

## BULLET BACKGROUND PAPER

ON

### DAVIS-MONTHAN AFB CHARTER SCHOOL

Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) ran Lowell Smith Elementary School on DM from 1969-2006. In 2006, they needed to downsize due to financial struggles and consolidate DM's elementary children into one school on DM, Borman Elementary. In 2007, parents of over 200 students responded to a survey expressing an interest in having a middle school on base at the former Smith School. During this timeframe, TUSD tried to open a middle school in its place; however they met too many challenges and were not able to make it happen. They were unable to meet unitary status, and therefore were denied the ability to re-open the school by the judge presiding over the desegregation issues that exist in the district. Subsequently, the lease expired on 30 Apr 08; and on 31 Jul 08 the lease reverted back to the AF.

In Aug 08, DM started another push to open Smith School as a middle school to give DM parents more options for their children. A Department of Defense Dependent School was not an option since they are following a trend to transfer to Local Education Authorities. 355 FW leadership determined that an existing charter was the best option to pursue.

A series of town halls, working group meetings, and open email discussions were conducted with interested parents and project leadership to compile a list of qualities DM families wanted in a middle school. Throughout the process, representatives from MSG, XP, CE, JA, FSS, CONS, SFS, AT/FP and the School Liaison Officer were included.

In Aug 08, DM submitted a beddown request to proceed with a charter school lease through ACC and HQ AF. On 17 Nov 08, it was approved to award a ten-year lease with an option to extend services for up to five one-year option periods.

The project team developed the Request for Proposal (RFP), lease, and the Statement of Objectives using Arizona State standards in conjunction with working group results. The RFP package was sent to interested charter schools on 21 Nov 08 with a deadline for proposals on 16 Jan 09.

On 2 Feb 09 the 355 FW/CC, as the Source Selection Authority, with a recommendation from the Source Selection Evaluation Team, proposed DM as an additional campus for Daisy Education Corporation – Sonoran Science Academy (SSA) as the best value for the base.

Coordination and approval was completed through ACC, the Air Force Real Property Agency, SAF, and Congress. The final package was signed by SAF/IEI on 15 Jul 09. Although limited on time, SSA moved forward and ensured the school opened on 17 Aug 09 with 120 students.

Since school began, SSA has been named the AZ Charter School of the Year for 2009. This makes them the number one of 502 charter schools in AZ. They are offering 19 different classes, 11 extra-curricular clubs, both parent and student social activities, and free tutoring. Their first basketball team came in second in their league, and their Lego team received the prestigious Judge's Award out of 23 teams in Southern AZ. AZ State Senator Linda Lopez and Representative Daniel Patterson have both visited the school on base. Also, other installations have inquired about the process for their own base. Notable comments: From parents: "I am so glad that my child doesn't have to ride the bus for two hours a day." "This school actually cares and goes the extra mile." From students: "No one has bullied me at this school."

A middle school on DM provides a great service to our Airmen. Our military families have a lot on their minds with the current operations tempo, numerous moves, frequent (temporary duty assignments) and deployments. Parents were extremely energized about actually having an input into what and how their children are taught. They have shown great enthusiasm in having a middle school on base for their children and are really excited about all SSA has to offer middle school children on DM with the first charter on an AF base.