

Final Report: Summit Place School

January 2022

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OVERALL SUMMARY

The idea of a place-based charter school in Santaquin, Utah is exciting. However, the application lacked specificity, and the idea still needs to be developed. After an extra year to work on the application, little was changed. The Market Analysis was improved from last year since it no longer focused on the need for a secondary school when the proposed school is elementary. However, the new Market Analysis relies heavily on a survey of 63 individuals, assumptions about the market, and how many students will leave the district. Experience has taught us that these assumptions may be optimistic.

This proposal could be a beneficial addition to the SCSB portfolio of schools for the area, but the specific plan needs to be stronger and better fleshed out, especially in terms of the educational program. The weakest area of the application, according to the reader ratings, was the Program of Instruction.

EXTERNAL READER REPORT

Summit Place School

Application Information:

Is the applicant seeking special treatment under UCA §53G-5-301?

Yes No

Is the applicant seeking priority consideration under UCA §53G-6-504?

Yes No

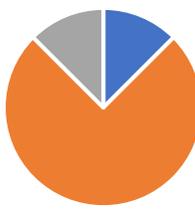
Is the applicant seeking any waiver requests?

Yes No

Summary of Section Ratings:

Section	Rating
Executive Summary	Partially Met
Exhibit A	Partially Met
Program of Instruction	Not Met
Market Analysis	Partially Met
Governance	Met
Staffing	Partially Met
Business Plan	Partially Met
Contracts	Partially Met

Ratings



■ Met ■ Partially Met ■ Not Met

***This applicant did not update sections from last year’s application that had received a “met” score during the 2019-2020 review year. However, the current educational climate has changed, and readers felt that all sections should be assessed with a current outlook, such as ongoing staffing challenges from the pandemic, labor and supply shortages, and increased minimum wage discussions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Criteria	Rating
Present a compelling 1 – 2 sentence mission statement that defines the purpose(s) of the school.	M
Present a convincing and appropriate vision of what the school will look like if it is achieving its mission.	PM
Briefly describe the main points about the school, including but not limited to the school’s location, anticipated population, and educational foundation.	M
Provide a compelling rationale for why the board chose to propose this school.	PM
Provide a compelling argument for why this school should be approved, including how this school will advance the State Charter School Board’s mission and vision.	PM
Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant model appears innovative. The application could be strengthened by providing more information and explanations about the student experience. • It is unclear what it would look like if the school were to achieve its mission. 	

Overall Rating: **Partially Met**

EXHIBIT A

Criteria	Rating
Identify compelling justification for meeting one or more of the purpose(s) of the charter school as outlined in 53G-5-104 . Applicant should only address the purpose(s) the school meets (at a minimum one).	M
Listed key elements match the overall purposes and unique elements of this school idea.	PM
Identify the legally permitted enrollment preferences which the school will employ.	M
Mission specific goals match the overall purposes and unique elements of this school idea.	PM
Academic goals are rigorous and demonstrate the board’s commitment to positive student outcomes.	PM
<p>Comments: Partially Met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goals in the application are unrealistic. This suggests the applicant has not looked at state averages, or their local district averages. This is concerning with the education background of members of the board. • Several of the listed goals are activities, not outcomes. • It is unclear what requirements are associated with student portfolios, and how they will be evaluated. • The applicant fails to identify the personalized competency-based learning resources already available in Utah. 	

