates and examples, technical and technology support

### **Ongoing Training for PLCs and Review of Data Assessment Initiatives**

Administrators and teachers will collaborate to develop an instructional and assessment plan with a timeline outlining each term, exit exam dates, PLC dates, and other items that are specific to assessment data analysis. The plan will reflect exit exam and other assessment requirements, prior year assessment data reports, current year data reporting periods, and proposed PLC goals for the current school year that include measurable targets. Student assessment data will drive decisions for continuous improvement of the teaching and learning process, and since assessment data is collected so frequently (daily, weekly,

monthly, and annually), teachers and administrators can effectively plan for data collection, collect data, analyze data, and implement change rapidly and with precision. Each week, PLCs meet and assessment data is incorporated into the goals of the PLC session. Some sessions focus on local, formative assessments while others focus on longitudinal, big picture assessment trends and progress markers. Assessment data will be used to understand and improve school effectiveness by targeting standards indicating which students need additional support to master specific grade level skills. The School leadership team –consisting of the principal, assistant principal and/or ELS Director of Instruction, grade level leaders, and content area leaders will monitor and analyze data to maintain a problem-solving system that brings out the best in our school, teachers, and students. The leadership team will meet on a monthly basis, at minimum, to address the following:

- Evaluate data and correlate to instructional decisions
- Review progress-monitoring data at the grade level and classroom level to identify students and their academic levels
- Identify professional development to enhance students' achievement levels, decisions, and practice new programs and skills
- Facilitate the process of building consensus, increasing infrastructure, and making decisions about implementation

The performance and other school data will also be presented to the board each month at their meeting, allowing the board to play an active role in assessment and other school data usage.

In addition to assessment data review and reflection in PLCs, student performance in the classroom will also be assessed by classroom teachers. Students who are not making adequate progress towards the Arizona State Standards as evidenced by teacher-developed assessments

will be identified and appropriate measures for improvement will be instituted. Ongoing communication between the school and the parents will be maintained through reporting systems such as web-based grade book and progress reports, parent conferences, and other forms of written and oral communication that are provided to parents. In this way, teachers both work directly with both students and PLC colleagues to achieve improved student assessment outcomes through the robust data-driven systems.

### **Ongoing Teacher Training and Support**

Returning staff will receive continued training on the Explore Learning instructional model each year as a refresher course as they plan their flavors for the upcoming school year. Most of this training will take place during three days of professional development leading to the start of school. Throughout the school year, teachers have comprehensive training sessions. Term break days and weekly staff meetings allow the school to hold full-staff training as well as breakout sessions to address teacher needs throughout the year. This built-in staff time also allows for immediate response to staff needs as they arise.

### **Mentor Teachers**

In addition to the school-wide support and development for teachers, there are also two types of teacher mentorship that also provide coaching and support for staff at Explore Academy. For first year teachers entering the profession, mentor teachers are assigned to provide support and guidance through their entire first year teaching. This partnership provides the teacher a point of contact to lend support above and beyond what is provided by the admin team. Starting in year two of operation, there will also be mentors assigned to teachers who are new to Explore Academy, even if they are experienced educators from other school systems. This school-



specific mentoring relationship will provide support as the teacher adjusts to the unique model and instructional practices that are required to teach at Explore.

### **Seminar Evaluation**

At the conclusion of each term and at the end of each year, each seminar flavor will be analyzed for instructional patterns that raise concern, specifically low exit exam scores within a seminar flavor or across a seminar itself. Such an instance will dictate a required corrective action that must be taken by the school to improve its practice and service to students. Low exit exam scores, excessive discipline issues, or high failure rate within a given seminar flavor could be indicative of an ineffective flavor. The specific causal factors of which may include its academic approach, instructional theme, or other general academic practices.

The ineffectiveness may also have instructor-related causation, relating to the instructor or a specific component of that instructor's educational approach, be it lecturing, classroom management, etc. Low scores on exit exams seen across all flavors of a given seminar would indicate an issue with the overall instruction of the seminar, perhaps including the exit exam itself as a common component shared by all flavors of a given seminar. If such patterns come to exist, the school leader and Explore Learning Systems (ELS) staff will work with the instructors to help identify and evaluate in what area(s) the instructional process has become ineffective.

Student evaluation surveys, performed at the conclusion of each seminar, will provide additional insight into this process. If such a problem persists in subsequent academic sessions, administrative corrective action will be taken to change the offerings for the flavors of the seminar(s) in question. This process may include both student and parent participation.

It is expected that some flavors will naturally be more popular and more successful than others and the continuous evaluation of the flavor offerings will be an ongoing process in the school's

evolution and will be a significant component in the work of the school's administrative and instructional staff. This element of the Explore Academy model allows its curriculum to change and remain current within its student population. Through a continuous analysis regarding which seminars are providing greatest student success, the school can easily adapt to reinvent / replace those seminars which struggle to educate students. This continuous evolution is but one benefit of the Explore Academy philosophy, allowing the curriculum to truly evolve and continually keep up with its changing student population.

### **School Wide Review**

ELS and the administration will prepare and present data reports each month (at the conclusion of each of the eight terms) that outline, in detail, assessment and performance data. Our Governing Board as well as the teaching staff will formally review formative assessment and student benchmark data at least monthly during the school year, guided by the principal and ELS team, in order to help ensure that resources are allocated appropriately to address any challenge areas. The teachers use this monthly review to drive PLCs, and the board uses it to drive initiatives and school (and assessment) operational changes and adjustments, as needed. Annually, the Board will also review summative assessment data with the Principal to determine the school's overall performance and make data-informed decisions about school-wide governance and management. If student academic achievement falls short of the targeted goals, the Board will implement a detailed action plan with responsible personnel and instructional support staff to ensure that all goals and corrective actions are implemented in a timely manner. The action plan will consist of a calendar of strategic activities such as ongoing professional development, interventions, differentiated instruction for students, and a scope and sequence of coaching cycles for teachers.

5. What process is in place or will be in place to recruit, select, and hire quality educators?

### **Teacher Recruitment**

Explore Academy leaders are committed to recruiting and maintaining talented instructors who love to teach and are committed to the Explore Academy educational model. Explore Academy will recruit personnel who have the appropriate certification(s) or are willing to pursue appropriate certification(s), are highly qualified, and bring with them a sense of enthusiasm and commitment as well as a strong belief in and understanding of the charter concept.

Explore Academy - Peoria's recruitment efforts will focus on identifying and hiring highly qualified staff, which will include but will not be limited to the following actions steps:

- Posting on appropriate job boards such as Edjoin to advertise administrative, teaching, clerical and support positions
- Creating and distributing informative recruitment brochures (to hand out at local job fairs, Universities etc.)
- Direct recruiting at local Universities and Colleges; working with each site's Teacher Credentialing Department
- Leverage the local community expertise in areas of CTE and healthcare
- Utilize local media venues to advertise openings
- Maintaining an attractive and informational website that promotes Explore Academy's mission and climate
- Conduct two job fairs a year to organize efforts that will recruit instructional experts to serve as teachers at the school and increase the rigor and relevance of the teaching and learning

- Offer a competitive salary schedule with performance incentives to attract high quality teachers
- Coordinate efforts and partner with postsecondary educational institutions to serve as a host school for interns, whenever possible
- Organize other efforts to attract in-field experts to serve as teachers in the various disciplines that require higher levels of academic content delivery
- Partner with local universities to assign interns to the school who are considered for possible openings that may arise based on their performance

Inspired and driven teachers will be drawn to Explore Academy because of its unique instructional model, which gives teachers autonomy to create and teach in ways that honor individual teacher strengths and content knowledge. At the same time, teachers will receive the needed support and ongoing training to meet varying learner needs in the classroom.

### **Hiring**

All school staff and faculty will be hired by the Principal. At the discretion of the Principal, a hiring committee may be convened, composed of the Principal, current teachers, staff, and parents to conduct a panel interview of candidate employees. Following the interview process, final approval will rest with the Board. All Explore Academy's hiring practices will comply with Federal and State anti-discrimination laws.

The teacher's role includes the following:

- Design thematic flavored seminars which are tied to the standards for the seminar in question
- Create engaging learning environments, driven by the flavor, to provide immersive student experiences in learning the academic standards

- Facilitate student learning through student-driven learning experiences
- Assess student comprehension in the standards in question continuously throughout the term, providing feedback on any and all student work
- Monitor student progress in the standards in question, providing remediation as needed in order to ensure students demonstrate mastery within the timeframe of the term in question
- Report student progress to parents, students, and administration through weekly progress reports

At Explore Academy, the teacher's role becomes pivotal in engaging students through the model's thematic "flavor" offerings, while also tethering instruction to the subset of academic standards in question. To fulfill the goal of seminar-based teaching and learning, teachers function as both instructor and facilitator to promote open inquiry and discussion, ultimately allowing students to drive the learning process within the classroom environment.

In order to retain an effective and dedicated teaching staff, Explore Academy will offer a competitive salary and generous benefits package and implement strategies to ensure that teachers feel supported, valued, inspired and heard. This support will involve: timely feedback on teaching strategies, PD opportunities, and a collaborative and creative work environment.

Throughout the academic year, teachers will be supported by a coaching, data, and logistics team and are provided planning time to collaborate, reflect and adapt lesson structures based on daily formative assessment. The Principal will be responsible for providing appropriate and relevant PD to school faculty and staff via internal trainers (i.e., the Principal) or external trainers.

### **Professional Development Plan**

Explore Academy will provide year-round Professional Development (PD).

**Planned Explore Academy PD “Year at a Glance”**

<b>Timeline</b>		<b>Meeting/Topics</b>
Pre-Service	June - full day	<b>Intro to Explore:</b> EA Model Overview, Seminars, Flavors, Student Choice & Teacher Creativity
	July - full day with work time	<b>Instructional Planning:</b> Mapping Focus Standards, Complex Text Sets, Objectives & Formative Assessment, Google Classroom, Frontloading
	August - full day with work time	<b>SY Kickoff:</b> Routines & Procedures, Cultivating a Positive Culture, Social-Emotional and Academic Development on Fridays
Job-embedded Professional Learning	Weekly during early release - 90 minutes	<p><b>Content-based band teacher teams</b> (i.e. Primary STEM, Primary HUM, Lower EI STEM, Electives, etc.) focused on instructional planning, data analysis, sharing strategies and ideas for student support.</p> <p>Facilitated by content team teacher leaders and supported by instructional leaders (Principal, Learning Specialist, Director of instruction). Agendas are responsive to current need, but follow this general cadence:</p> <p><u>Week 1:</u> Planning - academic, social-emotional learning, flavor assessments, engaging learning experiences</p> <p><u>Week 2:</u> Student learning team - discussing students of focus and sharing strategies for intervention and support</p> <p><u>Week 3:</u> Data analysis (student work, formative assessments, SEL, etc.)</p>

		Week 4: Adjusting instruction - reflecting, planning ahead, communicating with families
	Monthly during term breaks (8 per year) - half to full day of PD, plus work time	<p><b>Responsive professional learning workshops</b> to reflect on and develop staff skills and mindsets based on emergent trends in school/student data (whole staff, small groups).</p> <p>Topics have included: foundational literacy development, implementing IEP accommodations and modifications, supporting English Learners, standards-based math instruction, thematic instruction, neuroscience, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling)</p> <p><b>Content team collaboration</b> and reflection on instruction and formative assessment analysis - content team trends, instructional planning for next term</p> <p>Facilitated by content team teacher leaders, supported by instructional leaders (Principal, Learning Specialist, Director of instruction)</p>

All staff will receive PD on identifying and meeting the needs of Homeless and Foster Youth and will adhere to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. PD plans are evaluated annually and change from year to year dependent upon student needs.

**New Teacher Preparedness**

Explore Academy is committed to maintaining high quality instructors by implementing a comprehensive professional development plan for new and returning teachers for both initial and

continued success. The school's initial training regimen will include training for new teachers on:

- backward planning
- formative assessment strategies and development
- assessment development using projects and higher level thinking
- providing quality feedback to students
- teaching through a lens of flavor-first instruction (i.e. staying authentic to the flavor of the seminar)
- inquiry-based learning and instruction
- developing questions based on Bloom's Taxonomy
- seminar-based teaching
- standards-based instruction
- student-driven instruction
- technology use in the classroom - including the integration of Google Classroom and the Google Apps Suite.

All new teachers who enter the Explore Academy system will be provided the list of seminars, including the associated standards contained therein similar to the tables included in the grades 6-12 Curriculum Maps in the appendices, for which they will be responsible in creating innovative, thematic flavors to engage students. They will also be provided with a copy of the common exit exam for each seminar from which they can backward plan their instruction and formative assessment strategy while also requiring that teachers are prepared to instruct and assess all assigned standards for their seminars. With those two resources, each teacher is



empowered with the ability to choose the “how”, or curriculum, by drawing from their strengths and passions to create an immersive experience for each student.

### **Teacher Retention and Development**

Staff development is a vital part of Explore Academy due in large part to the innovative and unique educational model employed by the school. The comprehensive training and support has led to high levels of teacher retention at other campuses which in turn has provided stability and confidence for parents and students.

Current teacher retention at Explore Academy campuses averages 93% (Albuquerque - 94.8%, Las Vegas - 91.3%, Las Cruces - in its first year of operation 2021-22). Explore Learning Systems (ELS), an educational service provider that created the Explore Learning model and serves Explore Academy campuses nationwide, will partner with site leadership to ensure that staff are trained and supported starting before the beginning of the school year and throughout the year as well.

Staff development involves coaching in areas such as instructional model, curriculum development, pedagogical coaching, technology integration, student-driven instruction, and data-driven education. In order to teach successfully at Explore Academy, teachers must first be taught the instructional model to grasp the choice-based learning on which it is based.

Teachers are instructed in how to build their curriculum for each seminar using flavor (each seminar’s theme) as well as how to gather materials for the flavors they create. There are templates and examples that are provided by ELS content experts that can help guide new teachers until they are able to create curriculum on their own. ELS staff and site leaders also instruct staff in methods of instruction that correspond with the learning model, such as Socratic lessons, seminar-style teaching, and student-led lessons. This method of facilitating student

investigation / learning rather than lecturing and assigning work can take some time to adjust to, so content experts and instructional video examples are available to help teachers learn the model and the methods utilized.

In addition to classroom-related training, teachers are also taught the scope and sequence of seminars from grade 6-8 so they understand the way students progress through the curriculum. This includes training in the daily schedule and flex period usage (such as tutoring, mentoring, collaboration, planning time, etc.). Training also includes the breakdown of graduation requirements, the breakdown of standards assigned to each seminar in the teacher's content area, the common exit exams that will be administered for the seminars the teacher is teaching, and the grading system for formative and summative grading processes and reporting.

The Explore Academy model allows teachers to do something that is often overlooked and hard to accomplish in traditional schools: it allows them to teach and to do it authentically and creatively. In many schools across the country, curriculum is uniformly aligned horizontally and vertically within a subject area with assigned texts and teaching schedules that keep all teachers, and in turn their students, on an identical path that does not allow for variation or improvisation. The mandated adherence to a strict scope and sequence paired with the averaging of grades, often inflated with curving practices and extra credit, results in a system where teachers are not using their pedagogical skills to teach and students are not actually responsible to learn all the required material to earn credit.

Explore Academy and its learning model are able to retain teachers because it has completely changed this paradigm. Each teacher creates their seminars based on their own experiences, personal and academic interests, and understanding of their students and community. This allows teachers the ability to have autonomy and creative license to design and create their own

curriculum, with the understanding that high-performing teachers truly take pride in their craft and work continually to improve and adapt their lessons to meet the needs of their students.

At Explore Academy, the small class sizes paired with the engaging seminar curriculum allows teachers to facilitate student learning daily with frequent opportunities for feedback, adjustment, individualization, and intervention. Teachers know where each student is in their path to proficiency for every standard within the focused, 22 or 44-day seminars that focus on a few standards/skills at a time. When quality teachers are given the ability to design their own pathways in order to reach common goals, the results are astonishing. Teachers who excel in the craft of teaching remain at Explore Academy because the model provides satisfaction and fulfillment every term.

There are other aspects of a school that promote retention such as competitive teacher pay, flexibility related to teacher's personal needs such as appointments and emergencies, quality and availability of classroom supplies and teaching materials, and community building and appreciation initiatives built into the school culture. Each of these criteria is focused on, thus providing the best possible teaching experience for the teachers.

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**G. Budget Form and Narrative – Total points possible: 5 points**

A description of the eligible applicant’s planned activities and expenditures of subgrant funds to support the activities of opening and preparing for the operation of new charter schools, or replicated high-quality charter schools, or expanding high-quality charter schools. If the applicant plans to open its school on August 1, 2021, Planning and Implementation expenditures must be identified as such in the Budget Narrative. If the applicant plans to open its school on August 1, 2021, all expenditures are Planning and need not be identified as such. *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(C)(i)(V)*

**General expenditure guidance:**

Costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to meet the objectives of the grant. (See AZCSP website for more guidance on allowable expenditures.)

