

Valtena G. Brown, Deputy Superintendent/Chief Operating Officer  
School Operations

**SUBJECT: REQUEST SCHOOL BOARD APPROVAL OF ONE CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION, DENIAL OF ONE CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATIONS AND APPROVAL OF ONE AMENDED CHARTER CONTRACT**

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: STUDENT, PARENT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **APPLICATIONS**

Section 1002.33, F.S., authorizes the establishment of charter schools in Florida. As provided in Section 1002.33(6), F.S., and School Board Policy 9800, *Charter Schools*, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) receives and reviews charter school applications from individuals and/or organizations. Thirty-six (36) applications were received for the 2014 cycle to operate a charter school in Miami-Dade County. Pursuant to Section 1002.33(6)(b)(3), F.S., a sponsor must approve or deny an application no later than 60 calendar days after the application is received unless the applicants have agreed in writing to extend the statutory timeline.

### **EVALUATION**

Pursuant to School Board Policy 9800, *Charter Schools* (School Board Policy), the District reviews all applications using an evaluation instrument developed by the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) and may include additional information or documents requested by the District. The Standard Model Application includes standards of evaluation, certification and assurance declarations. The Sponsor shall deny any application that does not comply with the statutory requirements and/or Sponsor's instructions for charter school applications.

The Superintendent has appointed the Application Review Committee (ARC) with the responsibility to review and evaluate charter school applications after an initial technical review conducted by staff. The ARC is comprised of representatives from various District departments and is charged with identifying deficiencies in the written application and/or areas that require clarification to fully evaluate the quality of the application or the capacity of the applicant to properly implement the proposed plan.

Pursuant to Section 1002.33(6)(3)(a), F.S., if an application is denied, the District shall, within ten (10) calendar days after the denial, articulate in writing the specific reasons for the denial, based upon good cause, and provide the letter of denial and supporting documentation to the applicant and the FLDOE. An applicant may appeal the Board's denial by submitting a request in writing to the State Board of Education and the Sponsor no later than thirty (30) calendar days after receiving a notice of denial.

Pursuant to School Board Policy, two (2) charter school applications are being presented for final consideration by the School Board in this agenda item. Detailed in the following chart is a summary of the charter school applications. Additional details can be found in Attachments A

and B, which are provided under separate cover but are included and incorporated by reference in this Board item.

Table 1: Charter Applications				
Type of Application	Proposed Name of School	Legal Entity	Committee Recommendation	Supporting Documentation
<b>Approval</b>				
1.	Traditional	AcadeMir Preparatory Academy	AcadeMir Charter School, Inc.	Approval Attachment A
<b>Denial</b>				
1.	International Baccalaureate/ Mid-Year Program	Juntos Academy Middle School	Juntos Academy, Inc.	Denial Attachment B

**AMENDED CHARTER SCHOOL CONTRACT**

Section 1002.33(7), F. S., states that the major issues involved in the operation of charter schools be considered in advance and written into a charter school contract between the charter school and the School Board following a public meeting. Pursuant to School Board Policy 9800, *Charter Schools*, the amended contract presented on this agenda, was required to be negotiated by the M-DCPS' Contract Review Committee (CRC) prior to submission to the Superintendent of Schools' final decision. The recommendations are as follows:

Table 2: Charter Contract Amendment				
Type of Amendment	Name of School	Legal Entity	Committee Recommendation	Supporting Documentation
1.	Facility	Doral Academy High School (High Performing)	The Doral Academy, Inc.	Approval Attachment A

Copies of the applications, evaluations and amendment have been transmitted to the School Board Members under separate cover and will be available for inspection by the public in the Office of Board Recording Secretary, Room 924, and in the Citizen Information Center, Room 158, 1450 N.E. Second Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132.