Overall Rating: **Partially Met**

PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION

All applications	Rating
Identify that school’s philosophical approach to educating students and ensure that educational priorities are meaningful, manageable, and measurable, and focus on improving student outcomes.	NM
Provide a description of a complete and coherent educational program that includes curriculum and method of instruction.	NM
Presents clear criteria for promotion from one level to the next, or graduation	NM
Show that the method of instruction aligns with the school’s mission, vision, and overall educational priorities.	NM
Provide evidence or research to support that the method of instruction will lead to positive student outcomes.	NM
Provide a method for assessing student outcomes, at a minimum administering the statewide assessments.	NM
Include a viable plan of how the school will provide for and ensure that the needs of special and educationally disadvantaged populations are met.	NM
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant fails to make it clear if the learning format at this school will be online or in person. • There is a heavy reliance on teachers to develop curriculum. This is burdensome, and the time allocated for curriculum development is insufficient to develop quality unit and lesson plans and identify appropriate local resources essential to place-based education. School based curriculum development is a laudable practice, but it requires far greater time and resource allocation to ensure both quality and alignment to Utah standards • The applicant discussed pulling resources from the UEN website. UEN is not a curriculum and some materials on their site are outdated and the quality varies. It is unclear why the applicant does not use the Place Based Network as the primary resource for lesson and unit plans, as well as other curriculum resources. • The applicant has a current school director on the board. It is unclear why this board member did not share insights about what is working well at their current school, especially in relation to curriculum or resources. • The applicant describes using student portfolios for grade promotion. However, it is vague. The application would be strengthened by providing examples of what standards-based grading would look like at this school. The provision of exemplar rubrics would be particularly helpful in instilling confidence in the rigor of this academic model. • It is unclear what portion of the day is spent in place-based instruction. 	

Overall Rating: **Not Met**

MARKET ANALYSIS

Criteria	Rating
Identify the area in which the proposed charter school plans to locate.	M
Describe the education landscape in the identified area, showing a solid understanding of the community and surrounding schools.	NM
Provide a convincing rationale behind selecting this area for the proposed charter schools; show the proposed school’s viability in the identified area.	NM
Provide the characteristics of the proposed charter school that sets it apart from others in target location.	PM
Describe the educational needs in the targets area and show that the proposed charter school meets these needs.	PM
Identify challenges in locating in the target area and adequately address them.	PM
Present evidence to indicate that the enrolment projections for grade and school wide for each year of the charter are realistic.	PM
Demonstrate a clear understanding of the students the school intends to and is likely to serve and present a persuasive explanation of how the proposed school is likely to meet the needs of the target population.	PM
Justify why students will come to this school over another school, especially students in the target population.	PM
Describe a strong and reasonable recruitment plan that is likely to yield the requested enrollment.	NM
Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is unclear if the surveyed community understands what place-based education is. It may be helpful to provide community education about place-based learning before surveying parents, as it would aid parents in better assessing if this school would meet their students’ needs. • The applicant did not provide a reasonable recruitment plan. All students and parents are expected to come to the school simply based on where they are located in Santaquin. This is unlikely to be successful. 	

Overall Rating: **Partially Met**

Governance

Criteria	Rating
Present proper documentation that the entity proposing to hold the charter is a Utah nonprofit corporation and that the governing board is aware of and follows Utah's Open and Public Meetings Act in conducting board and committee business.	M
Demonstrate that the operation of the proposed school is consistent with the organization's overall mission and operation.	M
In the case of pre-existing organizations, provide details of the operational relationship and the separation between the pre-existing organization and the governing board.	M
Show the governing board's understanding of their governing role and ultimate responsibility of the school, including an organizational chart showing relationships between the governing board and school management (e.g., principal, ESP), and school management and key employees, ESPs, community organizations, and school groups (e.g., parents, PTO, etc.).	M
Include Background Information Sheets for all identified governing board members and key administrators.	M
All governing board members and key administration have agreed to submit to background checks as required by law.	M
Demonstrate the governing board's capacity to oversee the successful development and implementation of the education program presented in this application.	M
Demonstrate the governing board's capacity to oversee the effective and responsible management of public funds.	M
Demonstrate the governing board's capacity to oversee and be responsible for the school's compliance with its legal obligations.	M
Demonstrate the governing board's capacity to represent the community well.	M
Demonstrate the board has the capacity to found and sustain a quality school.	M
Provide the plan for governing board participation in professional development, including self-evaluation and evaluation of school management (e.g., principal, ESP).	M
Describe the process and frequency the governing board will follow to evaluate whether or not its meeting the vision, mission, and educational philosophy.	M
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While not required, it is suggested that the board consider adding a CFO position, to oversee public funds. • Applicant stated they will use Utah Alliance to address their professional development needs. • It may be helpful to describe how governance differs in a place-based model school. 	