**Activities:**

1. Preparing teachers, school leaders, and specialized instructional support personnel, including through paying the costs associated with—
  - a. providing professional development; and
  - b. hiring and compensating, during the eligible applicant’s Planning period specified in the application for subgrant funds that is required under this section, one or more of the following:
    - i. Teachers.
    - ii. School leaders.
    - iii. Specialized instructional support personnel.
2. Acquiring supplies, training, equipment (including technology), and educational materials (including developing and acquiring instructional materials).
3. Carrying out necessary renovations to ensure that a new school building complies with applicable statutes and regulations, and minor facilities repairs (excluding construction).
4. Providing one-time, startup costs associated with providing transportation to students to and from the charter school.
5. Carrying out community engagement activities, which may include paying the cost of student and staff recruitment.
6. Providing for other appropriate, non-sustained costs related to the activities described in subsection (b)(1) when such costs cannot be met from other sources.

Also, salaries are covered only during the Planning period.

## **Budget Narrative**

### **Planning Year**

#### **Salaries**

Principal Salary: Object Code: 6100, Function Code: 2300 - The principal role is crucial in the planning and launch of a charter school. As the leader and primary contact for the school community, the principal makes connections, builds partnerships, and leads their inaugural staff to a successful launch. The salary requested will ensure that a high quality principal can lead the planning year and achieve a smooth transition to implementation year one and beyond.

Job Description - Principal - The Principal will represent the school in all capacities, both instructional and administrative. They will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school, which include:

- Manage fiscal operation, including the securing of appropriate state, federal, and local monies
- Ensure that the needs of all students of all demographics and category subgroups are met, including special education, ELL, and low-income
- Oversee the ongoing implementation of the Explore Learning model and educational philosophy and the academic programs therein
- Maintain effective systems and structures in the school to ensure orderliness and compliance with all state laws and regulations (special education, faculty relations, student discipline, etc.)
- Coordinate all state-mandated testing
- Oversee the school's budget, both administrative and academic
- Review all staff licensure and manage all staff and their duties
- Evaluate teacher performance in accordance with school policy and state regulations
- Report data, including exit exam, charter goals, state assessments, and discipline, as required
- Continually analyze the school's financial standing, working closely with the business manager



- Continually report data (academic, operational, financial, etc.) and statistical information to the school's Governance Council
- Create organizational partnerships through outreach (community, corporate, political, etc.)
- Provide continuous support to the school's staff members, including input on curricular development and implementation of the Explore Learning model.
- Plan and implement professional development and/or appropriate training opportunities as determined by need or staff input

Office Manager Salary: Object Code: 6100, Function Code: 2300 - The planning year activities immediately before transitioning into the first implementation year consist of many administrative tasks such as student records, vendor management, supply orders, apparel sorting, etc. The requested funds will allow the office manager to join the staff in the two months prior to implementation to ensure a smooth opening.

**Job Description - Office Manager** - The office manager should have at least two years clerical and/or management experience and be proficient in word processing, phone service, and other clerical duties.

The office manager will provide direct support for the school's principal and manage the school's front office operations. Responsibilities include:

- Perform necessary clerical and secretarial duties
- Provide direct support for all staff
- Handle inventory of administrative materials
- Assess purchases made from the administrative budget
- Maintain documentation of all purchases made from administrative accounts
- Manage visitation of all school guests
- Oversee school attendance including the excusing of students as appropriate
- Oversee student files and maintain accurate records and documentation

## **Professional and Technical Services**

Compliance: Object Code: 6300, Function Code: 2300 - The planning year compliance and executive tasks can be overwhelming for a new charter school principal. The requested funds will allow the school to contract with a service provider who can assist the principal with all compliance and executive tasks including facility, budget, staffing, hiring, human resources, facility financing, legal counsel, etc.

Operations: Object Code: 6300, Function Code: 2300 - The initial start up operational tasks for a charter school are expansive. The funds requested will allow the school to contract with a provider for assistance with operational tasks such as assessment, handbooks and policies, daily procedures, school literature and materials, forms and surveys, supply orderings, vendor management, etc.

Outreach: Object Code: 6300, Function Code: 2300 - The planning year outreach tasks are vital to the successful launch of the school. The funds requested will allow the school to contract with providers for assistance with marketing, advertising, community outreach and partnerships, community events, venue management, print and social media, organizational partnerships, and coordination with the enrollment service providers and principal.

Enrollment : Object Code: 6300, Function Code: 2300 - Student enrollment and preparing for launch during the planning year and crucial to meeting enrollment goals. The funds requested will provide contracted services for enrollment including application management, lottery set up and execution, family communication, email monitoring, enrollment events, student information system input, and coordination with the outreach service providers and principal.

Data Systems Implementation: Object Code: 6300, Function Code: 2300 - The Explore Learning model brings with it a wealth of comprehensive systems designed to ensure the growth and success of all students including special education/gifted/504/ELL accommodations reports,

student credit analysis, student transcripts, student accounts, student clubs, student course selection / registration system, school disciplinary referral system, school academic referral system, weekly progress reporting system, student survey feedback system, teacher observation feedback system, report card generator, student store setup, food service/lunch ordering, staff leave portal, and purchase requisition system. The requested funds will cover the start up costs for these systems and ensure they are prepared and launch smoothly in year 1 and beyond

Advertising: Object Code: 6300, Function Code: 2300 - Social media advertising has the ability to reach deep into the community by spreading the Explore message across various platforms used by our community. This funding will allow the school to focus its social media presence on recruitment, enrollment, outreach, family support, and equitable access to information about and from the school. It will also help the school meet its enrollment goals.

Advertising: Object Code: 6300, Function Code: 2300 - Direct mail (printing) has the ability to reach parts of the community that are less connected digitally and rely more on physical mail and information in order to interact with the school. This funding will allow the school to focus its direct mail fliers and printed fliers on recruitment, enrollment, outreach, family support, and equitable access to information about and from the school. It will also help the school meet its enrollment goals.

Advertising: Object Code: 6500, Function Code: 2500 - Direct mail postage has the ability to reach parts of the community that are less connected digitally and rely more on physical mail and information in order to interact with the school. This funding will allow the school to send its direct mail fliers to households in the community.

Legal Counsel: Object Code: 6300, Function Code: 2300 - Legal consultation services for the school are important in the planning year as the school is establishing its procedures, policies,

guidance documents, reference material, school rules etc. The requested funding will allow legal counsel guidance and review of school operational and governance materials to ensure legal compliance.

### **Travel**

Principal Travel: Object Code: 6500, Function Code: 2300 - Principal travel to Explore Learning retreat is a vital component of the onboarding process for the principal. It allows the new school leader to receive on site training at an Explore site, observe operations in action, and liaise with other Explore Academy leaders and staff. This funding will allow the principal to participate in at least three days of on site, guided Explore Learning training and collaboration.

### **Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment**

Furniture: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 2300 - The front office furniture will help the school leadership work as they progress in the planning year, providing a functional workspace for the team to complete tasks, greet families, and organize themselves.

### **Computer Hardware**

Staff Technology: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 2300 - The principal and office manager both need tools to complete their work, so this funding will cover two computers and required peripherals for the principal and office manager to be effective in their positions.

### **Implementation Year 1**

#### **Computer Hardware**

Teacher and Student Technology: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 1000 - To supply each classroom with what it needs to implement the charter model successfully, the requested funds will purchase computers and peripherals for all teachers including short-throw projectors. The funds will also be used to purchase chromebooks for student use in class and for state and local

assessments. This will ensure equitable access to the school and its unique learning environment.

Network Access Points: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 1000 - To ensure that all students and staff have adequate access to the wireless network in all areas of the school, the funds will be used for the initial access point installation.

Admin Staff Technology: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 2300 - Similar to the principal and office manager from the planning year, the other members of the administrative team will need technology to be effective in their roles. The funds will cover their devices and peripherals.

### **Software**

Business Software License: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 2300 - The business software start up for accounting and finance is a requirement for the school to operate, and the funds will be used to acquire the software and pay for its set up and training.

Student Information System License/Start up: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 2300 - In order to provide the smoothest enrollment process and gradebook/information system experience, the requested funds will be used for the start up costs for PowerSchool student information system with the enrollment add on and the special education add on. CSP funds will not be used for any other features or charges associated with PowerSchool.

Chromebook Management Licenses: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 2100 - In order to provide access to state testing, safety features, and educational content, the requested funds will allow the school to install management licenses on all school-owned chromebooks.

### **Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment**

Classroom, Admin, and Cafeteria Furniture: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 1000 - The start up costs related to furniture can be very high for the first year of a school. In order to help with

this, the funds requested will be used to purchase general classroom tables and chairs for 11 classrooms to cover all students in year 1. It will also be used to supply three science labs with epoxy resin lab stations. It will also purchase art wood block tables to ensure the art room is properly equipped. For teachers, the funds will purchase 15 teacher desks. The funds will be used to purchase desks and chairs for four administration offices. It will also be used for 12 cafeteria tables to be used daily by students. All of these furniture items are planned for student and staff use as they embark on the first operational year of the school.

## **Implementation Year 2**

### **Professional and Technical Services**

Professional Development: Object Code: 6100, Function Code: 2100 - The requested funds will cover the costs of purchased professional development related to the Explore Learning model for teachers new to the school in year 2. Specifically, funds will be used for teacher training modules (at least four) customized specifically for Explore Academy - Peoria and its unique community, student body, and staff. The purchase will include all training, deliverables, materials, and follow up sessions with the trainers.

Advertising: Object Code: 6300, Function Code: 2300 - Social media advertising has the ability to reach deep into the community by spreading the Explore message across various platforms used by our community. This funding will allow the school to focus its social media presence on recruitment, enrollment, outreach, family support, and equitable access to information about and from the school. It will also help the school meet its enrollment goals.

Advertising: Object Code: 6300, Function Code: 2300 - Direct mail (printing) has the ability to reach parts of the community that are less connected digitally and rely more on physical mail and information in order to interact with the school. This funding will allow the school to focus its

direct mail fliers and printed fliers on recruitment, enrollment, outreach, family support, and equitable access to information about and from the school. It will also help the school meet its enrollment goals.

Advertising: Object Code: 6500, Function Code: 2500 - Direct mail postage has the ability to reach parts of the community that are less connected digitally and rely more on physical mail and information in order to interact with the school. This funding will allow the school to send its direct mail fliers to households in the community.

### **Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment**

Classroom and Cafeteria Furniture: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 1000 - Enrollment growth from year 1 to year 2 will necessitate additional furniture for students in classrooms. The funds requested will be used to purchase additional tables and chairs for eight general classrooms. Funds will also be used to supply two additional science labs with epoxy resin lab stations. It will also purchase art wood block tables to ensure an additional art room is properly equipped. It will also be used for an additional 12 cafeteria tables for the growth in students that will lead to more students eating during each lunch period. It will also be used for student seating (art and science stools) specifically designed for the seven art and science rooms so that students are equipped with the best seating for the content area and its activities and specialized tables. The furniture is all based on student growth and equipping new classrooms for year 2.

### **Computer Hardware**

Teacher and Student Technology: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 1000 - As the enrollment grows from year 1 to year 2, the school requests to use funds to purchase technology for the new staff and students. The requested funds will purchase computers and peripherals for new teachers including short-throw projectors. The funds will also be used to purchase additional

chromebooks for student use in class and for state and local assessments. This will ensure equitable access to the school and its unique learning environment.

Network Access Points: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 1000 - To ensure that all students and staff have adequate access to the wireless network in all areas of the school, the funds will be used for the initial access point installation.

### **Software**

Chromebook Management Licenses: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 2100 - In order to provide expanded access for new students to state testing, safety features, and educational content, the requested funds will allow the school to install management licenses on all school-owned chromebooks.

### **Materials and Supplies**

Instructional Materials: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 1000 - Requested funds will be used to purchase instructional materials for the physical education classroom and program such as balls, cones, ropes, weights, and other PE equipment. It will also be used to outfit the science labs with essential equipment such as beakers, flasks, hot plates, microscopes, and measuring devices. These specialized supplies will ensure that the school's academic programs are effective and engaging for its students.

### **Implementation Year 3**

#### **Professional and Technical Services**

Professional Development: Object Code: 6100, Function Code: 2100 - The requested funds will cover the costs of purchased professional development related to the Explore Learning model for new teachers in year 3. Specifically, funds will be used for teacher training modules (at least four) customized specifically for Explore Academy - Peoria and its unique community, student



body, and staff. The purchase will include all training, deliverables, materials, and follow up sessions with the trainers.

Advertising: Object Code: 6300, Function Code: 2300 - Social media advertising has the ability to reach deep into the community by spreading the Explore message across various platforms used by our community. This funding will allow the school to focus its social media presence on recruitment, enrollment, outreach, family support, and equitable access to information about and from the school. It will also help the school meet its enrollment goals.

Advertising: Object Code: 6300, Function Code: 2300 - Direct mail (printing) has the ability to reach parts of the community that are less connected digitally and rely more on physical mail and information in order to interact with the school. This funding will allow the school to focus its direct mail fliers and printed fliers on recruitment, enrollment, outreach, family support, and equitable access to information about and from the school. It will also help the school meet its enrollment goals.

Advertising: Object Code: 6500, Function Code: 2500 - Direct mail postage has the ability to reach parts of the community that are less connected digitally and rely more on physical mail and information in order to interact with the school. This funding will allow the school to send its direct mail fliers to households in the community.

### **Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment**

Classroom and Cafeteria Furniture: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 1000 - Enrollment growth from year 2 to year 3 will necessitate additional furniture for students in classrooms. The funds requested will be used to purchase additional tables and chairs for eight general classrooms. Funds will also be used to supply two additional science labs with epoxy resin lab stations. It will also be used for an additional 10 cafeteria tables for the growth in students that

will lead to more students eating during each lunch period. It will also be used for student seating (art and science stools) specifically designed for the two science rooms so that students are equipped with the best seating for the content area and its activities and specialized tables. The furniture is all based on student growth and equipping new classrooms for year 3.

### **Computer Hardware**

Teacher and Student Technology: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 1000 - As the enrollment grows from year 2 to year 3, the school requests to use funds to purchase technology for the new staff and students. The requested funds will purchase computers and peripherals for new teachers including short-throw projectors. The funds will also be used to purchase additional chromebooks for student use in class and for state and local assessments. This will ensure equitable access to the school and its unique learning environment.

Network Access Points: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 1000 - To ensure that all students and staff have adequate access to the wireless network in all areas of the school, the funds will be used for the initial access point installation.

### **Software**

Chromebook Management Licenses: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 2100 - In order to provide expanded access for new year 3 students to state testing, safety features, and educational content, the requested funds will allow the school to install management licenses on all school-owned chromebooks.

### **Materials and Supplies**

Instructional Materials: Object Code: 6600, Function Code: 1000 - Requested funds will be used to purchase instructional materials for the music classroom and program including violins, guitars, microphones, sound systems, keyboards, and computers for digital music. It will also be used to outfit the new science labs and year 3 science teachers with essential

equipment such as beakers, flasks, hot plates, microscopes, and measuring devices. These specialized supplies will ensure that the school's academic programs are effective and engaging for its students.