**RECOMMENDED:** That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida:

1. Approve one charter school application and authorize the Superintendent to negotiate a contract reflecting the contents of the application as approved by the School Board for AcadeMir Charter School, Inc., on behalf of AcadeMir Preparatory Academy.
2. Deny one charter school application for Juntos Academy, Inc., on behalf of Juntos Academy Middle School.
3. Approve one amended charter school contract with The Doral Academy, Inc., on behalf of Doral Academy High School to add a permanent campus located at the corner N.W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street and N.W. 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Miami, Florida 33172 (Folio No. 35-3030-042-0020), commencing with the 2016-2017 school year and ending on June 30, 2026.

VGB:elg  
Attachments

**School Board Agenda Item C-30  
ATTACHMENT A**

**APPLICATION:**

- AcadeMir Preparatory Academy

**AMENDMENT:**

- Doral Academy High School

The M-DCPS' Charter School Application Review Committee (ARC) reviewed the charter school application and the amendment listed below and recommended approval to the Superintendent.

(1)/(2)(3)	(4)(5)	(6)	(7)		(9)		
Name of School	Legal Entity	Term	Grade Levels	Enrollment	Focus/ Theme		
		Initial/ Exp.	Current or Initial Year				
			Maximum Capacity				
<b>APPLICATION</b>							
<b>AcadeMir Preparatory Academy</b> ESP: Superior Charter Schools Services  ARC recommended approval on November 3, 2014.	AcadeMir Charter School, Inc.	5 years	K-5	600	None		
		2015/ 2020	K-5	600			
(1)/(2)(3)	(4)(5)	(6)	(7)	(9)	(10)		
Name of School	Legal Entity	Term	Grade Levels	Enrollment	Special Provisions and/or Requested Action(s)	DISTRICT IMPACT 2014-15 SY	
		Initial/ Exp.				Revenue (\$)/ Positions	
						Instr.	Non-Instr.
<b>AMENDMENT</b>							
<b>Doral Academy High School (High Performing)</b> ESP: Academica Dade, LLC  ARC recommended approval on October 13, 2014.	The Doral Academy, Inc.	15 years	9-12	1,550	Approval of the first amendment to the first renewal charter school contract to add a permanent campus, adjacent to the existing facilities, located at the corner of N.W. 25 <sup>th</sup> Street and N.W. 112 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, Miami, Florida 33172; Folio No. 35-3030-042-0020, commencing with the 2016-2017 school year and ending on June 30, 2026.	N/A – No increase in contracted FTE.	
		2011/ 2026					

Copies of the application and amendment will be transmitted to the School Board Members under separate cover and will be available for inspection by the public in the Office of Board Recording Secretary, Room 924, and in the Citizen Information Center, Room 158, 1450 N.E. Second Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132.

## **School Board Agenda Item C-30 ATTACHMENT B**

As provided in School Board Policy 9800, *Charter Schools*, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has received charter school applications from individuals and/or organizations in the community.

### **Proposal**

Juntos Academy, Inc., on behalf of Juntos Academy, proposes to establish a charter school that will serve grades 6-8 with a proposed maximum enrollment of 396 students. The application for this charter school proposes to open in the 2015-2016 school year.

### **Applicant**

The members of the founding Governing Board include: Harry Tapias, Attorney, LOIGICA, PA; Nicolae Propescu, Architect, Architectura Group Miami; Joel Bernstein, Branch Manager, Raymond James; Valerie Navarrate, Independent Representative, Jusuru International.

A representative for the applicant attended the District's charter school application orientation conducted on May 8, 2014, and did receive the most current information regarding the submittal of a charter application. The meeting is not mandatory but attendance is strongly recommended by the Florida Department of Education and the District's Charter School Support Office (CSS) to inform applicants of new statutory requirements and District policies and procedures. This applicant submitted a draft charter application on May 1 and feedback was provided by July 1 as required by law. The applicant contacted CSS and further assistance was provided.

