

9. Networking and External Support

Landmark began as the result of interest expressed to Shea Homes by numerous area families. When bond elections in School District 27J failed in November 2005, Shea Homes heard from parents seeking a solution to their concerns about educational opportunities in the area. After considering numerous options, including the pursuit of developing a private school, among other things, Shea Homes made the decision to seek experienced educational professionals that could help provide a quality school in a timely fashion. Importantly, Shea Homes' plan included the formation of a citizen board that would serve as the foundational leaders for the new school development regardless of what professional organization was selected to assist with the new school development. That citizen board now sits as the school's first Governing Board.

When looking for external support to assist in the development of its proposed charter school, Shea Homes utilized a report prepared by the Education Policies Study Laboratory of the Division of Education Leadership and Policy Studies of the College of Education at Arizona State University. The report, entitled "Profiles of For-Profit Education Management Companies Sixth Annual Report 2003-2004" provided valuable insight into potential charter school partners. The report, along with other investigations, identified 36 potential companies capable of building and operating a new school. Shea homes, in evaluating these potential partners, looked for companies with proven track records of providing quality schools. After much study and consideration, Shea Homes selected NHA as its operational partner.

Landmark will rely on NHA, a nationally renowned educational service provider, to operate the school. Under the direction of the Governing Board, NHA will provide support to the school administrator and its staff. NHA will implement, in accordance with the terms of its agreement with the Governing Board, the school's chosen educational program. NHA will also manage the day-to-day operation of the school and will provide services for accounting, payroll, human resources, grants management including federally funded programs, facilities, curriculum, and assessment and data-driven decision making. Per the specifications of the Management Agreement (see Appendix I), NHA may perform some of these services off-site.

Landmark Academy is not requesting start-up grant funds for conferences or networking opportunities. Please reference the "Professional Development" section below for a detailed discussion on the school's professional development activities.

Landmark Academy's Governing Board has received training in the oversight and governance of a charter school. Initial Board training, conducted in Fall 2006, was based on the Carver model of governance as adapted by Brian Carpenter of the National Charter Schools Institute and based on direction offered by Chenzi Grignano through his Guidance for Charter School Operators. Additionally, specific training regarding the responsibilities of charter schools in Colorado will be offered to Board members in Spring 2007.