**Planning Year Budget (6 Months) - Spring, 2023 to August 1, 2023**

LINE ITEMS DESCRIPTION			
Function Code	Object Code	Description	Budgeted Amount
<b>Instruction 1000</b>			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300		0.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500		0.00
Supplies	6600		0.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
<b>Support Services 2100, 2200, 2600, 2700</b>			
Salaries	6100		
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300		0.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500		0.00
Supplies	6600		0.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
<b>Support Services - Admin 2300, 2400, 2500, 2900</b>			
Salaries	6100	Salary for the school principal leading up to the start of school. Months covered are from February, 2023 through July, 2023 (six months @ \$6700 per month) Total: \$40,200  Salary for the school's office manager for the two months leading up to the start of school (\$3500 per month for 2 months (June-July, 2023)). Total: \$7000	\$47,200.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300	Start-up costs for the setup and implementation of the Explore Learning applications for the collection, analysis, and reporting of school academic and operational data. Includes: special education/gifted/504/ELL accommodations reports, student credit	\$174,022.50

		<p>analysis, student transcripts, student accounts, student clubs, student course selection / registration system, school disciplinary referral system, school academic referral system, weekly progress reporting system, student survey feedback system, teacher observation feedback system, report card generator, student store setup, food service/lunch ordering, staff leave portal, and purchase requisition system. Total: \$30,522.50</p> <p>Social media advertising to educate the community about the charter school mission, program, contacts, registration process, lottery, performance outcomes and to recruit leadership, instructional and professional personnel. Funding consists of 50, \$500-boosted posts on Facebook and Instagram. Total: \$25,000</p> <p>Direct mail advertising to educate the community about the charter school mission, program, contacts, registration process, and lottery. Printing and postage per item is estimated at \$0.20 per unit x 60,000 units to be printed and mailed to residents in and around the greater Peoria area. Total: \$12,000</p> <p>Legal consultation services for the school's legal counsel to assist in reviewing school documents including staff and student handbooks, policies, procedures, etc. Estimated at \$350/hr for 30 hours. Total: \$10,500</p> <p>Contracted services for compliance tasks leading up to the start of school. Months covered are from February, 2023 through July, 2023 (six months @ \$4500 per month). Total: \$27,000</p> <p>Contracted Services for school operations leading up to the start of school. Months covered are from February, 2023 through July, 2023 (six months @ \$4500 per month). Total: \$27,000</p> <p>Contracted services for outreach for communicating with community entities, parent groups, etc. leading up to the start of school. Months covered are from February, 2023 through July, 2023 (six months @ \$3500 per month). Total: \$21,000</p> <p>Contracted services for enrollment and communicating with interested families and students leading up to the start of school. Months covered are from February, 2023 through July, 2023 (six months @ \$3500 per month). Total: \$21,000</p>	
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500	<p>Function Code: 2300. Travel for principal to receive training at Explore Learning principal retreat. Retreat is intended to work with current Explore Academy principals, receive on-site training within an operational school environment, and observe the Explore Learning curriculum in action at sister campuses. \$650 for airfare, \$400 for hotel (\$200 x 2 nights), \$75 per diem for food (\$225), \$100 for transportation. Total: \$1375</p> <p>Function Code: 2500. Postage for mailers, estimated at \$0.30 per unit x 60,000 units mailed. Total: \$18,000</p>	\$19,375.00
Supplies	6600	<p>Reception area furniture (1 reception desk x \$1600 per unit; 1 reception desk chair x \$350 per unit; 6 reception-area guest chairs for waiting area x \$400 per unit, quoted by School Outfitters). Added \$652.50 for shipping. Total: \$5,002.50</p> <p>Computer and peripheral computer equipment for school administrator (HP Envy PC (\$1200 x 1), display monitors (\$300 x 2), mouse/keyboard (\$60 x 1), office printer (\$340)). Total: \$2,200</p> <p>Computers and peripheral computer equipment for school office manager (HP Envy PC (\$1200 x 1), display monitors (\$300 x 2), mouse/keyboard (\$60 x 1), front office / reception printer (\$340)). Total: \$2,200</p>	\$9,402.50
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
Operation of Non-Instructional Services 3000			
Salaries	6100		0.00

Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300		0.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500		0.00
Supplies	6600		0.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
Indirect Cost Recovery	6910		0.00
Capital Outlay	1906		0.00

## Implementation Budget - Year 1 - 8/2023 through 7//2024

LINE ITEMS DESCRIPTION			
Function Code	Object Code	Description	Budgeted Amount
<b>Instruction 1000</b>			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300		0.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500		0.00
Supplies	6600	Classroom student furniture (10, 18"x60" student tables per classroom x 11 general education classrooms x \$250 per) + \$3800 shipping. Total: \$31,300  18 student chairs per classroom x 11 general education classrooms x \$80 per chair, quoted by School Outfitters). Total: \$15,840  For science classroom surfaces: 4 epoxy resin lab stations per classroom x 3 science classrooms x \$1400 per + \$2520 shipping. Total: \$19,320  Specialty classroom student furniture for art class (4 wood block art tables x 1 classroom x \$2750 per table) + \$1650 shipping. Total: \$12,650  Classroom desk for teachers. \$450 per desk x 15 classrooms. Total: \$6750  Administration office furniture for administrative staff (4 L-shaped desks with hutch x \$1400 ; 4 administrative desk chairs x \$350 per chair, quoted by School Outfitters) + \$1050 shipping. Total: \$8,050  Teacher computers: Samsung Galaxy Book Flex - Intel Core i7 Processor 10510U or equivalent. \$900 per unit x 15 teachers. Total: \$13,500  Optima Short-Throw Projectors for teachers (15 x \$800). Total: \$12,000  Student Chromebook devices for in-school / in-class use. \$275 per device x 100 devices. Total: \$27,500  Cafeteria tables for students (12 tables x \$1,450 per, quoted by School Outfitters) + \$2610 shipping. Total: \$20,010  Cost for the installation of school-wide wireless network devices to support the school's student/staff network (\$300 per access point x 10 access points; \$5000 for labor and installation). Total: \$8,000	\$174,920.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
<b>Support Services 2100, 2200, 2600, 2700</b>			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300		0.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00

Other Purchased Services	6500		0.00
Supplies	6600	Software - Chrome management licenses for student Chromebooks. \$45 per license (one-time purchase only) x 100. Total: \$4,500	\$4,500.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
<b>Support Services - Admin 2300, 2400, 2500, 2900</b>			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300		0.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500		0.00
Supplies	6600	Subscription for Apta Fund (Harris School Solutions) for the school's business management / accounting systems. Total: \$25,000  Subscription for PowerSchool student information system (for student/staff information, gradebook, and attendance data). Estimates \$20,000 for base fee, including initial setup and implementation, \$10,000 for special education special program, and \$10,000 for enrollment add-on. Total: \$40,000  Computers and peripheral computer equipment for school office staff members (HP Envy PC (\$1200 x 1), display monitors (\$300 x 2), mouse/keyboard (\$60 x 1)) x 3 staff members. Total: \$5,580	\$70,580.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
<b>Operation of Non-Instructional Services 3000</b>			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300		0.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500		0.00
Supplies	6600		0.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
Indirect Cost Recovery	6910		0.00
Capital Outlay	1906		0.00

## Implementation Budget - Year 2 - 8/2024 through 7/2025

LINE ITEMS DESCRIPTION			
Function Code	Object Code	Description	Budgeted Amount
<b>Instruction 1000</b>			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300		0.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500		0.00
Supplies	6600	<p>Classroom student furniture (10, 18"x60" student tables per classroom x 8 general education classrooms x \$250 per) + \$3000 shipping. Total: \$23,000</p> <p>For science classroom surfaces: 4 epoxy resin lab stations per classroom x 2 science classrooms x \$1400 per + \$2520 shipping. Total: \$13,720</p> <p>Specialty classroom student furniture for art class (4 wood block art tables x 1 classroom x \$2750 per table) + \$1650 shipping. Total: \$12,650</p> <p>Instructional materials for physical education program. To include: game balls (basketball, volleyball, etc.), hand weights, jump ropes, stacking cups, yoga mats, bicycles, goal/nets, etc. Total: \$8,500</p> <p>Instructional materials to equip science lab stations with science materials including microscopes, hot plates, incubators, glassware (flasks, beakers, test tubes, etc.), scales / measuring devices, dissection materials, water distiller, etc. Total: \$12,000</p> <p>Teacher computers: Samsung Galaxy Book Flex - Intel Core i7 Processor 10510U or equivalent. \$900 per unit x 8 new teachers. Total: \$7,200</p> <p>Optima Short-Throw Projectors for teachers (8 new teachers x \$800). Total: \$6,400</p> <p>Student Chromebook devices for in-school / in-class use. \$275 per device x 100 devices. Total: \$27,500</p> <p>Cafeteria tables for students (12 tables x \$1,450 per, quoted by School Outfitters) + \$2610 shipping. Total: \$20,010</p> <p>Cost for the installation of school-wide wireless network devices to support the school's student/staff network as enrollment expands (\$300 per access point x 10 access points; \$5000 for labor and installation). Total: \$8000</p> <p>18 student chairs per classroom x 8 general education classrooms x \$80 per chair, quoted by School Outfitters) + \$1728. Total: \$13,248</p> <p>18 metal stools for art (2) and science (5) classrooms x \$35 per stool + \$662 shipping. Total: \$5,072</p>	\$157,300.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
<b>Support Services 2100, 2200, 2600, 2700</b>			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00



Purchased Professional Services	6300	<p>Teacher training module #1 for all new teachers where the seminar-style teaching methodology is covered, including small-class instruction, thematic design and instruction, and student-driven instruction. This training will serve 8 new teaching staff. Total: \$4,000</p> <p>The second teacher training module for all new teachers where the development of the flavor and the implementation of instruction through a lens or theme. This training will serve 8 new teaching staff. Total: \$4,000</p> <p>Teacher training module #3 for all new teachers for the development of the formative and summative assessments. This includes flavor-based formative and summative strategies, depth-of-knowledge questioning, Bloom's Taxonomy and higher level of demonstration of knowledge, and backward planning from common exams. This training will serve 8 new teaching staff. Total: \$4,000</p> <p>Teacher training module #4 helps teachers in their work with special populations of students and how the school's academic model and seminar structure work to provide these students with additional support. The data systems discussed will include multi-layer tiered support systems, teaching students with IEPs, progress towards goals, students with 504 accommodations, students who are classified as ELL, at-risk students, monthly accommodation reports, discipline structure for specific subpopulations, alternative assessment procedures. This training will serve 8 new teaching staff/ Total: \$4,000</p>	\$16,000.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500		0.00
Supplies	6600	Chrome management licenses for student Chromebooks. \$45 per license (one-time purchase only) x 100. Total: \$4,500	\$4,500.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
<b>Support Services - Admin 2300, 2400, 2500, 2900</b>			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300	<p>Social media advertising to educate the community about the charter school mission, program, contacts, registration process, lottery, performance outcomes and to recruit leadership, instructional and professional personnel as the school expands its grade level offerings and enrollment. Funding consists of 48, \$500-boosted posts on Facebook and Instagram. Total: \$24,000</p> <p>Direct mail advertising to educate the community about the charter school mission, program, contacts, registration process, and lottery. Printing per item is estimated at \$0.20 per unit x 20,000 units to be printed and mailed to residents in and around the greater Peoria area (see postage as separate line item). Total: \$4,000</p>	\$28,000.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500	Postage for mailers, estimated at \$0.30 per unit x 20,000 units mailed. Total: \$6000	\$6,000.00
Supplies	6600		0.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
<b>Operation of Non-Instructional Services 3000</b>			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00

Purchased Professional Services	6300		0.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500		0.00
Supplies	6600		0.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
Indirect Cost Recovery	6910		0.00
Capital Outlay	1906		0.00

## Implementation Budget - Year 3 - 8/2025 through 7/2026

LINE ITEMS DESCRIPTION			
Function Code	Object Code	Description	Budgeted Amount
<b>Instruction 1000</b>			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300		0.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500		0.00
Supplies	6600	<p>Classroom student furniture to accommodate enrollment expansion (10, 18"x60" student tables per classroom x 8 general education classrooms x \$250 per) + \$3000 shipping. Total: \$23,000</p> <p>Science classroom furniture to accommodate enrollment expansion: 4 epoxy resin lab stations per classroom x 2 science classrooms x \$1400 per + \$2520 shipping. \$13,720</p> <p>Instructional materials for the startup of the school's music program. To include: guitars (\$200 x 16) \$3200, violins (\$175 x 16), microphones and sound systems (\$200 x 3), pianos/keyboards (\$200 x 16), computers for digital music seminars (\$800 x 16), music stands (\$35 x 16). Total: \$23,160</p> <p>Instructional materials to equip new (for new science staff hired as the school's enrollment expands) science lab stations with science materials including microscopes, hot plates, incubators, glassware (flasks, beakers, test tubes, etc.), scales / measuring devices, dissection materials, water distiller, etc. Total: \$12,000</p> <p>Teacher computers: Samsung Galaxy Book Flex - Intel Core i7 Processor 10510U or equivalent. \$900 per unit x 8 new teachers. Total: \$7200</p> <p>Optima Short-Throw Projectors for teachers (8 new teachers x \$800). Total: \$6,400</p> <p>Student Chromebook devices for in-school / in-class use to accommodate the increase in student enrollment. \$275 per device x 100 devices. Total: \$27,500</p> <p>Cafeteria tables for students to accommodate enrollment increase (10 tables x \$1,450 per, quoted by School Outfitters) + \$2175 shipping. Total: \$16,675</p> <p>Cost for the installation of school-wide wireless network devices to support the school's student/staff network as enrollment expands (\$300 per access point x 10 access points; \$5000 for labor and installation). Total: \$8,000</p> <p>18 student chairs per classroom x 8 general education classrooms x \$80 per chair, quoted by School Outfitters) + \$1728. Total: \$13,248</p> <p>18 metal stools for 2 science x \$35 per stool + \$189 shipping. Total: \$1449</p>	\$152,352.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
<b>Support Services 2100, 2200, 2600, 2700</b>			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300	Teacher training module #1 for all new teachers where the seminar-style teaching methodology is covered, including small-class instruction, thematic design and instruction, and student-driven instruction. This training will serve 8 new teaching staff. Total: \$4,000	\$16,000.00

		<p>The second teacher training module for all new teachers where the development of the flavor and the implementation of instruction through a lens or theme. This training will serve 8 new teaching staff. Total: \$4,000</p> <p>Teacher training module #3 for all new teachers for the development of the formative and summative assessments. This includes flavor-based formative and summative strategies, depth-of-knowledge questioning, Bloom's Taxonomy and higher level of demonstration of knowledge, and backward planning from common exams. This training will serve 8 new teaching staff. Total: \$4,000</p> <p>Teacher training module #4 helps teachers in their work with special populations of students and how the school's academic model and seminar structure work to provide these students with additional support. The data systems discussed will include multi-layer tiered support systems, teaching students with IEPs, progress towards goals, students with 504 accommodations, students who are classified as ELL, at-risk students, monthly accommodation reports, discipline structure for specific subpopulations, alternative assessment procedures. This training will serve 8 new teaching staff. Total: \$4,000</p>	
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500		0.00
Supplies	6600	Chrome management licenses for student Chromebooks. \$45 per license (one-time purchase only) x 100. Total: \$4,500	\$4,500.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
<b>Support Services - Admin 2300, 2400, 2500, 2900</b>			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300	<p>Social media advertising to educate the community about the charter school mission, program, contacts, registration process, lottery, performance outcomes and to recruit leadership, instructional and professional personnel as the school expands its grade level offerings and enrollment. Funding consists of 48, \$500-boosted posts on Facebook and Instagram. Total: \$24,000</p> <p>Direct mail advertising to educate the community about the charter school mission, program, contacts, registration process, and lottery. Printing per item is estimated at \$0.20 per unit x 20,000 units to be printed and mailed to residents in and around the greater Peoria area (postage entered as a separate line item). Total: \$4,000</p>	\$28,000.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500	Postage for mailers, estimated at \$0.30 per unit x 20,000 units mailed. Total: \$6,000	\$6,000.00
Supplies	6600		0.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
<b>Operation of Non-Instructional Services 3000</b>			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300		0.00

Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500		0.00
Supplies	6600		0.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
Indirect Cost Recovery	6910		0.00
Capital Outlay	1906		0.00

