
**Nevada Achievement School District
Operators Application Review Process 2016**

November 2016

Presentation Overview

Review Process Sought to Achieve Rigor, Equity, and Consistency

- The review process consisted of three phases – (1) the initial review phase, (2) the supplemental request phase and (3) the interview phase – which sought to determine whether applicants did or did not meet a set of application standards through a rigorous, objective review process.
-

Third-Party Review Team Consisted of Charter School Experts

- The third-party application review team, which consisted of a set of diverse charter school experts with extensive experience, was recruited through a partnership between the Nevada ASD and the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.
 - In the review process, each reviewer was assigned to assess applicants against academic or financial/organizational standards based on each reviewer's areas of expertise.
-

Authorization Decisions Were Rooted in Thorough Deliberation

- Of the six applicants NV ASD received for the 2016 application cycle
 - Two (Futuro Academy and Democracy Prep) were approved for authorization.
 - One (Celerity Schools) was conditionally approved.
 - Two (ASPIRE Schools and Pathways in Education) were denied.

Three Phases of the Review Process

Before any recommendations were provided on whether applicants should or should not be approved for authorization, three phases took place; each phase sought to identify on a binary scale whether the applicants did or did not meet a set of application standards.

Phase of Review Process

Details on the Review Phase

1

Initial Review Phase

- Review team reviewed applications, inclusive of (1) application narrative, (2) resumes of proposed leaders, and (3) past performance data for experienced applicants.
- Reviewers used online, collaborative software to determine whether applicants did or did not meet application standards and communicate with other applicants when evaluating applicants against a set of standards.
- Coordinators held conference calls with reviewers to discuss areas of misalignment between reviewers and work towards consensus on each application.

2

Supplemental Request Phase

- Reviewers identified areas where additional information would (a) clarify application responses or (b) address open questions for the applications.
- Applicants submitted responses to the requests, which were reviewed by the review team's generalist reviewer.

3

Interview Phase

- Generalist reviewer and review coordinators worked to identify key areas for interview questions
- Superintendent-in-residence of the NV ASD held in-person or video interviews with all applicants to address questions from the review team as well as the Department's questions.

Third-Party Review Team of Charter School Experts

In collaboration with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, the NV ASD recruited a strong team, which consisted of individuals with extensive and diverse backgrounds working with charter schools, uniquely positioning them to engage in a rigorous review process.

Recruiting a Team of Experts

- Teamed with NACSA to recruit a team of charter school experts with diverse experiences.
- The review team included representatives across these sectors:
 - Three (3) investors in national school choice and quality efforts
 - Five (5) current or former State authorizers
 - One (1) school quality and choice advocacy leader

Assigning Reviewer Roles Based on their Expertise

- Reviewers were assigned to evaluate applicants against academic or financial/org. standards based on each reviewers expertise.
- Reviewers reviewed the same standards across all applications to ensure fairness and consistency.

Leveraging a Generalist Reviewer

- One member of the review team acted as the “generalist reviewer”.
- The generalist reviewer
 - Evaluated each application for coherence.
 - Assisted in the development of the supplemental requests for each applicant.

Systems to Ensure Rigor and Consistency

Communication and Follow-Up with Reviewers and Applicants

While collaboration within the review team allowed reviewers to come to a more unified, rigorous assessment of each applicant, the second and third phases of the application process, allowed the NV ASD and review team to pose important questions to each applicant.

System to Ensure Rigor

Details

Collaboration within the Review Team

- Using web based platforms we were able to annotate each application with questions and comments for other reviewers to see, allowing reviewers to cite clear evidence in their evaluation of each applicant and discuss any questions.
- Through conference calls, reviewers were able to discuss their assessments of each application with each other and build a deeper understanding of each applicant's plans.

Follow-Up with Applicants

- The request for additional information phase, allowed us to follow-up with applicants for all areas that were unclear or unanswered in the initial review phase.
- Following the reviews of the applications, the interviews allowed us to dig deeper and hear more about each applicant's plan through a more candid conversation.

Final Evaluations of Each Applicant

Applicant	Takeaways from the Review Team	Recommendation
<p>Celerity Schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant academic success with a high needs population in CA • Multiple schools serving a population in line with the anticipated population of the NV ASD, mostly in the Los Angeles area 	<p><i>Approve with Conditions</i></p>
<p>Democracy Prep Public Schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant number of schools with strong academic results with a high needs population across the northeast and in Louisiana. • Substantial charter school organization able to provide ample support to the proposed NV ASD school. 	<p><i>Approve</i></p>
<p>Futuro Academy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed founding leadership team with a substantial local presence in Las Vegas, and has demonstrable support from a variety of local community, business, and educational organizations. • Will have launch support from Building Excellent Schools as well as local entities such as Opportunity 180. 	<p><i>Approve</i></p>
<p>Pathways in Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operates alternative high schools in a number of geographies with high needs, which have not demonstrated the academic results to merit approval. 	<p><i>Do Not Approve</i></p>
<p>ASPIRA Schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive plans to serve English Language Learners. • Inconsistent academic results and need for new operational procedures to be fully implemented 	<p><i>Do Not Approve</i></p>