### **Evaluation**

A review of this charter school application was conducted pursuant to § 1002.33 (6), F. S., and School Board Policy 9800, using the required Standard Model Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument (IEPC-M2). The Standard Model Application includes 19 evaluation and certification standards and an assurance declaration. As allowed by § 1002.33(6)(a)(6), F.S. and pursuant to Board Policy 9800, the District also includes an evaluation of the applicant's experience and historical performance operating charter schools.

The initial technical review resulted in significant concerns and findings that were provided to the applicant and forwarded to the Applicant Review Committee (ARC). The ARC conducts a second review of the application with the applicant in a public meeting to assess the overall capacity of the applicant's ability to establish and implement the charter school plan, clarify any components of the written application for which reviewers have questions or require additional information, and corroborate information provided in the written application. With the exception of technical or nonsubstantive corrections and clarifications, such as grammatical, typographical, and missing signatures, the application cannot be amended prior to submission to the School Board for consideration. The ARC reviewed the application with the applicant on October 28, 2014.

The ARC found that the application failed to meet minimum statutory requirements and identified substantial concerns/deficiencies regarding the applicant's understanding of various conceptual issues and/or its ability to meet statutory requirements.

Specifically, the application did not meet the required standards in 18 of the 18 applicable standards in the Model Evaluation Instrument. As summarized below, these deficiencies constitute good cause for denial of the application.

1. Failure to provide a detailed educational and curriculum plan that illustrates how students will be provided services to attain state standards and that is aligned to the mission and vision established in Section 1 of the application. (Standards 1, 3, and 4)

- The application does not provide a feasible plan of how the school intends to implement its mission. The school proposes to be an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IB-MYP) but does not provide within the application how this will be feasible beginning year 1 of the charter. Additionally the applicant did not provide a staffing plan or a budget that is aligned to the implementation of this mission. (Standards 1, 10, and 17)
- The application does not contain any evidence that the applicant has authorization to be an IB-MYP school. There is no evidence that the school will be able to provide this program or even if the process has been initiated. There is no evidence that the applicant has been granted the right from IB to use unit planners, assessment criteria and content. (Standards 1, 3, and 4)
- The applicant states that they will use the IB framework to develop curriculum, instruction and assessments, but in fact does not provide any details as to what the plan entails. The whole application hinges on the IB-MYP implementation but there is no evidence that the applicant has the wherewithal to implement this program. (Standards 1, 3, and 4)
- The applicant does not provide an implementation timeline that would allow the school to market and serve students from day 1 using the IB-MYP. (Standards 1, 2, and 13)
- The applicant never addresses what will happen if the school is not recommended for candidacy or for full implementation. The application centers on the authorization and implementation of the IB-MYP. Furthermore, the applicant does not provide the most up to date IB requirements. For example no community project was referenced, although this is a year 3 requirement; Areas of Interaction were not the most up to date; and the IB required courses for the Middle Year Program were not provided. (Standards 3, and 4)
- Along with IB-MYP the application references the implementation of a Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math program (STEAM). The application does not provide a clear description of how the educational program would be delivered with this emphasis. (Standards 1, 3, and 4)
- The application does not provide an educational program that all students at all levels would benefit from. The applicant never provided a comprehensive curriculum plan for students who are below grade level. (Standards 3, and 4)
- There is no mention of the IB required professional development and the applicant does not provide a plan of how teachers will be trained in the implementation of the IB program, a costly and time sensitive endeavor if the school is to be successful. (Standards 1, 3, and 12)
- The schedule provided does not clearly indicate how middle school students will receive required instructional minutes. The applicant expects to provide students with a one hour lunch period, PE for 60 minutes daily and a weekly early dismissal for students of two hours. (Standard 3)
- Given that this school is proposed to serve middle school students, the applicant does not provide an explanation of how credits would be awarded to ensure that student are on track to graduate from high school. The application provides split blocks and does not address the required double blocks for those students who need Intensive Reading and/or Intensive Math. The applicant does not address what courses would be offered and in fact during the interview stated that students would receive instruction from a teacher that would provide instruction at multiple levels. (Standard 3)
- The application fails to provide a clear picture of the educational program that the school intends to provide all students. It is not clear what coursework the school will provide students below, at or above grade level. No mention of intervention courses or language arts courses for English Language Learners (ELL). In fact the application does not fully address the IB required coursework. It is also not clear what electives will be offered to students. (Standard 4)
- The application does not clearly indicate what reading plan the school will implement; it only mentions a comprehensive research based reading plan without identifying it. The application is missing critical elements that will ensure that the reading plan addresses the needs of all learners, at all levels. (Standard 4)
- The application lacks details as to how middle school students will be given the opportunity to earn a foreign language credit. In fact the application states that for students who do not speak