**Max points possible: 100 points + 5 optional preference points**

## **Appendix A**

### **3-Year Financial Projections & Evidence of Support**

**Applicant Name: Explore Academy - Peoria**

Provide Assumptions by Line	First Year				Second Year				Third Year			
<b>STUDENT COUNT</b> (at full enrollment)				<b>270.00</b>				<b>390.00</b>				<b>515.00</b>
Number of Students (Budget based on)				<b>250.00</b>				<b>365.00</b>				<b>485.00</b>
% of Full Enrollment Budget Based On				<b>92.59%</b>				<b>93.59%</b>				<b>94.17%</b>
<b>CARRYOVER</b> (Balance from Start-Up Budget in				\$ 100,000.00				\$ 159,433.44				\$ 136,644.42
<b>REVENUE</b>				<b>\$ Amount</b>				<b>\$ Amount</b>				<b>\$ Amount</b>
State Funding (Equalization Assistance)				\$ 1,952,878.26				\$ 2,899,763.66				\$ 3,796,600.45
Secured Funds - Private Donations												
Secured Funds - Loans												
Revenue - Food Service				\$ 61,600.00				\$ 89,936.00				\$ 119,504.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>				<b>\$ 2,014,478.26</b>				<b>\$ 2,858,254.00</b>				<b>\$ 3,916,104.45</b>
<b>Administration, Instruction, &amp; Support (AIS)</b>	<b># of Staff</b>	<b>@ Salary</b>	<b>Req. Cont.</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b># of Staff</b>	<b>@ Salary</b>	<b>Req. Cont.</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b># of Staff</b>	<b>@ Salary</b>	<b>Req. Cont.</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>(add lines as necessary)</i>												
<b>Salaries</b>												
Director/Principal	1.00	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 6,755.00	\$ 76,755.00	1.00	\$ 72,100.00	\$ 6,957.65	\$ 79,057.65	1.00	\$ 74,263.00	\$ 7,166.38	\$ 81,429.38
Asst Director/Principal									1.00	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 6,272.50	\$ 71,272.50
Flex Coordinator	1.00	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 5,307.50	\$ 60,307.50	1.00	\$ 56,650.00	\$ 5,466.73	\$ 62,116.73	1.00	\$ 58,349.50	\$ 5,630.73	\$ 63,980.23
Counselor	1.00	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 5,307.50	\$ 60,307.50	1.00	\$ 56,650.00	\$ 5,466.73	\$ 62,116.73	1.00	\$ 58,349.50	\$ 5,630.73	\$ 63,980.23
Teacher-Regular Education	15.00	\$ 48,000.00	\$ 4,632.00	\$ 789,480.00	23.00	\$ 49,440.00	\$ 4,770.96	\$ 1,246,852.08	31.00	\$ 50,923.20	\$ 4,914.09	\$ 1,730,955.95
Teacher-Special Education	1.00	\$ 48,000.00	\$ 4,632.00	\$ 52,632.00	1.00	\$ 49,440.00	\$ 4,770.96	\$ 54,210.96	2.00	\$ 50,923.20	\$ 4,914.09	\$ 111,674.58
Instructional Assistants-Regular Educator	3.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 1,737.00	\$ 59,211.00	4.00	\$ 18,540.00	\$ 1,789.11	\$ 81,316.44	5.00	\$ 19,096.20	\$ 1,842.78	\$ 104,694.92
Information Technologist	1.00	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 3,377.50	\$ 38,377.50	1.00	\$ 36,050.00	\$ 3,478.83	\$ 39,528.83	1.00	\$ 37,131.50	\$ 3,583.19	\$ 40,714.69
Office Manager	1.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 2,412.50	\$ 27,412.50	1.00	\$ 25,500.00	\$ 2,460.75	\$ 27,960.75	1.00	\$ 26,010.00	\$ 2,509.96	\$ 28,519.96
Custodial/Maintenance	1.00	\$ 11,250.00	\$ 1,085.63	\$ 12,335.63	1.00	\$ 11,475.00	\$ 1,107.34	\$ 12,582.34	1.00	\$ 11,700.00	\$ 1,129.00	\$ 12,829.00
Other												
Employee Benefits (403b)				\$ -				\$ -				\$ 60,147.10
Employee Insurance (Health)				\$ 62,700.00				\$ 93,799.20				\$ 136,560.80
Office Supplies (Paper, Postage, etc.)				\$ 5,000.00				\$ 7,000.00				\$ 7,000.00
Instructional Consumables				\$ 5,000.00				\$ 8,000.00				\$ 10,000.00
Membership Dues, Registrations, & Travel				\$ -				\$ -				\$ -
Contracted Services (Business Manager)				\$ 50,000.00				\$ 55,000.00				\$ 55,000.00
Contracted Services (Special Education)				\$ 40,500.00				\$ 59,940.00				\$ 79,380.00
Curriculum / Resource Materials				\$ 15,000.00				\$ 12,000.00				\$ 12,000.00
SIS Software				\$ 8,000.00				\$ 12,000.00				\$ 15,000.00
Auditor Fees				\$ -				\$ 10,000.00				\$ 10,000.00
Legal Services				\$ 7,000.00				\$ 6,000.00				\$ 5,000.00
<b>Total Administration, Instruction, &amp; Support</b>				<b>\$ 1,370,018.63</b>				<b>\$ 1,929,481.69</b>				<b>\$ 2,700,139.13</b>
<b>Operations &amp; Maintenance (O&amp;M)</b>				<b>Total</b>				<b>Total</b>				<b>Total</b>
<i>(add lines as necessary)</i>												
Supplies				\$ 3,750.00				\$ 5,475.00				\$ 7,275.00
Marketing/Advertising				\$ 10,000.00				\$ 10,000.00				\$ 10,000.00
Educ Services (Explore Learning Systems)				\$ 120,868.70				\$ 228,660.32				\$ 352,449.40
Building Rent/Lease/Loan				\$ 247,000.00				\$ 499,840.00				\$ 562,320.00
Building / Improvements				\$ 3,500.00				\$ 3,500.00				\$ 3,500.00
Land / Improvements				\$ -				\$ -				\$ -
Fees / Permits				\$ 1,000.00				\$ 1,000.00				\$ 1,000.00
Property / Liability Insurance				\$ 22,500.00				\$ 32,850.00				\$ 43,650.00
Utilities (Electric, Gas, Water, Waste)				\$ 18,000.00				\$ 25,000.00				\$ 48,500.00
Phone / Communications / Internet Connectivity				\$ 6,000.00				\$ 7,000.00				\$ 8,000.00
Transportation				\$ -				\$ -				\$ -
Food Service				\$ 61,600.00				\$ 89,936.00				\$ 119,504.00
Student Furniture / Other Equipment				\$ 39,687.50				\$ 21,070.00				\$ 21,070.00
Office Furniture / Other Equipment				\$ 5,880.00				\$ 1,740.00				\$ 2,700.00
Student Technology Equipment				\$ 4,600.00				\$ 4,600.00				\$ 4,600.00
Office/Teacher Technology Equipment				\$ 35,640.00				\$ 13,890.00				\$ 18,970.00
Other Leases (Security, Copiers, etc.)				\$ -				\$ -				\$ -
Loan Repayment				\$ -				\$ -				\$ -
Other				\$ 5,000.00				\$ 7,000.00				\$ 8,000.00
<b>Total Operations &amp; Maintenance</b>				<b>\$ 585,026.20</b>				<b>\$ 951,561.32</b>				<b>\$ 1,211,538.40</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>				<b>\$ 1,955,044.82</b>				<b>\$ 2,881,043</b>				<b>\$ 3,911,677.53</b>
<b>Total Revenues</b>				<b>\$ 2,114,478.26</b>				<b>\$ 3,017,687.44</b>				<b>\$ 4,052,748.87</b>
<b>Budget Balance</b> (=Revenues-Expenditures)				<b>\$ 159,433.44</b>				<b>\$ 136,644.42</b>				<b>\$ 141,071.34</b>



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(801) 489-9535  
(801) 489-8493 fax  
[www.amercd.com](http://www.amercd.com)

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August 7, 2022

SUBJECT: Start-Up Financial Support

To Whom It May Concern:

American Charter Development is pleased to provide this letter of support and intent to Explore Academy - Peoria. It is because of the prudent choices in selecting a quality board, and the selection of a proven at-risk school operator to support the day to day operations of a high performing school that ACD is pleased to offer this letter of support.

ACD is a national charter school development and financing organization with a track record of developing and funding projects across the county. ACD can provide 100% financing, as well as start-up capital to work as a bridge until the state payments begin. Additionally, ACD specializes in providing a full-service, turnkey development for you charter school. We understand that this school, if approved, will use a unique model of instruction, which has proven highly successful in other states. ACD provides its services with no upfront cost to the school and meets mutually agreed upon budgetary and financial obligations required to deliver a fully functional, customized facility.

Upon final underwriting and approval, ACD will provide:

Startup Capital Amount: \$ 250,000

Cap Rate: 9% included within a lease payment term of 20 years

Once the facility is complete, it is leased back to the school, with strategic buyout options which enable the school to own its facility at a sooner date.

For over 15 years, ACD has successfully developed more than 75 school facilities nationally to include many in Arizona which range from \$3MM to \$25MM in cost.

ACD has diverse sources of capital that stand ready to deploy now and out lease rates are lower, our lease escalators are less, and our buy-out options can be sooner than many other firms. This not only



provides better prices, but allows the school to own its facility when it fits into the school's plans, not the lenders.

Our campuses, whether design build or renovated spaces, are attractive, affordable, functional, built to withstand the years of use that lies ahead of them, and are all developed to suit the needs of each school.

ACD is a strong, well-seasoned organization, whose senior leaders have been involved in the charter school movement nationally almost since the inception, by starting running, finding, buildings/facilities, and funding schools. We are a reputable organization with the highest of integrity, transparency and values.

We look forward to a long and mutually-beneficial relationship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MM', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Morley  
Manager

MM/tm

**Appendix B**

**Explore Academy - Albuquerque and Las Vegas Audit Statement**

## **EXPLORE ACADEMY**

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
STATEMENT OF NET POSITION  
JUNE 30, 2021**

	Governmental Activities
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 1,126,228
Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents	3,722,056
Taxes Receivable	10,374
Due from Primary Government	282,217
Other Receivables	10,000
Capital Assets Not Being Depreciated:	
Land and Land Improvements	5,143,779
Construction in Process	1,697,523
Capital Assets, Net of Accumulated Depreciation:	
Building and Building Improvements	10,737,002
Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment	7,462
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>22,736,641</b>
<b>DEFERRED OUTFLOWS OF RESOURCES</b>	
Deferred Outflows of Resources Related to Pension Amounts	9,378,108
Deferred Outflows of Resources OPEB Amounts	1,375,342
<b>TOTAL DEFERRED OUTFLOWS OF RESOURCES</b>	<b>10,753,450</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Accrued Liabilities	709,581
Accounts Payable	196,029
Due to Primary Government	267,681
Accrued Interest Payable	589,203
Noncurrent Liabilities:	
Accrued Interest Payable	
Long Term Debt - Due Within One Year	130,000
Long Term Debt - Due in More Than One Year	23,200,000
Net Pension Liability	16,757,864
Net OPEB Liability	2,298,482
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>44,148,840</b>
<b>DEFERRED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES</b>	
Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pension Amounts	64,617
Deferred Inflows of Resources OPEB Amounts	816,344
<b>TOTAL DEFERRED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES</b>	<b>880,961</b>
<b>NET POSITION</b>	
Net Investment in Capital Assets	(2,815,454)
Restricted for:	
Instructional Materials	53,780
Food Services	23,741
Capital Projects	784,947
Other Purposes	11,636
Unrestricted	(9,598,360)
<b>TOTAL NET POSITION</b>	<b>\$ (11,539,710)</b>

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

Functions/Programs	Expenses	Program Revenues			Net Revenues (Expenses) and Changes in Net Position
		Charges for Services	Operating Grants and Contributions	Capital Grants and Contributions	
Governmental Activities:					
Instruction	\$ 7,521,411	\$ 1,238	\$ 251,066	\$ -	\$ (7,269,107)
Support Services - Students	665,117	-	187,303	-	(477,814)
Support Services - Instruction	158	-	-	-	(158)
Support Services - General Administration	513,389	-	-	-	(513,389)
Support Services - School Administration	647,001	-	-	-	(647,001)
Support Services - Central Services	421,674	-	32,035	-	(389,639)
Support Services - Operation and Maintenance of Plant	548,686	-	-	-	(548,686)
Support Services - Student Transportation	461,528	-	-	-	(461,528)
Support Services - Other	-	-	-	-	-
Noninstructional - Community Services Operations	-	-	-	-	-
Noninstructional - Food Services Operations	31,073	687	26,445	-	(3,941)
Interest Expense	1,460,393	-	-	-	(1,460,393)
Unallocated*	373,498	-	-	347,490	(26,008)
<b>Total Governmental Activities</b>	<b>\$ 12,643,928</b>	<b>\$ 1,925</b>	<b>\$ 496,849</b>	<b>\$ 347,490</b>	<b>(11,797,664)</b>

**GENERAL REVENUES**

State Equalization Guarantee	5,670,279
Property Taxes	561,410
Miscellaneous	21,189
<b>Total General Revenues</b>	<b>6,252,878</b>

**CHANGE IN NET POSITION**

(5,544,786)

Net Position - Beginning of Year

(5,994,924)

**NET POSITION - END OF YEAR**

**\$ (11,539,710)**

\*This amount includes expenses that were not allocated to a specific function, which include expenditures in the budgetary function "Capital Outlay" that were not required to be capitalized and other unallocated depreciation amounts.

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
BALANCE SHEET  
JUNE 30, 2021**

	<u>Major General Fund</u>	<u>Major Special Revenue Fund</u>	<u>Non-Major Special Revenue Fund</u>	<u>Non-Major Special Revenue Fund</u>
		FND	21000	24101
	General Fund	Explore Academy Foundation	Food Services	Title I - IASA
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 1,027,790	\$ 6,701	\$ 23,741	\$ -
Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents	-	3,722,056	-	-
Taxes Receivable	-	-	-	-
Due from Primary Government	-	-	-	18,703
Other Receivables	-	-	-	-
Due from Other Funds	243,250	-	-	-
	<u>1,271,040</u>	<u>3,728,757</u>	<u>23,741</u>	<u>18,703</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 1,271,040</u>	<u>\$ 3,728,757</u>	<u>\$ 23,741</u>	<u>\$ 18,703</u>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</b>				
Accrued Liabilities	\$ 653,062	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,210
Accounts Payable	43,283	152,746	-	-
Due to Primary Government	267,681	-	-	-
Due to Other Funds	-	-	-	6,493
Total Liabilities	<u>964,026</u>	<u>152,746</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>18,703</u>
Fund Balances:				
Restricted for:				
Instructional Materials	23,392	-	-	-
Food Services	-	-	23,741	-
Capital Projects	-	603,407	-	-
Other Purposes	-	2,972,604	-	-
Assigned for Student Activities	20,932	-	-	-
Assigned for Subsequent Year	262,690	-	-	-
Total Fund Balance (Deficit)	<u>307,014</u>	<u>3,576,011</u>	<u>23,741</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance	<u>\$ 1,271,040</u>	<u>\$ 3,728,757</u>	<u>\$ 23,741</u>	<u>\$ 18,703</u>

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
BALANCE SHEET  
JUNE 30, 2021**

	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund 24106	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund 24146	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund 24154 Teacher/Principal Training & Recruiting	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund 24189 Title IV
	Entitlement IDEA-B	Charter Schools		
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 17,552	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents	-	-	-	-
Taxes Receivable	-	-	-	-
Due from Primary Government	-	89,739	-	-
Other Receivables	-	-	-	-
Due from Other Funds	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 17,552</b>	<b>\$ 89,739</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</b>				
Accrued Liabilities	\$ 6,278	\$ 25,649	\$ -	\$ -
Accounts Payable	-	-	-	-
Due to Primary Government	-	-	-	-
Due to Other Funds	11,274	64,090	-	-
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>17,552</b>	<b>89,739</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Fund Balances:</b>				
Restricted for:				
Instructional Materials	-	-	-	-
Food Services	-	-	-	-
Capital Projects	-	-	-	-
Other Purposes	-	-	-	-
Assigned for Student Activities	-	-	-	-
Assigned for Subsequent Year	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Fund Balance (Deficit)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 17,552</b>	<b>\$ 89,739</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
BALANCE SHEET  
JUNE 30, 2021**

	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund 24301	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund 24305 Governor's Emergency Education Relief	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund 24308 CRRSA, ESSER II	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund 24312 CRRSA Retention Stipends
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents	-	-	-	-
Taxes Receivable	-	-	-	-
Due from Primary Government	45,110	-	126,040	2,000
Other Receivables	-	-	-	-
Due from Other Funds	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 45,110</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 126,040</b>	<b>\$ 2,000</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</b>				
Accrued Liabilities	\$ 2,652	\$ -	\$ 9,240	\$ 490
Accounts Payable	-	-	-	-
Due to Primary Government	-	-	-	-
Due to Other Funds	42,458	-	116,800	1,510
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>45,110</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>126,040</b>	<b>2,000</b>
<b>Fund Balances:</b>				
Restricted for:				
Instructional Materials	-	-	-	-
Food Services	-	-	-	-
Capital Projects	-	-	-	-
Other Purposes	-	-	-	-
Assigned for Student Activities	-	-	-	-
Assigned for Subsequent Year	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Fund Balance (Deficit)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 45,110</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 126,040</b>	<b>\$ 2,000</b>



**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
BALANCE SHEET  
JUNE 30, 2021**

	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund 26107	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund 27109 Instructional Materials-GAA of 2019	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund 27130 Feminine Hygiene Products	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund 27502 Career Technical Education Program (Pilot)
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ -	\$ 30,388	\$ -	\$ -
Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents	-	-	-	-
Taxes Receivable	-	-	-	-
Due from Primary Government	-	-	625	-
Other Receivables	10,000	-	-	-
Due from Other Funds	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>	<b>\$ 30,388</b>	<b>\$ 625</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</b>				
Accrued Liabilities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Accounts Payable	-	-	-	-
Due to Primary Government	-	-	-	-
Due to Other Funds	-	-	625	-
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Fund Balances:</b>				
Restricted for:				
Instructional Materials	-	30,388	-	-
Food Services	-	-	-	-
Capital Projects	-	-	-	-
Other Purposes	10,000	-	-	-
Assigned for Student Activities	-	-	-	-
Assigned for Subsequent Year	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Fund Balance (Deficit)</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>30,388</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>	<b>\$ 30,388</b>	<b>\$ 625</b>	<b>\$ -</b>

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
BALANCE SHEET  
JUNE 30, 2021**

	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund 29102	Non-Major Capital Project Fund 31200	Non-Major Capital Project Fund 31600 Capital Improvements HB33	Non-Major Capital Project Fund 31701 Capital Improvements SB-9 - Local
	Private Dir Grants (Categorical)	Public School Capital Outlay		
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 1,636	\$ -	\$ 4,557	\$ 3,801
Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents	-	-	-	-
Taxes Receivable	-	-	7,014	3,360
Due from Primary Government	-	-	-	-
Other Receivables	-	-	-	-
Due from Other Funds	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,636</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 11,571</b>	<b>\$ 7,161</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</b>				
Accrued Liabilities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Accounts Payable	-	-	-	-
Due to Primary Government	-	-	-	-
Due to Other Funds	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Fund Balances:</b>				
Restricted for:				
Instructional Materials	-	-	-	-
Food Services	-	-	-	-
Capital Projects	-	-	11,571	7,161
Other Purposes	1,636	-	-	-
Assigned for Student Activities	-	-	-	-
Assigned for Subsequent Year	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Fund Balance (Deficit)</b>	<b>1,636</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11,571</b>	<b>7,161</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 1,636</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 11,571</b>	<b>\$ 7,161</b>

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
BALANCE SHEET  
JUNE 30, 2021**

	Non-Major Capital Project Fund <u>31703</u>	
	SB-9 State Match Cash	Governmental Funds Total
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 10,062	\$ 1,126,228
Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents	-	3,722,056
Taxes Receivable	-	10,374
Due from Primary Government	-	282,217
Other Receivables	-	10,000
Due from Other Funds	-	243,250
	<u>\$ 10,062</u>	<u>\$ 5,394,125</u>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</b>		
Accrued Liabilities	\$ -	\$ 709,581
Accounts Payable	-	196,029
Due to Primary Government	-	267,681
Due to Other Funds	-	243,250
Total Liabilities	-	1,416,541
Fund Balances:		
Restricted for:		
Instructional Materials	-	53,780
Food Services	-	23,741
Capital Projects	10,062	632,201
Other Purposes	-	2,984,240
Assigned for Student Activities	-	20,932
Assigned for Subsequent Year	-	262,690
Total Fund Balance (Deficit)	<u>10,062</u>	<u>3,977,584</u>
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance	<u>\$ 10,062</u>	<u>\$ 5,394,125</u>

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
RECONCILIATION OF THE BALANCE SHEET - GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS  
TO THE STATEMENT OF NET POSITION  
JUNE 30, 2021**

<b>Total Fund Balance - Governmental Funds (Governmental Fund Balance Sheet)</b>	<b>\$ 3,977,584</b>
--	---------------------

Amounts reported for governmental activities in the Statement of Net Position are different because:

Capital assets used in governmental activities are not financial resources and, therefore, are not reported in the funds.

