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August 22, 2024

Tom Miller  
The Seaside School, Inc.  
10 Smolian Circle  
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

RE: Triumph Pre-Application No. 341 – Dream Big Walton County

Mr. Miller,

Thank you for submitting a Pre-Application to Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.

Based on an initial review by the staff of Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc., (“TGC”) and a concurrence of the Board, the project or program outlined in your Pre-Application meets the minimum requirements for further consideration. As a result, you may proceed to submit a full Application for formal consideration.

While our initial opinion is that this project is eligible to apply, there are several issues that staff believes will need to be addressed prior to the Triumph board taking any action on this project. These comments are offered in order to help the applicant address potential issues in conjunction with filing a formal application. Triumph Staff remains ready, willing, and able to assist with the application process.

First, the pre-application seeks grant funding under s.288.8017(e) & (f) which are limited to awards for programming; however, the project appears to be a public infrastructure project; i.e., the construction of a public charter school on land owned by Northwest Florida State College. While changing the statute under which the request is made appears to make the project eligible, if approved this would represent the first grant award Triumph has awarded for new construction of a charter school. Further, projects must not only meet statutory eligibility but “meet the priorities for economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties.” Whether or not construction of a charter school meets these priorities is a discretionary decision of the Board.

Second, the documentation submitted does not describe the role of the Charter School’s sponsor; i.e., the Walton County School District. Under the Charter School law the sponsor bears some responsibility for general oversight of the schools progress towards goals, monitoring revenue and expenditures of the school, ensuring that charter schools participate in the state’s accountability system, and potentially intervening in the event of any problem with the charter school. To that end, one issue that needs clarification is whether the Walton County School District is a third-party beneficiary to the Ground Lease or Memorandum of Understanding. Another open question is whether or not this project would utilize Walton County School District contract and purchasing procedures. Additionally, we believe clarity is needed regarding the role the Walton County School District will play in the event of a default under the proposed Ground Lease and Memorandum of Understanding.

Finally, as the process moves forward, Triumph needs a better understanding of the specific uses of any grant funds earmarked for construction as well as refinement of the number of certifications being promised, the type, timing and the cost-per-cert basis.

We look forward to working with Seaside School to refine its application.

There is no deadline for submission of formal Application. Applications will be considered as they are received; however, because Applications require varying levels of due diligence, there is no way to provide any additional information on how quickly any specific Application will receive final application.

This letter is not a representation or guarantee that the project or program will receive any funding from TGC; nor is it a guarantee that the project or program will remain eligible if changes are made during the Application process.

Triumph Gulf Coast funding is intended to support programs that generate maximum economic activity. Applicants have asked how best to document the economic activity that would likely result from their proposed project. At the January 2018 Triumph Board of Directors meeting, Dr. Rick Harper discussed characteristics most often associated with higher levels of economic activity. These factors include things like amount of matching funds, and whether the project will become self-sustaining as Triumph dollars are used up. An audio transcript of Dr. Harper's remarks is available at <https://www.myfloridatriumph.com/meetings/> under the tab for the January 29th, 2018 meeting.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding this letter or the TGC Application process, please do not hesitate to contact me at [chenderson@myfloridatriumph.com](mailto:chenderson@myfloridatriumph.com)

Thank you for your continued interest.

Very truly yours,



Cori Henderson  
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