- English they will forgo the foreign language and receive instruction in English. The applicant never fully described what the instruction in English would entail and did not consider that some of the ELL students may be Spanish Speakers and would benefit from earning this credit and possibly earning a high school credit. (Standard 4)
- The applicant set aside funds to only purchase four textbooks and no other materials such as intervention materials and instructional technology. The cost of the IB implementation was not fully budgeted. (Standards 4, and 17)
  - The curriculum plan does not develop a plan of how the school will provide STEAM curriculum to students or opportunities that the students would be offered related to this program. (e.g., Science Fair, robotics, and/or competitions). (Standard 4)
2. Failure to provide measureable goals and objectives that set high standards for student performance. (Standard 5)
- The application identifies the FCAT 2.0 Writing Assessment which is no longer a state accountability assessment. The applicant does not reference the fact that the new writing assessment is for all students in grades sixth to eighth.
  - The goals reference obsolete assessments.
  - The application does not include objectives for learning gains.
  - Middle school accelerated success performance goals were not addressed.
  - The testing calendar provided specifies invalid and inappropriate assessments.
  - The application references student data but it provides very little specifics as to how it will drive the instructional program or how the school will determine if the students are making adequate progress.
  - The application does not demonstrate an understanding of the requirements regarding the calculation of EOC scores into final grades.
  - The application does not demonstrate how the school would be prepared to meet the requirements for computerized testing.
  - The application does not describe a clear plan for student progression and promotion. The applicant does not address how students would be promoted from one grade to the next or how they would be graded.
3. Failure to demonstrate an understanding of state and federal requirements regarding the Education of Exceptional Students (ESE) and English Language Learners (ELL). (Standards 6, and 7)
- The application does not clearly indicate how exceptional students will be served. (Standard 6)
  - The applicant does not demonstrate an understanding of the collaboration between the school and the Sponsor. (Standard 6)
  - The applicant does not provide a realistic staffing plan that aligns with the ESE student projections. (Standard 6)
  - It is unclear how the school will evaluate its effectiveness in serving ESE students. (Standard 6)
  - The application does not provide a plan to serve gifted students. (Standard 6)
  - The response to the section that requires the applicant to explain how exceptional students who enter the school below grade level will be engaged in and benefit from the curriculum was left out of the application. (Standard 6)
  - The applicant projected a 20% ESE population and a 30% ELL population, substantially higher than the District average. There was no explanation as to how these projections were determined or how realistic they are. (Standards 6, and 7)
  - The applicant does not demonstrate an understanding of state and federal requirements regarding the education of ELL students. The ELL section lacks meaningful details as to how ELL students will be served, assessed for eligibility, monitored and provided with extension of services. The application fails to demonstrate how the ELL students' linguistic needs will be met. (Standard 7)
4. Failure to provide a realistic assessment of the projected sources of revenue and expenses that ensure the financial viability of the school and a clear description of how the school's finances will be managed. (Standards 17, and 18)