The Cost of Capital Assets is	18,230,682
Accumulated Depreciation is	<u>(644,916)</u>

Total Capital Assets	17,585,766
----------------------	------------

Deferred inflows and outflows of resources related to the net pension liability and OPEB liability are not reported in the funds.

Deferred Outflows of Resources	10,753,450
Deferred Inflows of Resources	(880,961)

Long-term and certain other liabilities are not due and payable in the current period and, therefore, are not reported as liabilities in the funds.

Long-term and other liabilities at year end consist of:

Long-Term Debt	(23,330,000)
Accrued Interest Payable	(589,203)
Net Pension Liability	(16,757,864)
Net OPEB Liability	<u>(2,298,482)</u>

<b>Net Position of Governmental Activities (Statement of Net Position)</b>	<b><u>\$ (11,539,710)</u></b>
--	-------------------------------

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN  
FUND BALANCES - GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

	<b>Major General Fund</b>	<b>Major Special Revenue Fund</b>	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund
		FND	21000	24101
	General Fund	Explore Academy Foundation	Food Services	Title I - IASA
<b>REVENUES</b>				
Property Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Federal Sources	-	-	26,445	59,667
State Sources	5,670,279	-	-	-
County and Local Sources	-	-	-	-
Fees	1,238	-	687	-
Other Revenue	206,037	1,181,763	-	-
Total Revenues	<u>5,877,554</u>	<u>1,181,763</u>	<u>27,132</u>	<u>59,667</u>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Instruction	3,640,474	-	-	59,667
Support Services - Students	233,210	-	-	-
Support Services - Instruction	158	-	-	-
Support Services - General Administration	267,815	202,713	-	-
Support Services - School Administration	391,118	-	-	-
Support Services - Central Services	225,784	-	-	-
Support Services - Operation and Maintenance of Plant	651,015	46,356	-	-
Support Services - Student Transportation	461,528	-	-	-
Non-Instructional - Food Services Operations	-	-	31,073	-
Capital Outlay	-	5,577,377	-	-
Debt Service - Interest Payments	-	1,112,646	-	-
Debt Service - Principal Payments	-	125,000	-	-
Total Expenditures	<u>5,871,102</u>	<u>7,064,092</u>	<u>31,073</u>	<u>59,667</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	6,452	(5,882,329)	(3,941)	-
Other Financing Sources (Uses):	-	-	-	-
Other Financing Sources - Transfers In	-	-	-	-
Other Financing Uses - Transfers Out	-	-	-	-
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>NET CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES</b>	6,452	(5,882,329)	(3,941)	-
Fund Balances - Beginning of Year	<u>300,562</u>	<u>9,458,340</u>	<u>27,682</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>FUND BALANCES - END OF YEAR</b>	<u>\$ 307,014</u>	<u>\$ 3,576,011</u>	<u>\$ 23,741</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN  
FUND BALANCES - GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund
	24106	24146	24154	24189
	Entitlement IDEA-B	Charter Schools	Teacher/Principal Training & Recruiting	Title IV
<b>REVENUES</b>				
Property Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Federal Sources	58,185	89,739	19,665	10,000
State Sources	-	-	-	-
County and Local Sources	-	-	-	-
Fees	-	-	-	-
Other Revenue	-	-	-	-
Total Revenues	<u>58,185</u>	<u>89,739</u>	<u>19,665</u>	<u>10,000</u>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Instruction	21,046	29,740	-	10,000
Support Services - Students	37,139	50,000	19,665	-
Support Services - Instruction	-	-	-	-
Support Services - General Administration	-	-	-	-
Support Services - School Administration	-	-	-	-
Support Services - Central Services	-	9,999	-	-
Support Services - Operation and Maintenance of Plant	-	-	-	-
Support Services - Student Transportation	-	-	-	-
Non-Instructional - Food Services Operations	-	-	-	-
Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-
Debt Service - Interest Payments	-	-	-	-
Debt Service - Principal Payments	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	<u>58,185</u>	<u>89,739</u>	<u>19,665</u>	<u>10,000</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	-	-	-	-
Other Financing Sources (Uses):				
Other Financing Sources - Transfers In	-	-	-	-
Other Financing Uses - Transfers Out	-	-	-	-
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>NET CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES</b>	-	-	-	-
Fund Balances - Beginning of Year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>FUND BALANCES - END OF YEAR</b>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN  
FUND BALANCES - GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund
	24301	24305	24308	24312
	CARES Act	Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERF)	CRRSA, ESSER II	CRRSA Retention Stipends
<b>REVENUES</b>				
Property Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Federal Sources	70,275	1,014	126,040	2,000
State Sources	-	-	-	-
County and Local Sources	-	-	-	-
Fees	-	-	-	-
Other Revenue	-	-	-	-
Total Revenues	<u>70,275</u>	<u>1,014</u>	<u>126,040</u>	<u>2,000</u>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Instruction	37,739	1,014	66,041	2,000
Support Services - Students	10,500	-	59,999	-
Support Services - Instruction	-	-	-	-
Support Services - General Administration	-	-	-	-
Support Services - School Administration	-	-	-	-
Support Services - Central Services	22,036	-	-	-
Support Services - Operation and Maintenance of Plant	-	-	-	-
Support Services - Student Transportation	-	-	-	-
Non-Instructional - Food Services Operations	-	-	-	-
Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-
Debt Service - Interest Payments	-	-	-	-
Debt Service - Principal Payments	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	<u>70,275</u>	<u>1,014</u>	<u>126,040</u>	<u>2,000</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	-	-	-	-
Other Financing Sources (Uses):				
Other Financing Sources - Transfers In	-	-	-	-
Other Financing Uses - Transfers Out	-	-	-	-
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>NET CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES</b>	-	-	-	-
Fund Balances - Beginning of Year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>FUND BALANCES - END OF YEAR</b>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN  
FUND BALANCES - GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund
	26107	27109	27130	27502
	CLR Grant	Instructional Materials-GAA of 2019	Feminine Hygiene Products	Career Technical Education Program (Pilot)
<b>REVENUES</b>				
Property Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Federal Sources	-	-	-	-
State Sources	-	-	625	23,194
County and Local Sources	10,000	-	-	-
Fees	-	-	-	-
Other Revenue	-	-	-	-
Total Revenues	<u>10,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>625</u>	<u>23,194</u>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Instruction	-	750	625	23,194
Support Services - Students	-	-	-	-
Support Services - Instruction	-	-	-	-
Support Services - General Administration	-	-	-	-
Support Services - School Administration	-	-	-	-
Support Services - Central Services	-	-	-	-
Support Services - Operation and Maintenance of Plant	-	-	-	-
Support Services - Student Transportation	-	-	-	-
Non-Instructional - Food Services Operations	-	-	-	-
Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-
Debt Service - Interest Payments	-	-	-	-
Debt Service - Principal Payments	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	<u>-</u>	<u>750</u>	<u>625</u>	<u>23,194</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	10,000	(750)	-	-
Other Financing Sources (Uses):				
Other Financing Sources - Transfers In	-	-	-	-
Other Financing Uses - Transfers Out	-	-	-	-
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>NET CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES</b>	10,000	(750)	-	-
Fund Balances - Beginning of Year	<u>-</u>	<u>31,138</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>FUND BALANCES - END OF YEAR</b>	<u>\$ 10,000</u>	<u>\$ 30,388</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>



**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN  
FUND BALANCES - GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

	Non-Major Special Revenue Fund	Non-Major Capital Project Fund	Non-Major Capital Project Fund	Non-Major Capital Project Fund
	29102	31200	31600	31701
	Private Dir Grants (Categorical)	Public School Capital Outlay	Capital Improvements HB33	Capital Improvements SB-9 - Local
<b>REVENUES</b>				
Property Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 372,386	\$ 189,024
Federal Sources	-	-	-	-
State Sources	-	347,490	-	-
County and Local Sources	-	-	-	-
Fees	-	-	-	-
Other Revenue	-	-	-	-
Total Revenues	-	347,490	372,386	189,024
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Instruction	-	-	-	-
Support Services - Students	-	-	-	-
Support Services - Instruction	-	-	-	-
Support Services - General Administration	-	-	3,294	1,630
Support Services - School Administration	-	-	-	-
Support Services - Central Services	-	-	-	-
Support Services - Operation and Maintenance of Plant	-	-	-	-
Support Services - Student Transportation	-	-	-	-
Non-Instructional - Food Services Operations	-	-	-	-
Capital Outlay	-	347,490	421,421	280,744
Debt Service - Interest Payments	-	-	-	-
Debt Service - Principal Payments	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	-	347,490	424,715	282,374
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	-	-	(52,329)	(93,350)
Other Financing Sources (Uses):				
Other Financing Sources - Transfers In	-	-	-	-
Other Financing Uses - Transfers Out	-	-	-	-
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	-	-	-	-
<b>NET CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES</b>	-	-	(52,329)	(93,350)
Fund Balances - Beginning of Year	1,636	-	63,900	100,511
<b>FUND BALANCES - END OF YEAR</b>	<u>\$ 1,636</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 11,571</u>	<u>\$ 7,161</u>

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN  
FUND BALANCES - GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

	Non-Major Capital Project Fund	
	31703	
	SB-9 State Match Cash	Governmental Funds Total
<b>REVENUES</b>		
Property Taxes	\$ -	\$ 561,410
Federal Sources	-	463,030
State Sources	-	6,041,588
County and Local Sources	-	10,000
Fees	-	1,925
Other Revenue	-	1,387,800
Total Revenues	-	8,465,753
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
Instruction	-	3,892,290
Support Services - Students	-	410,513
Support Services - Instruction	-	158
Support Services - General Administration	-	475,452
Support Services - School Administration	-	391,118
Support Services - Central Services	-	257,819
Support Services - Operation and Maintenance of Plant	-	697,371
Support Services - Student Transportation	-	461,528
Non-Instructional - Food Services Operations	-	31,073
Capital Outlay	-	6,627,032
Debt Service - Interest Payments	-	1,112,646
Debt Service - Principal Payments	-	125,000
Total Expenditures	-	14,482,000
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	-	(6,016,247)
Other Financing Sources (Uses):		
Other Financing Sources - Transfers In	-	-
Other Financing Uses - Transfers Out	-	-
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	-	-
<b>NET CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES</b>	-	(6,016,247)
Fund Balances - Beginning of Year	10,062	9,993,831
<b>FUND BALANCES - END OF YEAR</b>	\$ 10,062	\$ 3,977,584

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
RECONCILIATION OF THE STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND  
CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES TO THE STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

**Net Changes in Fund Balances - Total Governmental Funds  
(Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in  
Fund Balances)**

\$ (6,016,247)

Amounts reported for governmental activities in the Statement of Activities are different because:

In the Statement of Activities, pension and OPEB expense is measured by the change in benefit liability and the related deferred inflows and outflows of resources. In the governmental funds, however, these expenditures are reported for current year employer contributions.

Expenses Related to the Net Pension Liability	(4,554,406)
Expenses Related to the Net OPEB Liability	(30,689)

The issuance of long-term debt (e.g., bonds, notes and leases) provides current financial resources to governmental funds, while the repayment of the principal of long-term debt consumes the current financial resources of governmental funds. Neither transaction, however, has any effect on net position. Also, governmental funds report the effect of premiums, discounts and similar items when debt is first issued, whereas these amounts are deferred and amortized in the statement of activities. This is the amount by which repayments exceeded proceeds:

Principal payments on long-term debt and capital leases	125,000
Change in accrued interest	(347,747)

Governmental Funds report capital outlays as expenditures. However, in the Statement of Activities, the cost of those assets is allocated over their estimated useful lives and reported as depreciation expense. In the current period, these amounts were:

Capital Outlay	5,577,377
Depreciation Expense	<u>(298,074)</u>

**Change in Net Position of Governmental Activities  
(Statement of Activities)**

\$ (5,544,786)

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
SCHEDULE OF BUDGETARY COMPARISONS - BUDGETARY BASIS  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021  
GENERAL FUND**

	Budgeted Amounts		Actual Amounts (Budgetary Basis)	Variance From Final Budget Positive (Negative)
	Original	Final		
<b>REVENUES</b>				
Local and County Sources	\$ -	\$ 205,005	\$ 206,924	\$ 1,919
State Sources	5,209,466	5,670,279	5,670,279	-
Federal Sources	-	-	-	-
Total Revenues	5,209,466	5,875,284	5,877,203	1,919
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Instruction	3,447,432	3,805,945	3,637,515	168,430
Support Services	2,061,281	2,396,124	1,969,427	426,697
Operation of Non-Instructional Services	-	-	-	-
Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	5,508,713	6,202,069	5,606,942	595,127
<b>EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER (UNDER) EXPENDITURES</b>				
	(299,247)	(326,785)	270,261	597,046
<b>DESIGNATED CASH</b>				
	299,247	326,785	-	(326,785)
<b>NET CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES</b>				
	\$ -	\$ -	270,261	\$ 270,261
<b>RECONCILIATION TO GAAP BASIS</b>				
Other Financing Sources (Uses)			-	
Adjustments to Revenues (Unbudgeted - Fund 23000)			351	
Adjustments to Expenditures (Unbudgeted - Fund 23000)			(263)	
Adjustments to Revenues			-	
Adjustments to Expenditures			(263,897)	
<b>NET CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES</b>				
			\$ 6,452	

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
COMBINING BALANCE SHEET - GENERAL FUND  
JUNE 30, 2021**

	<b>General Fund (Sub-Funds)</b>				<b>Total General Fund</b>
	11000	13000	14000	23000	
	Operational Fund	Transportation Fund	Instructional Materials	Student Activity Funds	
<b>ASSETS</b>					
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 713,089	\$ 267,681	\$ 26,088	\$ 20,932	<b>\$ 1,027,790</b>
Due from Other Funds	243,250	-	-	-	<b>243,250</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 956,339</b>	<b>\$ 267,681</b>	<b>\$ 26,088</b>	<b>\$ 20,932</b>	<b>\$ 1,271,040</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</b>					
Accrued Liabilities	\$ 653,062	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	<b>\$ 653,062</b>
Accounts Payable	40,587	-	2,696	-	<b>43,283</b>
Due to Primary Government	-	267,681	-	-	<b>267,681</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>693,649</b>	<b>267,681</b>	<b>2,696</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>964,026</b>
Fund Balances:					
Restricted for:					
Instructional Materials	-	-	23,392	-	<b>23,392</b>
Assigned for Student Activities	-	-	-	20,932	<b>20,932</b>
Assigned for Subsequent Year	262,690	-	-	-	<b>262,690</b>
<b>Total Fund Balance (Deficit)</b>	<b>262,690</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23,392</b>	<b>20,932</b>	<b>307,014</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 956,339</b>	<b>\$ 267,681</b>	<b>\$ 26,088</b>	<b>\$ 20,932</b>	<b>\$ 1,271,040</b>

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
COMBINING STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN  
FUND BALANCE (DEFICIT) - GENERAL FUND  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

	General Fund (Sub-Funds)				Total General Fund
	11000	13000	14000	23000	
	Operational Fund	Transportation Fund	Instructional Materials	Student Activity Funds	
<b>REVENUES</b>					
State Sources	\$ 5,208,751	\$ 461,528	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,670,279
Fees	887	-	-	351	1,238
Other Revenue	206,037	-	-	-	206,037
Total Revenues	<u>5,415,675</u>	<u>461,528</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>351</u>	<u>5,877,554</u>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>					
Instruction	3,637,515	-	2,696	263	3,640,474
Support Services - Students	233,210	-	-	-	233,210
Support Services - Instruction	158	-	-	-	158
Support Services - General Administration	267,815	-	-	-	267,815
Support Services - School Administration	391,118	-	-	-	391,118
Support Services - Central Services	225,784	-	-	-	225,784
Support Services - Operation and Maintenance of Plant	651,015	-	-	-	651,015
Support Services - Student Transportation	-	461,528	-	-	461,528
Total Expenditures	<u>5,406,615</u>	<u>461,528</u>	<u>2,696</u>	<u>263</u>	<u>5,871,102</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	9,060	-	(2,696)	88	6,452
Other Financing Sources (Uses):					
Other Financing Sources - Transfers In	-	-	-	-	-
Other Financing Uses - Transfers Out	-	-	-	-	-
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>NET CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES</b>	9,060	-	(2,696)	88	6,452
Fund Balances - Beginning of Year	<u>253,630</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>26,088</u>	<u>20,844</u>	<u>300,562</u>
<b>FUND BALANCES - END OF YEAR</b>	<u>\$ 262,690</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 23,392</u>	<u>\$ 20,932</u>	<u>\$ 307,014</u>