Overall Rating: **Met**

STAFFING

Criteria	Rating
Demonstrate a sound understanding of staffing needs and priorities that are aligned with the budget and with the school’s anticipated enrollment and target population.	PM
Include a staffing plan that appears viable and adequate for effective implementation of the proposed educational program and other elements of the charter agreement.	PM
Clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities for administering the day-to-day activities of the school.	PM
Present strategies for recruiting effective teachers that are realistic and reasonably likely to be effective.	PM
Include policies that appropriately address the requirements to comply with criminal background checks, the need for employee evaluations, and the school’s position on employment of relatives within the charter school, as well as a process for complying with statute.	PM
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has provided detailed descriptions in this section. It is clear that the applicant has an understanding of roles and responsibilities needed to run a school. • It appears that their Special Education Teacher ratio may be too low. Based on demographics, the applicant is likely to have a higher population of special education students. • As addressed earlier, it is unclear what value comes from participation in the Place-Based Network of schools. • The applicant did not address the online component of the school in the staffing section. • The applicant did not address how to recruit people to Santaquin. Posting job openings on a school website is unlikely to be sufficient to attract an adequate pool of qualified applicants who support the mission of the school. • It is noted that the applicant did not update this section. The applicant needs to be aware of the evolving market realities and that personnel costs have changed since last year. 	

Overall Rating: **Partially Met**

BUSINESS PLAN

Criteria 7a Budget	Rating
Present financial priorities that are consistent with and support goals and key elements of the plan, including the school’s mission, educational program, staffing, and facility.	PM
Present realistic, evidence-based revenue and expenditure assumptions for the first three fiscal years, including for any plan to incur and repay debt, for both full enrollment and breakeven enrollment scenarios.	PM
Demonstrate an understanding of available options for facilities acquisition and financing.	PM
Present viable strategies for meeting potential budget and cash flow challenges, particularly for the first three years of operation.	PM
Demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the financial viability of the school.	PM
Budget must reflect at minimum the required percentage of reserve funds at the end of each fiscal year.	PM
Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is unclear if the market rates are reasonable for rural Santaquin, such as paying an aide \$10-12 per hour. • The applicant did not consider that current rates for counselors or special education teachers have increased significantly since their 2020 application submission. 	
Criteria 7b Finances	Rating
Demonstrate understanding of the school’s financial management obligations.	PM
Present evidence that the school is prepared to adhere to generally accepted accounting practices.	PM
Present evidence that the school will have or has capacity to develop adequate policies and processes for tracking enrollment and attendance, eligibility for free and reduced priced lunch, SWD, and ELs enrollment.	PM
Demonstrate preparation to meet its insurance, annual audit, Audited Financial Report (AFR), and other key financial management obligations.	PM
Ensure that any grants or federal programs the charter receives are administered according to established guidelines.	PM
Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant needs to make adjustments based on current market. 	
Criteria 7c Facilities	Rating
Reflect a sound understanding of education facility needs, including the requirement for an e-occupancy building.	M
Demonstrate knowledge of facility costs including, as applicable, cost of purchasing, leasing, building, or renovating an educational facility that conforms to applicable health, safety, and occupancy requirements.	M
Present evidence to support facility-related budget assumptions.	M

Include evidence that the proposed facility will be adequate or present a plan for securing a facility that is appropriate and adequate for the school's educational program, anticipated location, and target population.	M
Demonstrate that the school's plan for acquisition of a facility is financially viable.	M
Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant's Facilities section is the strongest part of application. 	
Criteria 7d Pre-Opening Plan	Rating
Demonstrate the applicant's understanding of planning tasks is realistic in the timeframe between approvals and opening.	M
Reflect a sound understanding of resources required to complete tasks.	M
Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant's pre-opening plan appears realistic. 	
Criteria 7e Closure Plan	Rating
Explain the school's plan to self-evaluate its performance using the minimum standards and board determined targets, including the individuals responsible, frequency of evaluation, action plan following the evaluation, and school's responsibility to notify its authorizer of any potential missed targets in advance of state reviews.	PM
Describe how and when evaluation results will be disseminated to stakeholders.	PM
Describe the support provided to the student and family when choosing a new school and registering for classes, ensure protection of student records, and follow-up the subsequent school year to ensure enrollment.	PM
Fully describe any support that will be offered to employees through the school's closure.	PM
Explain plan for archiving and maintenance of required records (e.g., student files, attendance records, transcripts, employment records, inventory of assets, etc.). Plan should include appointing an individual to be responsible for records and should follow Utah Code 53G-5-403 and 34 CFR 80.32.	PM
Detail the plan for continued submission of required reports (e.g., audit, grant reports, end-of-year report, etc.). Plan should include appointing an individual to be responsible for reports.	PM
Closure reserves should be reflected and clearly labeled in the budget, and should be explained in the detailed business plan	PM
Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant may want to work on their asset liquidation plan and address where accountability lies. 	

