

1 BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

2 STATE OF NEW MEXICO

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10 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

11 PUBLIC MEETING

12 VOLUME I

13 December 7, 2016

14 9:00 a.m.

15 Jerry Apodaca Education Building - Mabry Hall

16 300 Don Gaspar

17 Santa Fe, New Mexico

18
19
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A P P E A R A N C E S

COMMISSIONERS:

MS. PATRICIA GIPSON, Chair
MR. GILBERT PERALTA, Vice Chair
MS. KARYL ANN ARMBRUSTER, Secretary
MR. JEFF CARR, Member
MS. ELEANOR CHAVEZ, Member (Telephonically)
MS. DANIELLE JOHNSTON, Member
MS. MILLIE POGNA, Member
MS. CARMIE TOULOUSE, Member

STAFF:

MS. KATIE POULOS, Director, Charter School Division
MS. AUDREY McKEE, Assistant Attorney General
Counsel to the PEC
MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN, PED Custodian of Record
and Liaison to the PEC

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1 THE CHAIR: I call to order this meeting
2 of the Public Education Commission. And it is
3 Wednesday, December 7th, and it is 9:04. So we will
4 begin with roll call.

5 Commissioner Armbruster?

6 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So I don't see
7 any here. Let me just hope for the best.

8 Okay. Roll call. Thank you.

9 Commissioner Pogna?

10 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Here.

11 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. Good.

12 Commissioner Toulouse?

13 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Present.

14 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
15 Armbruster is here.

16 Commissioner Conyers is not here.

17 Commissioner Peralta?

18 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Here.

19 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
20 Gipson?

21 THE CHAIR: Here.

22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
23 Johnston?

24 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Present.

25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

1 Shearman? Not here.

2 Commissioner Chavez?

3 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Here.

4 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: We have eight
5 out of ten Commissioners here. We have a quorum.

6 THE CHAIR: We have a quorum. Thank you
7 very much.

8 COMMISSIONER CARR: Did you not call my
9 name?

10 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I didn't, Jeff.

11 COMMISSIONER CARR: I'm here.

12 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It's hard,
13 reading --

14 THE CHAIR: So we have nine.

15 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I counted him.
16 I just didn't call him.

17 THE CHAIR: Okay. Got you. So we have
18 eight out of ten. Thank you very much.

19 We will now move on to the Pledge of
20 Allegiance.

21 And I will ask Commissioner Carr to lead
22 us in that, and Commissioner Johnston, because
23 Commissioner Shearman is not here, in the New Mexico
24 Salute.

25 (Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to the

1 New Mexico Flag conducted.)

2 THE CHAIR: Thank you all for coming.

3 It's so unusual that we have lots of bodies out
4 there. So we look forward to hearing from all of
5 you. And I want to thank everyone at this point in
6 time for all of your time and efforts that you put
7 into those applications. We appreciate your
8 thoughtful look. And, trust me, we've plowed
9 through all of them; so we look forward to a
10 spirited conversation on these.

11 But before we get to them, there are a few
12 things that we do need to work on first.

13 And the first item is approval of the
14 agenda.

15 And I need to look at the number.

16 I do have a correction on the agenda, for
17 Item No. 7. And that is the Report From Options for
18 Parents. And we are going to remove, for today, B
19 and C.

20 Item No. 7.

21 Is this working?

22 MS. FRIEDMAN: Yes.

23 THE CHAIR: Do I have any other changes
24 that need to be made to the agenda?

25 If not, I will entertain a motion for

1 approving the agenda with the removal of Item B --
2 7B and C.

3 COMMISSIONER CARR: So move.

4 THE CHAIR: Second?

5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Second.

6 THE CHAIR: Motion by Commissioner Carr,
7 second by Commissioner Armbruster.

8 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair,
9 before we vote, I'd like to make a comment.

10 THE CHAIR: Certainly.

11 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: And that is, I
12 have problems with dividing up the schools over the
13 three days, because, normally, we can finish in two
14 days. And to make us come back a third day and do
15 the business after that, when we've already been
16 tired, I have a problem; where normally, we just go
17 through till we reach a stopping point and then come
18 back.

19 So I know we've done it this way. There's
20 scheduled people now; but I want to be on the record
21 saying I disagree totally with this. If it happens
22 next year, I will vote "No" on an agenda. But I
23 disagree with making us do three days, and also
24 requiring the State to pay us for three days, when
25 we probably could have done it in two.

1 Thank you. Now, you can vote.

2 THE CHAIR: I understand your concern.

3 And that -- and that issue has been addressed.

4 So -- and you're right. There's nothing
5 we can do about the scheduling at this point in
6 time.

7 So all in favor?

8 (Commissioners so indicate.)

9 THE CHAIR: Opposed?

10 (No response.)

11 THE CHAIR: Carries unanimously.

12 All right. No. 3, the Approval of Minutes
13 and the Transcript.

14 So 3A is approval of PEC Work Session
15 Minutes for November 14th, 2016.

16 Do we have any corrections to those
17 minutes?

18 If not, I will entertain a motion to
19 approve.

20 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, so
21 move.

22 COMMISSIONER POGNA: [Indicates.]

23 THE CHAIR: Motion by Commissioner
24 Toulouse, second by Commissioner Pogna.

25 All in favor?

1 (Commissioners so indicate.)

2 THE CHAIR: Thank you. That is a
3 unanimous approval.

4 3B, Approval of the PEC Meeting Transcript
5 Minutes for November 15th, 2016.

6 Do we have any corrections?

7 If not, I will entertain a motion for
8 approval.

9 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I move we
10 approve the minutes transcript from November 15th.

11 THE CHAIR: Motion by Commissioner
12 Armbruster. Second by Commissioner --

13 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Here.

14 THE CHAIR: -- Commissioner Peralta.
15 All in favor?

16 (Commissioners so indicate.)

17 THE CHAIR: Opposed?

18 (No response.)

19 THE CHAIR: That is a unanimous approval.

20 3C, Approval of PEC Summary Minutes for
21 November 15th, 2016. If there are no changes,
22 corrections, I will entertain a motion. Motion by?

23 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: So move that
24 motion.

25 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Peralta.

1 COMMISSIONER CARR: Second.

2 THE CHAIR: Second by Commissioner Carr.

3 All in favor?

4 (Commissioners so indicate.)

5 THE CHAIR: Opposed?

6 (No response.)

7 THE CHAIR: That, once again, is a
8 unanimous approval.

9 Before we move on to the discussion of our
10 renewing schools, this is a -- this is a point of
11 the year where we have schools that are renewing and
12 looking forward to work that's going forward in the
13 new year. But it is also a time when we say goodbye
14 to Commissioners whose terms are ending; so that
15 it's -- it's a time for reflection for us a little
16 bit.

17 And we do have four Commissioners that --
18 whose terms are expiring, and they will not be with
19 us in January.

20 Commissioner Bergman, unfortunately, had
21 to leave his term early due to health, so that we do
22 not have the opportunity to have him here to
23 personally say goodbye.

24 But I do have -- I do have a statement
25 that Commissioner Bergman did send. So I would like

1 to read that into the minutes right now.

2 "During the past eight years, we
3 established and put into place a rigorous system of
4 protocols, procedures, standardized forms,
5 application evaluation rubrics, implemented the
6 performance contracts, performance frameworks
7 process, with the intent to improve academic
8 opportunities and outcomes for children attending
9 charter schools.

10 "I firmly believe that this oversight
11 system is the best in the country. I am proud to
12 have been part of this accomplishment. I thoroughly
13 enjoyed working with my fellow Commissioners,
14 Charter School Division staff, past and present, PED
15 staff, and the many, many dedicated charter school
16 leaders that I had the privilege to meet and work
17 with. Best wishes as you go forward with the PEC
18 mission. Vince Bergman."

19 Vince was very instrumental in helping me
20 with negotiations. And I had the opportunity to sit
21 with him, through my first year, and, I think, close
22 to 17 negotiations. So we got to know each other
23 fairly quickly. And I appreciate the guidance that
24 he offered us and was disappointed that he was
25 unable to fulfill the remainder of his term.

1 He and two of the other Commissioners,
2 actually, came on when the work of the PEC was not
3 as --

4 COMMISSIONER CARR: Rigorous.

5 THE CHAIR: -- as rigorous. They didn't
6 meet but six to eight times, probably, during the --
7 during the year.

8 So things have changed over those eight
9 years. And I applaud all the Commissioners that
10 came on with the understanding that this is what it
11 was, and it morphed into something very different,
12 and have dug in and done the work and helped move
13 the PEC forward; and Vince is certainly one of those
14 that was instrumental in that.

15 So I want to wish him, personally, and
16 from the Commission, good health in the future and
17 hope that he is doing well.

18 So thank you very much.

19 And we do have something that we will be
20 sending off to Commissioner Bergman.

21 Commissioner Shearman, also,
22 unfortunately, could not be with us today, because
23 she is having surgery in Lubbock. So she was -- you
24 know, it's unfortunate that that timing -- so she
25 wants to -- or I want to say -- that she, also, as

1 Chair, was a very, very important role model for me
2 and had spent a lot of time listening to my
3 questions, offering me advice, and guiding me
4 through these months that I ended up taking over as
5 Chair of the Commission.

6 And, once again, she has spent eight years
7 here. It has morphed into a more time consuming
8 role. And I appreciate and respect the time, the
9 effort, and the dedication that she put into this
10 Commission. And we certainly wish her the best of
11 health, as well.

12 Our third Commissioner, who is leaving us
13 now, is Commissioner Chavez. So I will turn this
14 over to Commissioner Chavez, if she wants to say a
15 few words.

16 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Sure. Thank you.
17 And, you know, I just want to say that being on the
18 Commission was certainly an eye opening experience
19 for me. I learned a lot. It was a joy working with
20 all of you, and I wish you the best of luck moving
21 forward.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. And we
23 certainly appreciate the work and what you have
24 contributed, in your short term that you've been
25 here. And we wish you the best of luck in your

1 future endeavors, which are -- in your work right
2 now, as well.

3 And, finally, but not last, is our sole
4 Commissioner who is here. And that is
5 Commissioner Carr. And, Commissioner Carr has been
6 with us here for eight years and has offered a
7 tremendous amount of insight. He has worked, and
8 does, still, currently work, in a charter school; so
9 that the insight that he offers to charters, and as
10 a strong dedicated professional teacher himself,
11 that that insight that he offers to this Commission
12 is and has been invaluable. So that it goes without
13 saying that we will miss his input, his insight, and
14 we appreciate the time, the effort, and the
15 dedication that he has offered to this Commission.

16 And I will turn it over to you for -- if
17 you wish, for some words.

18 COMMISSIONER CARR: Okay. I'll try to
19 keep it short. And you know I don't always do that.

20 THE CHAIR: You always say that.

21 COMMISSIONER CARR: That's a warning that
22 it's probably not going to be that short; right?
23 The -- but I will. I'll try.

24 The eight years that I've been here --
25 and, you know, this is my 27th year teaching, as

1 well -- has been quite an experience. I think I'm
2 going to -- I think all of us here are in a small
3 group of people who have -- maybe out of 20, 25
4 people or less, who have such an in-depth knowledge
5 of charter schools throughout the State over a long
6 period of time.

7 And it's -- hopefully, I'll -- I'll be
8 able to offer help or answer questions. You know,
9 I'm open. I still get questions from Karyl Ann and
10 some others. And, you know, I'll be here.

11 And for the new people who are coming in,
12 my friend, Trish Ruiz, who's coming on; Tim Crone,
13 who's coming on; people that I've known for years
14 that -- you know, I'll still be available to
15 consult. I'm still available to call, if you want
16 to ask me about something that happened seven years
17 ago or eight years ago.

18 I -- I have worked really hard on matters
19 maybe other than the PEC, as well; but it would
20 change the PEC. You know, I -- we -- I think most
21 of us recognize that we have a lot of things that
22 need to be taken care of in regards to the law, in
23 regards to charter schools and how the PEC operates
24 in conjunction with the Public Education Department.
25 There's a lot of things that need to be tweaked,

1 maybe, and a lot of things that really need to be
2 fixed.

3 And -- and we need to work tirelessly
4 toward that. And I plan on continuing that. I will
5 continue to lobby the State Legislature to fully
6 fund education, which has never been done. You
7 know, we have huge corporations out there that spend
8 millions of dollars lobbying Congress and our State
9 Legislature. And those same people tell us that
10 throwing money at a problem doesn't fix anything.
11 But they do it all the time. And it fixes a lot of
12 things for them. So I think that's an important
13 thing to realize.

14 Most teachers realize that we work on a
15 shoestring budget, not hardly any budget at all.
16 And that's something that needs to change, as well.

17 Charter schools may be going through a
18 major change in our state. I mean, I -- you know,
19 the -- they're going to be cutting a lot of funding.
20 The Small School funding formula, if that is cut,
21 may throw a lot of schools out completely, just
22 because of money.

23 There's a lot of issues that we need to
24 deal with in this state. And it's a holistic issue.
25 It's not just education; it's everything that we

1 need to work on. We happen to be almost last in
2 everything, which the good news is we have no place
3 to go but up.

4 But guess what? Sometimes things can get
5 even worse. And -- and we need to -- we need to all
6 hang on. We all need to work together to make this
7 a better state for our children, our grandchildren,
8 and the future. And it's something that we all need
9 to work on together. It can't be a handful of
10 people doing all of the work; it has to be you young
11 students coming up and graduating, getting involved
12 and doing what's necessary to make this a better
13 state and to make this a better country.

14 I will work tirelessly. I appreciate your
15 kind words, Commissioner Gipson. I would also like
16 to say, you know, Vince and Carolyn and I have
17 worked together for that entire eight years. You
18 know, we've kind of become like a family. Families
19 don't always get along, you know. But guess what?
20 Most of the time we came together, and, you know,
21 most of the time we agree, you know. And most of
22 the time, we work together.

23 Now, I will say, you know, I may have
24 disagreed with Vincent and Carolyn. I want to leave
25 Eleanor out. I don't think we hardly ever disagreed

1 on anything. But the -- this is a -- this is a good
2 example of where people can come together and
3 compromise and work on the greater good.

4 I have never doubted anybody on this
5 Commission's intent to do the right thing. And I
6 can't say that about all politicians. And even
7 though -- I mean, we're politicians. But guess
8 what? We're an example of people who work together.
9 And I haven't seen anybody work -- work for their
10 own good on this Commission, ever. I haven't seen
11 anybody come on here and say -- and had an agenda --
12 or a personal agenda. And you can't say that for a
13 lot of school boards across this state, either.

14 And we need to work on that. And I -- and
15 I appreciate that. I've always bragged on the
16 Commission for that very -- that very reason.

17 And I'll leave it at that. Thank you for
18 the opportunity to serve, and I hope to continue to
19 serve in whatever capacity I can in the future.

20 Thank you.

21 THE CHAIR: Thank you. And we do have a
22 small token for you of appreciation. Thank you so
23 much. Appreciate it.

24 And very quickly, before I move on, I
25 would like to recognize that we do have one incoming

1 Commissioner here today. So we would like to
2 recognize that newly elected Commissioner Ruiz, who
3 will be replacing Commissioner Shearman, is here.
4 So we would like to say, "Welcome. And we look
5 forward to the upcoming year. Thank you very much
6 for coming."

7 I think that's all we have. Is it not?

8 Yeah. Okay.

9 Thank you all very much once again.

10 On to No. 5, Discussion and Possible
11 Action on NACSA Contract for Renewal Project.

12 As all of you are keenly aware, the NACSA
13 report did make a series of recommendations for how
14 the Commission should be moving forward and assuring
15 quality charters.

16 There has been a proposal put forward that
17 PED, the PEC, and NACSA join in a project to take a
18 look at the renewal process. There is some -- Katie
19 Piehl from NACSA is here today -- not having any
20 input into current renewals, but taking a look at
21 our renewal process for going forward; so that this
22 is -- this is a proposal.

23 And there was an MOU that was presented by
24 NACSA so that they could be sure that all parties
25 were supportive of the project. And as such, it

1 does require the vote by the Commission for me to
2 sign this and move forward.

3 I think we can genuinely benefit from the
4 look that this is going to take on our renewal
5 process; so that I strongly recommend to the
6 Commission -- this is at no cost from PED for this,
7 which was expressed as somewhat of a concern early
8 on -- but this is at no cost to the State of New
9 Mexico for this project. So if that was a concern,
10 I want to put that aside.

11 So I would ask the Commissioners to put
12 forward a motion to accept this project, and,
13 therefore, I can sign the MOU, and we can move
14 forward on this; because, once again, I think this
15 is going to give us invaluable information for going
16 forward with renewals for next year.

17 Commissioner Carr?

18 COMMISSIONER CARR: I -- I move we -- we
19 accept the NACSA contract for renewal project.

20 THE CHAIR: I think it's sufficient. Is
21 that sufficient?

22 (The Chair consults with PEC counsel.)

23 THE CHAIR: Oh. Enter into an MOU.

24 COMMISSIONER CARR: Oh. And enter into an
25 MOU. Thank you.

1 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER POGNA: (Indicates.)

3 THE CHAIR: And there's a second by
4 Commissioner Pogna.

5 Roll-call vote, please?

6 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair,
7 discussion?

8 THE CHAIR: Oh, I'm sorry.

9 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, I
10 want to know what this is going to do for us at this
11 time with everything else going on.

12 I'm sorry, but I felt burned by the report
13 that we needed to have changes made to before it was
14 released. And it was released to the Legislature
15 and everybody else, making us look worse than we
16 are.

17 I understand that we have problems, and we
18 need to go forward. But I have no faith in NACSA,
19 and I will not vote for this.

20 I know the rest of you will. Again, when
21 we make a record. I, want to make sure I'm on the
22 record, either so you folks can tell me later, "You
23 know, you made a mistake," or I can say, "I told you
24 so."

25 But I really -- and nothing -- Katie, this

1 is not personal toward you. But I have no faith in
2 NACSA at this point, compared to what goes on in
3 other states as opposed to New Mexico. And what we
4 have going on here, I think, is a different process
5 than many, many charter schools in many, many other
6 states. We have no for-profit schools, other than
7 the semi-for-profit online that we got stuck with.
8 And we have no chains of schools.

9 We have independent, locally controlled
10 schools. And I just think we're very different than
11 many of the areas, where I talk to friends -- I have
12 friends in many other states. And I don't find any
13 similar to ours.

14 So I just -- again, I want to be on the
15 record. Thank you.

16 THE CHAIR: Okay. I would just like to
17 add that this is not -- this will not be generated
18 into a public report. This is, hopefully, going --
19 the end result is going to be working documents that
20 we can use to help us through the renewal process.
21 So that this is -- NACSA isn't coming in to do a --
22 they've already done that -- a review and a report
23 out through that -- through that last review.

24 This is a work project to help us to
25 develop forms, policies, processes that will make it

1 clear, transparent, and allow us, hopefully, to
2 assure that we're putting forward quality charters
3 when we're doing the renewal process.

4 And I honestly don't -- I don't
5 anticipate -- and I'll allow Katie to come down, if
6 she wishes to speak. I think I can do that, if she
7 wishes to speak only.

8 But I don't see that this is going to put
9 an extraordinary burden on the Commissioners in
10 terms of amount -- additional work that will be
11 required.

12 I may be wrong in thinking this.

13 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, every
14 form we do becomes a public document. And all of
15 those require our input and effort. And I know what
16 effort it took over two years to do what we have
17 now.

18 And if we're going to start completely
19 over, I want no part of it. If we're going to
20 modify what we had and change it, that's different.

21 THE CHAIR: Well, I think we have to take
22 a -- you know -- Katie --

23 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Again, I'm one of
24 the people who puts in the most time, and, I think,
25 may put in a little time on this. It doesn't

1 matter.

2 THE CHAIR: That's fine. But -- and I
3 know that everything that we do becomes a public
4 document. And I am more than aware of the time that
5 it takes to create those.

6 But I don't necessarily think we're
7 throwing everything out. I think if there's
8 something that's working, we're going to be able to
9 keep it.

10 Could you just introduce yourself for the
11 record.

12 MS. KATIE PIEHL: Sure. Chair and
13 Members, thank you. My name is Katie Piehl. I'm
14 Director of Authorizer Development for the National
15 Association of Charter School Authorizers, otherwise
16 known as "NACSA." I am -- do I need to hold this
17 down? I do.

18 THE CHAIR: Unfortunately.

19 MS. KATIE PIEHL: Okay. Thank you.

20 You, I believe, may have a copy of the
21 MOU, shows what the deliverable would be, which is a
22 memo of recommendations to improvements of the
23 renewal application process and corresponding
24 materials, and, you know, supporting documents, like
25 training materials, et cetera, for -- for charter

1 schools.

2 So the idea is that the -- the -- the
3 deliverable, or the -- the information that we would
4 provide would be expanding on recommendations for
5 improvements in the renewal process.

6 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Carr?

7 COMMISSIONER CARR: I want to -- I want to
8 agree to, at least some extent, with Commissioner
9 Toulouse. I -- you know, I remember going, you
10 know, to -- even though I introduced it -- I think
11 this is fine, or I wouldn't have -- wouldn't have
12 made the motion. But I -- I don't want to let this
13 go without making a statement about NACSA.

14 NACSA -- you know, I've gone to one of
15 their national meetings. Vince went with me. I
16 think Gilbert went with me. When they first
17 started, they were a cheerleader for charter
18 schools: "Okay, yes. For-profit charter schools.
19 Let's do this. Let's do that. Let's do
20 everything."

21 And, you know, all of a sudden, all the
22 schools didn't work across the country. And in many
23 states, they're a mess. You think we have problems
24 here? Just look at Ohio. Look at Florida and
25 Tennessee. You know, there are countless problems.

1 And NACSA has realized it. And I want to welcome
2 them to this new rationale.

3 And I -- and I want to -- and make that
4 statement. Yes, we need to be very careful about
5 what schools we allow to operate. And -- and -- and
6 if you're -- this organization is coming around to
7 my way of thinking, and some of our other people's
8 way of thinking now, they realize bad charter
9 schools are bad for good charter schools.

10 And a lot of people don't seem to get that
11 yet, you know. Bad public schools are not good for
12 anybody, either.

13 Charter schools -- so it's important that
14 we embrace what is good and what is right. And when
15 people come to want to work together, and if they're
16 doing what I think is right, then I think that we
17 need to work with them; if -- but recognizing the
18 fact that they're really coming to this late.

19 Sorry.

20 THE CHAIR: Any other Commissioners?

21 I would just like to add -- and assure
22 Commissioners -- that whatever recommendations, they
23 become recommendations. And ultimately, the PEC
24 makes its policies.

25 So that I don't think it hurts to look at

1 as many different points of view and as many expert
2 touches as we can get on this process. And that's
3 ultimately our job, to glean through it, then,
4 understanding that, yes, New Mexico is different
5 than many other states, and there are certain things
6 that may and may not work; because we're -- you
7 know, we are unique, and we want to make sure that
8 we keep what works for us, but that this is just
9 advice and consent -- advice.

10 And I don't think there's harm. And I
11 think there's benefit to the schools, ultimately,
12 that we have the best process that we can, and the
13 best information going forward for the schools, and
14 that this is -- all that will result in this is
15 something that we can look at with recommendations.

16 And we -- at the end of it all, we're the
17 ones that make the policies that will work for us.
18 So that this just gives us that opportunity to hear
19 another voice.

20 Is there any other discussion? There is a
21 motion and a second.

22 So, Commissioner Armbruster?

23 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
24 Johnston?

25 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
2 Peralta?
3 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.
4 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
5 Carr?
6 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.
7 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
8 Chavez?
9 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Yes.
10 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
11 Gipson?
12 THE CHAIR: Yes.
13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
14 Toulouse?
15 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: No.
16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
17 Armbruster votes "Yes."
18 Commissioner Pogna?
19 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.
20 THE CHAIR: Is it a seven-to-one vote?
21 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Yes. Seven are
22 voting for, out of the eight.
23 THE CHAIR: Seven voted to accept the
24 project. There is one vote not. So the motion
25 carries.

1 Thank you very much. Thank you.

2 MS. KATIE PIEHL: Thank you.

3 THE CHAIR: All-righty. On to --

4 COMMISSIONER CARR: Could I take just a
5 second of personal privilege?

6 THE CHAIR: Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER CARR: Real short.

8 THE CHAIR: What did I say before?

9 COMMISSIONER CARR: It's short. I already
10 could have said it, if you'd let me.

11 THE CHAIR: Okay.

12 COMMISSIONER CARR: I always wear a tie to
13 these meetings, and I wear a suit. And I do that
14 out of respect for these proceedings. And I just
15 simply forgot it. So that's all. I want people to
16 know that.

17 Thank you.

18 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

19 DEP. SEC. RUSZKOWSKI: Hold on, now. Hold
20 on, now.

21 COMMISSIONER CARR: He's supporting me.

22 DEP. SEC. RUSZKOWSKI: Thank you,
23 Commissioner.

24 THE CHAIR: And I do want to recognize
25 that Deputy Secretary Ruszkowski has joined us. So,

1 welcome.