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
SCHEDULE OF COLLATERAL PLEDGED BY DEPOSITORY FOR PUBLIC FUNDS  
JUNE 30, 2021**

Name of Depository	Description of Pledged Collateral (Maturity)	Fair/Par Market Value June 30, 2021	Safekeeping Agent
Wells Fargo	3132A5EB7 (9/2045)	\$ 21,274	Bank of NY Mellon
Wells Fargo	3138M5LD9 (8/2042)	10,896	Bank of NY Mellon
Wells Fargo	3140F5DA8 (12/2046)	19,688	Bank of NY Mellon
Wells Fargo	31418B3U8 (5/2036)	420,082	Bank of NY Mellon
Wells Fargo	31418CGE8 (2/2047)	16,439	Bank of NY Mellon
		<u>\$ 488,379</u>	
	Total Amount on Deposit	\$ 1,140,398	
	Less: FDIC	<u>(250,000)</u>	
	Uninsured Public Funds	890,398	
	50% Collateral Requirement	445,199	
	Total Pledged	<u>488,379</u>	
	Over (Under) Pledged	<u>\$ 43,180</u>	

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO**  
**PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**  
**EXPLORE ACADEMY**  
**SCHEDULE OF CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS**  
**JUNE 30, 2021**

	Primary Government Wells Fargo
Operating Account	\$ 1,140,398
Reconciling Items	(20,871)
Reconciled Balance at June 30, 2021	1,119,527
Plus: Blended Component Unit (Foundation)	3,728,757
Balance per Statement of Net Position (Unrestricted Cash Only)	\$ 4,848,284



**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
CASH RECONCILIATION  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

	Operational Account 11000	Pupil Transportation 13000	Instructional Materials 14000	Food Services 21000
<b>June 30 2020 Cash (Book Balance)</b>	\$ 696,056	\$ -	\$ 26,088	\$ 27,682
June 30 2020 Payroll Liabilities	(496,698)	-	-	-
June 30 2020 Temporary Interfund Loans	101,339	-	-	-
June 30 2020 Adjustments/Reconciling Differences	-	-	-	-
<b>June 30 2020 Cash Available to Budget</b>	300,697	-	26,088	27,682
2020-2021 Revenue	5,415,675	461,528	-	27,132
2020-2021 Expenditures	(5,413,095)	(193,847)	-	(31,073)
Permanent Cash Transfers/Reversions	-	-	-	-
Adjustments	-	-	-	-
<b>June 30 2021 Cash Available to Budget</b>	303,277	267,681	26,088	23,741
June 30 2021 Payroll Liabilities	653,062	-	-	-
June 30 2021 Temporary Interfund Loans	(243,250)	-	-	-
June 30 2021 Adjustments/Reconciling Differences	-	-	-	-
<b>June 30 2021 Cash (Book Balance)</b>	<u>\$ 713,089</u>	<u>\$ 267,681</u>	<u>\$ 26,088</u>	<u>\$ 23,741</u>
<b>Reconciliation to PED Cash Report Line 7</b>				
June 30 2021 Cash (Book Balance)	\$ 713,089	\$ 267,681	\$ 26,088	\$ 23,741
June 30 2021 Payroll Liabilities	(653,062)	-	-	-
June 30 2021 Temporary Interfund Loans	243,250	-	-	-
Audit Adjustments and Reclassifications	17,552	-	-	-
<b>Line 7 PED Cash Report June 30 2021*</b>	<u>\$ 320,829</u>	<u>\$ 267,681</u>	<u>\$ 26,088</u>	<u>\$ 23,741</u>

\* May include rounding errors when compared to PED Cash Report.

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
CASH RECONCILIATION  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

	Student Activity 23000	Projects Account 24000	State Flowthrough Fund 27000	Local/State Account 29000
<b>June 30 2020 Cash (Book Balance)</b>	\$ 20,844	\$ -	\$ 31,138	\$ 1,636
June 30 2020 Payroll Liabilities	-	(8,447)	-	-
June 30 2020 Temporary Interfund Loans	-	(26,438)	-	-
June 30 2020 Adjustments/Reconciling Differences	-	-	-	-
<b>June 30 2020 Cash Available to Budget</b>	20,844	(34,885)	31,138	1,636
2020-2021 Revenue	351	189,878	23,194	-
2020-2021 Expenditures	(263)	(436,585)	(24,569)	-
Permanent Cash Transfers/Reversions	-	-	-	-
Adjustments	-	-	-	-
<b>June 30 2021 Cash Available to Budget</b>	20,932	(281,592)	29,763	1,636
June 30 2021 Payroll Liabilities	-	56,519	-	-
June 30 2021 Temporary Interfund Loans	-	242,625	625	-
June 30 2021 Adjustments/Reconciling Differences	-	-	-	-
<b>June 30 2021 Cash (Book Balance)</b>	<u>\$ 20,932</u>	<u>\$ 17,552</u>	<u>\$ 30,388</u>	<u>\$ 1,636</u>
<b>Reconciliation to PED Cash Report Line 7</b>				
June 30 2021 Cash (Book Balance)	\$ 20,932	\$ 17,552	\$ 30,388	\$ 1,636
June 30 2021 Payroll Liabilities	-	(56,519)	-	-
June 30 2021 Temporary Interfund Loans	-	(242,625)	(625)	-
Audit Adjustments and Reclassifications	-	(17,552)	-	-
<b>Line 7 PED Cash Report June 30 2021*</b>	<u>\$ 20,932</u>	<u>\$ (299,144)</u>	<u>\$ 29,763</u>	<u>\$ 1,636</u>

\* May include rounding errors when compared to PED Cash Report.

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
CASH RECONCILIATION  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

	Public School Capital Outlay 31200	Capital Improve. HB 33 31600	Capital Improve. SB 9 Local 31701	Capital Improve. SB 9 State Cash 31703
<b>June 30 2020 Cash (Book Balance)</b>	\$ -	\$ 58,921	\$ 98,206	\$ 10,062
June 30 2020 Payroll Liabilities	-	-	-	-
June 30 2020 Temporary Interfund Loans	(74,355)	-	-	-
June 30 2020 Adjustments/Reconciling Differences	-	-	-	-
<b>June 30 2020 Cash Available to Budget</b>	(74,355)	58,921	98,206	10,062
2020-2021 Revenue	421,845	370,351	187,969	-
2020-2021 Expenditures	(347,490)	(424,715)	(282,374)	-
Permanent Cash Transfers/Reversions Adjustments	-	-	-	-
<b>June 30 2021 Cash Available to Budget</b>	-	4,557	3,801	10,062
June 30 2021 Payroll Liabilities	-	-	-	-
June 30 2021 Temporary Interfund Loans	-	-	-	-
June 30 2021 Adjustments/Reconciling Differences	-	-	-	-
<b>June 30 2021 Cash (Book Balance)</b>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 4,557</u>	<u>\$ 3,801</u>	<u>\$ 10,062</u>
<b>Reconciliation to PED Cash Report Line 7</b>				
June 30 2021 Cash (Book Balance)	\$ -	\$ 4,557	\$ 3,801	\$ 10,062
June 30 2021 Payroll Liabilities	-	-	-	-
June 30 2021 Temporary Interfund Loans	-	-	-	-
Audit Adjustments and Reclassifications	-	-	-	-
<b>Line 7 PED Cash Report June 30 2021*</b>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 4,557</u>	<u>\$ 3,801</u>	<u>\$ 10,062</u>

\* May include rounding errors when compared to PED Cash Report.

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
EXPLORE ACADEMY  
CASH RECONCILIATION  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

		Total Primary Government	
<b>June 30 2020 Cash (Book Balance)</b>	\$	970,633	
June 30 2020 Payroll Liabilities		(505,145)	
June 30 2020 Temporary Interfund Loans		546	
June 30 2020 Adjustments/Reconciling Differences		<u>-</u>	
<b>June 30 2020 Cash Available to Budget</b>		466,034	
2020-2021 Revenue		7,097,923	
2020-2021 Expenditures		(7,154,011)	
Permanent Cash Transfers/Reversions		-	
Adjustments		<u>-</u>	
<b>June 30 2021 Cash Available to Budget</b>		409,946	
June 30 2021 Payroll Liabilities		709,581	
June 30 2021 Temporary Interfund Loans		-	
June 30 2021 Adjustments/Reconciling Differences		<u>-</u>	
<b>June 30 2021 Cash (Book Balance)</b>	\$	<u>1,119,527</u>	Per Statement of Net Position Unrestricted Cash Only (excluding Foundation)
<b>Reconciliation to PED Cash Report Line 7</b>			
June 30 2021 Cash (Book Balance)	\$	1,119,527	
June 30 2021 Payroll Liabilities		(709,581)	
June 30 2021 Temporary Interfund Loans		-	
Audit Adjustments and Reclassifications		<u>-</u>	
<b>Line 7 PED Cash Report June 30 2021*</b>	\$	<u>409,946</u>	

\* May include rounding errors when compared to PED Cash Report.

**EXPLORE ACADEMY – LAS VEGAS**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**JUNE 30, 2021**

DRAFT

**EXPLORE ACADEMY – LAS VEGAS  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
JUNE 30, 2021**

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## *Independent Auditor's Report*

To the Governing Board and Management  
Explore Academy – Las Vegas

### *Report on the Financial Statements*

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities and each major fund of Explore Academy – Las Vegas (the School), as of and for the year ended June 30, 2021, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the School's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

### *Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements*

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### *Auditor's Responsibility*

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### *Opinion*

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities and each major fund of Explore Academy – Las Vegas, as of June 30, 2021, and the respective changes in financial position for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

## Other Matters

### *Required Supplementary Information*

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the management's discussion and analysis, budgetary comparison information, and supplemental pension information on pages 3-7 and 24-25 be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquires of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

### *Other Information*

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements that collectively comprise the School's basic financial statements. The financial statement audit results summary and schedule of financial performance are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements and are the responsibility of management. The schedules were derived from, and relate directly to, the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements, and have not been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and, accordingly, we do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on them.

### Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with Government Auditing Standards, we have also issued our report dated January 27, 2022, on our consideration of the School's internal control over financial reporting and our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards in considering the School's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Las Vegas, Nevada  
January 27, 2022



**MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

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**EXPLORE ACADEMY – LAS VEGAS  
MANAGEMENT’S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS  
JUNE 30, 2021**

---

The following discussion and analysis of Explore Academy - Las Vegas provides an overview of the School’s financial activities for the year ended June 30, 2021. As management of Explore Academy – Las Vegas (the School), we encourage readers to consider the information presented here in conjunction with the financial statements and notes. This annual report consists of a series of financial statements. The Statement of Net Position and the Statement of Activities provide information about the activities of the School as a whole and present a longer-term view of the School’s finances. Fund financial statements tell how these services were financed in the short-term, as well as what remains for future spending. Fund financial statements report the School’s operations in more detail than the government-wide statements.

**Financial Highlights**

The School’s has a net position of \$238,080, an increase of \$237,972. Assets consist of cash of \$116,036, receivables of \$51,085, and capital assets of \$166,823. Total revenues were \$1,378,992, an increase of \$915,351 and total expenses were \$31,961,987, an increase of \$849,094. Approximately 62% of total revenue was derived from the Distributive School Account (DSA) provided for operations in the current fiscal year.

**Overview of the Financial Statements**

The School’s basic financial statements are comprised of three components: government-wide financial statements, fund financial statements, and the accompanying notes to the financial statements.

Government- Wide Financial Statements:

The government-wide financial statements are designed to provide readers with a broad overview of the School’s finances, in a manner similar to a private-sector business.

The statement of net position presents information on all of the School’s assets and liabilities, with the difference between the two reported as net position. Over time, increases or decreases in net position may serve as useful indicators of whether the financial position of the School is improving or deteriorating.

The statement of activities presents information showing how the School’s net position changed during the most recent fiscal year. Changes in net position are reported as soon as the underlying event giving rise to the change occurs, regardless of the timing of related cash flows. Thus, revenues and expenses are reported in this statement for some items that will only result in cash flows in future fiscal periods.

Fund Financial Statements:

A fund is established to account for a specific activity or purpose. The School only has governmental funds. Governmental funds are used to account for essentially the same functions reported as governmental activities in the government-wide financial statements. However, unlike the government-wide financial statements, governmental fund financial statements focus on near-term inflows and outflows of spendable resources, as well as balances of spendable resources available at the end of the fiscal year. Such information may be useful in evaluating a government’s near-term financing requirements. Because the governmental fund financial statements focus on near-term spendable resources, and the governmental activities on the government-wide financial statements have a longer-term focus, a reconciliation of the differences between the two is provided following the fund financial statement’s balance sheet and statement of revenues, expenditures and changes in fund balances, respectively.

Notes to the Basic Financial Statements:

The notes to the basic financial statements provide additional information that is essential to a full understanding of the information provided in the government-wide and fund financial statements and should be read with the financial statements.

**EXPLORE ACADEMY – LAS VEGAS  
MANAGEMENT’S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS  
JUNE 30, 2021**

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**The School as a whole**

One important question asked about the School’s finances is: “Is the School better or worse off as a result of the year’s activities?” The information in the government-wide financial statements helps answer this question. These statements include all assets and liabilities using the accrual basis of accounting, which is the basis of accounting used by most private-sector companies.

The change in net position (the difference between total assets and total liabilities) over time is one indicator of whether the School’s financial health is improving or deteriorating. However, consideration should be given to other non-financial factors in making an assessment of the School’s health, such as changes in enrollment, changes in the State’s funding of educational costs and changes in the economy to assess the overall health of the School.

The School’s net position was as follows:

	2021	2020	Change	Percentage
Current assets	\$ 167,121	\$ 333,685	\$ (166,564)	-50%
Capital assets, net	166,823	-	166,823	0%
Total assets	333,944	333,685	259	0%
Deferred outflows of resources	116,049	-	116,049	0%
Current liabilities	211,913	333,577	(121,664)	-36%
Total liabilities	211,913	333,577	(121,664)	-36%
Net position invested in capital assets, net of debt	166,823	-	166,823	0%
Unrestricted	71,257	108	71,149	65879%
Total net position	\$ 238,080	\$ 108	\$ 237,972	220344%

The increase to assets, current liabilities and overall net position is due to Fiscal Year 2021 being the first year of operations for Explore Academy – Las Vegas.

**EXPLORE ACADEMY – LAS VEGAS  
MANAGEMENT’S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS  
JUNE 30, 2021**

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**The School as a whole – continued**

The School’s revenues were as follows:

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Revenue				
State sources	\$ 864,298	\$ -	\$ 864,298	0%
Federal sources	375,175	529,798	(154,623)	-29%
Other sources	<u>139,519</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>139,419</u>	139419%
Total revenue	<u>\$ 1,378,992</u>	<u>\$ 529,898</u>	<u>\$ 849,094</u>	<u>160%</u>

An increase in enrollment constituted an increase in the revenue from the Distributive State Account (DSA) and Federal sources. This increase to enrollment resulted from Fiscal Year 2021 being the school’s first year in operation.

The School’s expenditures were as follows:

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Instruction	\$ 747,867	\$ 7,500	\$ 740,367	9872%
Student support	118	-	118	0%
Instructional support	23,019	15,500	7,519	49%
General administration	10,715	-	10,715	0%
School administration	69,462	351,211	(281,749)	-80%
Central services	16,907	115,102	(98,195)	-85%
Operations and maint. of plant	240,445	40,477	199,968	494%
Food services	13,234	-	13,234	0%
Unallocated depreciation	12,833	-	12,833	0%
Debt service	<u>6,420</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,420</u>	<u>0%</u>
Total expenses	<u>\$ 1,141,020</u>	<u>\$ 529,790</u>	<u>\$ 611,230</u>	<u>115%</u>

Expenses increased due to initial expenditures and hiring of staff to support the enrollment for the school’s first year of enrollment.

**Government – Wide Financial Analysis**

The following analysis has been prepared comparing the results for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021 to the Final school budget:

**EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS VEGAS**  
**BUDGET COMPARISON SCHEDULE (UNAUDITED)**  
**MODIFIED ACCRUAL**  
**FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

	Budget	Actual	Variance Favorable / (Unfavorable)
<b>REVENUE</b>			
Local revenue sources	\$ 2,342,341	\$ 139,519	\$ (2,202,822)
State revenue sources	-	864,298	864,298
Federal revenue sources	669,812	375,175	(294,637)
Total revenue	<u>3,012,153</u>	<u>1,378,992</u>	<u>(1,633,161)</u>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>			
Regular programs:			
Instruction	1,377,340	782,401	594,939
Support services	1,162,098	252,779	909,319
Total regular programs	<u>2,539,438</u>	<u>1,035,180</u>	<u>1,504,258</u>
Special programs:			
Instruction	-	68,999	(68,999)
Support services	-	313,293	(313,293)
Total support services	<u>-</u>	<u>382,292</u>	<u>(382,292)</u>
Other:			
Debt service	-	106,420	(106,420)
Total other	<u>-</u>	<u>106,420</u>	<u>(106,420)</u>
Total expenditures	<u>2,539,438</u>	<u>1,523,892</u>	<u>1,015,546</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures	472,715	(144,900)	(617,615)
<b>OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES)</b>			
Proceeds from notes payable	-	100,000	(100,000)
Net change in fund balances	472,715	(44,900)	(517,615)
FUND BALANCE, beginning of year	108	108	-
FUND BALANCE, end of year	<u>\$ 472,823</u>	<u>\$ (44,792)</u>	<u>\$ (517,615)</u>

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic still looming as the school prepared for the first year of operations, enrollment was under-projected. Less revenue was earned and recognized than originally expected and planned for which required the school to adjust expenses as represented.