- The applicant does not provide documentation to support the \$20,000.00 start-up loan. (Standard 17)
  - The applicant does not provide a narrative that clearly identifies the assumptions made or aligns appropriately to the individual line items. (Standard 17)
  - In the planning year, in the Cash Flow the applicant projects a negative cash balance and provides no explanation as to how this will be resolved. In fact the applicant also projects a negative cash balance for the first five months of year one, again with no explanation as to how this would be resolved. (Standard 17)
  - The applicant does not submit a viable plan at 50% enrollment in the event the projected enrollment does not materialize. (Standard 17)
  - The staffing plan and budget do not support the educational plan described in the application. Many of the costs associated with the implementation of the IB-MYP were not budgeted for, as well as positions identified within the application. For example, although advisors, a school based health team, media specialist, counselor, and ESE Specialist were identified in the application, they are not included in the staffing plan of budget. Furthermore, the budget only set aside \$4,000.00 for the first year of the implementation of the IB-MYP, this amount does not include costs associated with the required teacher training component. The cost per teacher is \$729 plus travel costs associated with this. (Standards 10, and 17)
  - The application does not provide a clear description as to how the school's finances would be managed. It seems that the school will depend on an accountant to set policy and there is a concern that the board may not have the capacity to ensure that the school's finances are safeguarded. (Standard 18)
  - The applicant does not describe a financial plan that is aligned to state statute requirements, there is no mention of monthly financials and there is not a clear description as to how the annual budget will be developed and approved. (Standard 18)
5. Failure to provide clear and sound policies for student discipline and to describe sound practices and establish policies that will ensure that there is an admissions and enrollment process that is open, fair and in accordance with applicable law. (Standards 8, and 13)
- The application does not provide a sound approach to classroom management and student discipline. In fact the applicant only states that they will develop a "set of expectations". (Standard 8)
  - The applicant does not clearly state what Student Code of Conduct it expects to implement, a description of a comprehensive plan that is legally sound was not provided. (Standard 8)
  - The application does not address policies for student discipline, suspension, or dismissal. Additionally, the expulsion policy was not described. (Standard 8)
  - The timeline for student enrollment within the application differ. Dates provided within section 13 are not the same as those found in section 19. (Standards 13, and 19)
  - The applicant does not paint a clear picture of what the targeted population will be. (Standards 2, and 13)
  - In the policy manual provided, it is stated that parents must meet with the Director to see how students fit within the school. This implies that the school may not be open to all as stated within the application and required by law. (Standard 13)
  - The policy manual describes an attendance policy that will give students an absence when they are tardy multiple times, the same for early dismissals from school. Such practice is detrimental to students who may have legitimate reasons for being tardy or dismissed from school early. (Standard 13)
  - The policy manual provides a description of "wrap around services" that are described within the application and are not budgeted. (Standards 6, and 13)
6. Failure to provide a clear description of the targeted population the school will serve. (Standard 2)
- The application does not provide a clear description of the student the school intends to serve. The applicant states that the school will get "students who are dissatisfied with the middle option on Miami Beach" but then provides for an educational program that the applicant may not be able