Overall Rating: **Partially Met**

CONTRACTS – IF APPLICABLE

Criteria	Rating
Provide persuasive explanation of the reasons for the contracts, in general, and with the provider, in particular.	PM
Provide sense of how the proposed relationships will further the school’s mission and educational program.	PM
Provide evidence of the business’ success in serving student populations similar to your target population.	PM
Provide a clear description of the services to be provided that align with good governance and administrative practices.	PM
Provide a coherent and convincing delineation of the roles and responsibilities between the governing board, management, and the contractor.	PM
Provide performance expectations that are consistent with the school’s accountability requirements and the means by which the governing board will hold the contractor accountable for meeting those expectations.	PM
Disclose and explain any termination or nonrenewal contracts for equivalent services for any other charter schools in Utah within the past 5 years.	PM
As Appendix F, provide executed contract or MOU between governing board and contractors containing proposed services, performance evaluation measures, fee structure, renewal and termination provisions, and terms of property ownership (real, intellectual, and personal). This contract or MOU must be in accordance with State statute, Board rule, and State purchasing policy.	N/A
Provide a solid plan for the school in the case where the contract terminates.	PM
Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant appears to use boiler plate language. 	

Overall Rating: **Partially Met**

USBE READER COMMITTEE REPORT

1. IS WHAT THEY ARE DESCRIBING ALLOWABLE AND/OR POSSIBLE?

- Yes. It sounds like a growing area, and children are having to travel long distances to go to school.
- Maybe. However, the requirement imposed by the applicant for paraprofessionals to have both an associate degree and pass the praxis may make this position challenging to fill.

2. WHAT CONCERNS DO YOU HAVE AS YOU READ THEIR APPLICATION?

- Enrollment seems much too high for the area—the applicant anticipates 10% of current area students coming to their school, which does not seem feasible or sustainable.
- The application is super brief, the applicant did not provide a lot of substance.
- In multiple places, the applicant uses the term “direct instruction”, however what they described is explicit instruction.
- UEN is not a curriculum for science and social studies, and in some lessons is 15 years out of date.
- The applicant has no plan for instructional coaches.
- The applicant has a low pay rate for teachers and is not comparable with the local district.
- The description of special education teacher responsibilities felt like an afterthought, did not seem as well thought out as other roles.
- The sustainability of this program is a major concern---with a lack of funding from anticipated low enrollment and low pay
- The applicant mentioned academic interventions through MTSS and RTI but did not talk about behavior interventions.
- The applicant has identified that all tier ii interventions will be small group, however this is the opposite of what MTSS is, meaning the plan should be built off student needs. It appears the applicant does not have a complete understanding MTSS, sped, IEP, 504, IDEA law, etc....
- The applicant describes resources within the Santaquin community. However, the applicant should recognize that place-based education can be in other places too. It is recommended that the applicant connect with USBE staff to discuss further.
- Applicant states that educators have to have a level 2 license, which doesn't exist anymore!! Also, special education licensure is not an endorsement.
- The budget does not show fund for a sped director, but this position is listed for hiring.
- It is anticipated that this will be a very high case load for one sped teacher.

3. WHAT STRENGTHS DO YOU FIND IN THEIR APPLICATION?

- The idea is innovative, and is a good concept, but seems very idealistic as described by the applicant.
- Some of the USBE employee committee members have worked in schools with a place-based program, but they have not an entire school, so if successful this would be a unique school to visit.