2 DEP. SEC. RUSZKOWSKI: Can I say just a
3 world of welcome, Chairman?

4 THE CHAIR: I don't see -- but Senator
5 Lopez is also here. And I have not seen --

6 SENATOR LINDA LOPEZ: I'm back here. Good
7 morning.

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much for
9 coming.

10 DEP. SEC. RUSZKOWSKI: Just a quick "Good
11 Morning."

12 THE CHAIR: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't know
13 you wanted to say --

14 DEP. SEC. RUSZKOWSKI: Just, like,
15 30 seconds.

16 Good morning, Commissioners, and good
17 morning, Chairman Gipson. And thank you to everyone
18 for being here today for this important day, and
19 important series of days, for the Public Education
20 Commission to consider renewal for these 13 schools.

21 Just a word of welcome, and, again, my
22 apologies, as well, Commissioner Carr, for not --
23 for not wearing the tie this morning. It's a good
24 point, though, I think, about -- about respect for
25 these proceedings. And Katie didn't remind me about

1 the tie; so...

2 COMMISSIONER CARR: So it's all her fault.

3 DEP. SEC. RUSZKOWSKI: So it's all her
4 fault. Right.

5 Great to see some students here in the
6 audience and great to have folks here, our
7 legislators and members of our charter school
8 community. So welcome to everyone.

9 The only note I wanted to just share with
10 the Commission, obviously. Myself and my team
11 members who are here today from the Priority Schools
12 Bureau and College and Career Readiness Bureau and
13 others will be in and out over the next couple of
14 days, because of the importance and the gravity of
15 these proceedings. And the -- the effort to put the
16 recommendations in front of the Commission has
17 really been a full team effort.

18 It has been across the entire Public
19 Education Department, both Deputy Secretaries,
20 Secretary Skandera, the Finance team, the Assessment
21 & Accountability team; and so I just did want to
22 note this morning that these are the Public
23 Education Department's recommendations, and that
24 there are many people -- and I know the Charter
25 School Division will be here, you know, to answer

1 questions and to point folks to relevant
2 information.

3 But it really was the entire Public
4 Education departments that came forward and did a
5 lot of hard work. And I wanted to thank our team
6 for all of that hard work that is now sitting in
7 front of your desk today.

8 But I think, more importantly, just a
9 thank you to the Commissioners for their time over
10 the next three days and their deliberation on what
11 are some very difficult decisions and some very
12 difficult items that affect our children and affect
13 our taxpayer dollars and the like.

14 So, again, great to see some students here
15 today at the PED. Good morning.

16 UNIDENTIFIED STUDENTS: Good morning, sir.

17 DEP. SEC. RUSZKOWSKI: And -- that was
18 great. That was fun. I taught seventh and eighth
19 grade. You guys look a little older than that. So
20 I'm out of my depth already with you guys.

21 But great to be here. Thank you,
22 Chairwoman for the -- for the two minutes. But good
23 luck to you over the next couple of days.

24 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

25 Commissioner Toulouse?

1 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, could
2 we ask the Deputy Secretary to introduce his team
3 members who are here? Because many of them, we know
4 about, but we don't see in here. We have only
5 several people who routinely come talk to us.

6 DEP. SEC. RUSZKOWSKI: Yeah.
7 Madam Chair --

8 THE CHAIR: Certainly, yes.

9 DEP. SEC. RUSZKOWSKI: -- if I may. So
10 I'm Christopher Ruszkowski. I'm the Deputy
11 Secretary of Policy and Program. If you're from the
12 PED team, would you please just stand up really
13 quickly?

14 And let's, just -- Gloria, just quickly --
15 let's just all shout out what we do here at the PED
16 and our role.

17 MS. GLORIA RUIZ: Good morning. My name
18 is Gloria Ruiz. And I'm the Family Engagement
19 Coordinator for the Public Education Department.

20 (Reporter requests clarification.)

21 DEP. SEC. RUSZKOWSKI: I'm sorry. that's
22 Gloria Ruiz. She's our Family and Parent Engagement
23 Coordinator.

24 MS. DEBBIE MONTOYA: Good morning,
25 everyone. Debbie Montoya. I am the Division

1 Director overseeing Priority Schools, Literacy,
2 Math, and Science for the PED.

3 DEP. SEC. RUSZKOWSKI: So Debbie oversees
4 one of our largest teams here at the PED, which
5 includes the Priority Schools, programs like
6 Principals Pursuing Excellence, Reads to Lead, all
7 our math and English language arts programs. Works
8 closely with Katie on a lot of the funding that
9 charters get from below-the-line initiatives.

10 MS. BECKY KAPPUS: Good morning. My name
11 is Becky Kappus, and I work in the Charter School
12 Division.

13 MS. LAUREL PIERCE: Good morning. My name
14 is Laurel Pierce. I work in Charter Schools in the
15 Assessment Department.

16 DEP. SEC. RUSZKOWSKI: And Laurel is in
17 week one in the Charter School Division and is
18 supporting the administration of both the Charter
19 School Division and Contract Assessment &
20 Accountability Division.

21 MR. PHILIP GLOUDEMANS: My name is Philip
22 Gloudemans. I'm in the Charter School Division, and
23 I'm the Academic and Program Specialist.

24 MS. SHIRLEY MARLOW: Good morning. My
25 name is Shirley Marlow, and I'm with IDEAL-New

1 Mexico, virtual school.

2 DEP. SEC. RUSZKOWSKI: I assume folks are
3 roughly familiar with IDEAL-New Mexico. But it's
4 our online statewide platform. A lot of students
5 take AP courses online, if they're not offered.
6 They take driver's ed online. So it's our online
7 virtual school, slash, blended learning platform.
8 So it's great to have somebody from the IDEAL team
9 here, as well.

10 So with that, Madam Chair, and
11 Commissioners, thank you for allowing --

12 THE CHAIR: We were just trying to figure
13 out how you do driver's ed online.

14 DEP. SEC. RUSZKOWSKI: We could spend a
15 whole half-day on that subject.

16 Thank you, Madam Chair.

17 THE CHAIR: I know. Thank you very much.
18 And we appreciate that there appears to be this
19 effort so that we can all communicate easier
20 together, and we can get information, so that we are
21 making better decisions.

22 DEP. SEC. RUSZKOWSKI: We had one more
23 team member walk in. So Elaine?

24 DR. ELAINE PEREA: Good morning.

25 Dr. Elaine Perea. I think you on the Commission

1 know me. I'm with the College and Career Readiness
2 Bureau.

3 THE CHAIR: Good morning. Welcome once
4 again.

5 Before we begin, as we go through each of
6 the schools, if there is anyone here that wishes to
7 make a comment in the public input portion for that
8 school, if you would please just come to Beverly
9 here and sign in so that we know who here -- because
10 if you signed in in the back for public input, we
11 don't know what school. So it will make it a lot
12 easier for us to make sure that we recognize you.

13 So that if you wish to have public input
14 with our first school, please come to Beverly and
15 give her your name so that we will not forget to
16 recognize you.

17 Thank you. And with that said, we are
18 moving on to Item No. 6, which is Discussion and
19 Action on Renewal Applications.

20 And our first school up this morning is
21 MAS Academy, Albuquerque.

22 THE CHAIR: Welcome. Thank you for
23 coming. And if you would, please, introduce
24 yourselves for the record.

25 MS. JoANN MYERS: Sounds good. I'm JoAnn

1 Myers. I'm the principal and founder. And just for
2 clarification, it's Mission Achievement and Success
3 Charter School. Just wrong on the agenda; so just
4 so you know what school you're renewing today.

5 MR. BRUCE LANGSTON: Thank you, ma'am. My
6 name is Bruce Langston. And I am the Board chairman
7 at the charter school.

8 MS. JENNIFER PEÑA: I'm Jennifer Peña.
9 I'm the Special Education Director.

10 SENATOR BILL O'NEILL: And I'm State
11 Senator Bill O'Neill, board member of this fine
12 school.

13 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Director?

14 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman,
15 Commissioners. So today, and in the materials over
16 the next three days, you have received some pretty
17 substantial reports. I believe our first one, when
18 we prepared it, was 3,000 pages, approximately. And
19 that is because there's a substantial amount of work
20 that has gone into these reports.

21 As the Deputy Secretary has indicated,
22 this has been an across-PED effort to ensure that
23 you have high quality information that can help --
24 help you make meaningful decisions.

25 And those 3,000 pages have all been

1 considered and have all been looked at. And it's
2 not 3,000 for every school; but the amount of
3 support material varied.

4 What we have done is consolidated that
5 into a -- an approximately 25-page report from the
6 Charter -- Public Education Department, and then
7 provided you with, also, the school's response to
8 the preliminary report, as well as the renewal
9 application and their district report card.

10 You'll see for this school that we have
11 made the recommendation for a full five-year renewal
12 term.

13 And I want to take a moment to just
14 commend the great efforts at Mission Achievement and
15 Success. They have achieved a letter grade of -- a
16 three-year average letter grade of "A." And when my
17 team was out there, they saw some pretty incredible
18 things going on at that school.

19 And I think that's reflected in their
20 letter grade performance, and it's reflected in a
21 lot of the data you receive today.

22 They -- they are a school that it can't be
23 said that they are one of those elitest schools,
24 which is sometimes said about our charter schools.
25 They clearly have a population, as you can see in

1 the data, that looks a lot like Albuquerque, and, in
2 fact, is, as a school, achieving what we don't see
3 being achieved throughout the district, which is
4 really great student achievement and academic
5 success.

6 Their student membership has continued to
7 rise. They retain a great number of their students.

8 Over the term of their contract, they have
9 retained many of their teachers; although, that is
10 an issue that we brought up in the report that we
11 would love to see improvement.

12 With regards to the standards, the -- the
13 Department's standards of excellence, we truly
14 believe the school has met those academic standards.

15 When we looked at the school-specific
16 goals, we find ourselves back in that challenging
17 place, where there were many goals. They were
18 developed in a different time, and they are goals
19 that have changed over time.

20 And maybe they should have come before the
21 Commission for an amendment. But we really are
22 finding ourselves in this place with 13 schools.

23 And so what we did try to do is look
24 closely at the data they provided and see what is
25 the trend, and can we look at comparative

1 information, look at when there was an SBA goal,
2 look at what's going on with the PARCC.

3 And we ultimately found that this school
4 was -- even if it didn't achieve the goals as
5 written, was making substantial progress toward
6 those goals.

7 When we looked at the financials, our
8 Audit Bureau and our School Budget Bureau helped us.
9 And, you know, they gave the school some healthy
10 feedback, and we appreciate that the school has
11 taken the time to confirm that feedback.

12 But ultimately, where we landed is we
13 believe this is a school that is doing great things
14 academically. We would like to see, in those
15 conditions that we've recommended, some
16 demonstration of correction of the audit items that
17 were identified in the audit.

18 But ultimately, we leave you with a
19 recommendation to renew this charter school.

20 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, I
21 needed to say at the beginning of this -- and we
22 went too fast -- that I need to recuse myself on the
23 final vote on this, having family members at the
24 school.

25 Thank you.

1 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Fortunately, we
2 still have a quorum.

3 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I'm counting
4 over here.

5 THE CHAIR: Yes. We are shy numbers right
6 now.

7 Thank you, once again. And I just have to
8 remind myself. There's 15 minutes for the school
9 comments. And Beverly will be keeping time for us.

10 MS. JoANN MYERS: The challenge is on.

11 Ms. Poulos, thanks for the positive
12 comments. We appreciate those. And members of the
13 Commission, we appreciate the opportunity to come
14 before you.

15 So in five short minutes, I am going to do
16 my part. And then I'm turning this over to where
17 the real story lies.

18 So what I'd like to do -- and
19 Ms. Poulos -- sorry.

20 Now that we have your attention -- so
21 Ms. Poulos has already highlighted some of our
22 academic highlights. But I'd like to touch on a few
23 of those.

24 So as mentioned, we've achieved an "A"
25 grade for the 2014-'15 school year and the 2015-'16

1 school year, making us one of only 14 percent of
2 schools in the entire state to achieve that grade
3 and one of the only schools in the state to achieve
4 that grade with our demographic.

5 We serve a higher population of students
6 with disabilities, English Language Learners,
7 economically disadvantaged students, than our local
8 public school district, which is the Albuquerque
9 Public School district, as well as a higher
10 percentage than what the State averages are.

11 The Similar Schools data from our school
12 report card ranks us No. 1 in the State for all
13 categories: English Language Learners, students
14 with disabilities, students of -- with mobility
15 factors, economically disadvantaged students.

16 So we're very proud of those
17 accomplishments.

18 Additionally, we were recently recognized
19 by the Center for Educational Reform as a school to
20 emulate in New Mexico. And they highlighted the
21 fact that independent charter schools like us are
22 usually not noticed, because we're not part of a
23 huge network of schools.

24 So some of our other highlights:

25 New Mexico Coalition of Charter Schools

1 has recognized us as the last four years [verbatim].
2 We had Teacher of the Year this year with Allison
3 Garcia, Charter School of the Year last year, Board
4 of the Year the year prior, and Principal of the
5 Year, 2013-'14.

6 We also are proud to have our -- the
7 READ 180 student of the year, a national award. And
8 our student is with us today, Carlos Gallegos.

9 And we have -- in addition to this, we've
10 logged over 3,000 hours of community service over
11 the last four years. Every year in the spring, we
12 take every single secondary student, and we place
13 them in community service organizations throughout
14 Albuquerque to provide community service to local
15 community places.

16 One of the other organizations that we
17 work very closely with is the Roadrunner Food Bank.
18 And over the last four years, we've collected nearly
19 50,000 pounds of food for the Roadrunner Food Bank,
20 making us one of the largest contributors in the
21 State of New Mexico, not just in schools, but in the
22 state. We rank right up there with Walmart and
23 Intel for our contributions.

24 While I could go on and provide you
25 additional accolades and provide data that

1 demonstrates the great things that are going on
2 here, I'd like to shift your attention from what
3 we've done to why we do what we do.

4 So for us, our belief at MAS is that all
5 students can succeed when they have access to a
6 great education. We provide a great education,
7 because we feel like we're part of a civil rights
8 movement that's part of this era. Providing equal
9 access for high quality education is a civil rights
10 movement, in our opinion.

11 We also feel like what we do is social
12 justice. So the work that we do at our school is
13 far beyond just a school. We provide social
14 justice.

15 And what I'd like to do is turn this over
16 to our students, who can demonstrate for you
17 firsthand what our school has done for them.

18 (All students rise.)

19 FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Leslie
20 Barragan [ph]. I am --

21 (A discussion was held off the record.)

22 THE CHAIR: If that's not pressed down,
23 it's off.

24 MS. JoANN MYERS: I think they're okay
25 with ours, then.

1 THE CHAIR: No, that wasn't on.

2 MS. JoANN MYERS: Okay.

3 MS. FRIEDMAN: Is this on? Just turn it
4 up a little.

5 THE CHAIR: It's on now. We're good now.

6 FROM THE FLOOR: Hello my name is Leslie
7 Barragan [ph]. I am Hispanic, ELL, and will be a
8 first-generation college graduate.

9 When I started off in MAS, I had
10 proficient math and reading levels; but throughout
11 my time here, I have succeeded and now I'm reading
12 in college levels.

13 I'm a dual-credit student. And when I
14 graduate from MAS, I would like to go to Yale
15 University and get a Ph.D. in medicine.

16 FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Ashley
17 Bustillos. I'm Hispanic, ELL. Before I went to
18 MAS, I never found interest in school. When I
19 started at MAS, my reading Lexile was near
20 proficient, and over the past years, I have been in
21 the thousands, and now I am also taking
22 college-level classes. I plan on graduating from
23 Colorado -- the University of Colorado and being in
24 the medical field.

25 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is

1 Gloria Gonzales. When I first started at MAS, my
2 reading Lexile score was 573. Over the past year, I
3 am well into the thousands, taking college-level
4 classes. And before MAS, at my middle school, I had
5 no intention of going to school or college. And now
6 that I am here, when I -- when I graduate high
7 school, I hope to go to UCLA and become a doctor.

8 FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Alexandra
9 Murphy. I've been in seven different schools. And
10 in those seven different schools, I was never
11 proficient. After coming to MAS, I am almost
12 advanced in reading and nearing proficient in math.

13 When I graduate high school, I want to go
14 to Denver University and compete for their
15 gymnastics.

16 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. I'm
17 Claudia Chavez. I'm a Hispanic student at MAS.
18 Before coming to MAS, I never took school serious.
19 I had mostly "D's" and "F's." And when I came here,
20 my grades improved tremendously. I now have a 3.5
21 GPA, and I now know what I want to do when I
22 graduate high school.

23 FROM THE FLOOR: My name is Regan Murphy.
24 And when I first started at MAS, I was below in math
25 and reading. And now I'm proficient. And when I

1 graduate high school, I want to go to CU-Denver and
2 do college gymnastics.

3 FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is
4 Alexander Rodman [ph]. I'm the first in my family
5 to attend high school and college. At MAS, they've
6 helped me overcome a lot of things that I've had in
7 my life. They helped me see that education is
8 important. They've raised me from below average to
9 almost advanced. And when I graduate, I want to
10 become a forensics doctor or study a field in
11 [inaudible] college.

12 FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Gloria
13 Kerry. I'll be the first college graduate in my
14 school -- in my family.

15 When I first started at MAS, I was on the
16 first-grade reading level. Now, I'm back up to
17 where I'm supposed to be. I will go to CU-Denver
18 and get a degree in business.

19 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. I'm
20 [Inaudible] Michel [ph]. I am a junior. I have
21 dyslexia, and also an ELL student. Before coming to
22 MAS, I had poor math and reading abilities. Now
23 that I am at MAS, I am taking a college math class
24 at CNM, and my reading abilities have increased
25 tremendously.

1 When I graduate, I want to go to Eastern
2 New Mexico University and study business.

3 FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Juan
4 Morel [ph]. Before coming to MAS, I had below
5 reading and math skills. And now I am proficient in
6 both math and reading. Teachers back then never
7 really cared for me. I was more of just a space.
8 And now here at MAS, everyone -- all the teachers
9 have cared for me and pushed me to where I've been.

10 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is
11 Ashley Gutierrez. And I am a Hispanic ELL student,
12 and I will be the first college graduate from my
13 family.

14 When I came to MAS, I was a developing
15 reader. Now, I am at college-level reading. I am
16 also taking a college class. College -- MAS has
17 really affected my life and has encouraged me to
18 take -- to move on and go to college.

19 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is
20 Omar Hernandez. I am Hispanic from a low-income
21 family, where Spanish was my first language. Before
22 coming to MAS, I was below average in all my
23 subjects. I am now advanced in reading and math.
24 And I will be the first in my family to graduate
25 high school, then college, in the field of

1 engineering.

2 When I graduate college and I become an
3 engineer, not only that I want to be the person who
4 inspires others to embrace the light that shines
5 within them.

6 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is
7 Andy Castillo. Before I came to MAS, I was held
8 back from my second-grade year. My second year
9 attending with Jackson Middle School, I just passed
10 with "D's" and "F's." In the summertime, I found
11 MAS Charter School, and they really showed me how to
12 get my work done and how to focus, and they pushed
13 me to be who I am today.

14 Now, I am both advanced in math and
15 reading, and I am a dual-credit student. When I
16 graduate and go to college, I plan on having a
17 career in computer engineering.

18 FROM THE FLOOR: I'm Anthony Morales.
19 Before coming to MAS, I was always in trouble. I
20 never really cared about school. My parents never
21 made it to college, just straight out of high
22 school. For me, that was it. Just finish high
23 school, and I'm good.

24 I've been at MAS since they opened their
25 doors. From then to now, I have a clear view of my

1 future. I'm going to Arizona State University, to
2 play for the Sun Devils and make some noise, get
3 recognized by the NFL, have a successful future.

4 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is
5 Andres Salazar. I'm a junior. I'm Hispanic, and
6 I'm a first graduate in my family. Before MAS, I
7 was most likely the dropout, because they just
8 looked at me as a number. And when I went to MAS,
9 they taught me that I could achieve whatever I
10 wanted to do.

11 And I achieved many things that I thought
12 I was incapable of. And now, after I graduate, I
13 want to go to CNM, then UNM, to get a master's
14 degree in math.

15 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is
16 Carlos Gallegos. And I'm an ELL at MAS. And before
17 MAS, I really didn't care that much for school. And
18 I really just slacked, because nobody -- nobody
19 really ever showed that they cared that much.

20 And since I've been at MAS, I've learned
21 to care more for school and for my friends. And
22 they've really turned into, like, a family to me.

23 And after I graduate high school, I want
24 to go to Highlands University and study photography
25 and psychology.

1 FROM THE FLOOR: My name is Anthony
2 Martinez, and I'm a gifted Hispanic and dual-credit
3 student at MAS. Before MAS, I was failing all of my
4 classes, because I didn't think any of it mattered.
5 But here, they've taught me that my life is what I
6 make of it, and I hold a 3.8 GPA.

7 I now want to attend cosmetic school for
8 cosmetic artistry in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

9 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is
10 Fabian Vasquez. I'm a gifted ESL student taking
11 dual-credit classes at MAS Charter. Before MAS, I
12 was a failing student, not planning to graduate high
13 school. But when I came to MAS, I came to realize
14 that school is not a punishment, but a pleasure that
15 not everybody gets to have.

16 For my future, I want to go to UNM and
17 study computer technology.

18 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is
19 Jonathan Cordero. I'm a gifted, first-generation
20 student. Before I went to MAS, I was going through
21 a rough patch. My last school really didn't help
22 me, and I began failing a lot of classes. After
23 coming to MAS, though, they did help me, the staff
24 and teachers, and got my grades back up. And I have
25 a plan to become an engineer.

1 FROM THE FLOOR: Hey. My name is Deja
2 [ph] Muñoz. I speak two languages, and I'm a
3 dual-credit student. Before coming to MAS, my
4 reading scores were nearing proficient. And now, my
5 reading scores are doing advanced.

6 With the help of the teachers and staff at
7 MAS, I have come to realize that success is
8 achievable, and now I will graduate college and
9 become a dermatologist.

10 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is
11 Jeffrey Saavedra. And I -- I'm Hispanic. And I
12 will be a first-generation college student. And
13 before MAS, I was most likely to drop out. I didn't
14 really care about my grades or anything. And while
15 attending MAS, they've helped me learn and achieve
16 more as I get to know myself.

17 And when I graduate -- when I graduate
18 high school, I will attend the University of New
19 Mexico and major in business.

20 FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Mitchell
21 Price. Before MAS, I was in special education, and
22 I was abused and neglected. Then I came to MAS for
23 a couple of years, being in MAS's -- being the first
24 hundred students MAS had. And they helped me to
25 bring my grades up.

1 Then I was pulled out of MAS with no
2 choice at all. I was taken away from my family for
3 almost a year. And I begged and begged to come
4 back. When I did, my grades went back up.

5 Now, thanks to MAS, I'm going to be the
6 first to graduate in my family and go to college.
7 And I would like to study cosmetology, education,
8 and medication [ph].

9 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is
10 Daniel Canela [ph]. I am a gifted tenth-grade
11 student. English was my second language. Before
12 MAS, I didn't really care about school. I would
13 consider myself lucky if I even graduated high
14 school.

15 But MAS has given me the confidence to not
16 only graduate high school, but be the first to
17 graduate college in my family. That's it.

18 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is
19 Carlos Valenzuela. I am Hispanic, ESL, gifted
20 student, taking dual-credit classes right now,
21 preparing myself to become the first-generation
22 graduate.

23 Before MAS, my academic levels were really
24 low. But after being there for more than four
25 years, I have been able to increase that to nearing

1 advanced. And hopefully, my plans for when I
2 graduate is to come out with an architectural and
3 landscaping degree.

4 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is
5 Vonnie [ph] Sanchez. I'm a Spanish-speaker. And
6 before MAS, I was at a second-grade reading level.
7 Now that I am at MAS, I have boosted to where I'm
8 supposed to be.

9 I still see progress, and MAS has made me
10 confident and made me realize that I'm going
11 somewhere in life. My goal is to go to CU-Denver,
12 get a business degree and cosmetology.

13 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is
14 Secan [ph] Bryant. I am Hispanic, Native American
15 sophomore. I'm a student at MAS. And I am
16 currently enrolled in dual-college-credit classes.
17 Before MAS, I didn't really care about school. Day
18 after day, I've always decided about missing and
19 dropping out.

20 Then once -- I was one out of 100 students
21 that were encouraged to enroll at MAS. What MAS has
22 taught me is each day of class is another lesson to
23 learn. And I have to take advantage of it.

24 For my future, I want to go to New Mexico
25 State University and study music to become one of

1 the best DJs in the world.