- to deliver, IB-MYP. Additionally, it never provides for a clear description as to how the school will implement its marketing strategies. The student population on Miami Beach and that of the schools listed off the beach may have different needs, and a comprehensive plan as to how the school intends to market to these very different student populations, was not found. (Standard 2)
- The projections for ELL and ESE students were overinflated based on District averages and no explanation for this was provided. (Standards 2, 6, 7, and 17)
7. Failure to provide evidence of an organizational plan that provides a clear understanding of how the school will be governed and managed. (Standards 9, 10, and 12)
- The office that each governing board member holds was not included. (Standard 9)
  - The policy manual provided with the application contained policies that were of concern in the area of school governance, finances, and student enrollment. (Standard 9)
  - The bylaws provided indicate that Directors can receive compensation from the corporation for other services rendered, but this is a nonprofit board and compensation for the Board of Trustees is not allowed by law except under very particular circumstances. (Standard 9)
  - The application did not contain a conflict resolution policy. (Standard 9)
  - The application did not contain a clear organizational chart that delineated roles and responsibilities for administering the day to day activities of the school. Not all positions listed within the application were included, does not clearly describe the structure of the school, and listed the leadership team, comprised of teachers, in a supervisory role. (Standards 9, and 10)
  - The application did not clearly define the role of the school leader. (Standard 10)
  - The application mentions a Business Manager but this position was not referenced in Section 18 or include in the staffing plan. (Standards 10, and 18)
  - The application failed to provide comprehensive job descriptions and qualifications for key staff. (Standard 10)
  - A sound plan to recruit the school leader was not provided. The selection process as described is vague and general. In fact the qualifications indicate that the Director only needs to possess a Master's Degree in any field and with strong leadership and management experience. The board does not have any educational background and they are not requiring that the individual have experience as an education leader, the academic viability of the school is of concern. There was no mention of how the school leader would be evaluated. (Standard 10)
  - The staffing plan does not list all of the positions found within the application. (Standards 3, 4, and 10)
  - It is not clear if the school will be able to attract and retain highly qualified teachers. Many of the positions listed are part time positions, including the Director. It is not clear if the applicant budgeted for the compensation plan described. (Standards 10, and 12)
  - Professional Development needs are not aligned to the school's mission. (Standard 10)
  - The application does not provide strong policies and procedures that will hold staff to high professional standards. What was provided was not comprehensive; it only provided very limited information. The evaluation of teachers does not describe the impact of student performance. A strong professional development component was not provided. The application only states that the staff will participate in a teacher orientation program where policies will be reviewed in detail, but it does not address these policies or how these policies will be developed. (Standard 12)
8. Failure to provide a clear understanding of how (a) transportation services and (b) food services will serve eligible students and (c) failure to provide a realistic plan for securing an adequate facility. (Standards 14, 15, and 16)
- The applicant does not provide an analysis of how the cost of the facility was derived. (Standard 14)
  - The applicant does not provide an adequate back up plan to ensure an appropriate facility for the number of students it anticipates serving. (Standard 14)
  - The transportation plan does not provide for a comprehensive transportation plan. The applicant does not clearly indicate that it will only contract with approved vendors for all their transportation



needs, including ESE students who required transportation by their IEP and for school planned activities and fieldtrips. (Standard 15)

- The food service plan does not address equipment that will ensure the proper storage of food prior to serving students or how lunch will be served daily. The application only provides a description of participating in the National School Lunch Program. (Standard 16)
9. Failure to provide a thoughtful and realistic implementation plan that covers major operational items and ensures the school will be ready to serve its student on the first day of school. (Standard 19)
- The applicant does not provide a comprehensive and realistic implementation plan that covers the major operational items that will ensure that the school will be ready to open for the 2015-16 school year. The timeline provided does not cover:
    - Approval and adoption of the annual budget,
    - Technology needs,
    - IB-MYP implementation timeline,
    - Finalization of contracts with vendors,
    - Finalization of hiring of needed staff,
    - Employee contracts,
    - Professional Development,
    - Open Houses for Students and Parents,
    - The development of the Parent / Student Handbook,
    - Timeline for Facility and Safety Inspections,
    - Curriculum planning (pacing guides, curriculum maps),
    - Finalization of purchasing of instructional materials,
    - Staff fingerprinting and background check,
    - Implementation of the Marketing Plan,
    - Finalization of procurement of furniture, fixtures, equipment and materials, and
    - Preparation of the facility, conduct final facility and safety inspections, when required facility documentation will be provided to the Sponsor.
  - The enrollment timeline is not aligned with the timeline provided within the action plan. (Standard 13 and 19)

The applicant was notified of the Superintendent's intent to recommend denial to the School Board and provided a copy of the final evaluation. Pursuant to § 1002.33(6) (c), F.S., if the School Board approves this recommendation to deny the application, the applicant may appeal to the State Board of Education no later than 30 days after receipt of the School Board's decision.

Copies of the application and evaluation, which are incorporated by reference in this Board item, will be transmitted to the School Board Members under separate cover and will be available for inspection by the public in the Office of Board Recording Secretary, Room 924, and in the Citizen Information Center, Room 158, 1450 N.E. Second Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132.