- The director has admin experience.
 - The applicant thought deeply about the roles and responsibilities of the board, though reader suggest that the applicant should have put that amount of detail into the rest of the application.
4. DOES IT REMIND YOU OF ANY CURRENT SCHOOLS OR PROGRAMS?
- Name can be confusing with summit academy, might consider a name change
 - Reminds of project based/problem-based schools
 - Reminds of Edith Bowen, experiential learning
5. WHAT FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS WOULD YOU ASK THE APPLICANT?
- Will students have a well-rounded understanding of people outside of their community?
 - Will community experts be compensated for their time? Or will this model end up becoming a burden on the community?
 - What is the contingency plan if enrollment or staffing becomes a concern? (Especially mid school year)
 - How will curriculum be chosen? (Note: ed reports is not the only report they should be looking at)
 - Have they thought about hiring curriculum director or sped director? The struggle is real if one director is doing it all. Who else do they need on their team?
 - Who are you connecting with at USBE? (Testing, licensing, sped, etc....)
 - Why did you not include coaches? How will they help their teachers get better?
 - How will they run the mentor program that is required for all teachers?
 - Did they do a market analysis for their pay rates? (As listed in the application, current rates seem very unreasonable).
 - How are they paying for the fieldtrips and place-based learning? (esp. If parents can't afford to pay, low socioeconomic status of the area)
 - Why are they requiring employees to pay for their own background checks? (Note: for aides or paraprofessional, this could essentially be them working for 2 days just to pay for it).
 - How are they tracking and monitoring IEPs and 504s?

SCSB STAFF REPORT

NEW SCHOOL APPLICATION				
Summit Place School				
PROPOSED LOCATION	PROPOSED GRADES SERVED		PROPOSED ENROLLMENT	
Santaquin City, Nebo School District Area	K-8		350→450	
PROPOSED MISSION & FOCUS				
<p>The mission of Summit Place School is “Inspiring students to engage in the culture, ecology, and economy of their community through Place-Based Education.”</p> <p>Vision statement: Summit Place School students learn to be innovative, competent, and confident leaders in their community.</p> <p>Summit Place School will provide Place-Based Education for students. The school will join Place Network Schools, a collaborative system of rural schools led by Teton Science School.</p>				
MARKET DETAILS				
Market Area:	% ED	% ELL	% M	% SWD
Nebo District	30%	4%	18%	16%
State of Utah	30%	8%	27%	13%
Charters in Area	49%	31%	46%	19%
Summit Place School (proposed)	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided

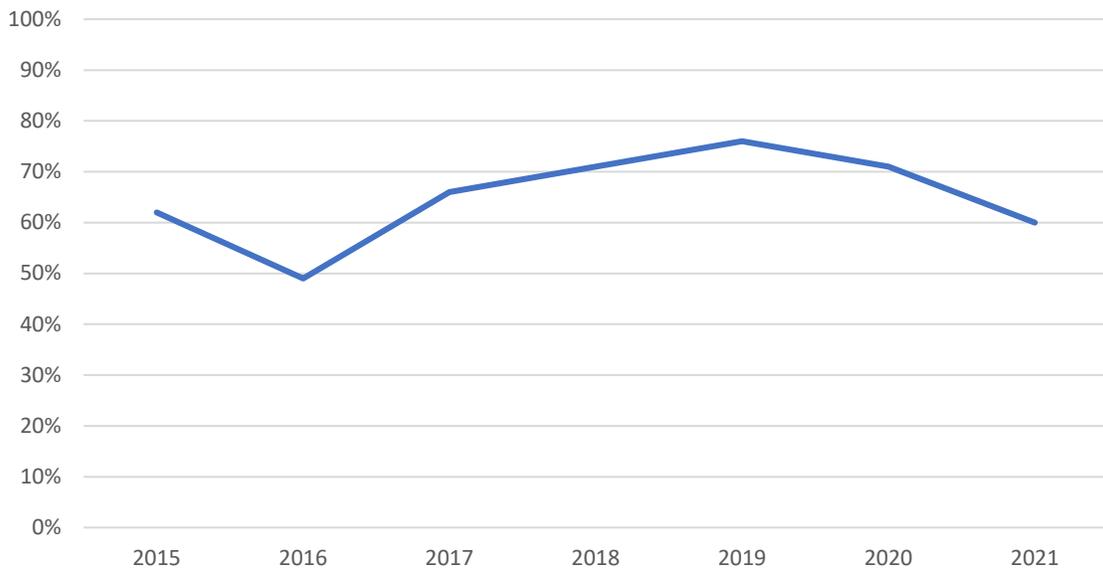
Key: ED: Economically Disadvantaged, ELL: English Language Learner, M: Minority, SWD: Students with Disabilities