2 THE CHAIR: Thank you all so much. We
3 appreciate all of your stories.

4 We are now actually on to the public input
5 portion. Is there anyone that --

6 MS. FRIEDMAN: Yes, ma'am. There is one
7 person. Ms. Linda Lopez.

8 THE CHAIR: Senator Lopez.

9 SENATOR LINDA LOPEZ: Thank you very much,
10 and good morning to everyone. My name is Linda
11 Lopez. I serve as a State Senator for District 11,
12 which is the southwest quadrant of Bernalillo
13 County. Good morning, everybody. Thank you again
14 for all the work that you on the Commission have
15 done and will continue to do for our charter
16 schools.

17 But here today, I am a mom, the best title
18 in the world. And I have my son, Lorenzo, who
19 attends MAS. And what I have seen happen with him
20 over the last two years has been phenomenal. And I
21 know what will continue to happen as he finishes for
22 the last two years of his high school time will be
23 phenomenal, also.

24 What the team here at MAS has done is
25 helped him to regain his -- and, again, I'm speaking

1 as a mom, because he gets emotional on this.

2 He has come back from where he was before.
3 Middle school was a disaster. His eighth grade
4 year, his self-esteem had gone down, just a lot of
5 other, I think, processes that happened with many of
6 our children. And he has ASD. And coming over to
7 MAS with the supports that have come in through the
8 special education, through his instructors, through
9 the students who have been mentors to him in many
10 different ways, with his participation in the
11 football and basketball teams, my son -- and I know
12 many others who may not be here today -- have
13 regained and have come much, much farther than where
14 they were when they first entered the doors of MAS,
15 Mission Achievement and Success Charter School.

16 I'm here to offer any support I can, but
17 just to let you know that as a mom, and, of course,
18 as a policy maker in our state, I've long been a
19 supporter of charter schools from day one when I
20 entered into, 20 years ago, into the Legislature.

21 This is an opportunity where we get to
22 work outside of the box, and, hopefully, our
23 traditional public schools can look at and mirror
24 and bring some of these new ways of looking at how
25 we work with our children, as you've heard the

1 success here from all these young men and women,
2 where we do make a difference.

3 I know you on the Commission do that. And
4 as we continue to move forward, that will also
5 continue for not just our schools here, but across
6 the State of New Mexico.

7 But, again, I'm here as a mom, offering my
8 support and saying I do hope that you do support
9 MAS, as they move forward for the next five years.

10 Thank you.

11 THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. And I
12 would just like to say that it's more than apparent
13 that the word "limits" doesn't exist in your school.
14 And I appreciate that more than you can know.

15 I also appreciate -- I know that you are
16 such a -- and you do one of the best jobs that I can
17 see of using data. And I know you're a -- you've
18 come before us so many times. And you -- you don't
19 just do the talk; you walk the walk. And it is more
20 than apparent with the results that you have
21 achieved that there's a -- there's a reason why
22 you're doing these assessments, and that you take
23 them seriously, and that you are caring and
24 concerned about each and every one of those students
25 that are there.

1 That being said, I just want to -- there
2 is another component to the renewal process that I
3 think was sort of new for us this year. And that
4 was the -- the buildings.

5 So that shortly before the renewal
6 applications were -- the renewal applications were
7 already in. But the schools received, with kind of
8 short notice, a series of documents that needed to
9 be submitted to PSCOC. And it varied on what
10 documents, depending on whether they owned,
11 lease/purchase, and so on.

12 And I appreciate that MAS was actually
13 able to get in and complete all of the necessary
14 documents.

15 I received, just earlier this week, a
16 rundown of all the schools, whether they were
17 complete or what they were missing.

18 So I want to thank you for your diligence
19 with that piece; because that was kind of a new
20 component for us in terms of looking at the renewal
21 process, that there -- the -- we have not looked at
22 their facilities in terms of whether all their
23 documentation and so on needed to be in as part of
24 the renewal process; so that it was a little
25 additional for us to look at. And I appreciate

1 that.

2 I would just, before I turn it over to the
3 rest of the Commissioners, there was the one item
4 about -- it was a financial concern about variances
5 that had been noted. So I just want -- if you could
6 address that briefly?

7 MR. VIGIL: Madam Chair, members of the
8 Commission, my name is Michael Vigil. I'm the owner
9 of the Vigil Group. We've been here, a number of
10 charter schools went through. As a matter of fact,
11 we're the PED contractor for some of the takeover
12 schools that the PED has taken over.

13 So I can assure you the findings that the
14 school received were very minor in what we've --
15 what were given to the school.

16 The findings with regards to the school in
17 the past were basically a -- the biggest finding was
18 an issue with the cash that was reported. And the
19 issue was -- and the State -- the schools are
20 required -- and this is districts and charters -- to
21 maintain their books on what we call a "cash" basis
22 of accounting, which is a checkbook accounting
23 system. Basically, revenues are recognized when
24 received; expenditures, when the check is cut.

25 However, when we get to the financial

1 statement audit at the end of the year, we convert
2 the books from a cash basis to a modified accrual
3 basis, where we recognize expenses that have been
4 incurred, but not yet paid, revenues that have been
5 earned but have not yet been received.

6 So the difference that we -- basically,
7 between the reports, was we had a difference with
8 the auditor as to what -- when we should accrue an
9 expenditure.

10 So ultimately, we agreed with the auditor
11 that we would accrue at the end of the year, rather
12 than the next subsequent year. Other than that
13 difference, there were no major findings. He
14 decided to put that as a finding, because he felt it
15 was something that should go in the report, because
16 it did impact a small amount of the financials.

17 But it was not a material amount. But per
18 State Auditor Rule, there is no such thing as a
19 materiality limit. If you are off \$1.00, that is an
20 issue for the State Auditor.

21 And so this was a minor issue. I believe
22 it was only a few hundred dollars what the
23 difference it was. But other than that, there have
24 been no additional findings of that nature. All of
25 their findings were very minor in nature.

1 We continue to work with Ms. Myers and her
2 staff and the board to ensure that processes and
3 procedures are in place, that there would be no --
4 no financial issues.

5 And I can tell you -- I cannot give you
6 audited financial information at this point as it is
7 illegal under State Auditor rule. I know that's
8 what we were requested to do. But I can tell you,
9 from an unaudited standpoint, the school did end the
10 year with all funds positive and their operational
11 fund in excess of \$100,000 fund balance.

12 So the school is very sound financially
13 with no issues from a financial standpoint.

14 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you very much.

15 Commissioners, questions? Comments?

16 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair?

17 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Toulouse?

18 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, I'm
19 just interested in how your elementary grades are
20 beginning to move into your school. I know how well
21 your high school students -- but I know you're just
22 starting to implement. I'm just curious as to how
23 that process is going.

24 MS. JoANN MYERS: Elementary, we started
25 elementary last year with kindergarten and first

1 grade. And as you probably remember from us
2 presenting in front of you, we did that because, on
3 average, 80 percent of our students who walk through
4 our doors, secondary, 6 through 12 -- 11, now --
5 they come in not proficient in reading or math. And
6 you heard that from the students.

7 That's part of the reason we requested to
8 open elementary. So last year, we started with
9 kindergarten and first. And then this year, we
10 added second, and will continue to add a grade level
11 till we get to fifth.

12 Last year, we ended the year with over
13 80 percent of our kindergarteners on grade level,
14 while 80 percent of our first-graders came to us not
15 proficient upon arrival. So we still have a little
16 bit of a gap there to catch up on that. They did
17 make substantial gains. We received the Reads to
18 Lead grant last year, and we also received it this
19 year. And as you may know, the grant changed this
20 year. It was based on performance of how schools
21 had performed with their elementary. And we had
22 performed in that top -- I think they looked at the
23 quartile, the top quartile for reading performance
24 for elementary.

25 So it's going very well. What we expect

1 to see over time is because of that elementary
2 program, that we won't see, by the time kids get to
3 middle school, those type of gaps that we've seen so
4 long.

5 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Thank you.

6 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

7 Commissioner Johnston?

8 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Thank you,
9 Madam Chair. First of all, I would like to commend
10 the staff at Mission Achievement for your commitment
11 to data-driven, research-based instruction, and your
12 demands for excellence from every one of the
13 teachers on your staff.

14 And as an aside, I have no background,
15 other than having been an administrator and a
16 teacher, teaching and using data-driven instruction
17 is very difficult, and that could cause some people
18 to make decisions to go elsewhere, when they see
19 your determination and your commitment to this.

20 In everything that I have read, I have
21 seen over and over, from your mission statement, on
22 through everything, your commitment to data-driven
23 instruction and the successes in the outcomes that
24 are verified by this data.

25 The gains in student proficiency have been

1 truly in excess of one year. I didn't read many
2 other schools who had that. So I really, really am
3 impressed by that.

4 And to the students, one of you -- a young
5 man said today -- he said, "Every day is a lesson
6 learned."

7 I want you to really think about what
8 you're observing today, and the process that brought
9 you here today as far as the reevaluation goes,
10 because it's all a process in teamwork. None of
11 this would be possible if all of these adults in
12 your world were not committed to making your school
13 the best place it could be.

14 And that commitment is not based just in
15 emotion; it's based in data. You know your data. I
16 listened to you talk about your Lexile scores.
17 There are not a great many students who can say,
18 "Well, this is my academic data."

19 You have it. So you know exactly where
20 you need to put your energies.

21 This renewal process is a team-generated
22 effort. No score is ever perfect. I think you need
23 to acknowledge that; because it always gives you
24 that room for growth every day.

25 And this is about growth. And the

1 acceptance of constructive criticism, and the
2 acknowledgment of, "Yes, we do need to grow in this
3 area," is very important in everything that we do in
4 this life.

5 I want you to recognize the work that it
6 takes to go -- that goes into creating a product,
7 and then the sharing of -- of that product so that
8 it can be tweaked.

9 You heard us earlier talking about going
10 into collaboration with another agency and the fact
11 that that's tough for some of us. But we need to do
12 that to be better.

13 I commend each one of you, and I am
14 thrilled for each one of you. Many of you have that
15 gift of dual language. Use that gift. Consider
16 that a gift, not a constraint, and use it.

17 Back to the staff, just one final. It's
18 amazing what a commitment to research-based,
19 data-driven instruction can do for students. And I
20 thank you for that.

21 MS. JoANN MYERS: Thank you.

22 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Armbruster?

23 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Although I want
24 to congratulate the staff, including everyone on
25 that staff, I mostly want to say thank you to the

1 students; because it doesn't really matter how
2 terrific a teacher is. If you don't come to school
3 with the desire to learn and to be a better person
4 educationally, it really doesn't matter.

5 Teachers can stand on their head; they can
6 do cartwheels. But if you're not there to want to
7 learn, then you won't. So it's really you I want to
8 thank for the success of MAS, as well as the
9 teachers.

10 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Anyone else?

11 I will then --

12 (The Chair consults with PEC counsel.)

13 THE CHAIR: Just so the Commissioners
14 know, we have a written suggested motion. So
15 whoever is going to make the motion, Ms. McKee will
16 give you the -- the written piece -- no, there
17 isn't; but we have it -- right -- because we need
18 to -- we need to determine if there will be
19 conditions placed on the school with that motion.

20 The recommendation by CSD is for the
21 condition to continue -- was it a Corrective Action
22 Plan? No.

23 MS. POULOS: Madam -- Madam Chairwoman?
24 Madam Chairwoman?

25 THE CHAIR: Actually -- right, right.

1 Evidence of corrections. Okay.

2 So evidence of corrections.

3 Yes? Sorry.

4 MS. POULOS: And, Madam Chairwoman, the
5 schools have all submitted Corrective Action Plans
6 to our School Audit Bureau. So what we would be
7 looking there for is the condition being that they
8 would report on that Corrective Action Plan, to
9 ensure its implementation.

10 THE CHAIR: Okay.

11 MS. MCKEE: I've got it.

12 THE CHAIR: Okay. So now that we're set,
13 I will entertain a motion. Don't all jump in here
14 at once.

15 MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: Madam Chair --
16 Madam Chair?

17 THE CHAIR: I'm sorry. Oh, I'm sorry.

18 MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: Patricia Matthews
19 on behalf of the charter school. Attorney.

20 I'm a little concerned about the vagueness
21 of what appears to be a condition on the charter. I
22 didn't hear anything specific as far as an
23 articulated issue of financial concerns.

24 But -- and I think Ms. Poulos is trying to
25 clarify that it's not a true condition on the

1 charter, but, rather -- I'm -- I actually -- my
2 concern is we have a very vague statement here. And
3 it's not as if, for example, we're -- the condition
4 is that the charter school no longer has two
5 findings, so that that's something that we can all
6 articulate and agree on.

7 MS. McKEE: Can I have that back? So just
8 for clarification, are you -- just for
9 clarification, are you comfortable with the
10 condition being to report on the Corrective Action
11 Plan that was provided?

12 MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: Are we talking
13 about the management responses to findings that
14 exist in prior years? What is this?

15 MS. POULOS: No. Madam Chairwoman and
16 Commissioners and school leaders, every school this
17 year that had audit findings was required to create
18 and submit a Corrective Action Plan to Molly Saiz,
19 our Audit Bureau Manager.

20 MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: So it's my
21 understanding it's just the regular process that the
22 auditors or the school business managers report out
23 on that financial framework piece.

24 MS. POULOS: Every school was required to
25 submit -- it was called, very specifically, a

1 Corrective Action Plan -- to Molly Saiz. It had
2 actions and individuals who were responsible for
3 implementing those actions.

4 We would like to ensure, as a condition,
5 for any school that had especially significant
6 findings -- significant deficiencies -- that that
7 Corrective Action Plan is implemented, and that we
8 have evidence of that through reporting to the
9 Commission.

10 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair?

11 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Toulouse?

12 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I don't see that
13 the Corrective Action Plan itself has requirements
14 in it to report. And so I don't see that -- I mean,
15 this is doubling down where I don't think we need to
16 double-down. If they don't follow through, the
17 correct division will let us know, and it will come
18 back to us, and we will deal with it.

19 But I see no reason -- and, again, I can't
20 vote, so I can't do anything on this one -- but I
21 honestly don't see when something as vague as
22 this -- they've already agreed with their Correction
23 Plan -- to report. And so I don't see that that
24 needs to be our condition. That sounds as if we
25 don't trust these people to run the quality school

1 they're running.

2 THE CHAIR: And I'll just add that I tend
3 to agree that if they have a Corrective Action Plan
4 in place, there are steps that are taken in that
5 Corrective Action Plan for them to report. If that
6 reporting isn't done, it gets reported to us that
7 they have not complied. So that that's already in
8 place someplace else.

9 Do you agree?

10 MS. McKEE: Yes, in principle. I would
11 like to get the Director's input on that.

12 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman,
13 Commissioners, again, I think it's important, as
14 this Commission has a fiduciary duty to the State to
15 ensure the compliance of its charter schools, that
16 this be a condition. This is a school that had
17 significant deficiencies. And they did have the
18 requirement to submit the Corrective Action Plan.

19 But there's not -- when it comes to the
20 PED, there are cases where we don't have a lot of
21 leverage. And when it's the fiduciary duty of this
22 body to ensure compliance of their charter schools,
23 I think adding this condition, and recognizing the
24 seriousness and the importance of this matter,
25 especially as we annually have reports come out with

1 the audit that say charter schools are leading the
2 number of audit findings, that this Commission take
3 that seriously and make that reporting, that
4 requirement of correcting a term of the condition --
5 of the contract.

6 I think that's important. That's why we
7 recommended that. But ultimately, it is this
8 Commission's decision.

9 THE CHAIR: And I understand that. But --
10 and even though that Department may not have a lot
11 of leverage, we do. So that when the report comes
12 back to us that they haven't fulfilled their
13 Corrective Action Plan consideration, then we have
14 the ability to act -- we've got -- we've got the
15 leverage; so that I -- I'm of the legal opinion that
16 it's -- it's duplicative to put that in there.

17 I think the steps are in there for us to
18 be able to keep track of what's going on, as long as
19 we're made aware of whether they did or did not --
20 more importantly, that they did not -- and,
21 therefore, we can then act, once we know that they
22 have not completed or complied with certain or all
23 pieces of that Corrective Action Plan.

24 But the Corrective Action Plan is there.

25 MS. MATTHEWS: In addition, Madam Chair,

1 members of the Commission, it seems to me that the
2 annual site visit report also looks at -- part of
3 that process is reviewing their financial reporting.
4 And that would come out at that time. So I suppose
5 we'd have dual reporting: We have it on the
6 frameworks, and then we apparently have it on this
7 Public Education Department process.

8 So it seems, as you said, covered not just
9 once, but at least twice, if I understand correctly.

10 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Johnston?

11 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Thank you,
12 Madam Chair. I just lauded a school for their
13 willingness to address rigor and their willingness
14 to -- to hold their students accountable to the
15 highest standards of excellence. I do not see a
16 recommendation by PED or a condition by PED that
17 goes forward with a charter renewal that is positive
18 as duplicative or infringing in any way. I think
19 it's a necessary, because we are charter schools.
20 We are school districts. We are -- we do have
21 fiduciary responsibility.

22 And having this in the report, I think is
23 vital, and should be, to my way of thinking, a
24 challenge to all of us to remember our fiduciary
25 responsibility. I don't see it as a negative. I

1 see it as a necessary. Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair?

3 THE CHAIR: But you do understand that the
4 Corrective Action Plan is in place.

5 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Yes, ma'am, I do.

6 THE CHAIR: Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: And I also
8 understand the power of the written word.

9 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, may I
10 address Commissioner Johnston?

11 THE CHAIR: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Commissioner
13 Johnston, we have not been privy to audit findings
14 until this year. We are now addressing those. And
15 I think because we are now addressing those, it's
16 already being taken care of.

17 But when PED had not felt it was something
18 to bring forward to the Commission until this
19 year -- and I do thank Ms. Poulos for finally doing
20 that for us, because I've been asking since I got on
21 this Commission for the audit findings, and they
22 never came forward to us. But there's a difference
23 in putting a condition on a whole renewal and
24 another thing about looking at it in our yearly
25 status reports on the schools and all.

1 And I think there are a school or two that
2 we may want to make this a condition. But in
3 general, most of our schools that are doing as well
4 as this school are also following any Corrective
5 Action Plans that they have.

6 So I have a problem putting conditions on
7 renewals of schools that are this good. Normally,
8 when we put conditions on, it has to do with when
9 we've shortened, when there's academic problems,
10 when there's retention problems, things like that.

11 So that's why my concern is making this an
12 actual renewal condition; because we can bring it up
13 at any time. And I know any school out there will
14 tell you, they don't want to be seen on our agenda
15 as a School of Concern. And that's exactly where
16 they would be put, now that we know about audit
17 findings. And that usually takes care of itself
18 without having to be a part of a contract.

19 If we can't trust people with the money,
20 we need to close them. And we've done that on
21 several occasions. So that's -- that's the back
22 story on this. This is the first year that we
23 really have dealt with audit findings.

24 Thank you.

25 MS. MATTHEWS: Madam Chair, I apologize

1 again, to interrupt. You know, part of my
2 concern -- and I was going exactly where
3 Commissioner Toulouse was going -- the particular
4 finding that's being thrown out there, which was a
5 substantial -- is that what you called it,
6 Ms. Poulos?

7 MS. POULOS: The auditor calls it a
8 significant deficiency.

9 MS. MATTHEWS: It's my understanding that
10 that was a significant finding from a prior year,
11 which has been resolved and is not a repeat finding.
12 Again, we're putting a condition which is a
13 substantial -- well, it's a substantial mark on a
14 charter renewal, versus looking at a charter which
15 comes to you each year and then saying, "Okay,
16 you're on a Corrective Action Plan now, because you
17 didn't do the reporting."

18 But a long-term condition on a charter,
19 which is absolutely vague here -- because if it's
20 been addressed -- I just don't know that we have
21 clear information to impose such a significant tag
22 on the charter who's doing good. And Mr. Vigil
23 would be happy to explain to you what a
24 substantial -- or a significant -- finding means
25 when it comes from the auditor.

1 So I'm happy to turn the mic over to him;
2 but I'm just -- again, once -- it's a difference
3 between, you know, how do we -- how do we monitor
4 the school for its performance during its contract
5 term, and should we put a condition for poor
6 performance -- or alleged poor performance -- when
7 it's not necessarily, in my mind, been documented,
8 in fact, that it exists, on top of that. So I think
9 that's the concern.

10 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman?

11 THE CHAIR: I think at this point in time,
12 we just have to decide if we want to --

13 SPEAKER: Madam Chairwoman?

14 THE CHAIR: I'm sorry. (Indicates.)

15 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman. Madam --
16 (Chair consults with counsel.)

17 MS. POULOS: Can I clarify --

18 THE CHAIR: No. We're going to take the
19 motion.

20 MS. POULOS: -- that misstatement that you
21 just heard?

22 THE CHAIR: No. We're going to take the
23 motion.

24 MS. POULOS: Okay.

25 MS. McKEE: So, Commissioners, a

1 Commissioner can make a motion to -- you know, to
2 accept the five-year renewal plan with the condition
3 that the Director suggests; or we can have a motion
4 to accept the plan, you know, without that
5 condition.

6 The bottom line is -- I mean, if a
7 Commissioner wants to make the motion for the
8 renewal -- for the five-year renewal with the
9 condition, take a vote on it and see what it is, and
10 there's not a majority, then someone else can do
11 another motion, okay?

12 But let's just get the process moving.
13 Let's put a motion out there and see where we're at.

14 THE CHAIR: Okay.

15 MS. McKEE: Did that make sense?

16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Yes.

17 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Peralta?

18 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Madam Chair, I
19 would move to approve the renewal application for
20 five years for Mission Achievement and Success
21 Charter School, with the condition that they report
22 on the implementation of the Correction Plan, as
23 presented by CSD.

24 COMMISSIONER CARR: Second.

25 THE CHAIR: Second by Commissioner Carr.

1 Roll call, Commissioner Armbruster?
2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
3 Peralta?
4 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.
5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I'm sorry. You
6 said "Yes"?
7 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.
8 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
9 Toulouse -- Commissioner Pogna?
10 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.
11 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
12 Armbruster votes "Yes."
13 Commissioner Gipson?
14 THE CHAIR: No.
15 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
16 Johnston?
17 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Yes.
18 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
19 Chavez?
20 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Yes.
21 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
22 Carr?
23 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.
24 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: That is -- wait.
25 That is a six vote to approve with conditions, and

1 that is a quorum -- and a -- not the word.

2 COMMISSIONER CARR: Six to one.

3 THE CHAIR: It's six to one, with one
4 abstention.

5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: With one
6 abstention.

7 THE CHAIR: Six in favor, with conditions;
8 one not in favor, with conditions; and one
9 abstention.

10 Thank you.

11 THE CHAIR: Commissioners, at this point
12 in time, I'm going to ask for a short break. Ten
13 minutes? Thank you.

14 (Recess taken, 10:40 a.m. to 10:58 a.m.)

15 THE CHAIR: I will bring us back into
16 session. And I would like to let people in the
17 audience know that Ms. McKee is here from the
18 Attorney General's Office. She is not a
19 Commissioner. And she advises us on wording of
20 motions; but she does not advise on how we should
21 make the motion -- or make suggestions for what the
22 motion should be. It's just the proper wording for
23 the motion.

24 So I think there may have been a concern
25 that she was a silent Commissioner here. But when

1 she does speak to us outside of the microphone, it's
2 to simply help us with proper wording.

3 So that being said, next on our agenda is
4 Coral Community. So, welcome, and I'll turn it over
5 to the Director.

6 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman,
7 Commissioners, first, I want to start our summary by
8 just making one correction to the report that you
9 have in front of you.

10 Since the report was finalized, the Public
11 Schools Facilities Authority has confirmed that that
12 school does meet the facility requirements. And
13 that was something we weren't able to get into your
14 book. So, again, that's a correction, because the
15 report indicated that they did not meet. But they
16 have confirmed at this point that the school does
17 meet the facilities requirements.

18 THE CHAIR: So let me just ask for a
19 clarification in the worksheet that I received on
20 the 1st. So that should be a "complete" then?

21 MS. POULOS: For the facilities; they do
22 meet. And, in fact, we -- we did correct that on
23 the -- on the worksheet that you have for Coral
24 Community, the summary.

25 THE CHAIR: Okay. All right.

1 MS. POULOS: But in the report --

2 THE CHAIR: But on this that I received
3 from PSCOC -- I received this on the 1st.

4 MS. POULOS: We have received a more
5 recent one. So I can send that to the
6 Commissioners; and I will. But they have been able
7 to demonstrate --

8 THE CHAIR: All right. All right. Thank
9 you.

10 MS. POULOS: -- they meet the facilities
11 requirements.

12 So while this school has implemented the
13 material terms of the contract, the school has not
14 met the Department standards of excellence or the
15 school-specific goals in the charter contract.

16 Currently, the school has a "D" letter
17 grade and a three-year average of a "D" letter
18 grade. In two of the last three years, the school
19 has had this configuration of letter grades.

20 In addition, while the school met the
21 attendance-related, school-specific goal, the school
22 did not meet the short-cycle, school-specific goals;
23 and, in fact, as CSD evaluated that data, we saw
24 that when tracking cohorts, the performance declined
25 over time. That means that as students were moving

1 from first grade to second grade to third grade to
2 fourth grade, and so on, over time, we saw the
3 proficiency rates for that same group of students
4 decrease in each of those years.