**EXPLORE ACADEMY – LAS VEGAS  
MANAGEMENT’S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS  
JUNE 30, 2021**

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**Request for information**

The financial report is designed to provide a general overview of the School’s finances for all those with an interest. Questions concerning any of the information provided in this report or requests for additional financial information should be addressed to the Explore Academy – Las Vegas at 4660 N Rancho, Las Vegas, Nevada 89130, and telephone number (702) 805-0926.

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**BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

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**EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS VEGAS**  
**STATEMENT OF NET POSITION**  
**JUNE 30, 2021**

<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current assets:	
Cash	\$ 116,036
Receivables	51,085
Total current assets	<u>167,121</u>
Noncurrent assets:	
Depreciable capital assets, net	<u>166,823</u>
Total assets	333,944
<b>DEFERRED OUTFLOWS OF RESOURCES</b>	
Pension requirement	116,049
Total assets and deferred outflows of resources	<u>449,993</u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Current liabilities:	
Accounts payable	9,395
Accrued liabilities	202,518
Total current liabilities	<u>211,913</u>
Total liabilities and deferred inflows of resources	<u>211,913</u>
<b>NET POSITION</b>	
Invested in capital assets, net of debt	166,823
Unrestricted	71,257
Total net position	<u><u>\$ 238,080</u></u>

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*The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.*



**EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS VEGAS  
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES  
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES	Governmental Activities
Instruction:	
Regular instruction	\$ 678,868
Special instruction	68,999
Total instruction	747,867
Support services:	
Student support	118
Instructional support	23,019
General administration	10,715
School administration	69,462
Central services	16,907
Operations and maintenance of plant	240,445
Food services	13,234
Unallocated depreciation	12,833
Total support services	386,733
Debt service:	
Interest expense	6,420
Total expenditures	1,141,020
PROGRAM REVENUE	
Operating grants	
Special programs	382,292
Total operating grants	382,292
GENERAL REVENUE	
Distributive school account	857,181
Other sources	139,519
Total general revenue	996,700
CHANGE IN NET POSITION	237,972
NET POSITION, Beginning of year	108
NET POSITION, End of year	\$ 238,080

*The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.*

**EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS VEGAS**  
**BALANCE SHEET - GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS**  
**JUNE 30, 2021**

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	<u>General Fund</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Cash	\$ 116,036
Receivables	51,085
Total assets	<u>\$ 167,121</u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Accounts payable	\$ 9,395
Accrued liabilities	202,518
Total liabilities	<u>211,913</u>
<b>FUND BALANCES</b>	
Unassigned	<u>(44,792)</u>
Total fund balances	<u>(44,792)</u>
Total liabilities and fund balances	<u>\$ 167,121</u>

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*The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.*

**EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS VEGAS  
RECONCILIATION OF THE BALANCE SHEET OF GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS  
TO THE STATEMENT OF NET POSITION  
JUNE 30, 2021**

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**Total fund balances - governmental funds** \$ (44,792)

Amounts reported for governmental activities in the statement of net position are different because:

Capital assets, net of related depreciation, are not reported in the governmental funds financial statements because they are not current financial resources, but they are reported in the statement of net position.

Capital assets not reported	179,656	
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>(12,833)</u>	166,823

Deferred outflows of resources are not included in governmental fund financial statements.

Deferred outflows of resources - pension requirement		116,049
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<b>Total net position - governmental activities</b>		<u><u>\$ 238,080</u></u>
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**EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS VEGAS**  
**STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES -**  
**GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS**  
**FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

	General Fund	Special Revenue Fund	Total
<b>REVENUES</b>			
State sources	\$ 857,181	\$ 7,117	\$ 864,298
Federal sources	-	375,175	375,175
Other sources	139,519	-	139,519
Total revenues	<u>996,700</u>	<u>382,292</u>	<u>1,378,992</u>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>			
Programs:			
Instruction:	<u>782,401</u>	<u>68,999</u>	<u>851,400</u>
Support services:			
Student support	118	-	118
Instructional support	7,519	15,500	23,019
General administration	10,715	-	10,715
School administration	22,091	59,887	81,978
Central services	1,234	15,673	16,907
Operations and maintenance of plant	211,102	208,999	420,101
Food services	-	13,234	13,234
Total support services	<u>252,779</u>	<u>313,293</u>	<u>566,072</u>
Debt service:			
Principal payment on long-term debt	100,000	-	100,000
Interest expense	6,420	-	6,420
Total debt service	<u>106,420</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>106,420</u>
Total expenditures	<u>1,141,600</u>	<u>382,292</u>	<u>1,523,892</u>
Excess of revenue over (under) expenditures	(144,900)	-	(144,900)
<b>OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES)</b>			
Proceeds from note payable	<u>100,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>100,000</u>
Net change in fund balances	(44,900)	-	(44,900)
Fund Balances, beginning of year	<u>108</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>108</u>
Fund Balances, end of year	<u>\$ (44,792)</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ (44,792)</u>

*The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.*

**EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS VEGAS**

**RECONCILIATION OF THE STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN  
FUND BALANCES OF THE GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS TO THE STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES  
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

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**Net change in fund balances - governmental funds** \$ (44,900)

Amounts reported for governmental activities in the statement of activities are different because:

The acquisition of capital assets are reported in the governmental funds as expenditures. However, for governmental activities, those costs are shown in the statement of net position and are allocated over their estimated useful lives as annual depreciation expenses in the statement of activities. This is the amount that the current year's depreciation expenses exceeded the capital asset purchases in the current period.

Expenditures for capital assets	\$ 179,656	
Less current year depreciation	<u>(12,833)</u>	166,823

Some expenses reported in the statement of activities do not require the use of current financial resources and, therefore, are not reported as expenditures in governmental funds:

Change in net pension liability and related deferred outflows and inflows of resources		<u>116,049</u>
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**Change in net position of governmental activities** \$ 237,972

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**EXPLORE ACADEMY – LAS VEGAS  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
JUNE 30, 2021**

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**NOTE 1 – ORGANIZATION AND CHARTER**

Explore Academy - Las Vegas (School) is a Non-Profit entity established in 2018 under the laws applicable in the State of Nevada to operate a charter school in accordance with Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 386.527 (subsequently replaced by NRS 388A.270). The Nevada State Public Charter School Authority (Authority or SPCSA) agreed to sponsor the establishment and operations of the school under an approved charter contract with an initial term of six years, based on certain conditions being met during the term of the contract, with the most recent renewal term started July 2020 and ending in June 2026, and may be amended from time to time.

The School serves grades 6-10 and provides students with an innovative educational system, which focuses on subject mastery, college preparation, and student-driven academic choice. Students are offered the opportunity to create a customized learning pathway, thereby generating student-ownership and a stronger personal motivation for success.

**NOTE 2 – SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

The financial statements of the School have been prepared in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America as applied to governmental units. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) is the accepted standard setting body for establishing governmental accounting and financial reporting principles. The following is a summary of the more significant policies:

**Reporting Entity**

The accompanying financial statements include all of the activities that comprise the financial reporting entity of the School. The School has established a Governing Board (Board), which is legally separate and fiscally independent from other governing bodies; therefore, the School is a primary government, and the School is not reported as a component unit by any other government unit. The accounting policies of the School conform to generally accepted accounting principles as applicable to governmental entities. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) is the accepted standard-setting body for establishing governmental accounting and financial principles.

**Basis of Presentation: Government-wide and Fund Financial Statements**

The accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with GASB Codification, Section 2200 (previously referred to as GASB Statement No. 34, Basic Financial Statements – and Management’s Discussion and Analysis – for State and Local Governments (GASB 34)). The School’s basic financial statements consist of both government-wide financial statements and fund financial statements. Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require the School to apply all applicable pronouncements of GASB. The school also follows guidance issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) in the Accounting Standard Codification (ASC) to the extent that the pronouncements do not conflict with pronouncements issued by GASB.

## NOTE 2 – SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

### Basis of Presentation: Government-wide and Fund Financial Statements (Continued)

#### Government-Wide Financial Statements

The government-wide financial statements (i.e., the statement of net position and the statement of activities) report information on all of the nonfiduciary activities of the primary government. The statement of activities presents a comparison between direct expenses and program revenue for each function of the School's governmental activities. Direct expenses are those that are clearly identifiable with a specific program or function. The School does not charge indirect expenses to programs or functions. Program revenues include grants and contributions that are restricted to meeting the operational or capital requirements of a particular program or function. Revenue that is not classified as program revenue is presented as general revenue.

#### Fund Financial Statements

The major governmental funds are reported as separate columns in the fund financial statements. This requires that each fund be treated as a separate accounting entity and that the operations of each fund are accounted for with a separate set of self-balancing accounts that comprise its assets, liabilities, fund balance, revenue, and expenditures. Governmental resources are allocated to and accounted for in individual funds based upon the purposes for which they are to be spent and the means by which spending activities are controlled.

#### **Measurement Focus and Basis of Accounting**

The government-wide financial statements are reported using the economic resources measurement focus and the accrual basis of accounting. Revenues are recorded when earned and expenses are recorded when a liability is incurred, regardless of the timing of related cash flows. Grants and similar items are recognized as revenue as soon as all eligibility requirements imposed by the provider have been met and the School has been notified that the funds are available to be received.

Governmental fund financial statements are reported using the current financial resources measurement focus and the modified accrual basis of accounting. Revenues are recognized as soon as they are both measurable and available. "Measurable" means that the amount of the transaction can be determined. "Available" means that the amount is collectible within the current period or soon enough thereafter to pay liabilities incurred in the current period. In general, expenditures are recorded when liabilities are incurred. The exception to this rule is for payments of principal and interest on debt service or capital leases, which are recorded when payment is due.

All of the School's funds are governmental funds. The food service fund is not considered an enterprise fund as the pricing policies are not high enough to recover the related costs. The School reports the following major governmental funds:

**General Fund:** The School's general operating fund used to account for all financial resources and costs of operations traditionally associated with governments, which are not required to be accounted for in other funds.

**Special Revenue Fund:** These funds are used to account for the proceeds of special revenue sources that are restricted or committed by law or administrative action to expenditure for specific purposes other than debt service or capital projects, including special education and restricted grants.

**NOTE 2 – SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)**

**Budgets and Budgetary Information**

The School is required by the Nevada Department of Education (Department) to adopt a final budget no later than May 1 of each year under NRS 388A.366 but is not required by the Department to augment the budget during the year. Further, the School is not required under the statute to adopt a final budget or otherwise comply with any provisions of Chapter 354 of the NRS. In essence, augmentation of the School's budget is neither required nor prohibited.

**Cash and Cash Restrictions**

The School defines cash and cash equivalents as cash and short-term investments with an initial maturity of three months or less.

**Receivables**

Receivables generally include Distributive School Account (DSA) balances due from the state, in addition to other State and Federal grant revenues related to the special revenue fund. The School considers the balance of receivables to be fully-collectible; accordingly, an allowance for uncollectible accounts has not been recorded.

**Capital Assets**

Capital assets are defined by the School as assets with an initial individual cost exceeding \$5,000 and an estimated useful life in excess of one year, or that are material in the aggregate for new furnishings or assets replaced together as a unit. Such assets are recorded at historical cost or an estimated historical cost if purchased or constructed. Donated capital assets are recorded at their estimated fair market value on the date of donation. Costs of normal repair or maintenance that do not add value or materially extend asset life are not capitalized. Depreciation on all depreciable capital assets is provided on the straight-line basis over the a period of seven year.

**Accrued Salaries and Benefits**

Employee compensation earned but not paid by June 30, 2021, has been accrued as liabilities and shown as expenses for the current year. Paid time off (PTO) is not paid out upon termination and, accordingly, no accruals for such time has been recorded.

**Defined Benefit Pension Plan**

For purposes of measuring the net pension liability, deferred outflows of resources, deferred inflows of resources and pension expense, information about the fiduciary net position of the Public Employees' Retirement System of Nevada (PERS) and additions to/deductions from PERS's fiduciary net position have been determined on the same basis as they are reported by PERS. For this purpose, benefit payments (including refunds of employee contributions) are recognized when due and payable in accordance with the benefit terms. Investments are reported at fair value.



## NOTE 2 – SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

### Deferred Outflows and Inflows of Resources

In addition to assets, a separate section is reported for deferred outflows of resources. This separate financial statement element, deferred outflows of resources, represents a consumption of net position that applies to a future period and will not be recognized as an outflow of resources (expense/expenditure) until then. The changes in proportion and differences between employer contributions and the proportionate share of contributions as well as contributions made after the measurement period for pensions qualify for reporting in this category.

In addition to liabilities, a separate section is reported for deferred inflows of resources. This separate financial statement element, deferred inflows of resources, represents an acquisition of net position that applies to a future period and will not be recognized as an inflow of resources (revenue) until that time. Differences between expected and actual experience and between projected and actual investment earnings on pension plan investments qualify for reporting in this category.

### Net Position and Fund balance

In the government-wide financial statements, net position is classified into three components:

**Invested in Capital Assets, Net of Related Debt:** This is the component of net position that reports the difference between the capital assets less both the accumulated depreciation and the outstanding balance of debt, excluding unexpended proceeds, that is directly attributable to the acquisition, construction, or improvement of those assets.

**Restricted Net Position:** This is the component of net position that reports the constraints placed on the use of assets by constitutional provisions, enabling legislation, or because of constraints that are externally imposed by creditors, grantors, contributors, or the laws and regulations of other governments.

**Unrestricted Net Position:** All other assets that do not meet the definition of “invested in capital assets, net of related debt” or “restricted net position”.

In the fund financial statements, the classifications of fund balance represent amounts that are not subject to appropriation or are legally segregated for a specific purpose, and are classified into five components:

**Nonspendable fund balance:** These items are legally or contractually required to be maintained intact and are not in a spendable form, such as prepaid expenses.

**Restricted fund balance:** These amounts are restricted for use toward a specific purpose by constitutional provisions, enabling legislation, or because of constraints that are externally imposed by creditors, grantors, contributors, or the laws or regulations of other governments.

**Committed fund balance:** These amounts can only be used for specific purposes as set forth by the School Board. The Board must take formal action, prior to the end of the reporting period, in order to establish an ending fund balance commitment for any specific purpose. Formal Board action is also required to modify or rescind an established commitment.

**NOTE 2 – SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)**

**Net Position and Fund balance (Continued)**

**Assigned fund balance:** Assignments are neither restrictions nor commitments, and represent the School's intent to use funds for a specific purpose. These assignments, however, are not legally binding and are meant to reflect intended future use of the School's ending fund balance. The School Board and Management have the responsibility of assigning amounts of ending fund balance.

**Unassigned fund balance:** The residual classification for the General Fund that is available to spend.

When an expenditure is incurred, and both restricted and unrestricted resources are available, the portion of the fund balance that was restricted for purposes shall be reduced first. If no restricted resources exist, then the unrestricted fund balance shall be reduced. Furthermore, when an expenditure is incurred for purposes which amounts of committed, assigned, or unassigned are considered to have been spent, and any of these unrestricted fund balance classifications could be used, they are considered spent in the above order.

**Use of Estimates**

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates, assumptions, and judgments that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures. Accordingly, actual results could differ from those estimates. The estimated useful lives of depreciable capital assets is considered to be a significant estimate of the School.

**New Accounting Pronouncement**

In June 2017, the GASB issued Statement No. 87, Leases, which establishes a single model for lease accounting based on the foundational principle that leases are financings of the right to use an underlying asset. Under this statement, a lessee is required to recognize a lease liability and an intangible right-to-use lease asset, and a lessor is required to recognize a lease receivable and a deferred inflow of resources, thereby enhancing the relevance and consistency of information about governments' leasing activities. This statement is effective for annual reporting periods beginning after December 15, 2019, with early adoption permitted. In May 2020, the GASB issued Statement No. 95 which the effective date of this pronouncement by 18 months due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. The School is currently evaluating the impact the adoption of this statement will have on its financial statements.

In May 2020, the GASB issued Statement No. 96, Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements, which provides guidance on accounting and financial reporting for subscription-based information technology arrangements (SBITAs) for government end-users (governments). This statement results in a right-of-use subscription intangible asset and a corresponding liability for such arrangements as defined. This statement is effective for fiscal years beginning after June 15, 2022, with early adoption encouraged. The School is currently evaluating the impact the adoption of this statement will have on its financial statements.

**EXPLORE ACADEMY – LAS VEGAS**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**  
**JUNE 30, 2021**

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**NOTE 3 – CONCENTRATION OF CREDIT RISK**

During the 2003 Nevada Legislative session, legislation was enacted that permitted the creation of a statewide collateral pool that would provide sufficient collateral guaranteeing the public deposits of Nevada state and local agencies (NRS 356.360). The statewide program is centralized and coordinated by the Office of the State Treasurer. Under the pool, participating financial institutions are required to maintain collateral securities having a fair market value that is at least 102% of the amount of the aggregate uninsured ledger balances of public money held by the depository. State and local agency participation is voluntary.

Financial institutions that participate require a signed collateral security agreement and approval by the State Treasurer. The School’s banking institution is a participant in the statewide collateral pool; however, as of June 30, 2021, the School had not yet elected to participate.