AREA PERFORMANCE ON STATE ACCOUNTABILITY	
<p>2019 Achievement Results by School Ranking</p> <p>■ Bottom 25% ■ Typical ■ Top 25%</p>	<p>OF THE 9 CLOSEST COMPARABLE SCHOOLS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 ARE IN THE BOTTOM 25% OF SCHOOL RANKINGS IN THE STATE OF UTAH • 2 ARE IN THE TYPICAL RANGE OF SCHOOL RANKINGS IN THE STATE OF UTAH • 1 IS IN THE TOP 25% OF SCHOOL RANKINGS IN THE STATE OF UTAH

AREA CHARTER ENROLLMENT

- There is only one charter school in the area, which is currently at 59.6% of its max enrollment.
- The area charter school has 268/450 students currently enrolled.
- Besides the area charter school, there is about 14 miles between the current charter school and the next closest charter school, located in Spanish Fork.

% of Max Enrollment Over Time at Area Charter School



ANALYSIS OF REQUIREMENTS:

GOVERNING BOARD:

- All non-profit experience appears to be from volunteer ecclesiastical assignments, rather than other types of non-profit roles/positions involved in governance and oversight.
- This school appears to be completely driven by location, rather than educational philosophy or community needs.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

- Surrounding schools do not have high enrollment. Having enough students to be financially viable may be challenging for this school.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND STANDARDS

- The entire model of this application appears to be based on the Teton Science School Educational Service Provider (ESP), which can lead to bad contracts/” being held hostage” by an ESP. Ultimately, if in the future the ESP no longer exists, this school would cease to exist.
- Application states that “Place-Based Education integrates several methods of learning in the contexts of the local ecology, economy and culture. The following list contains some of those methods” However, this does not address how Summit Place School will be providing Place-Based Education. The application has many links and terms but does not well articulate the program the applicant is seeking to build for this specific school.
- The Special Education Program outlined does not appear to meet the needs of all learners.
- Some of the chosen curriculums are outdated and not supported by research for use. For example, Ed Reports shows both Pathways and the Fountas and Pinnell curriculums only partially meet the criteria for alignment to standards and research-based practices for foundational skills instruction.
- Proposed goals from the application are not likely to be recommended by the Authorizing Committee and will require adjustment.

Measure	Metric	Exceeds Target	Meets Target	Progressing Towards Target	Does Not Meet
Mission Specific	Students at all grade levels will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a local business’s impact and importance to our community through group projects, demonstrations, or media to be included in each student’s individual portfolio.	≥90% will complete this project	80% will complete this project	70% will complete this project	≤70% will complete this project

Mission Specific	All students at Summit Place School will learn basic facts about the history and heritage of Santaquin and our surrounding areas, either through field trips, venue visits, or study/research projects, followed by creating a record of learning from that visit to be included in each student's individual portfolio.	>90% will complete this project	80% will complete this project	70% will complete this project	≤70% will complete this project
Relative Academic Performance (Middle School)	Students in grades 5 through 8 will perform at or above the state average on the appropriate state- required assessment, such as RISE. (EOY measurement.)	>80%	70%	60%	≤60%
Relative Academic Performance (Elementary School)	Students in grades K through 4 will perform at or above the state average on the appropriate state- required assessment, such as Acadience/DIBELS. (EOY measurement.)	>80%	70%	60%	≤60%