5 I do want to note one difference in that
6 was in reading, in which, in the 2015 school year,
7 we saw a bump in reading go up. That aligned with
8 the bump-up in the letter grade, which then
9 subsequently, in the next year, declined, along with
10 the school letter grade.

11 When we talk about the audit, the school
12 has no material weaknesses and no significant
13 deficiencies. It does have two repeat findings in
14 the 2015 audit.

15 In addition, in 2016, based on that
16 2015 audit, the school was required to provide the
17 PED with a Corrective Action Plan for all audit
18 findings from the '15 audit. The school did
19 complete a Corrective Action Plan by the May 8th due
20 date; however, that CAP was not complete, and it
21 continues, as of the finalization of this report, to
22 have multiple outstanding issues.

23 Specifically, we learned from our Audit
24 Bureau that it did not reference finding -- or
25 sorry, I apologize. It referenced findings that

1 were not in the 2015 audit report, and it did not
2 include all findings from the 2015 report.

3 Additionally, it was difficult to identify
4 who the CAP belonged to, as it did not reference the
5 school. A complete CAP was submitted to the PED on
6 July 22nd after multiple requests.

7 PED Audit Staff has had conversations with
8 staff requesting verification or proof of background
9 checks being performed. That information has not
10 been received by the PED bureau -- Audit Bureau.
11 However, during our site visit, my staff was able to
12 review staff files and confirm that they did contain
13 background checks.

14 In addition, in regards to finances, the
15 school was placed on monthly reporting for fiscal
16 year '17, in part because the PED is concerned about
17 their cash balances and some funds showing up on
18 their audit that were not submitted in the operating
19 budget. This led PED to more closely monitor the
20 finances of the school to determine the timing of
21 revenues and the overall solvency of the school, as
22 there were notable declines in cash this year.

23 However, the major reason the school was
24 moved to the monthly reporting had to do with the
25 timeliness of responses to the Fiscal Year '15

1 financial audit Corrective Action Plan.

2 We have learned that the school is taking
3 steps to resolve findings from the financial audit;
4 but it has been less than timely in developing its
5 plan to resolve all findings. And moving the school
6 to monthly reporting is going to allow the PED to
7 ensure monthly contact with the school to keep lines
8 of communication open regarding the actual financial
9 position.

10 In relation to legal compliance, CSD is
11 working with the school to resolve the concern in
12 the report about co-founder stipends, but continues
13 to have concerns that at least one teacher has not
14 been paid in accordance with the statutory
15 requirements, that all licensure requirements are
16 not being met, and that all special education and
17 ELL requirements are not being met.

18 As a result of this analysis, CSD does
19 recommend a short-term renewal of this charter for
20 two years. That recommendation is based on the
21 school's letter grade performance; specifically,
22 that the school maintains that three-year average
23 letter grade of "D." But it does recognize, as
24 you'll see, in comparison to some of the later
25 schools today, the recommendation for renewal comes

1 from the recognition of that prior year letter grade
2 of "B" and prior year three-year average letter
3 grade of "C."

4 CSD's recommendation is, further, based on
5 the fact that the school has not met or made
6 substantial progress toward all goals in the charter
7 contract and other concerns regarding the legal
8 compliance.

9 With regards to the conditions, CSD is
10 making the following conditions of renewal: That
11 shortened two-year term; submission of an
12 acceptable -- or an Academic Improvement Plan that
13 is accepted by the Public Education Commission,
14 along with regular reporting on that plan and its
15 effectiveness; also, that the school's performance
16 framework include academic goals related to the
17 growth of lowest performing students, for which they
18 received an "F" in the letter grade -- most recent
19 letter grade report; and that the school's
20 performance framework include organizational goals
21 related to audit findings and responsiveness and
22 financial performance and reporting.

23 In addition, the school's application for
24 renewal did include an amendment request to amend
25 the mission of the school. That was to bring the

1 mission in alignment with a previously improved
2 amendment that did allow the school to expand the
3 grade levels it's serving.

4 THE CHAIR: And I would just like to add
5 that, at this point in time, I will ask the schools
6 to address the amendment request. But the amendment
7 will be voted on in a separate motion; so that if
8 whenever the vote for -- gets the charter renewal,
9 that does not include the amendment request that is
10 part of the renewal application. We will address
11 that request after that, as a separate issue. Okay?

12 Good morning. Welcome. And I'll remind
13 you that you have 15 minutes for this portion. And
14 if you would, please, introduce yourself and spell
15 your name, if necessary, for the record.

16 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: Good morning,
17 Commissioners, Madam Chair. My name is Donna
18 Eldredge. And I'm one of the co-founders and head
19 administrator at Coral Communities Charter School.
20 Thank you for this opportunity to realize our dream
21 of starting the only single-gender school in the
22 state of New Mexico.

23 We're going to begin with Ms. Krista
24 Martinez, who is one of our founding members of the
25 governance council.

1 MS. KRISTA MARTINEZ: Good morning,
2 Madam Chair and members of the Commission. Can you
3 hear me okay?

4 Great.

5 As a -- as a founding governance council
6 member, I've seen an evolution in the organization
7 of Coral Community.

8 THE CHAIR: I'm sorry. You need to come
9 closer. Okay, thanks.

10 MS. KRISTA MARTINEZ: How's this?

11 MS. FRIEDMAN: Closer.

12 MS. KRISTA MARTINEZ: It's because I have
13 a soft voice.

14 MS. McKEE: Probably. I have a soft
15 voice, also. If you press down and lean in, it'll
16 pick up your voice.

17 MS. KRISTA MARTINEZ: Wonderful. Thank
18 you.

19 So as a founding member of the governance
20 council and of Coral Community, I've seen really an
21 evolution of the school and our processes, from
22 facilities to finance, and how we assess our
23 students.

24 When we first started the school, there
25 was no way for the teachers, through their

1 assessments, to show us the data on how students
2 were performing without sharing that information.
3 And in the last two years, Ms. Eldredge and staff
4 have identified a solution, with Dr. Rojas. So
5 every month, we receive those types of reports.

6 So during the time of Coral's setup, I
7 have seen improvements in process. Everything is a
8 work in progress. But to provide our families in
9 the Albuquerque community an option for single
10 gender is really important. Our job as members of
11 the governance council is to make sure that Coral is
12 running and operating the way that it needs to. And
13 we have members on the board of the governance
14 council who are in audit, who are legal, who hail
15 from the community, a very diverse group that can
16 work in partnership and in tandem with the school to
17 reach our goals.

18 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: Next, we have our
19 parents, Mrs. Giron, who is a founding parent, and
20 Mr. Leaming, who is on the governance council and a
21 new parent at CCS.

22 MS. JANET GIRON: Can you guys hear me?
23 Do I have? No? Okay.

24 Good morning, Madam Chairman and
25 Commissioners. My name is Janet Giron. I am a

1 parent of four children that currently and happily
2 attend Coral Community Charter School. Our journey
3 began with Coral in the spring of 2012. I visited
4 and toured 12 schools trying to decide what school
5 was going to be best for my son, who would be
6 starting kindergarten in the fall, and my triplets,
7 who would follow the year after.

8 My decision was made one Sunday afternoon
9 when I dialed Coral's phone number to find out their
10 location. Donna Eldredge answered the phone and
11 talked with me and my husband for over an hour about
12 this brand new charter school that would open in the
13 fall.

14 Since that first day, when my son walked
15 through the doors of Coral with 34 other students,
16 we have never looked back. Coral has not only met,
17 but has exceeded our expectations. Our children are
18 thriving. They're confident, they're eager, and
19 they're excited about their education.

20 Beyond a standard education, Coral
21 provides them with the tools they need to succeed by
22 offering music, creative writing, PE, art, power
23 days, out-of-school instruction, otherwise known as
24 field trips, family events, and a diverse selection
25 of after-school activities.

1 The teachers are inspiring, and the staff
2 is amazing. The school welcomes and encourages
3 families to take an active role in our school;
4 because of this, we know the names of the children
5 and their families. Coral has provided a community
6 for my family.

7 As I've watched my children rise to their
8 highest and greatest potential here at Coral, I have
9 also watched Coral flourish. So today, I ask you,
10 not just for my family, but for all the other
11 families in our community, to please renew our
12 charter.

13 MR. FREEMAN LEAMING: Thank you. My name
14 is Freeman Leaming. I am a member, a parent member,
15 of the governance council of the -- of the charter
16 school. And -- and I'm also a parent. And today, I
17 am speaking to you as a parent.

18 Our oldest son, who is 12 years old,
19 started at Coral Community last year. He has a high
20 IQ, ADHD, dysgraphia, and several other things that
21 make school very, very difficult for him. He
22 started there and was testing -- although he was
23 testing -- started with testing at the fourth-grade
24 level. He hated school. It was a miracle to get
25 him to school every day. And I'm sure some of you

1 knows what that's like.

2 It was amazing. Within six months, he was
3 at a sixth-grade math level. He no longer hated
4 going to school, but loved it. And I never told
5 Mr. Nunn this -- this is the gentleman that was his
6 teacher -- Joshua was sad when school was over,
7 which is amazing. But after three weeks, he was
8 fine; but -- still, he was okay.

9 But he did -- he went to the Regional
10 Science Fair at UNM and received an honorable
11 mention. And this is a boy that we were told was
12 twice exceptional, because of his different -- high
13 IQ, but difficulty with writing. And we were told
14 we would have a hard -- a difficult time finding any
15 place for him.

16 We found a place for him. It was so good
17 that when our other boy, who tests in the 98th
18 percentile, was desperate and crying every few days
19 about going to school because he was bored out of
20 his mind in public schools, we immediately, the next
21 year, said, "We are bringing him to this school."

22 He started there in the fall, which was a
23 few months ago. He is flourishing. He is excited.
24 He found a friend on Monday, which is a big deal for
25 our quiet little boy. He is flourishing and doing

1 well, because of the individualized program that
2 they have. He can go at the pace that he can. So
3 can our other son, even in the different sections,
4 in the different subjects.

5 We brought our kindergartener, our
6 other -- our daughter -- to start kindergarten there
7 also in the fall, and she is flourishing. She just
8 finished her primer and was so excited and brought
9 it home and said, "I am done. I get to start on the
10 next one."

11 We are so thrilled with what this school
12 has done for our children. There -- it brings in a
13 diverse group from the entire city; so our kids are
14 exposed to more varied kinds of backgrounds in
15 economics and -- everything.

16 But there is one uniting thing: And that
17 is the parents deeply want something better for
18 their schools for their children. And I think that
19 is a unifying factor for them.

20 And so I would ask if -- I know the
21 recommendation. But I would also ask if you would
22 please consider a full extension for the five years,
23 so that they can continue this wonderful work. I
24 joined -- I volunteered for the governance council
25 two months ago, because I saw what this school was

1 doing and where it was going.

2 And I thank you for your time.

3 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: Our data analyst,
4 Dr. Rojas, will give you some highlights now.

5 DR. PATRICIO ROJAS: Good morning, Chair
6 Gipson, members of the Commission. My name is
7 Patricio Rojas. I am the data analyst.

8 MS. FRIEDMAN: You have to hold the button
9 down.

10 THE CHAIR: You have to hold the button
11 down.

12 DR. PATRICIO ROJAS: Good morning, again.
13 Chair Gipson, members of the Commission. My name is
14 Patricio Rojas. I am the data analyst for this
15 school.

16 Many times, these reports say we don't do
17 data analysis in this school. I have been doing
18 this for 45 years. And I apologize for that. Maybe
19 we failed to send enough evidence what we're doing
20 at this school.

21 But in your documentation, you have this
22 card that show you highlights, how we analyze data
23 there. You also will have -- called a database with
24 about 20 points of data for each student. It is a
25 comprehensive database.

1 We talk data every week with my
2 administrators and teachers. Yes, we do data
3 analysis in this school. And we also do data-driven
4 instruction every week.

5 Thank you for your time.

6 FROM THE FLOOR: Today we have here
7 students from our Girls Academy and Boys Academy:
8 Rachel Wilson in Grade Six.

9 THE CHAIR: Excuse me. Could you
10 introduce yourself for the record?

11 MS. HEATHER SICKENGER: I apologize.
12 Madam Chair, members of the Commission, I am Heather
13 Sickenger. I am a co-founder of Coral Community
14 Charter School, as well as an intermediate teacher.

15 We have, from the Girls Academy, Rachel
16 Wilson, Grade Six; Isis Chavez from Grade Six.
17 Josiah Chavez, Grade Seven, and Eric Bucksis [ph],
18 Grade Six.

19 MS. RACHEL WILSON: I am Rachel Wilson, a
20 sixth-grader at Coral Community Charter School. It
21 is important that Coral's charter is renewed,
22 because it gives so many opportunities that you
23 can't get anywhere else. For example, we learned
24 how to use public transportation and how school
25 subjects are used in the real world.

1 Most people don't learn these things until
2 they are at high school or college. We learn in
3 elementary school and junior high. Having these
4 opportunities and learning experiences are very
5 useful for now and later on in life.

6 Before coming to Coral, I didn't know why
7 I had to learn math and reading and how to use
8 public transportation. I don't know what I would
9 have done without Coral. Now I know and understand
10 more than ever, thanks to Coral.

11 MS. ISIS CHAVEZ: Good morning. My name
12 is Isis Chavez, and I am a sixth-grader at Coral
13 Community Charter School, and I have been here for
14 four years. Coral has really helped me in pushing
15 me to do my best and encouraging me to keep going.

16 When I first started Coral, I was in
17 third-grade math level. Now, I do eighth-grade
18 math. Coral's an amazing school. I hope you renew
19 our charter.

20 Thank you for your time.

21 MR. ERIC BUCKSIS: Hello. My name is Eric
22 Bucksis [ph], and I am a sixth-grader. I believe
23 Coral is a great school and has been a perfect
24 choice for me.

25 I remember back in first grade, where I

1 knew how to do the work, but I couldn't, because the
2 teacher wouldn't let me; but at Coral, I am
3 excelling in many subjects, and I get to work at my
4 own pace. I also feel much more comfortable in a
5 single-gender class than a coed one.

6 Thank you for your time.

7 MR. JOSIAH CHAVEZ: Hello. My name is
8 Josiah Chavez, a seventh-grader at Coral Community
9 Charter School. The reason I'm here is to tell you
10 why I've been here for five years.

11 At my old school, I was performing at
12 level, but I wanted more than to be average. And
13 this is exactly what this school gave me in every
14 subject, including math.

15 I'm doing Algebra 1; and in reading, I'm
16 reading at a ninth-grade level.

17 And thank you for your time.

18 MR. REID NUNN: Madam Chair, members of
19 the Commission, my name is Reid Nunn. I am a
20 co-founder of the school. I lead the Boys Academy
21 at our school, and also teach both boys and girls on
22 various subjects.

23 I want to talk a little bit about how this
24 single-gender concept came out, for me, anyway. I
25 started many years ago as a Juvenile Correction

1 Officer at YDDC. You may be familiar with that we
2 had children as young as 11 or 12 years old.

3 As I worked cases with these kids, I found
4 that most of the problems started with these
5 children when they were not wanting to go to school
6 or kicked out of school. After working there for a
7 couple of years, I learned I was at the wrong end of
8 the line to make much of a difference. So I entered
9 the family business, which is education for my
10 family. I got my degree in elementary education and
11 shortly started at an APS elementary school,
12 McCollum Elementary in the Heights.

13 In 2007, I won the Milken Educator's
14 Award. And in working with those Milken Educators
15 across the country, I realized I wanted to do more
16 for the students of New Mexico and have a greater
17 influence.

18 I used my award money to achieve my
19 master's. And while working on my master's, I
20 learned about single-gender education, which seemed
21 to be a remedy to the problems that I saw for those
22 kids in juvenile correctional facilities, to keep
23 them in school and to keep them excited about
24 school.

25 In 2010, APS let me have a single-gender

1 class. It was incredibly successful. We had a lot
2 of publicity, a lot of success. But it was
3 discontinued.

4 I still firmly believed I could make a
5 difference through single-gender education.
6 Fortunately, I found the people here today that
7 wanted to start a charter.

8 We were all educators. We weren't charter
9 professionals. We knew that for a kid to be
10 successful, we needed individualized education for
11 every kid; every good teacher knows that. We
12 created what's called a "Personal Education Plan"
13 for every kid as part of our charter, which is an
14 informal IEP for every single student. It covers
15 goals from schoolwork to responsibility, to even
16 what they do at home, and chores.

17 I can't tell you how many times I've just
18 talked to parents who are crying, because -- tears
19 of relief or joy, because of the changes they've
20 seen in their child, at home and at school; their
21 motivation, as you heard some parents talk about,
22 their progress, their interest in their levels,
23 changes at home, less or no meds -- many of our kids
24 have gone off meds.

25 THE CHAIR: Excuse me. I'm sorry; but

1 that is time.

2 MR. REID NUNN: Okay. I'll stop.

3 THE CHAIR: I have eight people that have
4 signed up for public comment. There's five minutes
5 total for public comment. So if there's individuals
6 on that list that choose not to speak now, that's
7 fine. But the time will tick off at five minutes.

8 And the first on my list is Chloe
9 Williamson.

10 FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Chloe
11 Williamson, and I'm the Girls Academy Student
12 Council President at Coral Community Charter School.
13 I have attended the school for three years. And
14 this year, I had the chance to go to a public middle
15 school. I went for nine days and knew the
16 curriculum, as well as the environment, were not
17 right for me.

18 It was after that I knew I had to go back
19 to Coral. I went back. And the first day, I asked
20 myself why I had ever considered leaving.

21 The individualized instruction, as well as
22 the single-gender classes, has helped me grow more
23 as a person than I ever thought I could. Coral is
24 an amazing school with many opportunities for anyone
25 who gets the chance to come here.

1 Thank you.

2 FROM THE FLOOR: My name is John Paul
3 Cutter, and I am the Boys Academy President of Coral
4 Community Charter School. This is my first year at
5 CCCS. I fell in love with it in the first day. It
6 is easy to learn, and by far my favorite school I
7 have ever attended.

8 FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Xavier.
9 I'm in fourth grade. When I got to Coral, I worked
10 hard to move up in -- up levels. I have nice
11 teachers at Coral.

12 I got to make my own event. I got to plan
13 and put on a Jump-Rope-a-Thon. We raised money for
14 our new school. Now, I am smarter -- smart. Thank
15 you for having me here.

16 FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is
17 Benicio Mondragon. I have been at Coral for three
18 years. I am in fourth grade. I think we have an
19 awesome school, because we have great teachers.
20 Coral has all-boy classes and all-girl classes.

21 Now that I'm at this school, I am working
22 at my own level, and I have improved in my work.

23 Thank you for your time.

24 FROM THE FLOOR: My name is Jill Urban.
25 This is my first year at Coral. I came from a very

1 successful charter in Socorro, New Mexico, that has
2 been open for 16 years. I've been through a lot of
3 rough times at that school, and I'm very impressed
4 at the spot that Coral is in now in their fifth
5 year. So I have great confidence that they are
6 going to succeed. I attribute that largely to
7 having such a stable administration.

8 Thank you.

9 FROM THE FLOOR: Good evening -- good
10 afternoon. My name is Greg Rees. I'm a native
11 New Mexican and a career law enforcement officer, an
12 Undersheriff with the Bernalillo County Sheriff's
13 department. My daughter also attends the school.
14 I'd like to talk about the confidence she's gained
15 in attending the school, in participating the
16 programs.

17 I'm looking at the time, because I don't
18 want to hog the time.

19 What I can tell you, in my profession, the
20 people that feel they don't fit in or they struggle,
21 they oftentimes revert these types of problems in
22 their adulthood.

23 We're still trying -- you heard students
24 talk about being comfortable, the confidence, and
25 wanting to go to school. And we're still trying to

1 find these programs for the adults that don't feel
2 like they fit in and have fallen behind, to solve
3 those problems.

4 I really encourage you to renew the
5 charter.

6 Thank you.

7 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. I'll try
8 to keep it short. My name is Tanya, and I have a
9 nine-year-old son and a five-year-old daughter who
10 attend Coral Charter.

11 My son started at a public school in
12 Rio Rancho. When I sent him, I thought that all
13 schools were equal. But I sure found out that
14 they're not.

15 My son needed something special, and we
16 were fortunate enough to find Coral. And since he's
17 attended Coral, he's done nothing but thrive and
18 done better. And I couldn't ask for a better
19 opportunity for both my children.

20 And then, along with our model of, "Why
21 fit in, when you were born to stand out," I know no
22 other place better than Coral Charter that promotes
23 this. Thank you.

24 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is
25 Karen Cutter, mother of John Paul Cutter. I just

1 want to say how proud I am of him today. He was
2 able to come and stand in front of you because of
3 these teachers and this place, when, at his other
4 schools, I can tell you, I don't think he felt very
5 smart. He was always getting low grades, falling
6 behind.

7 And just with the short time he's been at
8 Coral, he's thriving. He's doing very well. He's
9 getting good grades. He is the first-ever president
10 of the Boys Junior Academy. He stood up in front of
11 his peers, and he spoke and told them why he wanted
12 to make his school better. And he could not have
13 done that if it wasn't for this school.

14 I have three other children at this
15 school. And when you walk in the classrooms and you
16 see all boys, and you see all girls, you can know
17 the specifics of why single-gender works; but you
18 look at them in those classrooms, and you
19 understand, it just works.

20 These kids are doing so well because
21 they're given the opportunity to do well, thanks to
22 these teachers and this administration.

23 Thank you.

24 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Commissioners,
25 I'll open it up for questions, comments.

1 No questions?

2 No comments?

3 Commissioner Peralta?

4 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Madam Chair, just
5 one thing I'm noticing in the report, analysis
6 report, about teacher retention. I noticed that was
7 just under the PEC goals of what we like to see as
8 far as teachers staying with your school.

9 Can you speak to that momentarily, please?

10 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: Yes. Prior to last
11 year, we had a very, very stable teacher retention.
12 We had one of our teachers chose to join another
13 field, another profession. He's a pharmaceutical
14 representative. And then we had another teacher
15 retire. And another staff member left for -- to
16 another school for family reasons.

17 So we -- all amicable.

18 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

19 Commissioner Johnston?

20 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Thank you,
21 Madam Chair.

22 In the reading that I've done about Coral
23 Community, it seems that -- and Dr. Rojas is talking
24 about the data that is gathered. But the reporting
25 of the data somehow is not happening, and it's not

1 being communicated.

2 Could someone comment on communication to
3 PED for the data?

4 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: Yes. We -- we are --
5 I just want to highlight a few things. We passed
6 out a little document here. And that's why it's
7 really important that we really highlight this.

8 Because, you're right. It didn't -- it
9 didn't come through in the documentation. And --
10 and we'll talk to that.

11 But our students ranked in the top
12 20 percent in math proficiency and the top
13 30 percent in language arts of our 62 charter
14 schools in the State of New Mexico.

15 We outperformed the State by 10 percent in
16 math for fourth grade and 27 percent of the entire
17 State of New Mexico in fifth grade. And we
18 outperformed the State in language arts at every
19 grade level by up to 30 percent.

20 We're the top 20 percent in math
21 proficiency, top 30 percent in language arts
22 proficiency, and we have a 97 percent student
23 retention.

24 If you look through the charts that are
25 there, all of those charts show our -- our student

1 Short-Cycle Assessments. And the lowest percentage
2 of growth we had of all of our Short-Cycle
3 Assessments of all four-and-a-half years has been
4 74.7 percent. The average is over 90 percent.

5 We -- when we present our data,
6 Dr. Rojas -- we have lots of charts and graphs in
7 there that you can see. You can see -- every time
8 we have data to present, Dr. Rojas comes to the
9 governance council, and he shows scatter plots and
10 charts.

11 And if you were to ask me about any
12 student on that list, I can tell you everything
13 there is to know about them and I can probably tell
14 you what their public -- their PEP goals are.

15 So somehow, we feel like it was lost in
16 the translation. I'm not really sure.

17 Our letter grade, of course, we still have
18 growth, if you -- if you look at our letter grades.
19 We have very strong students after our four years.

20 And so I'm going to let Dr. Rojas talk to
21 you a little bit about how that translates; because
22 he is somebody who understands how to calculate the
23 letter grades.

24 DR. PATRICIO ROJAS: Yes. Thank you.

25 So to answer your question more specific,

1 we probably failed to provide more data to PED. The
2 communication has not been -- I was a data analyst
3 for Los Lunas Schools for about 20 years. And
4 public schools have a different communication than
5 charter schools. So I'm learning how charter
6 schools communicate with PED now.

7 So I promise you guys in the future, I'm
8 going to do a better job of communicating with PED,
9 what we're supposed to do.

10 We sent all the reports that we need to
11 do, the S.T.A.R.S. and, you know, all this data; it
12 is in place. But we failed to provide more data for
13 Charter Schools.

