

ABSTRACT

Project Title: Initial Creation and Implementation of the Stetson Charter School, An ASPIRA Turnaround School in Philadelphia, PA

CDE Information: Charter Schools Program Non-SEA Planning, Program Design, and Implementation (Number 84.282B)

Applicant Organization: ASPIRA, Inc. of Pennsylvania (a 501(c)3 non-profit organization)

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Type of Project: Charter School Initial Implementation

ASPIRA, Inc. of Pennsylvania is proposing to create a project for the U.S. Department of Education under the Charter Schools Program Non-SEA Planning, Program Design and Implementation grant system that will dramatically improve the implementation of the new John B. Stetson Charter School in an impoverished area of Philadelphia, PA. ASPIRA of PA is a 501(c)3 non-profit community services and educational organization that has served the Philadelphia area since 1968, including developing and managing two very successful bi-lingual English/Spanish charter elementary schools. ASPIRA of PA was selected by the School District of Philadelphia through a highly competitive process to turn the failing John B. Stetson Middle School, a high poverty, primarily Latino school serving 675 students in grades 5 to 8, into a bilingual charter school. The school has a high percentage of ELL students (30%), mostly Spanish speaking, similar to the populations of ASPIRA's two other charter schools- Pantoja Charter and De Hostos Charter.

ASPIRA's implementation grant application for Stetson Charter School meets the central purpose of this grant program as the funds will be used to purchase classroom furniture and student computers that are necessary for providing a high quality education to our students. This proposal also meets both invitation priorities for this program. The grant meets Invitational Priority 1, because ASPIRA will be replicating its high quality charter school models in a high need community with a large proportion of public schools that are in corrective action. The grant meets Invitational Priority 2, because Stetson is being closed by the District and re-opened as a new charter school under the management of a successful Charter Management Organization (ASPIRA of PA).

The goals of this project are straightforward: we will be purchasing with these funds furniture for 31 classrooms (including student desks, student chairs, teacher desks, storage cabinets and similar items) and 13 mobile laptop labs of 22 student computers each. The project will last for two years, and will cost a total of \$398,075. The project is essential to the implementation of the school, as the School District removed all furniture and computers prior to turning the school over to ASPIRA, and because our curriculum requires students to use computers for learning and conducting research projects. The outcomes that we expect are high levels of proficiency as measured by State tests of Math, Reading, Science and Writing and achievement of the federal No Child Left Behind goals for the school. Contributions for policy include a deeper understanding of the requirements for creating successful turnaround schools that serve high levels of ELL students in high poverty communities.