BOARD MEMBER BACKGROUND VERIFICATION

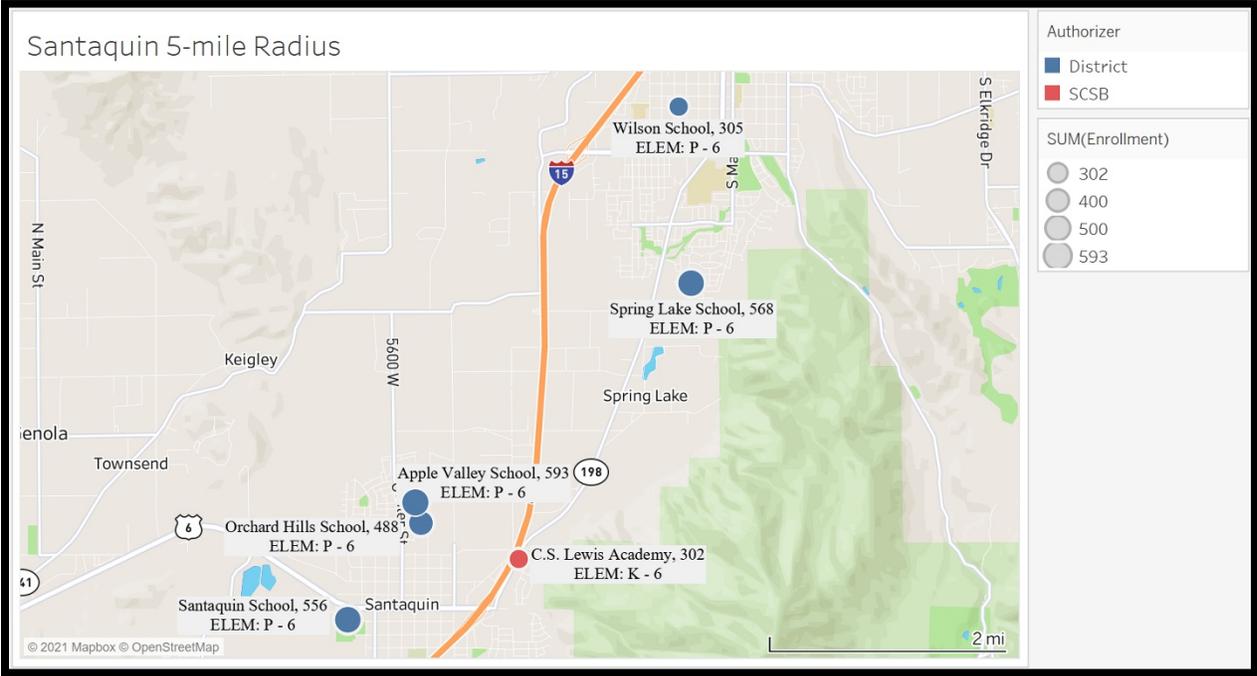
Potential Concerns:

1. Most of the board’s nonprofit experience comes from church callings, which are assigned volunteer positions.
2. Jesse Christopher states he is the Vice President of a post-secondary school that offers a master’s degree program, and that as such he has experience in running an online platform. The school is a School of Natural Healing.
 - i. [Jesse Christopher - Vice President - Christopher Publications | LinkedIn](#)
 - b. It appears the Santaquin Arts Council has been dissolved into a Community Services Board, and that Mr. Christopher is no longer involved with this council.
 - i. [Community Services Board | Santaquin, UT](#)
3. Mike Weight shares experiences working for BYU and Novell; however, staff was unable to verify these professional experiences.

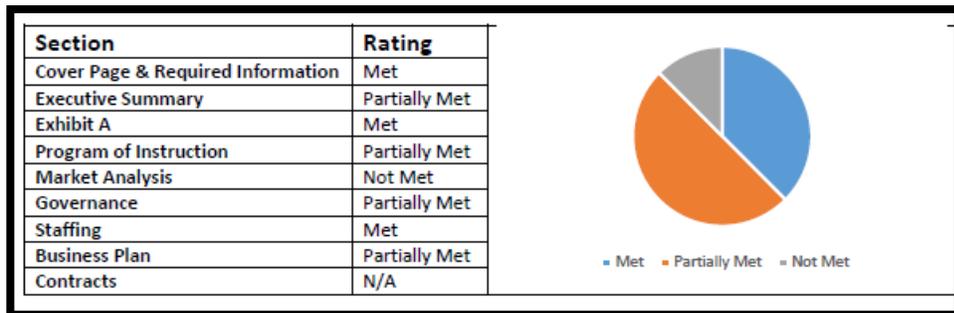
Positive Findings not in the Application:

- a. Mike Weight was a candidate for the Santaquin City Council
 - i. [2021 City Council Candidate Profiles | Santaquin, UT](#)

MAP OF PROPOSED LOCATION AREA SCHOOLS



For Reference from Last Year:



Executive Summary:

The concept of Place Based education is mentioned throughout the application, however, when explaining why the model was chosen, and why it is needed, the applicant addressed more of the community growth/real estate development concerns, rather than selling the model. Why address a problem for a school with grades you are not serving? (School is K-8 and the concern was a High School bussing issue)

Exhibit A:

Santaquin Elementary currently has between 35-37% of students scoring proficient, compared to 48%-54% statewide. All surrounding schools are performing similarly poorly. For the applicant to meet their own metric, they have to have 80% of students scoring at or above the state average.