14 So the other reason I probably lost, in a
15 way, to send the communication is because I think in
16 the [inaudible] job that I do with the teachers and
17 administrators, they [inaudible] to me. I mean, we
18 do data analysis every week. We do data-driven
19 instruction every week.

20 All the material [verbatim] knows exactly
21 what's going on with each student. We have created
22 a number of programs of support for each student.
23 And that's the reason they get in much more grades
24 and they are advancing their education; because we
25 have this special program for them. But yes, you're

1 right. We have failed to communicate better with
2 PED. We're going to do that better.

3 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: I would thank you
4 for taking responsibility for that; because that is
5 an important -- the work you do sounds like you do
6 admirable work in the evidence from the students;
7 but the collaboration with PED to translate that
8 data is -- is one, I think, that needs to be worked
9 on. And I appreciate you telling me truthfully.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: We also -- our goals
12 are original goals. And I note Commissioner
13 Shearman isn't here. But back when we first came to
14 the Commission, our goals were very lofty. We said
15 that we would need 100 percent proficiency with our
16 students.

17 Well, as I'm sure you know -- and, you
18 know, when you're writing a charter, I mean, that's
19 what we want; that's what we want to do. But
20 it's -- it's something that we really need to look
21 at.

22 And so when we renegotiate our goals,
23 we're looking carefully at growth, which we do very
24 well with, as you can see through our analysis. And
25 our goals are going to reflect more of an attainable

1 goal; still lofty, but more attainable.

2 And, you know, we -- we recognize that, as
3 well. We had too many goals at the time. And so,
4 you know, we are definitely working on -- on looking
5 at goals that are attainable, so that it can be
6 translated so it's something that we can attain and
7 can meet when we come to the Commission again.

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you for that; because
9 that's actually a discussion that we've had,
10 overall, in general, that many of these goals were,
11 you know, numerous for all school -- you're not the
12 only school that's falling into this situation.

13 It is worrisome, when I look at the
14 charter and you've failed to meet this, this, this
15 and this. And it seems like you failed to meet more
16 than you met, except for -- and the school grade
17 was, without a doubt, a concern, when there was
18 that -- that drop in the school grade. That
19 certainly piques interest and I become concerned
20 when there's that significant change.

21 Can you just briefly address what you
22 think brought that drop?

23 MR. REID NUNN: I'll take responsibility.
24 That drop was -- I had not missed a day of school
25 since we opened. I had been with my kids every day.

1 And unfortunately, the day we started
2 testing, my son came a month early; so -- my wife
3 also taught at the school. So we were both gone.
4 It made a very stressful situation for the students
5 even more stressful. And it made things a little
6 bit irregular at our school for quite a while, the
7 excitement, and substitutes, people that are not
8 familiar with doing the testing.

9 It's not an excuse; but I do think me
10 being gone after not missing a day, forever, that
11 did have a little bit of an impact on the students;
12 and my wife being gone, as well.

13 THE CHAIR: I'm sorry. You can directly
14 relate specific PARCC scores --

15 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: Yes.

16 THE CHAIR: -- to those students in those
17 classes?

18 MR. REID NUNN: In my class, yes, ma'am.

19 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: Yes, ma'am. We have
20 four students who we can identify who were
21 proficient who dropped two points. We have four
22 students who were two points away from proficiency.
23 Believe me, we have analyzed this data to the core,
24 to the core.

25 And, you know, I -- like I said, no

1 excuses. But we did find a correlation that our
2 older proficient students did have a drop that we
3 had not anticipated. We did not.

4 And when you can look and say, "Wow.
5 Two -- two staff members were..." -- it was just
6 that morning that we knew that Jack was being born.

7 So we were able to look at that data; yes,
8 we were.

9 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

10 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: And just to remind,
11 you know, with small numbers of students who are
12 tested, those can have a profound impact.

13 MR. REID NUNN: Yeah, four of them.

14 THE CHAIR: That, I well understand. I do
15 talk that language.

16 Commissioner Carr?

17 COMMISSIONER CARR: I guess I've been
18 giving a lot of thought to the idea -- the NACSA
19 report, maintaining high standards. And I actually
20 have a question for Katie.

21 And I have voted to renew schools for
22 shorter than the five-year period before. On
23 reconsideration, based on the NACSA report, and I
24 also -- my own -- my own feelings, how can we
25 just -- if a school doesn't meet the standards in

1 your consideration, Katie, to be renewed for a whole
2 five years, how can we justify renewing it at all?

3 And I leave that open to the Commissioners
4 to weigh in, as well. I'd love to hear it.

5 MS. POULOS: Commissioner --
6 Madam Chairwoman, Commissioner Carr, thank you for
7 that question.

8 And I think -- I gave each of you a
9 summary about our recommendations. This was a lot
10 of work, and it was really difficult. My team and I
11 have been here late into the evening hours each day
12 for the past three to four weeks, working on this.

13 And there's been a lot that's gone into
14 this consideration. And as the Public Ed
15 Department, there's a lot to weigh, just as there is
16 for the Public Education Commission. There is the
17 communities that have been built at these schools.
18 There is the decision making that families have made
19 about what is best for their students. And -- and
20 so these are hard recommendations to make.

21 Ultimately, taking a hard line would be --
22 would be the thing we'd love to do; right? If you
23 don't meet "C" or better every single year, if you
24 don't "meet" on every single standard, we're done.
25 That's not something that's necessarily easy to do.

1 But I don't think it's necessarily always the right
2 thing to do.

3 And so you'll see that there's been a
4 really careful weighing and consideration of a lot
5 of things that went into these recommendations.

6 One of the things that we -- we certainly
7 did recognize is, you know, this school does look
8 different from some of the other schools where
9 you'll see that we made a recommendation to not
10 renew those schools. And that was this school did
11 earn a "B."

12 I have concerns. Because it's not so much
13 about the communication of the data. We received
14 it. It's that we saw different things in that data.

15 We saw the decline cohort-by-cohort,
16 year-after-year, that, actually, except in 2015,
17 that year, the "B" was the anomaly. That year
18 showed the highest performing on the Short-Cycle
19 Assessments. If you look at Page 17, when you look
20 at '14 and '16, those years show equal performance,
21 and, in fact, on their Short-Cycle Assessment. And,
22 in fact, that was the same that we saw in a letter
23 grade.

24 So it's challenging. I -- I can't say
25 that this -- that, you know, that I'm 100 percent

1 behind the renewal. What I can say is the reason
2 that we made that recommendation for the short-term
3 renewal was the school showed us, in 2015, that they
4 could do it. And we want to give them the
5 opportunity.

6 But five years is too much. This is
7 serious. And this has to show immediate
8 improvement. No delay. These kids deserve it. I
9 think all of us sitting up here know that every
10 child in this state deserves that opportunity. I
11 think, from Mission Achievement and Success, we saw,
12 when given that opportunity, they can achieve.

13 And so that's really what this
14 recommendation is about. It's about the
15 consideration of a lot of different pieces and
16 really challenging things to weigh. The
17 egregiousness of compliance issues are going to
18 weigh differently, those compliance issues, as we go
19 across these three days.

20 Ultimately, we did weight academic
21 performance most heavily in all of our schools. It
22 was this promise that we saw in 2015, where the
23 school showed they could do it that we thought
24 supported the recommendation to give them that
25 short-term opportunity to do it, and if they

1 maintain that performance.

2 COMMISSIONER CARR: So I was going to
3 respond. But -- and correct me if I'm wrong -- what
4 I heard you say was that they don't meet standards,
5 but you think they can, based on some past
6 history -- you know, based on some data, for sure,
7 not just on conjecture.

8 So that -- that worries me. I -- I -- you
9 know. So I -- I don't think you -- well, you did
10 help me, I guess; but -- so I -- I think I could
11 make the same argument for almost every school
12 that's coming before us, you know, is that -- and
13 maybe -- unless it's a new school and there's
14 nothing there, that's different. But a renewal
15 school, well, they all can do it.

16 So what's our standard? I -- that's --
17 that's my question. So, I mean -- and you don't
18 have to answer it. I just -- that's -- that's where
19 my mind is right now.

20 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Toulouse?

21 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, this
22 may be the time also to bring up that in the past,
23 we have never done two-year renewals because it is
24 too difficult for the schools. As soon as we get
25 them renewed, we get the charter negotiated, we go

1 through all of that, they have to start immediately
2 again on their next renewal application. That's why
3 we have schools on three years.

4 And at least in my four years -- ending
5 four years at this meeting, we've -- three was the
6 shortest we could do, because two years put such a
7 burden on the school that it takes the people who
8 are doing the renewal application away from doing
9 the improvement that needs to get done for that
10 school year.

11 So I would recommend that we not look at
12 two in any of the schools that you want to shorten,
13 but to three, to give them that opportunity.
14 Otherwise, you're setting them up to fail with two
15 years, because we know they don't have the staff to
16 do both the intensive work with the students and the
17 intensive renewal application they have to do.
18 People lose where they're going.

19 But I'd also like to ask the school, did
20 your PARCC scores for your older students take your
21 grade down?

22 DR. PATRICIO ROJAS: You know, we
23 actually -- like that little chart you see there --
24 we outscored the State in math and reading. So the
25 proficiency level is pretty good. We failed to grow

1 the students.

2 Because, you know, I always explain to my
3 college students, when you have a snowball coming to
4 you, it's difficult to stop the ball; but more
5 difficult is to put it up back to the mount
6 [verbatim].

7 So that's what we're doing now. We're
8 trying to get the students to get back in growth.
9 But we really do good proficiency; but it doesn't
10 translate into growth. That, we are committed to do
11 in the next two years.

12 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I just know that
13 the PARCC scores for different tests, different
14 things that shifted your kids in midstream, as well
15 as the school.

16 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: We do have a close to
17 60 percent proficiency rate in reading, which is
18 very good, and 38 percent in math. And so, you
19 know, we are working -- looking at our -- you know,
20 our Quartile 1 students, who are strong, how do we
21 get them to continue to grow. But, you know, our
22 proficiency rates are maintaining.

23 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Thank you.

24 THE CHAIR: Commissioners? Anyone?

25 Commissioner Johnston?

1 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Thank you,
2 Madam Chair. One further issue. The fiscal
3 management and the lack of timeliness and providing
4 information to -- to Public Education Department,
5 the missed deadlines that I'm reading about here,
6 even on -- let's see -- I don't want to misstate --
7 the timeliness of responses to the FY '15 Financial
8 Audits Corrective Action Plan. Could you explain to
9 me, who does your school business? Who is your
10 school business official and --

11 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: Yes. Mrs. Angela
12 Lerner is our school business official. And we
13 are -- we did -- through the analysis, we did
14 provide response to that, based on this information.

15 Our e-mails from David Craig were --
16 stated something different for us about our cash
17 report -- our budget for this year didn't include a
18 substantial amount of money. And it was related to
19 our building. We had to move.

20 And in order to move, we had to put a
21 substantial amount of money into a particular fund.
22 But we didn't need it this year. So when we looked
23 through the e-mails in our analysis, we -- we
24 responded to that.

25 In our feeling, based on the e-mails and

1 the response, we -- we have it all in there. At no
2 time did we feel we were not being timely. But
3 "timely" is different to other people. And in
4 our -- I don't want to make excuses at all. Our --
5 our conversation with David Craig originally did not
6 address that.

7 So we felt that we went through our
8 analysis. We have every e-mail stream that we've
9 had with him since the requests. And we felt that
10 we responded to that effectively, to the PED.

11 THE CHAIR: But there's a specific
12 notation of a Corrective Action Plan that was in
13 place that was not completed from the 2015 audit.
14 That's my understanding, that there was a specific
15 Corrective Action Plan.

16 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman, do you
17 mind? Molly Saiz from our Budget Office and David
18 Craig from our School Budget Office are both here.
19 And they can address this more fully and engage in
20 that conversation.

21 So do you guys want to come up?

22 MR. CRAIG: Hi. Commissioner --
23 Madam Chairwoman Gipson and Commissioners. My name
24 is David Craig. I'm with the School Budget and
25 Financial Analysis. I'm the director. I have Molly

1 Saiz with me here.

2 We were asked to provide a number of
3 information that we haven't, in the renewal packages
4 in the past, been afforded the opportunity to do so.
5 One of the things that we brought up with the Coral
6 Community -- I believe that they've accurately
7 represented the information that was a
8 back-and-forth with my office. We have e-mails
9 going back -- back and forth regarding the operating
10 budget, back to operating budget development.

11 One of the things that came up with Coral
12 Community was a failure to budget a line item that
13 they had in their audit. It was a very small
14 amount, actually, Ms. Lerner -- Tina. It was 27114
15 was the fund, had \$1,350 in it. We noticed there
16 was nothing in it.

17 As often happens with the budget analysis,
18 as part of the operating budget development, they
19 started a back-and-forth of, "We notice this was in
20 your balance. Why aren't you budgeting it for the
21 FY '17 operating budget?"

22 That was part of the conversations that
23 came about that led to a move to monthly reporting.

24 We received satisfaction that they were
25 aware that these funds were out there in the

1 operating budget. There's no requirement for them
2 to budget it as part of their operating budget
3 development process.

4 So we decided, okay, we'll monitor their
5 quarterly reports to determine whether or not
6 they're going to BAR that money in before they spend
7 it or revert it to the operational fund.

8 As part of their operational budget
9 development, one of the things I'm most concerned
10 and watching for in Coral Community is the cash.
11 They are currently set to receive about
12 \$1.42 million this year. Last year, they received
13 something -- I'm sorry, 1.47. Last year, they
14 received something in the neighborhood of
15 \$1.32 million. That's a significant increase,
16 largely to due to the phase-in of the seventh grade,
17 I believe, in Coral Community, which results in
18 favorable adjustments in the Public School Funding
19 Formula.

20 That large increase in cash is associated
21 with a larger increase in expenditures for this
22 fiscal year, including a proposed drawdown of
23 \$70,000 in their cash balance.

24 So they're expending probably more than
25 what they're receiving in revenues, to the impact

1 that's it's negatively going to impact their
2 beginning cash balance at the start of the year. So
3 that threw up a flag for me: "Okay. We're going to
4 having to watch their cash."

5 Then the issues of the Corrective Action
6 Plan for the FY audit happened. Coral Community did
7 not submit -- I'll let Molly talk to greater
8 detail -- a Corrective Action for their FY '15 audit
9 that reflected that they understood what their
10 responsibilities were under the State Audit Rule for
11 resolving outstanding audit issues. At that point
12 in time, I made the decision to move them to monthly
13 reporting to closer watch their cash balances and
14 their financial ongoing in this school, and also to
15 be able to make sure that we got the Corrective
16 Action Plan in place.

17 I'm going to turn this over to Molly Saiz.
18 If you have any questions about any of that, that
19 was very "education finance geek." I will say that
20 I've been very encouraged by the monthly
21 communications we've had. We've received every
22 monthly report on time from Coral Community. We
23 continue to monitor them, because we're a little
24 concerned about the rate of expenditures exceeding
25 the amount of phase-in grade revenues. We also want

1 to say that Ms. Lerner has been very open to
2 communicate with us, okay?

3 You know, if the school can apply the same
4 gusto to school data that they do to education
5 finances, I think that perhaps we can move forward
6 with this school in a very healthy manner. I would
7 just say right now, we really need to work on
8 financial capacity at this school.

9 Thank you.

10 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

11 MS. MOLLY SAIZ: Madam Chair,
12 Commissioners, my name is Molly Saiz. I am the
13 Audit and Accounting Manager for the Public
14 Education Department.

15 When the 2015 audit was released from the
16 State Auditor's Office, Deputy Aguilar issued a
17 letter requiring all charter schools to submit a
18 Corrective Action Plan addressing each of their
19 findings. And the Corrective Action Plan needed
20 to -- to recognize what the issue was, how it was
21 going to be fixed, who was going to fix it and when.

22 The deadline to submit this Corrective
23 Action Plan was May 8th.

24 On May 6th, we received a document that we
25 assumed was Coral Community, because it was not

1 filled out completely. It did not address the
2 findings that were in the 2015 audit. So going back
3 and forth on many occasions with Ms. Lerner, we had
4 to correct -- request a new Corrective Action Plan
5 that followed the requirements.

6 And so to date, we have received
7 everything. We've had follow-up discussions with
8 Ms. Lerner, and she has responded. We did finally
9 get a completed Corrective Action Plan that met all
10 of the qualifications on September 7th, which was
11 many months after the requirement.

12 But I am going to say that with the 2016
13 audit, we're going to request the same thing, not
14 only with Coral, but with all charter schools, a
15 Corrective Action Plan. And hopefully, going
16 through this first exercise, Coral will be able to
17 respond accurately and completely.

18 Thank you.

19 THE CHAIR: Mr. Craig?

20 MR. CRAIG: One more follow-up, Madam
21 Chair Gipson. I just want to be clear that I do
22 think it is accurate to say that all of the
23 timeliness to my requests from Coral Community have
24 been fulfilled very timely. However, the issue that
25 we had was the timeliness of the response to the

1 Corrective Action Plan.

2 I just want to clarify that point, okay?

3 THE CHAIR: Okay.

4 MR. CRAIG: Okay. Thank you.

5 THE CHAIR: As of this date, it is -- the
6 Corrective Action Plan has been completed.

7 MS. MOLLY SAIZ: That is correct.

8 THE CHAIR: Okay. All right. Thank you
9 very much for that clarification and the
10 information.

11 Commissioner Peralta?

12 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Madam Chair, real
13 quick. Who are you leasing the facility from for
14 your school?

15 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: The Coral Foundation
16 for Excellence in Education. Our school foundation
17 owns the facility.

18 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Okay. So it's your
19 foundation that owns the facility. And you're
20 just -- you're -- you just have a straight lease,
21 not lease-to-purchase or anything?

22 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: Yes.

23 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Okay. Thank you.

24 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Armbruster?

25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I love the

1 concept of the single-gender education. I've long
2 thought that was a much better way to go on so many
3 students.

4 Having said that -- and I'm pleased that
5 your proficiency is high. I'm concerned about the
6 growth. And one of the requirements for renewal was
7 that -- to have that "C" average. And you've had a
8 "B"; you've had some "D's"; you've had some "C's,"
9 and it goes up and down.

10 My concern is that in the last one, which
11 you did talk about a little bit -- but we're talking
12 about the lowest performing students having an
13 "F" -- that concerns me, because those are the most
14 needy students. And I'm feeling like that's a score
15 that I would want to see higher than an "F."

16 The additional ones in the current
17 standing is an "F," and in the school growth.

18 So while you're proficient, we're
19 measuring growth. And unless you're in the 99th
20 percentile or 98th percentile type of thing, it
21 could be important to grow. So that that's one of
22 my concerns. And I have read your report, and I
23 think these are all good things. But the growth is
24 what we're measuring.

25 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: And that's why,

1 Commissioner Armbruster, we are looking at our
2 goals. But we do have lots and lots of data
3 regarding our lowest performing students and our
4 most targeted population. With our Reads to Lead
5 grant, we've put -- we've designated FTE for
6 students -- our ELL students, our math. We are
7 working on our math plans, which are already in
8 place. And we have -- we have significant
9 information about our -- our Quartile 3 students.

10 And so if you look at our plan, the -- the
11 most important thing for us with them is growth --
12 with our students, is growth. And so like I said,
13 with our Reads To Lead, our math interventions, our
14 ELL students; we're working with all of those
15 students to -- in their Personal Education Plans on
16 growth.

17 Specific -- Dr. Rojas, do you have
18 anything specific?

19 And when we look at our Short-Cycle
20 Assessments, we do see significant growth with those
21 students. We have to translate that growth to the
22 PARCC.

23 DR. PATRICIO ROJAS: Yeah. The problem
24 with the Q1 students in any school, in any
25 educational system, it's hard for them to do some

1 growth. So when we're talking about Q3 student, we
2 are on top of the ceiling; so they have no room to
3 grow more. But the Q1, they do have a lot of room
4 to grow.

5 But usually, they are ELL students,
6 special ed students. And we do have problems for
7 them to make growth. But there's some time that I
8 saw behind in grade [verbatim], even if we grow
9 them, we don't grow enough.

10 The expected growth, by this system that
11 we have in place, is, for them, really hard to do
12 the growth we needed. So when you have a student
13 that is really low in performance, they set the
14 goal, which is really high, for them to set.

15 And I have been discussing with these PED
16 people statistics a lot. But the system is there.
17 We have to deal with the system. But that
18 explanation of why we don't grow enough in Q1 and
19 why we do -- we don't grow enough in Q3, neither.
20 So our data doesn't show that we really are doing
21 growth; because unfortunately, the system we have,
22 it just show, you know, compared to the average of
23 the state.

24 In particular, if you look at the school,
25 for one school the staple size, same demographics,

1 you will see that we are doing some growth. But we
2 recognize the growth is not enough. But we doing,
3 for them, the most we can, for those students in Q1.

4 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: We know who every
5 single one of those students are. So if you were to
6 ask me right now, I can tell you who they are. We
7 have Personal Education Plans for each one of those
8 students. And we have their IEPs.

9 And one of the things I think it would be
10 important to add to that, one of those data
11 points -- if you see our colored chart, our IEP
12 goals -- our students -- our special ed students are
13 meeting their IEP goals.

14 And so we look at all of this data, and
15 we're looking at our students. And we're working
16 on, you know, translating that to the PARCC.

17 But when we look at each individual
18 student of our lowest performing students, we look
19 at their Personal Education Plan. We look at their
20 IEP. They are meeting their IEP goals in all of
21 their areas of exceptionality.

22 THE CHAIR: Director?

23 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman and
24 Commissioners, I think there's a slight
25 misunderstanding about how student growth is

1 calculated in the letter grades.

2 And if you'd like, we have Cindy Gregory
3 here. She's our chief statistician. She can
4 provide a little more clarity and maybe clear up
5 some of the misunderstandings about how student
6 growth is calculated, if the Commission so wishes.

7 COMMISSIONER CARR: I'd like to hear it.

8 THE CHAIR: Certainly.

9 DR. CINDY GREGORY: Madam Chair and
10 Commissioners, I just want to clarify growth for Q1
11 and Q3. I think there was some discussion that
12 perhaps Q3 is at the ceiling, and there is no room
13 for growth.

14 That really isn't true. Q3 consists of
15 the top three quartiles of students and rarely, if
16 ever, are these students really at the ceiling.
17 There's plenty of room for growth at both Q1 and Q3.
18 And we like to see schools that are not growing one
19 group at the expense of the other. So, really, the
20 balance between Q1 and Q3 tells a little bit about
21 what the school is doing.

22 The other thing I would clarify is that
23 this isn't just PARCC scores. I know there's some
24 concern that we went to PARCC. It's a more rigorous
25 test. But the "value-added" modeling that we do for

1 school grading takes into account that different
2 assessments have different scales. It's what allows
3 us to combine all of our assessments together.

4 So we include students who took the
5 Alternate, the NMAPA, the Spanish SBA Reading for
6 students that were Spanish-speaking, the PARCC, and
7 the DIBELS. And they all have different scales.
8 But because of our statistical treatment, we bridged
9 the gap from SBA to PARCC without a blip in the
10 screen, because the statistical treatment allows us
11 to adjust for that.

12 So while we're inclined to say the PARCC
13 year was a difficult year, the growth piece did not
14 suffer. That statistic is robust to the change in
15 assessment.

16 Now, the proficiency piece is a little bit
17 different. We do -- we did take a little bit of hit
18 in proficiencies, and we adjusted for that in school
19 grading. But I think when you're thinking growth, I
20 would make sure that you don't make excuses for the
21 PARCC year.

22 And the other thing that Katie brought up
23 is to understand that Q1 students are being compared
24 only to other Q1 students. In other words, it's
25 their academic peer group. You may hear that term

1 used also in our NMTEACH model. Students who took
2 the same assessment and were in the same group were
3 compared across the state. So these Q1 students
4 were compared with all other Q1 students in the
5 state. They're not compared with Q3.

6 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

7 Commissioners, any questions?

8 Okay. So we are, I think, at a point to
9 look at a motion. I will address -- Director?

10 MS. POULOS: I apologize. Director Craig
11 asked if he could address the budget piece one more
12 time. I think he had some additional information he
13 wanted to give. I apologize.

14 THE CHAIR: Okay.

15 MR. CRAIG: Thank you, Madam Chair and
16 Director. And, Commissioners, I'm going to be in
17 and out. I'm not going to be able to address every
18 single charter school.

19 I did hear the Director say that they
20 valued academics very highly. And being from the
21 finance side, I wanted to say we had some robust
22 conversations about that. And I wanted the
23 opportunity to direct -- address the Commission and
24 say we take finances very seriously in the school
25 budget, in the audit side.

1 Some of the issues that we saw related to
2 the Corrective Action Plan for Coral Community, I
3 don't mean to downplay that. Those are serious
4 issues. And when I say that there has been monthly
5 communications to my office, we have had many
6 charter schools, including recently closed ones,
7 that had large issues monthly communicate with us.
8 The information is wrong, but they are very timely
9 in their monthly communications to us.