The School has concentrated its credit risk for cash by maintaining deposits in financial institutions which, at times, may exceed amounts covered by insurance provided by the U.S. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). The School has not experienced any losses in such accounts and believes it is not exposed to any significant credit risk to cash. As of June 30, 2021, the School did not have any cash in excess of the federally insured limit.

**NOTE 4 – CAPITAL ASSETS**

A summary of changes in capital assets from governmental activities for the year ended June 30, 2021 is as follows:

	Balance June 30, 2020	Additions	Deletions	Balance June 30, 2021
Cost of depreciable capital assets:				
Furniture and fixtures	-	179,656	-	179,656
Less: accumulated depreciation:				
Furniture and fixtures	-	(12,833)	-	(12,833)
Net depreciable capital assets	-	166,823	-	166,823

Depreciation expense was not charged to activities as the School considers its assets to impact multiple activities and allocation is not practical. Total depreciation for the year ended June 30, 2021 amounted to \$12,833.

**NOTE 5 – OPERATING LEASES**

The school has entered into a non-cancelable operating lease agreement for its campus facility. The lease agreement calls for monthly payments ranging from \$18,750 to \$52,000 per month and including a remaining term of approximately 1.5 years. The lease may be amended from time to time based on the need for additional space or other uses.

**EXPLORE ACADEMY – LAS VEGAS**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**  
**JUNE 30, 2021**

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**NOTE 5 – OPERATING LEASES (Continued)**

The future minimum lease payments under these leases are as follows:

<u>Year Ended June 30:</u>	<u>Amount</u>
2022	\$ 624,000
2023	338,000

**NOTE 6 – NOTE PAYABLE**

During the year, the School received loan proceeds of \$100,000 bearing 9% interest. The loan matured in May 2021 and the school repaid the loan in full at the time. As of June 30, 2021, the School had no further note obligations.

**NOTE 7 – DEFINED BENEFITS PENSION PLAN**

**Plan Description**

The School is a public employer participating in the Public Employees Retirement System of the State of Nevada (PERS), a defined benefit cost-sharing multiple-employer program, and all employees considered to be full-time equivalents (FTE) of 50% or more are covered under the system. The System is administered to provide a reasonable base income to qualified employees who have been employed by a public employer and whose earnings capacities have been removed or substantially impaired by age or disability.

**Benefits Provided**

Benefits, as required by statute, are determined by the number of years of accredited service at the time of retirement and the member's highest average compensation in any 36 consecutive months, with special provisions for members entering the System on or after January 1, 2010. Benefit payments to which participants may be entitled under the plan include pension benefits, disability benefits and survivor benefits.

Monthly benefit allowances for members are computed at 2.5% of average compensation for each accredited year of service prior to July 1, 2001. For service earned on and after July 1, 2001, this factor is 2.67% of average compensation. For members entering the System on or after January 1, 2010, there is a 2.5% service time factor and for members entering the System on or after July 1, 2015, there is a 2.25% factor. The System offers several alternatives to the unmodified service retirement allowance which, in general, allows the retired employee to accept a reduced service retirement allowance payable monthly during his or her lifetime and various optional monthly payments to a named beneficiary after his or her death.

**NOTE 7 – DEFINED BENEFITS PENSION PLAN (Continued)**

**Vesting**

Members are eligible for retirement at age 65 with 5 years of service, at age 60 with 10 years of service or at any age with 30 years of service for members enrolled prior to January 1, 2010. Members enrolled on or after January 1, 2010 are eligible for retirement at age 65 with 5 years of service, at age 62 with 10 years of service, and at any age with 30 years of service. Members who entered the System on or after July 1, 2015 are eligible for retirement at age 65 with 5 years of service, at age 62 with 10 years of service, at age 55 with 30 years of service, or any age with 33 1/3 years of service.

The normal ceiling limitation on monthly benefits allowances is 75% of average compensation. However, a member who has an effective date of membership before July 1, 1985, is entitled to a benefit of up to 90% of average compensation. Members become fully vested as to benefits upon completion of five years of service. Members become fully vested as to benefits upon completion of five years of service.

**Contributions**

The authority for establishing and amending the obligation to make contributions and member contribution rates is set by statute. New hires, in agencies which did not elect the Employer-Pay Contribution (EPC) plan prior to July 1, 1983, have the option of selecting one of two contribution plans. In one plan, contributions are shared equally by employer and employee. In the other plan, employees can take a reduced salary and have contributions made by the employer (EPC).

The System's basic funding policy provides for periodic contributions at a level pattern of cost as a percentage of salary throughout an employee's working lifetime in order to accumulate sufficient assets to pay benefits when due. The System receives an actuarial valuation on an annual basis indicating the contribution rates required to fund the System on an actuarial reserve basis.

Contributions actually made are in accordance with the required rates established by the Nevada Legislature. These statutory rates are increased or decreased pursuant to NRS 286.421 and 286.450. The actuarial funding method used is the Entry Age Normal Cost Method. It is intended to meet the funding objective and results in a relatively level long-term contribution requirement as a percentage of salary.

For the year ended June 30, 2020, the statutory employee/employer plan matching rate was 15.25% while the employer-pay contribution rate was 29.25%.

**Deferred Outflows of Resources**

The deferred outflows of resources recognized by the School consisted of \$116,049 related to contributions subsequent to the measurement date.

**Investment Policy**

The System's policies which determine the investment portfolio target asset allocation are established by the Retirement Board. The asset allocation is reviewed annually and is designed to meet the future risk and return needs of the System.

**EXPLORE ACADEMY – LAS VEGAS  
 NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)  
 JUNE 30, 2021**

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**NOTE 7 – DEFINED BENEFITS PENSION PLAN (Continued)**

**Investment Policy (Continued)**

The following was the Retirement Board’s adopted policy target asset allocation as of June 30, 2020:

<u>Asset Class</u>	<u>Target Allocation</u>	<u>Long-term Geometric Expected Real Rate of Return*</u>
Domestic equity	42%	5.50%
International equity	18%	5.50%
Domestic fixed income	28%	0.75%
Private markets	12%	6.65%

\*As of June 30, 2020, PERS’ long-term inflation assumption was 2.75%.

**Additional Information**

Additional information supporting the Schedule of Employer Allocations and the Schedule of Pension Amounts by Employer is located in the PERS Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) available on the PERS website at [www.nvpers.org](http://www.nvpers.org) under Quick Links – Publications. That report may also be obtained by writing to Public Employees Retirement System of Nevada, 693 West Nye Lane, Carson City, Nevada 89703 or by calling 775-687-4200.

**NOTE 8 – NET POSITION RECONCILIATION FOR GASB 68**

The following reconciles the net position from the government-wide financial statements to an adjusted net position, which excludes balances directly related to GASB 68 pension reporting requirements, as of June 30, 2021:

Net position including GASB 68 adjustment	\$ 238,080
Less: deferred outflows of resources	<u>(116,049)</u>
Net position without GASB 68 adjustment	<u><u>\$ 122,031</u></u>

**NOTE 9 – EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION (EMO)**

In July 2020, the School entered into an agreement with Explore Learning Network (ELN) to provide educational and administrative management services. The EMO is responsible for providing educational services to students, managing and operating the school, and maintaining the related campus facility. For the year ended June 30, 2021, the School did not pay management fees to the EMO; however, the School paid approximately \$90,000 to ELN for consulting, public relations, and training services to assist in the establishment of the school. In addition, the school paid ELN \$195,534 as reimbursement for expenditures made by the EMO on the School’s behalf. ELN donated an additional \$137,684 to the school, which included \$99,107 in rent payments made on behalf of the School.

**NOTE 10 – SUBSEQUENT EVENTS (Continued)**

Subsequent events have been evaluated through January 27, 2022, which is the date the financial statements were available to be issued. No additional events were identified that would require additional disclosure.

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**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**

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**EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS VEGAS  
 BUDGET COMPARISON SCHEDULE  
 MODIFIED ACCRUAL  
 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

	Budget	Actual	Variance Favorable / (Unfavorable)	Percentage
<b>REVENUE</b>				
Local revenue sources	\$ 2,342,341	\$ 139,519	\$ (2,202,822)	-94%
State revenue sources	-	864,298	864,298	0%
Federal revenue sources	669,812	375,175	(294,637)	-44%
Total revenue	<u>3,012,153</u>	<u>1,378,992</u>	<u>(1,633,161)</u>	<u>-54%</u>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Regular programs:				
Instruction	1,377,340	782,401	594,939	43%
Support services	1,162,098	252,779	909,319	78%
Total regular programs	<u>2,539,438</u>	<u>1,035,180</u>	<u>1,504,258</u>	<u>59%</u>
Special programs:				
Instruction	-	68,999	(68,999)	0%
Support services	-	313,293	(313,293)	0%
Total special programs	<u>-</u>	<u>382,292</u>	<u>(382,292)</u>	<u>0%</u>
Other:				
Debt service	-	106,420	(106,420)	0%
Total expenditures	<u>2,539,438</u>	<u>1,523,892</u>	<u>1,015,546</u>	<u>40%</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures	472,715	(144,900)	(617,615)	-131%
<b>OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES)</b>				
Proceeds from note payable	-	100,000	(100,000)	100%
Net change in fund balances	472,715	(44,900)	(517,615)	-109%
FUND BALANCE, beginning of year	108	108	-	0%
FUND BALANCE, end of year	<u>\$ 472,823</u>	<u>\$ (44,792)</u>	<u>\$ (517,615)</u>	<u>-109%</u>

**EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS VEGAS  
 SUPPLEMENTAL CONTRIBUTION SCHEDULE  
 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

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<u>Fiscal year ended June 30:*</u>	<u>Contractually required contribution</u>	<u>Contributions in relation to the contractually required contribution</u>	<u>Contribution deficiency (excess)</u>	<u>School's covered-employee payroll</u>	<u>Contributions as a percentage of covered-employee payroll</u>
2021	\$ 116,049	\$ 116,049	\$ -	\$ 537,503	21.6%

\* Fiscal year 2021 was the first year of implementation. Therefore, only one year is shown.

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**EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS VEGAS  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT AUDIT RESULTS SUMMARY  
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

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1	School name	Explore Academy - Las Vegas
2	School year ended	2021
3	Year of operations	2021
4	Independent auditor	Ellsworth & Stout, LLC
5	Cash	116,036
6	Current assets	167,121
7	Noncurrent assets	166,823
8	Deferred outflows	116,049
9	Current liabilities	211,913
10	Noncurrent liabilities	-
11	PERS pension liability	-
12	Deferred inflows	-
13	Revenues	1,378,992
14	Expenditures	1,141,020
15	Annual principal	-
16	Interest expense	6,420
17	Depreciation expense	12,833
18	Outstanding loan	No
19	Debt default	No

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**EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS VEGAS  
SCHEDULE OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

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	<u>Standard:</u>	<u>Result:</u>	<u>Meets or Exceeds?</u>
<i>Near-Term Financial Indicators:</i>			
Current ratio	1.1 or greater	0.8	NO
Unrestricted days cash-on-hand	60 days or more	37	NO
Debt default	Should be NO	NO	YES
<i>Sustainability Indicators:</i>			
Aggregate 3 year total margin	Positive	12.47%	YES
Current year total margin	Positive	17.26%	YES
Debt-to-asset ratio (net of pension liability)	0.90 or less	0.63	NO
Multi-year cash flow	Positive	116,036	YES
One-year cash flow	Positive	115,928	YES
Debt-service coverage ratio (net of GASB 68 pension adjustment)	1.1 or greater	N/A	YES

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**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR’S REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING AND ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS BASED ON AN AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS PERFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH *GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS***

To the Governing Body and Management  
Explore Academy – Las Vegas

We have audited, in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, the financial statements of the governmental activities and each major fund of Explore Academy – Las Vegas (the School) as of and for the year ended June 30, 2021, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise Explore Academy – Las Vegas’ basic financial statements, and have issued our report thereon dated January 27, 2022.

**Internal Control Over Financial Reporting**

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered Explore Academy – Las Vegas’ internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Explore Academy – Las Vegas’ internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of Explore Academy – Las Vegas’ internal control.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the preceding paragraph and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that have not been identified. However, as described in the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs, we did identify certain deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses and significant deficiencies.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. A material weakness is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity’s financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. We consider the deficiency described in the accompanying schedule of findings and responses as item 2021-001 to be a material weaknesses.

A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance. We consider the deficiencies described in the accompany schedule of findings and responses as items 2021-002 and 2021-003 to be significant deficiencies.

**Compliance and Other Matters**

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether Explore Academy – Las Vegas’ financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the determination of financial statement amounts. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

**School’s Response to Findings**

The School’s response to the findings identified in our audit is described in the accompanying schedule of findings and responses. The School’s response was not subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and, accordingly, we express no opinion on it.

## **Purpose of this Report**

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the School's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the School's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.

Las Vegas, Nevada  
January 27, 2022

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**EXPLORE ACADEMY – LAS VEGAS  
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RESPONSES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

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**2021-001 – Improper Accounting Classifications**

**Description:**

During the audit, there were a significant number of improperly classified transactions noted that were not corrected in a timely and accurate manner. This included the following:

- Debt payment being recorded to expense rather than against a liability account
- CSP grant revenues recorded as loan proceed income
- CSP expenditures being recorded entirely to management fee expense account rather than broken out to the appropriate objects and functions
- Nearly all grant revenue being recorded to a single account rather than being appropriately segregated
- Improper fund accounting between the general and special fund for grant related revenues and expenditures
- An incomplete allocation of expenditures to one smaller grant

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the School provided adequate training and supervision to ensure that transactions are recorded properly and corrections are made, if any, in a timely manner. It is also recommended that the school, including management, become more familiar with the state chart of accounts and related requirements to ensure the proper classification of transactions in accordance with State reporting guidelines.

**Management Response:**

The school will immediately adjust its financial oversight to address the specific issues raised within this finding. The school will expand the capacity of its business office through the addition of a financial director in addition to its contracted business manager. The school will further contract with Ellsworth and Stout, or similar firm, for financial consultation services to ensure that best accounting practices have been incorporated to ensure that the school's financial systems are accurate, correctly organized, and compliant with all local, state, and federal requirements.

**2021-002 – Improper Cut-Off Procedures**

**Description:**

During the audit, we noted transactions related to accounts payable and accounts receivable that were not recorded in the proper year. An expense was recorded in fiscal year 2022 that was incurred and should have been recorded in fiscal year 2021. Grant revenues earned during fiscal year 2021 and received after year end were not appropriately included in accounts receivable and revenues in the fiscal year 2021.

In addition, the accrued liabilities related to the pension obligation was understated due to incorrect tracking and recording of pension expenses and liabilities. This included pension deductions being withheld for employees who elected to participate in the employer only pension plan, which provides that the employer pay 100 percent of the pension obligation without any deduction from the employee. As a corresponding observation, there was no evidence available for one employee's pay rate change during the fiscal year, though such approval may have occurred.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the School review and update its procedures related to its financial close process to ensure the proper recording of financial activities to the correct period and the completeness and accuracy of all transactions, especially as they pertain to payroll and related benefits.

**EXPLORE ACADEMY – LAS VEGAS  
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RESPONSES (Continued)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021**

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**2021-002 – Improper Cut-Off Procedures (Continued)**

**Management Response:**

The school will immediately adjust its financial oversight to address the specific issues raised within this finding. The school will establish a contractual relationship with a reputable accounting firm, for the current fiscal year (and future years as needed) to ensure that the end-of-year closeout of the school's finances is performed in accordance with proper accounting procedures to ensure comprehensive financial compliance.

**2021-003 – Lack of Segregation of Duties**

**Description:**

Due to the limited number of personnel performing accounting functions, there is a lack of segregation of duties over accounting functions. As a result, the School may not be able to prevent errors or misappropriations, and there is a higher risk that error or misappropriation could occur and not be detected within a timely period. Such functions might include improper review and approval of journal entries, detailed review of financial reports by an individual with appropriate knowledge; skills; and experience, and proper review for off-book transactions such as in-kind revenues and expenditures.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the School review its policies and control procedures, including documentation of such, to ensure that the controls are properly designed to segregate duties between those having custody of assets or access to them; those that review, approve, or authorize transactions; and those that are involved in the recordkeeping process.

For small organizations, compensating controls may be implemented to assist where segregation of duties is impractical due to significant costs or other obstacles. Such compensating controls might include the board comparing a detailed and carefully prepared budget to actual financial performance on a monthly basis, an individual outside of the accounting department reviewing all journal entries made and providing evidence of such reviews, using knowledgeable personnel with the appropriate skillset for detailed reviews of financial information; or using third-party providers on a part-time or as needed basis to review accounting information and reports.

**Management Response:**

The school will perform a comprehensive review and revision, as needed, of its internal control procedures to ensure that such controls allow for appropriate review and approval of all transactions. This will include a review of the roles and responsibilities of the local school personnel to ensure that there is clear segregation of duties and an organized work flow for monitoring and managing the school's financial workflow. Further, this review will include additional training of said personnel to ensure that proper internal control procedures are followed. The final draft of these procedures will be reviewed by an independent third-party financial consultant prior to implementation.

In addition, the school will provide a more comprehensive report set for board review, both in the financial data shown and in the explanation of the data by qualified personnel.