First, do they really mean to calculate the percentage of students scoring above the state average for each grade level-subject test. Why use that metric? It is not used in any state accountability measures, and it would be an additional step to figure out. Why not just use percent proficient? Second, the state average is usually just below the cut score for proficiency, so--given the recent local scores--this seems unrealistic, especially given that they are filling each grade level with students coming straight over from the local schools.

*Student Academic Gain - "Students at all grade levels will demonstrate growth in writing competency in two or more subject areas by using a rubric to self-evaluate, edit, and revise their writing using the same grade specific rubric for a beginning and end of year writing sample of the same genre. * These writing assessments will be included in each student's portfolio."*

Demonstrate "growth?" Any amount of growth will do? What if it is not nearly adequate to reach the grade level standard? And this is based on self-evaluation? How valid is self-evaluation?

Program of Instruction:

Special Education-refers to research that a place-based model is good for sped students. However, the applicant did not discuss how their particular version of place-based will address the needs? Overall, did not provide enough detail about special education students. Would also like to see how this will be marketed to families of students with special needs.

Did not address how many high need students are in the community.

Referenced using an inclusion model, however the application states that the sped teachers and sped aide will provide services—how will other teachers support as well in an inclusion model?

*Also appears to counsel out some students, which is not allowed by law.
English Language Learner (ELL) descriptions were insufficient. Did not identify their ELL service model. What if parent does not identify it as their home language?
Not all curriculum programs have strong evidence base. How will it be implemented to lead to success?
Assessment is referenced, but not correlated. Does not explain how assessment will be used to determine needs.*

*For assessment, try to define purpose, here is how it links, here is how we do it, etc.....
No discussion of specialty type classes (art, music, pe, etc....)
Also, please note that the referenced National Geographic Curriculum is fairly tech heavy, and the provided budget may not be sufficient.
Stated they would follow state standards but did not show HOW they were following the state standards.*

Market Analysis:

*The enrollment seems high for the first year (675); also, is this number too high for the area? Especially with a specific learning model. Seems too big for the community. Half size may be more manageable.
Letter of support from the community were impressive
Stated they will continue with FB marketing (73 likes), though that does not seem to be making a difference? The concept of Place Based education is mentioned throughout the application, however, when explaining why the model was chosen, and why it is needed, the applicant addressed more of the community growth/real estate development concerns, rather than selling the model.
Why address a problem for a school with grades you are not serving? (School is K-8 and the concern was a High School bussing issue)*

Governance:

*Governance seemed sufficient. Some were education based, some were not, which would lend to balance. Having a leader of another charter on their board may be a strength, depending on the history and context of the previous school.
The non-educator roles did not show experience with running a business and were especially lacking in profit and loss understanding.*

Staffing:

*This was the strength of the application.
Could tell this was thought through by educators.*

Budget:

No major concerns with finances or facilities, overall seemed fairly boiler plate. The applicant did not assume increases in funding for a few years, which was wise. Assumed reserves and surpluses, starting in year one.

Detail in the breakeven was good.

Budgeted for increases in salaries, even with flat revenue.

Please note that even though all of the budget calculations look good on paper, it all relies on enrollment numbers that depend on a market analysis that is not adequate.

Finances:

No major concerns with finances. Seemed fairly boiler plate.

Generally strong description of the parties in the financial management section. Having an Audit Committee is a good idea. May want to consider how to manage if a conflict arises due to parent involvement?

Facilities:

No major concerns with finance and facilities. Seemed fairly boiler plate. Building is more reasonably sized.

Pre-Opening Plan:

Opening plan/timeline is well thought through.

Closure Plan:

Did not provide substantive answers in this section. Did not address supporting students and families.

Applicant should think through the emotional toll of this situation.

Contracts:

Applicant stated there were no contracts in place. However, Red Apple Financial has reached out on their behalf. Additionally, some of the language throughout the application seems similar to what a CMO template would have.