10 We need to be very thoughtful about
11 finances. And we need to be very thoughtful about
12 how we get the financial capacity and the financial
13 understanding at these entities up to the place it
14 needs to be.

15 We've working very closely with Ms. Lerner
16 and Coral Community; but we still have serious
17 concerns. I want you to know that if there are any
18 concerns brought up that are fiscal in nature on
19 these, we've had large input in that, and they
20 should be taken very seriously, because we've put a
21 lot of thought into it on our side, as well.

22 So thank you, Ms. Gipson.

23 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

24 Commissioner Armbruster?

25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I want to -- and

1 it's hard when you have a good school. But at the
2 same time, the statute says that they have to
3 have -- we are not looking at D -- "D's" or "F's" on
4 the school grade. They were explained about the
5 growth; although, they use statistics. So -- you
6 know.

7 But I -- my understanding is that you have
8 to kind of reconnoiter your finances to address the
9 lowest performing students. And I believe that you
10 are on the road to doing that; but in five years,
11 it's still showing that they are the ones who are
12 not doing as well.

13 I do not want to close this school. That
14 is not one of my goals at all. But I think that the
15 two years to turn it around in that particular area
16 that we're talking about as growth is an adequate
17 amount; because, otherwise, we're saying, "Well,
18 we're going to give them another year of not doing
19 that, when we've already given five years to be able
20 to do it in the first place."

21 And it's hard for me to say. But we're
22 looking at schools that have been around for five
23 years, and they should be able to get there in five
24 years. So now they can get there in eight, but not
25 seven, when I want to say by the end this year?

1 But I'm not saying that by the way. But
2 that's kind of where my concern is.

3 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, may I
4 again, though, state that it is very difficult for a
5 school to do a two-year?

6 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I hear you.

7 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: The staff would
8 have to be taken away from the academic side to work
9 on the renewal application with the two-year.
10 That's why, in the past, I understood we did three
11 years on the shorter terms.

12 THE CHAIR: And I would agree. We've had
13 lengthy discussions about the -- a shorter-term
14 contract. And it has always been the recommendation
15 that a two-year is just way too short, because
16 they're just barely starting out, and they're doing
17 this renewal process all over again, that they don't
18 even -- they won't even have all the data that will
19 be necessary to show that in the renewal
20 application, because you're always a year behind in
21 that renewal application information.

22 So you're only really get- -- so that it's
23 not a two-year; their turnarou- -- two years, to
24 me -- and whenever we've had this discussion --
25 isn't substantial time for them to be able to report

1 back to us. And they're engaged just in this
2 constant cycle of renewal.

3 Commissioner Carr?

4 COMMISSIONER CARR: So add to this. You
5 know, we know that we can close a school down
6 anytime, if we need to. Even if we gave them the
7 whole five years, if some substantial problems come
8 about, we can close them down a year from now, any
9 school.

10 But still -- so the time frame -- you
11 know, I mean, that's why I'm starting to have a
12 problem with this time frame altogether. They're
13 either good for five, or they're not good, is the
14 conclusion I'm coming to. So if they're not good
15 for five, they're not good for two, three, or four.
16 And, you know -- and if we want to maintain
17 standards.

18 So I don't know if the time period is
19 really that significant, you know. If they've made
20 substantial progress in two years, I say we give
21 them two years. Then we come up and say, "Well,
22 okay -- well, gosh, you're really doing pretty well.
23 I want you to go ahead -- I want to give you another
24 two years," you know. And that becomes quite a
25 quagmire process of doing things.

1 The idea of having a five-year charter,
2 you know, in the law, I think it's one of the things
3 they probably did right, you know. There's a lot of
4 problems with our legislation in regard to charter
5 schools. I don't think that was one of them.

6 So that being -- I just wanted to add my
7 two cents in to the idea of looking at a time frame.

8 THE CHAIR: I will -- I think in
9 philosophy I agree with you; because I believe that
10 if there's adequate monitoring of an improvement
11 plan, and/or Corrective Action Plans, with other
12 bureaus, if there is a problem, if the improvement
13 plan hasn't been completed, if they haven't met
14 whatever those goals are in the improvement plan, if
15 they have not adequately fulfilled their Corrective
16 Action Plan, then the Commission has the ability to
17 close that school at any time.

18 And I know, maybe not for this school, but
19 for many others, a lease-purchase is -- becomes more
20 difficult when you're looking at the potential for
21 shorter-term -- individuals don't want to enter into
22 those leases, because it is -- you know, there are
23 some that are saying, "We don't want to do a
24 five-year lease. We'd rather -- we'd be more
25 comfortable with a ten-year lease."

1 And I know that's part of the
2 conversation, but nothing that we could do with
3 here. So I tend to agree that the short term really
4 doesn't -- that the five-year, and they can be
5 closed at any time.

6 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair?

7 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Toulouse?

8 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: From my
9 experience, all of the schools we've closed were
10 during a charter period. The only one we tried to
11 got into a legal mess and didn't work on a charter
12 renewal.

13 So I think right there, that shows when we
14 need to do something, we do it.

15 THE CHAIR: And you are correct in that,
16 except for that -- with that one exception.

17 Commissioner Johnston?

18 COMMISSIONER CARR: Thank you,
19 Madam Chair.

20 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Director Poulos,
21 Charter School Division recommended two years. Is
22 it -- it must be, in your perception, doable to give
23 this information without taking away from the
24 academic environment.

25 Can you speak to why you thought two years

1 would be doable?

2 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman,
3 Commissioner Johnston and Commissioners, absolutely.
4 So I think, first and foremost, this Commission has
5 never revoked a charter midterm for academic
6 performance. So I just want to be clear. And so
7 saying that this could be handled at any time, I
8 think, is a little disingenuous. I think --

9 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I resent that.

10 MS. POULOS: I apologize. Maybe that's
11 the wrong choice of words. I don't think it's
12 likely. And I don't think that -- I don't think it
13 would happen.

14 We don't have -- this Commission doesn't
15 have -- no authorizer in this State has the
16 processes in place right now to do that kind of
17 work. And so I think it's important to really
18 consider that.

19 We recommended this two-year term because
20 we do think this can be done. We don't think
21 renewals should actually be this thing that takes
22 away so much time, because the reality is it's a
23 summary of what you should already have on hand;
24 right?

25 What is your academic performance? You

1 should have that data in hand. You should be doing
2 that analysis every month -- every day at your
3 teacher level, every week at your administrator
4 level, every month at your -- your board level.

5 And so that data should really just be
6 cut-and-paste. It should already be collated and
7 coordinated, and it should just be put into a
8 document. And so we don't think it takes that much
9 time.

10 In addition, this school is already going
11 to have 2017's letter grade. It's going to be
12 there. They have said, in their report, they are
13 working on improving. They've already said that.
14 We're going to see that play out in the 2017 letter
15 grade.

16 Then there's going to be a 2018 letter
17 grade. You're going to have two years of data
18 already there.

19 The statute that we talked about last
20 month in relation to the letter grades, it says two
21 years. Two consecutive years is what the
22 Legislature said is necessary to see a school making
23 improvement from a letter grade of "D" or "F."

24 And so that's why we made this. Again, we
25 don't believe renewals should take a substantial

1 amount of time. It should be something that schools
2 already have ready; it's a packet. It takes a lot
3 of time for PED and the PED staff, because there's a
4 lot of work and analysis for us to do and coordinate
5 throughout the building to make sure you have the
6 information you need.

7 But on the school's part, I just don't
8 think -- we don't want processes that take away from
9 any of the school leaders' time is the reality. We
10 want these processes to be things that are already
11 being done at the school level and are already
12 meaningful at the school level, and then brought to
13 your attention for really serious consideration,
14 hopefully, every five years; but there are going to
15 be times that require it to be sooner than every
16 five years.

17 And, again, the last thing that I would
18 say is the reason we recommended short-term renewals
19 is that academic -- again, no school has ever been
20 revoked for academic performance midterm. And I
21 don't think we have the structures in place right
22 now to do that.

23 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Thank you very
24 much. My concern lies with the -- the immediate,
25 fiscally and organizationally, that can -- a school

1 year closes out. And so that's simpler, the growth.
2 Thank you very much.

3 THE CHAIR: And I just want to remind the
4 Commission that we don't make our decisions solely
5 on the school grade.

6 COMMISSIONER CARR: Right.

7 THE CHAIR: So that that's important for
8 people to keep in mind, that there are many other
9 components besides just a school grade that goes
10 into this.

11 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: And, Madam Chair,
12 also, that the CSD, slash, PED recommendations are
13 only that: Recommendations.

14 We make the decisions. We often have a
15 different approach to the basic statistics. Every
16 one of these statistics is a student. When you have
17 a school of 240 students divided over seven grades,
18 that's not very many kids in a grade, which is
19 where, as you say, just a few kids upset by the
20 teachers not being there can create a drop.

21 So I have a real problem when we're
22 looking at statistics for the small schools. I
23 mean, I think you've got to have 100 or more kids in
24 each grade before you really can begin to look at
25 statistics.

1 And, I mean, I've handled statistics in
2 the Human Services Department and in error rates and
3 things like that with the same kind of thing, to say
4 a welfare office that had 500 cases could have a
5 very high error rate, because they had two mistakes;
6 whereas, an office with 50,000 cases could have a
7 very low one with, you know, 200 errors. And so you
8 can't tell what the work product is from your
9 statistics.

10 So I would like -- I know we can't see it;
11 but somewhere, people need to take into account each
12 of these kids as an individual.

13 Thank you.

14 THE CHAIR: Commissioners, are we at a
15 point where we're going to entertain a motion?

16 MS. McKEE: Commissioners, I would just
17 remind you that whoever makes the motion, please
18 make it excluding the amendment that's asked for at
19 the end, so that we can -- so that you can then make
20 another motion on that. And if the motion is going
21 to include conditions, you'll want to put those in
22 your motion.

23 THE CHAIR: Do I have a Commissioner that
24 wishes to make the motion?

25 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, I'll

1 make the motion.

2 MS. McKEE: Well, it's not filled out,
3 because I don't know if she wants conditions; but --

4 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Well --

5 MS. McKEE: So if you look at this
6 document, you can -- you can move to approve the
7 renewal application, or you can move to approve the
8 renewal application for whatever amount of years you
9 want for this school, with the following conditions.
10 So those are those two options at the top there,
11 that you can --

12 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Okay. Have we
13 discussed the conditions here? I'm -- my feeling is
14 we do need to have the condition on the financial
15 reporting, on the Corrective Action on that one.

16 MS. McKEE: Commissioner Toulouse, the
17 conditions -- just for wording -- it's your
18 prerogative -- but in this document the Director
19 provided, she's listed those conditions. So I think
20 for clarity, you know, that these are -- you know,
21 that these are -- that these were drafted. And I
22 didn't know, as they're conditions, you know, you
23 can read from that and chose from those conditions
24 that you want to include.

25 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Well, I'm just

1 trying to get a feeling, not necessarily a
2 discussion, of consensus before I look at it. I
3 mean, I -- what I look at before I make the motion
4 is the Corrective Action Plan needs to be followed,
5 as per their agreement; that I don't know about
6 the -- I think their facility is adequate, isn't it?

7 THE CHAIR: Which --

8 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: It says "facility
9 compliance."

10 THE CHAIR: No, I'm looking at these
11 conditions up here.

12 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Oh, sorry. I'm
13 looking at a -- I was going through a different --
14 okay. So -- see? It's lunchtime. My blood sugar
15 is getting low.

16 The academic improvement plan, I don't
17 have a problem with. The financial improvement
18 plan -- I think the performance framework -- that
19 shouldn't be in here. It will be negotiated on the
20 growth of the lowest performing students.

21 And the performance framework would be
22 negotiated on the audit finding responses.

23 But the Corrective Action Plan is also
24 separate from that in what I'm looking at. So
25 that's what my motion will be.

1 THE CHAIR: Okay.

2 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: If that's --

3 THE CHAIR: Go for it.

4 COMMISSIONER CARR: What -- are you going
5 to change the time frame?

6 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I move to approve
7 the renewal application for Coral Community Charter
8 School in Albuquerque for three years, with the
9 conditions that they continue to adequately provide
10 responses on a timely basis on their Corrective --
11 financial Corrective Action Plan, that they submit
12 an acceptable academic improvement plan and complete
13 regular reporting requirements. And this -- I --
14 this motion is excluding the amendment request,
15 which we will handle separately.

16 THE CHAIR: Do I have a second?

17 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Second.

18 THE CHAIR: Second by Commissioner Pogna.
19 Commissioner Armbruster?

20 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Pardon me.
21 Commissioner Toulouse?

22 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Yes.

23 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
24 Pogna?

25 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
2 Peralta?
3 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: No.
4 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
5 Gipson?
6 THE CHAIR: Yes.
7 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
8 Carr?
9 COMMISSIONER CARR: No.
10 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Chavez?
11 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: No.
12 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
13 Johnston?
14 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: No.
15 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
16 Armbruster votes "No."
17 The vote is five against renewing for
18 three years, and four -- and three for. So the
19 motion does not pass.
20 THE CHAIR: So, Commissioners, does --
21 does someone want to entertain another motion?
22 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: I'll do another
23 motion.
24 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Peralta?
25 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Madam Chair, I move

1 that the charter for Coral Community Charter School
2 be renewed for two years to improve performance in
3 the letter grade and improve performance in school
4 and mission-specific goals, with the conditions that
5 there is submission of an acceptable academic
6 improvement plan, along with regular reporting on
7 that plan and its effectiveness, that the school
8 performance frameworks include academic goals
9 related to the growth of the lowest performing
10 students, Q1, and the school's performance framework
11 include organizational goals related to audit
12 findings and responsiveness and financial
13 performance and reporting; this, with the idea that
14 we are excluding the amendment request.

15 THE CHAIR: Do I have a second?

16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Second.

17 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, may I
18 point out this motion did not include the follow-up
19 on the financial Corrective Action Plan?

20 THE CHAIR: I thought it did.

21 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: No, it was
22 academic.

23 THE CHAIR: Would you like to amend?

24 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: No. I followed the
25 four bullet points on the recommended conditions, as

1 provided here in the summary.

2 MS. McKEE: So, Commissioners, the
3 school's performance framework -- that the school's
4 performance framework include organizational goals
5 related to -- and then you have two bullet points
6 under that, which is the audit findings and
7 responsiveness and the financial performance and
8 reporting. So those are two subparagraphs of --

9 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I still have a
10 problem, because those are part of a contract
11 negotiation.

12 THE CHAIR: I have difficulties with
13 including that as part of a condition for renewal
14 when that is something they negotiate. And I don't
15 think we have the right to negotiate -- to force
16 something into those separate negotiations through
17 that renewal.

18 The performance framework is negotiated
19 after the contract is -- after the renewal process.
20 So I have difficulty in saying that they have to put
21 something into a negotiated document.

22 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Madam Chair, I do
23 have a motion and second on the floor. If we could
24 ask for a vote, please?

25 THE CHAIR: Okay. Commissioner

1 Armbruster?

2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

3 Peralta?

4 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

6 Johnston?

7 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

9 Carr?

10 COMMISSIONER CARR: No.

11 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

12 Toulouse?

13 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: No.

14 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

15 Gipson?

16 THE CHAIR: No.

17 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

18 Chavez?

19 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: No.

20 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

21 Armbruster votes "Yes."

22 Commissioner Pogna?

23 COMMISSIONER POGNA: No.

24 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: No.

25 Madam Chair, we have five votes against

1 the motion; so the motion does not pass.

2 THE CHAIR: Commissioners, I will
3 entertain another motion.

4 Commissioner Toulouse?

5 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, I
6 move that we approve Coral Community Charter School
7 for two years, with the conditions of a submission
8 of an acceptable academic improvement plan, along
9 with regular reporting on that plan and its
10 effectiveness, and that they follow through with
11 their financial plan, Corrective Action Plan, on a
12 timely basis, and that we exclude the request for a
13 change to the mission statement, which we will take
14 up at a separate point.

15 COMMISSIONER CARR: Point of order. I'm a
16 little concerned about what we're doing right now.
17 We've never --

18 THE CHAIR: I understand that.

19 COMMISSIONER CARR: -- had two or three
20 motions. If -- if a motion fails, it's -- it fails.
21 And I -- and we already did a second one. And
22 I'm -- I -- I'm -- don't feel comfortable with what
23 we're doing legally.

24 THE CHAIR: I understand that. And I
25 posed that question: What if we disagree with the

1 conditions and the vote -- and Ms. McKee did say we
2 would have another motion. So I'm going by what I
3 was --

4 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: And, Madam Chair,
5 my "No" vote was based on the conditions, and not on
6 the renewal.

7 THE CHAIR: So that's why we're continuing
8 this process, because this school --

9 COMMISSIONER CARR: You know me. I'm not
10 laughing to make light of it. I'm laughing because
11 I --

12 THE CHAIR: I had your concern and
13 addressed that concern when we started the morning
14 with this.

15 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yeah. We're really
16 breaking -- we're really breaking with some
17 tradition here. And I -- I, really -- you know, I'm
18 sorry to disagree with you, Audrey. But I -- you
19 know, you make a motion. And quite -- you know, and
20 quite often, we -- you know, we're discussing it
21 enough where we have some consensus on it.

22 But going into a third motion -- I think
23 what we -- you know, if it's denied, it's denied.
24 And we don't even -- and if we were going to deny
25 it, we don't need a second motion to deny it.

1 This -- I have serious reservations.

2 THE CHAIR: I do, as well. And as I said,
3 I addressed this.

4 My concern is the votes that are being
5 generated are not votes to not renew the school; the
6 votes are to not accept the conditions. So that I
7 think it's patently unfair for the school to have to
8 go back and say, "Your charter wasn't renewed," when
9 that was not the intent of the votes. I believe I'm
10 speaking for the Commission, in that the votes were
11 not to not renew the school.

12 COMMISSIONER CARR: Okay.

13 THE CHAIR: But I'm going by what -- the
14 advice that I was given.

15 COMMISSIONER CARR: We don't have an
16 attorney here who's truly representing us. So, you
17 know, there will be -- so we're -- I think we're on
18 shaky ground.

19 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I think my
20 understanding of Rules of Order is you can have as
21 many motions on any subject as you want. One motion
22 is never absolutely final. It can always be brought
23 up again.

24 COMMISSIONER CARR: All right.

25 THE CHAIR: I'm sorry. Commissioner

1 Toulouse, did you finish your --

2 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, my
3 problem always has been with requiring us to rule on
4 something before it's negotiated, when the contracts
5 are -- the performance framework is part of the
6 legal standing in the contract, and those are
7 negotiated.

8 So I think that we're actually violating
9 the law to put a condition in the renewal of the
10 contract in what the performance framework will be.
11 And that was my reason for saying I could not accept
12 that part of it, because the performance framework
13 is in the law, and so we can handle this.

14 And this whole group votes, again, to
15 accept the contract. And if it's not acceptable
16 there, then we don't accept the contract, and we
17 then have to go back through a whole different
18 issue. And the school may still not continue.

19 So I just -- that was my vote. I never
20 wanted to close the school; but I did not want to
21 put those conditions that I think are illegal in a
22 renewal.

23 THE CHAIR: Correct. And I will issue the
24 same sentiment, that I have serious concerns about
25 putting -- forcing into the performance framework

1 something that's negotiated after the fact. I don't
2 think we have the -- the ability or the right to say
3 that this has to be in a document that will be
4 negotiated later on.

5 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Madam Chair, may I
6 ask a question?

7 THE CHAIR: Certainly.

8 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: The -- the audit
9 findings and the financial performance and reporting
10 deficiencies are of a great concern to me. And I'm
11 uncertain -- it's important to me that these be a
12 part of the conditions with the wording of this,
13 because these -- these could be corrected -- or
14 should be corrected immediately.

15 THE CHAIR: Correct. And I believe
16 Commissioner Toulouse's first motion addressed the
17 financial reporting as a separate entity.

18 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: So did my second
19 one.

20 THE CHAIR: So did the second one.

21 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Thank you.

22 THE CHAIR: So it's being covered. It's
23 not being covered in that specific language to be
24 placed in the performance framework; but that the
25 reporting aspect was included in the motion.

1 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Could we have the
2 motion re-read, please?

3 (The record was read as requested.)

4 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: And, Madam Chair,
5 I find my indecisiveness most concerning for myself
6 and for this school. It's like you said. This is
7 nothing to do with the charter renewal. And were I
8 sitting there, I would be -- on my part, I apologize
9 for any indecisiveness to you. You have done -- you
10 have done your work, and it's getting the correct
11 wording. So thank you.

12 (The record was read as requested.)

13 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Thank you.

14 THE CHAIR: Do I have a second? Was that
15 a second or a comment?

16 COMMISSIONER CARR: No, this was
17 another -- so point of order. I look at Robert's
18 Rules of Order. And I know you can make an argument
19 about this. If a motion has been rejected, can
20 members bring the same motion? I know you're saying
21 it's not the same motion.

22 THE CHAIR: It's not the same motion.

23 COMMISSIONER CARR: Okay. So you can
24 tweak any motion. You can put a comma in there and
25 say it's different. And any motion, as defeated,

1 usually cannot be brought up again at the same
2 meeting, unless someone who voted on the prevailing
3 side moves to reconsider the vote, or unless time or
4 circumstance changed the motion.

5 However, members can bring it up again at
6 another meeting. This is called "renewing the
7 motion."

8 So I knew there was an issue here; because
9 this can go on, incredibly, forever.

10 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: But it's not the
11 same motion; it's not requesting a revote.

12 THE CHAIR: I think at this point -- do
13 you want to address that or no? Because I think
14 maybe you can put it to rest.

15 MS. McKEE: Certainly. It's not the same
16 motion. It's not just the addition of a comma. We
17 also don't follow Robert's Rules of Order
18 specifically. We have our own rules that we follow.

19 But I think that we're very close. But
20 clearly, the objective is not to close the school,
21 you know. You can certainly do a motion without
22 conditions, you know.

23 I mean, I think we all need to think
24 about, you know, what the ultimate goal is. Is it
25 keeping the school open or not keeping it open, and

1 then, you know, coming -- just agreeing on some
2 wording for the conditions, if that's what you want.

3 COMMISSIONER CARR: Well, again, that's
4 why we need to agree upon those things ahead of
5 time. But the -- we adopt Robert's Rules of Order
6 here every year.

7 THE CHAIR: No, we don't.

8 COMMISSIONER CARR: We don't?

9 THE CHAIR: No, we adopt our own rules
10 every year; but they're not Robert's Rules.

11 COMMISSIONER CARR: So are you telling me
12 that that particular rule doesn't exist? I -- and
13 there's a reason for those. And it's because it's
14 to prevent this type of thing from happening.

15 So I have an issue with it. I still do.
16 And so -- and I'd like to see that in writing. I'd
17 like to see the rules you're talking -- 'cause I'm
18 under --

19 THE CHAIR: We have a handbook with all of
20 our rules.

21 COMMISSIONER CARR: It doesn't spell --
22 no. We -- I'm -- if memory serves me correctly, I
23 thought we adopted Robert's Rules of Order. But we
24 do -- if we do adopt a certain amount of rules on
25 how we conduct our meetings, then I need to see

1 those rules; because I can't -- I need to know what
2 they are so I can look them up.

3 THE CHAIR: We do not adopt Robert's Rules
4 every year -- that's.

5 COMMISSIONER CARR: Then what rules do we
6 adopt?

7 THE CHAIR: We adopt the PEC rules that
8 are in that handbook. That's the rules that we
9 adopt every year.

10 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Therefore, your
11 issue isn't covered; therefore, we can do what we
12 want.

13 THE CHAIR: But we absolutely do not adopt
14 Robert's Rules every year, at least not since I've
15 been here.

16 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Madam Chair, may I
17 second Commissioner Toulouse's motion?

18 THE CHAIR: Yes, you may.

19 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: I am seconding.

20 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Armbruster?

21 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Can I have
22 discussion on this? I just wanted to clarify
23 something so I know what I'm voting on. That's
24 permissible after we've had a motion and a second;
25 correct?

1 MS. McKEE: Absolutely. Yes, absolutely.

2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. So the
3 condition, Commissioner Toulouse, is that we're
4 going to renew with two years, with the condition
5 that there's an academic plan -- is that for the
6 improvement of the school's grades? Is that
7 correct? And then -- and the financial plan
8 Corrective Action.

9 Am I correct on that?

10 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: (Indicates.)

11 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I just need to
12 know that.

13 THE CHAIR: All right.

14 Commissioner Armbruster?

15 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Got it.

16 Commissioner Chavez?

17 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: No.

18 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
19 Johnston?

20 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Yes.

21 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
22 Carr?

23 COMMISSIONER CARR: No.

24 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
25 Gipson?

1 THE CHAIR: I'm going to vote "Yes,"
2 reluctantly, because I would prefer five years.

3 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
4 Peralta?

5 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: No.

6 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
7 Toulouse?

8 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I vote "Yes."

9 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commission
10 Armbruster votes "Yes."

11 Commissioner Pogna?

12 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: That is five
14 votes in favor of renewing Coral for two years, with
15 conditions.

16 THE CHAIR: That's not enough. We need
17 six. We have five.

18 Can we take a ten-minute break? Let's
19 take a ten-minute break.

20 I don't want to hold them back and make
21 them come back for lunch.

22 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Commissioners, can I
23 have your attention? I need to get off now for
24 about an hour.

25 MS. McKEE: Can you wait ten minutes?

1 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: I've already been
2 holding. What are we going to do in ten minutes
3 after the break?

4 THE CHAIR: Vote.

5 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Okay. Can you --
6 yeah, I'll wait. I'll wait.

7 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Okay.

9 (Recess taken, 12:40 p.m. to 12:43 p.m.)

10 THE CHAIR: We're okay. Because there's
11 six of us here, I think we can go ahead. I have to
12 apologize, because my addled brain -- I kept
13 thinking Commissioner Toulouse was --

14 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Yes, I'm here. I
15 had you all on "Mute." Sorry.

16 THE CHAIR: The motion passed at
17 five-four. That was my error in just -- my blood
18 sugar going down. So I apologize for that
19 short-term lapse there. So the motion does pass
20 five-four --

21 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Five-three.

22 THE CHAIR: Five-three. Sorry.

23 MS. McKEE: The confusion was because in
24 the -- because in the school before you,
25 Commissioner Toulouse had to recuse herself. So we

1 needed six to pass. So there was that moment of
2 confusion.

3 THE CHAIR: That's my fault. So I
4 apologize. Thank you so much.

5 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: So with that, I'm
6 going to get off now.

7 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you very much.

8 (A discussion was held off the record.)

9 THE CHAIR: Excuse me. We didn't do the
10 anticipated request. We have to do the amendment
11 request. I'm sorry.

12 Okay. We're good. So we can just do it.
13 Everyone else can go. We have to quickly do the
14 amendment request. I apologize.

15 And I just need a little clarification on
16 the amendment request. You've -- you already have
17 the pre-K -- the 7 and the 8. You're just asking
18 for the language change from your initial mission?

19 MS. DONNA ELDREDGE: Yes.

20 THE CHAIR: So I think we can quickly
21 dispense with this; because they're not asking to
22 add any grades. They already have the grades. But
23 the original mission did not include that, so
24 they're just cleaning up their mission to cover what
25 they already do.

1 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, I
2 move that we approve the change of mission statement
3 for Coral Community School from using the words
4 "through seventh grade," to using "through eighth
5 grade."

6 THE CHAIR: And using "pre-K."

7 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: And -- right. And
8 using "pre-K."

9 THE CHAIR: Do I have a second?

10 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Second.

11 THE CHAIR: Second by Commissioner Pogna.
12 Commissioner Armbruster?

13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
14 Toulouse?

15 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
17 Peralta?

18 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.

19 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
20 Johnston?

21 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
23 Pogna?

24 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

1 Carr?

2 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
4 Gipson?

5 THE CHAIR: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
7 Armbruster votes "Yes."

8 That's seven out of seven.

9 THE CHAIR: That is seven votes in favor.
10 Thank you. Thank you once again. And we will be in
11 recess for 45 minutes.

12 (Recess taken, 12:45 p.m. to 1:43 p.m.)

13 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Okay. In the
14 absence of Chair Gipson -- and it will be
15 momentarily, I believe -- I'm going to call this
16 Commission back to order.

17 Next on the agenda is the Sage Montessori
18 Charter School in Albuquerque. We'll go ahead and
19 hear from the Charter School Division.

20 Ms. Poulos?

21 MS. POULOS: Acting Chair and
22 Commissioners, I'll just start with CSD's analysis.

23 This school has failed to meet the
24 material terms of the contract: specifically, CSD
25 was unable to observe the implementation of a

1 comprehensive technology program, extended day
2 programs, or music and Spanish programs required in
3 the charter for this school.

4 Additionally, the school maintains a
5 three-year average letter grade of "D" and has
6 earned a "D" or "F" letter grade in each of the last
7 three years. The school has failed to meet or make
8 substantial progress toward a majority of the goals
9 in the charter contract.

10 One thing I do want to address is that, at
11 a very late minute, both the school and CSD became
12 aware that there had been an amendment request to
13 one of the goals that was in the contract. And so I
14 believe the school will be prepared to address that,
15 and CSD is also prepared to address that.

16 It was specifically the student
17 performance goal related to Short-Cycle Assessments
18 in 2011. This school did submit and receive
19 approval on an amendment request to revise that goal
20 to incorporate NWEA as their -- their school
21 assessment. And so the analysis provided by the CSD
22 does still address this particular goal, because the
23 school had provided NWEA data. And ultimately, the
24 way that the goal was revised required the school --
25 I apologize I'm just scrolling up -- to test

1 students in fall, winter, and spring, and to achieve
2 national student growth targets in math and reading,
3 as set through the fall testing cycle by NWEA.

4 It indicates students in the cohort will
5 demonstrate one full year of growth or more, as
6 defined by the NWEA student growth target
7 established from the fall test results. All
8 students will score from the 40th through the 70th
9 range. And that amendment request was approved on
10 July 11th, 2014.

11 You'll see in the analysis, again, that we
12 hadn't looked at NWEA data and the growth. And so
13 there were varying ranges for grade levels,
14 including some grade levels that had negative
15 growth. And so CSD still believes that this goal
16 and analysis does stand true, even for the revised
17 school-specific goal. And we apologize that that
18 was information that we did not become aware of
19 until -- it's just been the past couple of days --
20 or day.

21 So as we stated, this school, you know,
22 has not met the Department standards of excellence
23 based on that State letter grade. In addition, they
24 don't meet, based on our analysis, the school goals
25 in the contract.

1 And I do want to note that we believe this
2 school is distinguishable from the other schools
3 that have received a recommendation for renewal,
4 because this school has consistently maintained a
5 "D" or "F" and has not, at any time, demonstrated
6 the capacity to achieve the expected academic
7 performance for their students.

8 And we believe that additional data
9 provided in your analysis appears to demonstrate
10 that families also are making this determination and
11 have concerns about the academic performance of the
12 school. Annually, the school experiences a
13 substantial amount of student turnover. The
14 school's student retention rate is much lower than
15 expected and has steadily declined from 70 percent
16 between the first and second year to 49 percent in
17 the third year.

18 The fourth year demonstrated some increase
19 in that student retention rate; but, again, we've
20 seen that decline in the fifth year. In addition,
21 the school has also experienced very high teacher
22 turnover, retaining fewer than 50 percent of the
23 teachers between years.

24 With regards to the school's audit, this
25 is the area that you will note the school's analysis

1 indicates that they have met; so the school did not
2 have any material weaknesses. It did have one
3 significant deficiency in the most recent audit;
4 but, again, no material weaknesses.

5 In addition, we did -- based on compliance
6 with all provisions of law, we have provided that
7 analysis.

8 Based on that analysis, and the site
9 visit, CSD had concerns about compliance with
10 licensure and background check requirements with
11 instructional hours, as those relate specifically to
12 having submitted a budget calendar to the PED and
13 then not implementing that same calendar, meeting
14 special education service requirements, ELL service
15 requirements, school safety requirements,
16 specifically with regards to creating and receiving
17 approval for a student -- or a school safety and
18 wellness plan, and governance requirements,
19 specifically as that relates to the number of board
20 members serving on the board, as well as with
21 regards to not all board members completing their
22 required number of training hours.

23 And as a result of these findings, CSD has
24 recommended non-renewal of this charter. That is
25 based on, again, the school's letter grade

1 performance; specifically, that the school maintains
2 a three-year average letter grade of "D" and has
3 earned a "D" or "F" letter grade in each of the last
4 three years, and the school's failure to meet or
5 make progress toward the goals in the charter
6 contract.

7 In addition, the school has failed to meet
8 several elements of the material terms of the
9 contract. The school has experienced high student,
10 teacher, and governance body turnover, including in
11 this renewal period, which demonstrates a lack of
12 support for the school and community.

13 And additionally, the school has failed to
14 develop and obtain approval on a student wellness
15 and safety plan.

16 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Thank you, Director
17 Poulos. We are now to school comments. And so you
18 will have 15 minutes to present your comments. And
19 if, prior to your comments, if you would please
20 identify yourself to the reporter we have that on
21 the record. The time begins now.

22 MR. FELIX GARCIA: Good afternoon. Good
23 afternoon, members of the Commission. My name is
24 Felix Garcia, and I am the head administrator of
25 Sage Montessori Charter School.

1 So Sage Montessori Charter School has a
2 very united community of board members, parents,
3 teachers, community members. And we feel that we
4 have a lot of great things that are going on in our
5 school. We feel that we are implementing a lot
6 of -- of the best practices that are required by the
7 law at our school.

8 You wouldn't be able to tell by -- by
9 looking at the CSD report that we received. We
10 realize that the recommendation is based mainly on
11 the letter grade that we received, which was on the
12 report. But we do have quite a few things that we
13 disagreed with the report, which is, it was
14 mentioned that material terms, as far as music, art,
15 and technology -- we have a technology program. And
16 we've implemented a technology program at our
17 school. We have computer lab, where our students
18 are -- our students are taken into the computer lab,
19 and they work on computer skills, on practice
20 testing, and which we attribute this to the --
21 bringing our scores up from a -- an "F" to a "D,"
22 again, because -- and I'll go into that a little bit
23 further into my report.

24 But our students are -- they have software
25 that they are -- that they work on to improve their

1 skills in the classroom, as well as to help them do
2 better in the assessment; because the Montessori
3 philosophy is a little bit different and doesn't
4 align itself really well to testing. So we've done
5 some things to help our students in that area.

6 As far as the music, we have a Montessori
7 teacher. He is not State-certified, but he's been a
8 Montessori music teacher for almost 40 years. He
9 presents every year at the national conference for
10 Mont- -- for over 1,000 Montessori teachers. And he
11 is -- has been a big part of our school. Our
12 parents love him, and we do have a robust music
13 program at the school with that.

14 We do have -- as far as the -- some of the
15 findings that were noted with the bilingual program
16 and the special ed program, we felt that, overall,
17 the visit that we had from CSD was fairly positive.
18 We received comments that our files looked really
19 good, that we had background checks on all our
20 staff, including staff that we contract from EASi
21 and staff that we contract from ITSQuest for
22 substituting for teachers.

23 We had all those background checks. We
24 also had licenses for our teachers. We had one
25 teacher that is a long-term sub that recently

1 received her license for long-term sub, which we had
2 been working with PED on getting her to qualify for
3 an alternative licensure program.

4 So -- and we also felt that we've had
5 audits in the past. We've had visits. And one
6 visit in the spring, which the Director attended, we
7 had no findings in special ed. And the few findings
8 that we had were made -- were corrected in a timely
9 manner, also.

10 We applied -- our application was
11 submitted in a timely manner. Also, we do
12 acknowledge, and we don't make excuse for, the work
13 that needs to be done at our school. We all believe
14 that our goal is to make sure that our children
15 achieve, both in the Short-Cycle Assessment, as well
16 as in the standardized testings, or the PARCC
17 testing that we do with our kids. That's one area
18 that needs to be addressed and one of the problems
19 that we've had in the past, is that the Montessori
20 philosophy, again, doesn't align really well to
21 testing.

22 The Montessori philosophy -- we do a lot
23 of observation as far as assessment. And we've had
24 to implement some strategies to address those --
25 those -- those things.

1 And we feel that our students have shown
2 the growth, that it is working what we're doing, and
3 the practice testing. A lot of the skills that
4 they're getting, some of the things that we saw with
5 the problems that we had with practice testing is a
6 lot of our kids were not familiar with the
7 keyboarding and things like that.

8 We struggled the first year. We had gone
9 from an "F" to a "D." And in the first year of the
10 PARCC assessment, we went back down to a "D," which
11 a lot of other schools also went down the first year
12 of PARCC. [Verbatim.]

13 And then last year, we went back up to a
14 "D," and we are currently -- as the CSD pointed out,
15 we're about 7 points away from a "C."

16 So we -- we know that the growth is not a
17 lot; but we are making growth. And we feel that
18 this year, we're going make a lot more growth,
19 because we have the system in place to -- to assure
20 that that takes place.

21 Some of the issues that we've had at our
22 school from the beginning of the first year is our
23 founding -- we feel that our founding leadership who
24 created the charter had a very strong Montessori
25 philosophy, but had very little knowledge about

1 State requirements and about best practice
2 implementation.

3 During the first year and a half of -- we
4 had a part-time head administrator that was
5 providing consulting to the school. And we had a
6 lot of resistance from the founding leader in
7 implementing those best practices, because she felt
8 she didn't want to water down the Montessori
9 curriculum.

10 So we attribute a lot of our turnover in
11 staff that we had because of the issues that we had
12 with that staff member.

13 I came on board with Sage Montessori
14 Charter School about a year and a half ago. And we
15 were finally able to make the changes necessary
16 to -- we were able to remove that staff member.
17 And -- and so that we feel that right now we have
18 nothing holding us back. We are implementing best
19 practices at our school.

20 One of the things with our board,
21 initially, was that our founder hand-picked the
22 board members that were part of that -- that initial
23 board. And they had a lot of trust in her because
24 of her knowledge in Montessori education, which the
25 board, once they started learning about their duties

1 as board members, they saw that -- that some of the
2 things that that person was doing weren't in the
3 best interests of the school. So they quickly -- we
4 all became -- we're all together as a team. We have
5 a good board, supportive board, with administration
6 and teachers.

7 We have really good teachers that do a lot
8 of great things in the classroom. Some of the
9 challenges that we've had at our school, again, are
10 finding Montessori teachers who are also
11 State-certified. A lot of the times we hire
12 certified State teachers that come in, and we have
13 to train them in the Montessori philosophy.
14 Sometimes the teachers come in, and after a year of
15 being in the -- in the Montessori program, they
16 decide that they -- they want to go back into a
17 traditional school. So we're working on that.

18 We're working with MECR and some of the
19 other institutions to get our teachers highly
20 qualified, both with the State and with the
21 Montessori program.

22 The other problem that we've had is --
23 again, like I said -- is bringing together the -- we
24 have a curriculum that is both State standards and
25 Montessori-aligned curriculum. But we do have some

1 issues with the Montessori program and bringing
2 together, again, the best practices. And we're
3 doing a lot of that now. We are following lesson
4 planning, lesson delivery, some of the SIOP best
5 practices. And we are training our staff.

6 One of the things that was identified in
7 the old material terms was parent involvement. I
8 think that we received a -- a no-go in that area,
9 which we have a high parent involvement. We have
10 about 95 [verbatim] participation of parents in all
11 our parent-teacher conferences. We have a high
12 parent involvement in our activities. And we have
13 an active PTO.

14 And we, also -- professional development;
15 our teachers have participated in everything from
16 special ed training to SAT, 504 trainings.
17 Administration participates in all the required
18 Teachscape trainings, so that we can hold our
19 teachers accountable. Our board holds the head
20 administrator accountable by evaluating me, by
21 setting goals for me.

22 And so I believe that we have the
23 structure and the foundation in place. It has taken
24 us quite a while. And you might be asking, you
25 know, from what we've heard today, why has it taken

1 us so long to start looking at those things. And --
2 and it was a struggle with some of those issues that
3 we had. But we feel that we finally have those
4 issues under control and in place.

5 Again, we -- the current -- we have -- one
6 of the things that we're doing is we've signed up
7 with Advanced Ed to get accredited through Advanced
8 Ed. We're also working for accreditation with the
9 American Montessori Society.

10 Most teachers, again, are
11 Montessori-certified and are State-certified. We
12 only have one teacher that is currently a long-term
13 sub. We've established partnerships with all the
14 Chambers of Commerce in the community and
15 businesses. We're working with businesses -- right
16 now, we're working on a project to help us bring
17 aqua -- aqua -- what is it? -- aquaponics and
18 hydroponics to our school, because the planting and
19 gardening is a big part of the Montessori
20 philosophy. So we're exploring with some businesses
21 in doing some modern growing in our school. That's
22 one of the things that we're very proud of in the
23 school.

24 We also hold leadership and PLC meetings
25 that are data-driven. We have teacher-led

1 professional development, where our Level III
2 teachers are -- for staff meetings, are training
3 other teachers in different topics.

4 We have a mentorship program, where our
5 Level III teachers are also mentoring other staff
6 members to make sure that they're implementing the
7 programs with fidelity in the classroom.

8 And, again, we're doing -- again, if we
9 didn't have the technology, that's one of the things
10 that we attribute the growths [verbatim] that we've
11 made is by just putting the technology in front of
12 our kids; because, again, Montessori is a lot about
13 manipulatives, a lot about hands-on training, and a
14 lot of working on -- on -- on things like that.

15 Technology wasn't a big part of the
16 Montessori program, which, now, our kids are -- are
17 working on those type of skills, and we feel that
18 they're making gains based on those.

19 I'm going to turn it over to Ms. Lajuan.
20 She is one of our teachers, who can tell you some
21 other best practices and things that are going on at
22 our school, as a positive culture.

23 MS. LAJUAN GUERRERO: Hello,
24 Commissioners. Thank you for having us. My name is
25 Lajuan Guerrero. I am a kindergarten teacher, a

1 Montessori kindergarten teacher. I've been with
2 Sage for four-and-a-half years. So I am one of two
3 teachers who have been there that long. We have had
4 a -- a big staff turnover.

5 I've been through all the ups-and-downs,
6 and I've seen staff come and go, and I've seen
7 parents come and go. And I do agree with Mr. Garcia
8 that the administration and the leadership was very
9 lacking in the early years, and it caused -- it
10 caused a ripple-down effect so that no one felt
11 really secure.

12 But I feel that this is the most positive
13 year we've had so far, last year and this year.
14 We're showing gains. We have actually retained
15 seven of our nine lead teachers. So that's the
16 biggest so far.

17 It's a very core, tight-knit group who are
18 dedicated to data-driven instruction. And all of us
19 are State-certified. Most of us are
20 Montessori-certified.

21 It is an issue trying to marry those two
22 things, because Montessori is very different from
23 traditional school. And we are judged based on a
24 traditional school test, basically; so we have to
25 teach ourselves how to do this. And we have just

1 come to a point where we are making gains in that
2 direction.

3 It has taken a long time. But we finally
4 have leadership and a board and a set of teachers
5 that can make it happen. And I feel very positive
6 that if you give us a renewal for our charter, you
7 will see amazing growth.

8 The statistics and studies for Montessori
9 education are out there. And I don't know if any of
10 you have ever looked it up. But Montessori students
11 generally score better, especially in math, but also
12 in reading, than traditional -- traditional school
13 students.

14 We want to get there. That's our goal.
15 We want to get there. We just finally stopped
16 rocking the boat. The boat's stable now. We want
17 to get going and start making gains.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. FELIX GARCIA: At this point, I'd like
20 you to hear from one of my parents.

21 THE CHAIR: Three seconds?

22 MS. FRIEDMAN: Your time is up.

23 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Did -- do we have
24 anyone signed up for public input?

25 MS. FRIEDMAN: Yes, we did.

1 THE CHAIR: We now have four people who
2 have signed up for the public comment. So you've
3 got -- everyone, it's a total of five minutes; so
4 that's --

5 FROM THE FLOOR: I'll try my best to make
6 this quick.

7 THE CHAIR: And, actually, first on the
8 list is Lujuan Guerrero.

9 MS. LUJUAN GUERRERO: That was me. And
10 that was before I knew I was going to speak during
11 the -- sorry about that.

12 THE CHAIR: Second on the list is
13 Dr. India Northrop Pratt?

14 FROM THE FLOOR: I'll time myself. Where
15 shall I speak? Do you mind if I use that one?

16 MS. POULOS: Thank you. Do you want to
17 come over here with me? Or do you want to be --

18 FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. I'm Dr. India
19 Northrup Pratt. And I just moved back to New Mexico
20 a year and a half ago, when I joined the Sage team.
21 I left a private school in Southampton, New York,
22 where I was an administrator in a private school,
23 and precisely because I wanted to experience and
24 work in a public Montessori school.

25 According to the American Montessori

1 Society, there are only 475 public Montessori
2 schools in the entire U.S. And I've seen other data
3 that says there's even less. It is a problem,
4 marrying the Montessori with the traditional rubric.
5 I can tell you that right away.

6 But we have all identified this problem in
7 this last year and a half of our five-year term and
8 have really made great strides in working towards
9 putting those two components together, so that a
10 hands-on approach does translate to a
11 two-dimensional test.

12 I feel like we have done very well, and
13 I'm very proud of the school, and -- with our
14 consistent leadership. And we do have very good
15 parent participation. I feel like we are going to
16 do even better in the years to come.

17 So I very much encourage you to renew our
18 charter, at least on a conditional basis, to let us
19 show you what we can do.

20 THE CHAIR: Thank you. And my next person
21 is Elias Martinez.

22 FROM THE FLOOR: Yes, Elias Martinez. I
23 think you have to go to the next. His mother just
24 went into surgery, so he had to go.

25 THE CHAIR: Oh, okay. All right.

1 FROM THE FLOOR: Madam Chair,
2 Commissioners, my name is Katelynn Frugé. I am the
3 newest member of the board, and also a parent at the
4 school. I have a son who is five who is actually in
5 Ms. Lujuan's class.

6 We had him in a regular APS school. My
7 little boy does have Down Syndrome and -- sorry. He
8 was in a regular APS school for four days. They did
9 not want inclusion. They had done a lot of things
10 in their power to try to make sure he didn't get the
11 inclusion.

12 We had looked around at several schools.
13 And most wanted to test my son before he was even
14 allowed in. They wanted to see where he was at.

15 We saw -- we had heard about Sage. We
16 went in. Ms. Lujuan automatically said, "Yes, we
17 want him. We want to work with him."

18 I had no idea about Montessori style. I
19 don't know if there's anybody else out there like
20 that. I thought, a bunch of hippies; they don't
21 really do what they do with the schoolwork.

22 But they definitely showed me that
23 difference. It really isn't -- children with
24 special needs definitely get a lot from this, you
25 know. They get to pick and choose what they want to

1 do for how long they want to work with it.

2 And they are working with him on computer
3 skills, and he's gotten better at testing. I don't
4 know a lot about the school in the past or how
5 they've graded in the past or a past administration.
6 But I do know that they are doing amazing things
7 now, and that if this school was renewed, they would
8 continue to do these amazing things.

9 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

10 Commissioners? Questions? Comments?
11 Concerns?

12 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair?

13 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Toulouse?

14 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: It's after lunch.
15 I think my blood sugar is back up.

16 I have heard problems ongoing with your
17 school, from various kinds of people. I have
18 concerns. I had a young relative who was there and
19 who was removed and is in another school, because
20 her parents felt she just was not getting what she
21 needed.

22 And the parents there, the mother, is very
23 familiar with Montessori. And that's why she wanted
24 it for her child.

25 I'm not sure I'm ready yet to close you;

1 but I really do have concerns that you were unstable
2 for so long that you're stabilized now. But look
3 how long it's taken to get to that point? And I --
4 I don't know. I just wanted to say, with the
5 turnover rate -- and I'm also concerned, how can you
6 teach in a Montessori school if you're not
7 Montessori-certified? And that is a question I
8 have. I assumed you needed that Montessori
9 certification to be able to teach in a Montessori
10 school.

11 MS. LUJUAN GUERRERO: One of the
12 requirements to teach in a Montessori school is to
13 either be certified or in a Montessori certification
14 program. So that is the case. They are either
15 certified, or two of them are in a Montessori
16 certification program.

17 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Where is that
18 program?

19 MS. LUJUAN GUERRERO: It is online. I
20 don't have all the details. But it's an online
21 school.

22 The issue is that there was a local
23 training program in Albuquerque, and she had to
24 close doors midyear. So those teachers had to
25 quickly find an alternative.

1 The closest is in -- in Colorado. And
2 that would require an entire summer spent there. So
3 we thought it would be better just to do an online.

4 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Because I know
5 this is a problem with the International
6 Baccalaureate schools, too, where they have to go
7 somewhere else for training.

8 But that was a question I had when I
9 looked at this; because I hadn't realized -- again,
10 I'm not totally familiar. I understand more than
11 some people, but not as much as people in the
12 schools do.

13 So thank you.

14 THE CHAIR: Director, did you want to say
15 something?

16 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman,
17 Commissioner Toulouse, I just wanted to share, from
18 the school's charter application, which is their
19 contract, that it states that teachers must be fully
20 certified; but then it continues on in the
21 application to say, "NM licensed teachers who wish
22 to become Montessori-certified teachers may apply if
23 they are willing to take the required Montessori
24 training for the level they plan to teach."

25 So that was in their application.

1 THE CHAIR: But those teachers that are
2 not certified now, are they all on that online
3 program?

4 MS. LUJUAN GUERRERO: Yes. And I think
5 there's only two that are not certified now.

6 THE CHAIR: Do we have an idea of how long
7 it would take them to complete their certification?

8 MS. LUJUAN GUERRERO: Well -- do you want
9 to answer that, Mr. Garcia?

10 MR. FELIX GARCIA: It takes
11 approximately -- and I came into Sage Montessori,
12 and I'm attending the school in MECR, in Boulder,
13 Colorado, and it's about a year-and-a-half process,
14 taking classes online.

15 And then you attend two weeks in the
16 summer. And you attend two long weekends during the
17 year. So that's approximately how long it takes
18 to -- to get through a certification program.

19 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

20 Commissioners, anyone else?

21 Commissioner Armbruster?

22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I am actually
23 quite familiar with Montessori. My daughter went
24 from the time she was four until she went into sixth
25 grade; private, I might add, and in California. So

1 I'm thinking back on what she did.

2 And even in those days -- and this was in
3 the '80s, early '80s -- they still had tests. They
4 weren't the PARCC test; it was CTBS or some other
5 letters.

6 So I'm a little concerned that you had the
7 feeling that the Montessori methods are not
8 conducive with the regular testing; because, as I
9 said, my experience has been they've always done
10 that.

11 I can't speak for the PARCC. But even
12 before you got your original contract, they still
13 had testing. I mean, we've always had that. So my
14 concern is that you've had five years -- and I am
15 happy that you're doing better; I'm happy for the
16 students. But at the same time, you've had five
17 years to get it together with whatever -- whoever
18 teachers were there, whether they were doing the
19 right Montessori type of way or another way.

20 And this -- so four years, at least, three
21 years, students have not been getting the education
22 that they should be getting. And that's of concern.

23 I know you mentioned that you were --
24 something away from a "D." Ms. Poulos, can you
25 explain?

1 FROM THE FLOOR: Seven points away from a
2 "C."

3 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So there's a
4 range, I think?

5 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman,
6 Commissioner Armbruster, yes, a "D" letter grade
7 ranges from a 37.5 to a 50. And so they had earned
8 a 43, which would be seven points away. But
9 ultimately, that is -- you know, they're still
10 halfway to go in the points to get up to the "C,"
11 approximately.

12 FROM THE FLOOR: Do you mind if I respond
13 to that?

14 THE CHAIR: It wasn't a question.

15 MS. LUJUAN GUERRERO: It was just a
16 comment.

17 THE CHAIR: It wasn't -- yeah.

18 Is there anyone else? I just want to say
19 that I want to express my serious concern, not only
20 with the letter grade; but there are indications
21 that IEPs hadn't been completed. There were -- to
22 me, there were significant findings with special ed
23 students that -- that were in the -- in the analysis
24 that are very concerning. And the fact that you
25 signed up as a public school when the school

1 started, and there's an understanding of what public
2 schools do.

3 Yes, you had a separate mission for the
4 Montessori method; but that when this contract was
5 signed, five years ago, there was an understanding
6 that you were going to comply with all of the
7 regulations that a traditional public school does,
8 which is all the testing and every other aspect; so
9 that, you know, to me, three-and-a-half years of
10 trying to figure it out, that's what needed to be
11 figured out during the planning year. And then it
12 shouldn't have taken three-and-a-half years.

13 And based on even some of the Short-Cycle
14 Assessments, there's been -- there's a -- you're on
15 the downslide, not the -- not the up-slide --
16 upswing -- in your scores; so that I don't even see
17 that there's -- you've shown that potential that
18 you're on the upswing at this point in time.

19 So it's -- it's very concerning to me.
20 And the fact that there apparently weren't even --
21 there was two years that even Short-Cycle
22 Assessments hadn't been reported; correct? I think
23 that's what it said, if I read that correctly.

24 You changed the Short-Cycle Assessment
25 without letting us know. And there were two years

1 that there weren't Short-Cycle Assessments provided.

2 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman? So I did
3 want to correct that, which is, again, not that they
4 weren't taken, necessarily. And also, the change --
5 again, that was something that both the school and
6 CSD became aware of at the last minute.

7 And you may not have been here when I said
8 that. So I apologize. We became aware in the last
9 day that -- that there had been an amendment
10 request, and that had been approved by the
11 Commission.

12 THE CHAIR: Okay. But beyond that, there
13 were -- I thought it was stated in the report that
14 there were two years that Short-Cycle Assessment
15 data had not been provided.

16 MS. POULOS: That's correct. It was
17 before that amendment that the data was not provided
18 for the initial goal. And so there were those two
19 years.

20 THE CHAIR: Right. So that's concerning,
21 as well, that we don't have that information.

22 So that being said, are there any other
23 questions? Comments? Concerns?

24 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I want to say
25 one more comment; and that is, what is also

1 concerning me is that relative to other schools and
2 New Mexico, in general, you have a higher Caucasian
3 group of people. You have a lower economically
4 disadvantaged, where a number of our schools are at,
5 like, 100 percent or 98 or whatever. And you
6 actually have lower ELL and special ed.

7 So those are the groups -- the latter two
8 I just mentioned are the groups that are generally
9 bringing everyone down. And you don't really have
10 those same statistics.

11 I would say, just looking at the makeup of
12 your school, you would expect it to be much better,
13 regardless of who was teaching it. The pool of able
14 learners is already there.

15 THE CHAIR: Commissioners, I'll entertain
16 a motion. And I just want to make sure there were
17 no amendment requests; correct?

18 Commissioners? Anyone?

19 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Peralta?

20 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Madam Chair, I move
21 to deny the renewal application for the Sage
22 Montessori Charter School in Albuquerque for the
23 following reasons:

24 The school committed a material violation
25 of the conditions, standards, or procedures set

1 forth in the charter contract, due to, one, the
2 school failed to meet or make progress toward a
3 majority of the goals in the charter contract, and,
4 two, the school has failed to meet several elements
5 of the material terms of the contract.

6 Also, the school has experienced a high
7 teacher, student, and governing body turnover. They
8 have also failed to protect the student safety by
9 failing to develop and obtain approval on a student
10 wellness and safety plan. There has been additional
11 concerns regarding legal compliance.

12 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Madam Chair, I can't
13 hear.

14 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Also, number two,
15 the school failed to meet or make substantial
16 progress toward achievement of the Department's
17 standards of excellence, or student performance
18 standards identified in the charter contract,
19 because the school currently maintains a three-year
20 average grade of D and has earned a D or F grade in
21 each of the last three years.

22 And, finally, the school did not meet the
23 facilities requirements -- no, it did. It did.

24 THE CHAIR: It did?

25 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: I will exclude that

1 last one. That is my motion.

2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Second.

3 THE CHAIR: Motion by Commissioner
4 Peralta, second by Commissioner Armbruster.

5 Commissioner Armbruster, roll-call vote,
6 please?

7 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Before you do the
8 roll-call vote, I didn't hear the beginning of the
9 motion. Can you please just read that again for me
10 so I'm clear?

11 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Okay. So the very
12 first component of my motion was that the school
13 committed a material violation of the conditions,
14 standards, and procedures set forth in the charter
15 contract, because the school failed to meet or make
16 progress toward a majority of the goals in the
17 charter contract, and the school has failed to meet
18 several elements of the material terms of the
19 contract.

20 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Okay. But is this a
21 motion not to renew?

22 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Correct.

23 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Okay. Thank you.

24 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Armbruster?

25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Yes.

1 Commissioner Gipson?
2 THE CHAIR: Yes.
3 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
4 Johnston?
5 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Yes.
6 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
7 Toulouse?
8 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Reluctantly, yes.
9 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
10 Chavez?
11 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Yes.
12 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
13 Carr?
14 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.
15 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
16 Pogna?
17 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.
18 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
19 Peralta?
20 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.
21 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
22 Armbruster votes "Yes." That is an eight-to-eight
23 vote to --
24 THE CHAIR: Eight-to-zero vote.
25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: -- eight-to-zero

1 vote to deny Sage Montessori's renewal.

2 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.

3 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, don't
4 they know they will receive a formal letter and have
5 appeal rights?

6 THE CHAIR: They know that.

7 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: But I think we
8 need to tell them. I know; but I -- to me, that's
9 at least politeness.

10 THE CHAIR: Good afternoon. We are now up
11 to letter D, New America School, Las Cruces.

12 Welcome.

13 FROM THE FLOOR: Thank you.

14 MS. FRIEDMAN: Madam Chair? Madam Chair?
15 If anyone wants to make a public comment, would they
16 like to sign up?

17 THE CHAIR: If anyone is interested in
18 being part of the public comment, if you would,
19 please, just sign in with Beverly over here so that
20 we know who wants to speak.

21 And I do not believe we have an amendment
22 request with this; correct? So we're good with
23 that.

24 Good afternoon, once again. And please,
25 if you could state your name for the record.

1 MR. JOHN MUÑOZ: Thank you, Madam Chair,
2 Commissioners. My name is John Muñoz, M-U-N-O-Z.

3 Would you like me to go and then -- or
4 introduce everyone all at once?

5 THE CHAIR: Probably be easier if you
6 introduce yourself, as you speak, for the record.

7 MR. JOHN MUÑOZ: Thank you.

8 THE CHAIR: And I'll just remind you, you
9 have 15 minutes for this piece.

10 MS. POULOS: (Indicates.)

11 THE CHAIR: I'm sorry. We need to hear
12 from the Charter School Director first.

13 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman,
14 Commissioners, as you have seen in CSD's materials,
15 CSD has recommended renewal of this charter.
16 However, CSD has recommended a shortened term
17 renewal.

18 Our analysis does indicate that the school
19 has met the Department's standards with a three-year
20 average letter grade of "C," and a "C" in each of
21 the last three years. The school has also complied
22 with facility requirements and has complied with
23 generally accepted standards of fiscal management.

24 The most recent audit contains no material
25 weaknesses, no significant deficiencies, but does

1 have one repeat finding. However, the school has
2 not made or met -- sorry -- not met or made
3 substantial progress toward all of the specific
4 goals in the charter contract.

5 And CSD has other concerns. Those include
6 student and teacher retention and contractual and
7 legal compliance. And that is the rationale for the
8 conditions that are recommended.

9 Specifically, the student retention rates,
10 typically, over the past four years, have been
11 around 35 to 40 percent; that is, students retained
12 within a year. This is kind of a quick-and-dirty
13 calculation, takes all of the enrollment codes and
14 then puts that -- the total number of enrollment
15 codes. Over that is the total number of withdrawal
16 codes. That gives you basically how many students
17 are retained.

18 The school did have concerns about that
19 calculation. So CSD did go back and do some
20 revisions or look at different ways of calculating
21 that.

22 Specifically, we took out any student that
23 was a student that enrolled and re-enrolled. So we
24 didn't look at their enrollment codes or their
25 withdrawal codes at all.

1 And then for students who enrolled, but
2 never attended the school, we took those completely
3 out of the calculation, as well.

4 Ultimately, that still resulted in about a
5 60 percent turnover; so only retaining, during the
6 school year, about 40 percent of those students,
7 that's raised some pretty significant concerns for
8 the CSD.

9 We do understand that this is an
10 alternative population. This is a school that's
11 been designated as a SAM school; but still want to
12 see that there is continuity, that students are
13 being well-served.

14 The other thing about this population is
15 that student -- SAM schools aren't held to the same
16 95 percent participation rate for student
17 assessments. And this school does have lower than
18 that rate. They haven't been penalized for it in
19 the calculations of their letter grade; but
20 ultimately, even when you look at that and dig a
21 little bit deeper, what we found is that's --
22 95 percent -- or that calculation for participation
23 rate, when it's calculated by the PED for letter
24 grades, only considered students that are enrolled
25 in assessed courses.

1 But I think it's really important for this
2 Commission to know that the letter grade is only
3 reflecting about 50 percent of students enrolled,
4 period. That's because there are students that are
5 enrolled in this school that are not enrolled in
6 assessed courses. And so that their grade data is
7 giving us limited information.

8 First off, it's really only incorporating
9 about 50 percent of all students enrolled at that
10 school; but secondarily, when you go to assessed
11 students, students that should be assessed and that
12 are, that's only 70 or 80 percent of the students
13 that should be assessed, which is part of the
14 rationale for the concerns that CSD has and the
15 recommendations that CSD has made with regard to
16 specific goals that we believe should be part of any
17 renewal going forward.

18 Again, we have seen that -- we have
19 concerns about the way that the program is being
20 implemented and whether it meets the material terms,
21 specifically as that relates to whether students are
22 getting the minimal instructional hours.

23 So there's kind of this three separate
24 sections of the daily program. Students are
25 enrolled in, I believe, what is called -- it's a

1 morning or day program, an afternoon program, and an
2 evening program. And the school has explained why.
3 There are over-age students. I think about
4 180-or-so of their students are over the age of 22.
5 And those students are attending the evening
6 program, so that they are not mixing with students
7 of the younger ages, the more traditional school
8 ages.

9 But that evening program, with generous
10 calculations, is not meeting what is indicated would
11 be provided to students in the material terms of the
12 contract. But our concerns is without -- with
13 really kind of what we see as the instructional time
14 those students get, we're not sure that's meeting
15 the minimum instructional hours.

16 So, again, we do want to recognize that
17 the school has met that "C" letter grade. But when
18 we got digging into the school-specific goals, we
19 have concerns.

20 One of those goals is for WIDA access.
21 And that is really about English language
22 development. And that goal was set at 70 percent of
23 students attending will show one year's growth on
24 WIDA access. This is really targeted toward the
25 population that we've been told this school serves,

1 and we have seen that this school serves. And the
2 school didn't meet that goal, and we don't believe
3 the school is making progress toward that goal.

4 The dialogue from the school was, "Well,
5 we do see that, because our ELL students are
6 outperforming our traditional, or non-ELL students,
7 in math."

8 Again, our concern is that, actually,
9 they're just very low proficiency in math. So we're
10 really, again, not getting at the heart of that
11 goal, which was to measure English language
12 development, which math wouldn't be doing; but
13 additionally, we're not sure that having higher
14 proficiency for that that group of students is
15 really -- that great, when the proficiency rates are
16 so low.

17 Additionally, we have goals based on the
18 the Statewide assessment program. Again, that's
19 challenging, because we have changed assessments.
20 We also have Short-Cycle Assessment goals, which,
21 again, we did not see that the school was meeting.
22 And, in fact, as we looked at those goals and
23 analyzed those from the school's data, we just kind
24 of wanted to group them by subject, so that we could
25 see what was happening, over time -- and this is in

1 Page 19 of our report -- in almost every subject, we
2 see a decline in proficiency rates, even on the
3 Short-Cycle Assessments. So we definitely can't say
4 that we are seeing substantial progress toward that
5 goal.

6 There are some other goals. A goal
7 regarding credit accumulation. We have outstanding
8 questions, because of the way that data was
9 reported, about whether that's -- what percentage of
10 students that's capturing and whether that's
11 capturing a large percentage of their population.
12 But we also saw that they were not meeting that
13 goal, based on what we saw.

14 We did see that passing rates, Goal 5, was
15 a goal that they met. And then the Goal 6, with
16 regards to the ACT score of 18 or better, again, did
17 not see substantial progress in relation to that
18 goal.

19 Again, as we've noted -- and there are
20 additional organizational goals; I'm just going to
21 focus on the student performance goals in my
22 summary. As we have noted, the school did meet the
23 standards of fiscal management; so there was no
24 concern there.

25 But with regards to legal compliance, we

1 have a pretty robust analysis and have had some
2 robust back-and-forth with the school with regards
3 to teacher pay, licensure, mentorship, contract, and
4 background check requirements; the question, I
5 think, outstanding, about instructional hours.

6 Compulsory attendance laws. We had some
7 good back-and-forth and actually learned that we had
8 not received some information that the school has
9 attempted to send you. We did get a chance to look
10 at that, because the school did provide that to us
11 in the last day. That's with regards to the
12 compulsory attendance laws.

13 We were looking to see if there was a
14 process for working with students to improve
15 attendance. The letters that we were able to review
16 from the school were actually only withdrawal
17 letters. They weren't kind of those interim
18 letters, before we got to the ten days of miss- --
19 of absences, that would -- would result in
20 withdrawal. And so we didn't -- we still haven't
21 seen what we were looking for, which is that
22 compulsory attendance process that's supposed to
23 capture students early on.

24 We do know that the school is working with
25 a truancy coach; and so that is something that they

1 are doing to address that concern.

2 We had concerns about the Response To
3 Intervention and the implementation of a compliant
4 program, special education service requirements, ELL
5 service requirements. We had concerns about the
6 New Mexico residency verification and whether the
7 school is verifying that students are residents of
8 New Mexico, not of another surrounding state.

9 We had concerns about all of the
10 compliance pieces being met with regards to Next
11 Step Plans. Again, our concern about assessments is
12 not necessarily a compliance, but it's whether
13 that's capturing a meaningful group of the students,
14 and so kind of weights on how much emphasis we were
15 able to put on the letter grade.

16 And then we had concerns about health and
17 safety, which are reflected in our report, and also
18 some concerns about governance, specifically about
19 the degree to which the governing council itself was
20 fulfilling the obligation to evaluate the head
21 administrator, versus relying on someone else to
22 conduct that evaluation, and whether that was
23 appropriate. So all of that is reflected in our
24 report.

25 Ultimately, again, we recommend that this

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1 school be renewed; but we do look -- recommend a
2 shortened term renewal. I think part of that is to
3 see continued performance in the letter grade, but
4 also to ensure that this Commission is getting
5 meaningful goals about all -- or meaningful
6 information about all of the students that are being
7 served by this school.

8 And so we would love to see performance
9 framework goals -- and I understand the Commission's
10 position on that -- but we believe that it's
11 important that those really capture all students and
12 are able to provide meaningful data to the
13 Commission about how well the school is serving all
14 of those students, as well as looking to see
15 organizational goals related to student retention,
16 and also corrective actions and working
17 affirmatively with the PED divisions to get -- to
18 improve performance with regards to serving ELLs,
19 special education students, and ensuring Next Step
20 Plans are meeting all requirements, as well as
21 instructional hours.

22 THE CHAIR: Good afternoon, once again.

23 MR. JOHN MUÑOZ: Good afternoon, again,
24 Madam Chair, Commissioners. Thank you very much for
25 your time today. My name is John Muñoz. Again, I

1 am the board chair of the New America School.

2 As background, I have the privilege of
3 leading one of the larger employers in Southern
4 New Mexico. At the time that New America was
5 proposing to open, I was approached as a community
6 leader. At the time, I was also the president of
7 the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

8 When I heard the mission, and I heard --
9 and I saw the model of the New America School, I
10 instantly became a promoter, so much so that I not
11 only wanted to promote and be part of sharing the
12 message, I also wanted to be part of the
13 organization. And so I invited myself in as a board
14 member, as a founding -- as a founding member.

15 So when -- when we looked at -- at -- some
16 of the things that I was doing as far as my plate
17 and being responsible for the livelihood of so many
18 employees, I knew that within my constituency, we
19 had students -- we had parents of students, those
20 who wanted to apply and come work for our agency,
21 that probably couldn't, because the requirement we
22 had was a high school diploma.

23 I can tell you that now, though, after
24 serving on the board for five years and there are
25 several board members that have been on the board

1 since our inception, that this has been one of the
2 most rewarding boards that I've had the opportunity
3 to serve on. I've seen the dramatic impact on
4 people's lives due to the staff, the teachers, and
5 the admin at New America School.

6 Some of those have been recognized as
7 Charter School Teacher of the Year for the State,
8 Teacher of the Year for Doña Ana County; and our
9 very own principal was nominated and given the
10 award -- one of four awards as the Hispanic Heritage
11 Award winner for this year.

12 I want to thank the CSD for their
13 continued support to strengthen our school. I
14 appreciate the three-year renewal recommendation. I
15 also hope that at the conclusion of the comments and
16 our presentation, that the Commission will consider
17 a five-year renewal, so that we can continue to do
18 the good work that we feel we're making in
19 Las Cruces.

20 Thank you for your time.

21 MS. SUSIE KIMBLE: My name is Susie
22 Kimble, K-I-M-B-L-E. And I also sit on the
23 governing council with John. I began as a founding
24 member, as well. And I've been very pleased through
25 the years to watch the growth of our school and our

1 students.

2 And I'm going to tell you a little bit
3 about our students. We have a diverse population in
4 our student body. 12 percent are homeless;
5 23 percent are single mothers; 45 percent overaged
6 or under credit; 28 percent are English Language
7 Learners; and 94 percent are impoverished.

8 We've had fathers and sons in school
9 together, an instance where a mother, a daughter and
10 a grandmother were in school together. We find that
11 our students are our best advocates; they're the
12 best ones to bring us new students, because they
13 grow to love our school so much, they want to
14 include people they know.

15 All of our students have attended other
16 schools and have not found success in those other
17 schools. Our percentage of English Language
18 Learners is 6 percent higher than the local school
19 district we sit within, which is Las Cruces Public
20 School District. So we have quite a few English
21 Language Learners.

22 New America School offers these students a
23 second chance for education by offering the support
24 they need to succeed. Despite the challenges, we
25 maintain a "C" grade and are showing an upward

1 change within the "C" over the past three years.

2 Over the past four years, we have
3 graduated 266 students; 243 of those students have
4 been over 19 years of age. These adults now have
5 access to higher education and higher paying jobs in
6 the community, thereby reducing the potential that
7 they will utilize social support services.

8 In our 2016 graduating class, 61 percent
9 of our students continued on to higher education.
10 These were people that maybe just a year before had
11 no hope of graduating from high school.

12 In 2015, 57 percent continued their
13 education after high school.

14 When students come to New America School,
15 they no longer feel like they're second-class
16 students that are forgotten by their teachers and
17 administrators. We are a public charter school with
18 a mission to serve underserved students who have not
19 succeeded in other school settings. Many of our
20 students stopped believing they could earn a high
21 school diploma. And we have brought hope back to
22 them and our families at New America School.

23 We're very proud of our students. And if
24 you ever attended one of our governing council
25 meetings, which we hold monthly, we recognize

1 Students of the Month. I can tell you, almost every
2 meeting, there are tears. Their stories are so
3 strong and so powerful. And we're very pleased, as
4 board members, to be able to offer this opportunity
5 to our students who really felt hopeless before they
6 found us.

7 Thank you for hearing us today.

8 MS. MARGARITA PORTER: Good afternoon.

9 I'm Margarita Porter, and I'm the principal of New
10 America School. We -- New America is an asset to
11 Las Cruces economically, socially, and academically.
12 Over the past five years, we have seen -- excuse
13 me -- an upward trend in our grade. We are five
14 points away from a "B." And given the demographics
15 that Ms. Kimble just described, I believe that we
16 are bringing a great -- we are filling a great need
17 in the City of Las Cruces.

18 Two of our students applied for -- entered
19 an essay writing contest, and they were given trips
20 to Cuba and Poland. And we were the only students
21 in Southern New Mexico that had this recognition.

22 One of our students was also selected for
23 her artwork that hung in the nation's capital for an
24 entire year.

25 Along with these positive recognitions, we

1 have other awards that we have been given from the
2 PED, and these are in forms of grants that have
3 allowed us to make a positive difference with our
4 students.

5 We've increased the daily attendance by
6 20 percent within one year. We have more students
7 attending the dual credit program. And we have more
8 students entering college.

9 Our reading proficiency has increased.
10 And our English Language Learners are feeling more
11 confident because of their English language
12 proficiency levels, and they are entering -- as they
13 enter the workforce, or continuing their
14 post-high-school education.

15 Our students come to us with a variety of
16 reasons. As you can see from the interviews -- and,
17 hopefully, you received the letters from our -- our
18 students -- you can see that they hold New America
19 in the highest regard.

20 It is very clear that New America has
21 ended some bullying for our students. Our students
22 feel confident; they feel important; they feel that
23 they are being seen by their teachers. And that is
24 due to the staff that we have retained.

25 We are -- our teachers are very caring,

1 and they allow students to feel very successful
2 academically because of our small supportive
3 learning environment.

4 We appreciate the time and effort from the
5 Charter School Division to make this renewal process
6 a constructive one. However, we would like to
7 address some of the issues in regard to the final
8 report that you all received, basically focusing on
9 the conditions that were -- that were listed.

10 In regard to English Language Learners --
11 and one of the claims was that we are not supporting
12 our students -- we did include a graph showing how
13 our students are doing. And these are students who
14 have been measured two years or more in a row. We
15 do have a high mobility rate; but the students that
16 we do retain are showing growth in their English
17 language ability. The highest percentage of
18 students meeting one year's growth is 81 percent,
19 throughout our history.

20 If CSD staff would have spoken to our
21 teachers, they would have -- our teachers would have
22 been able to explain to them what our ELL supports
23 are. So things, such as we have our proficiency in
24 our binder, so that as teachers are preparing and
25 delivering lessons, their language proficiency is at

1 their fingertips.

2 They would also be able to share with the
3 staff -- excuse me -- my staff would have been able
4 to share with CSD that we use a small learning
5 environment, that we use sheltering strategies, that
6 we have peer supports, that we have strategies in
7 place that support our students in reading, writing,
8 listening, and speaking.

9 One of the statements was that we have at
10 least two teachers endorsed in TESOL, which is the
11 endorsement to teach English to speakers of other
12 languages. And we, in fact, have seven.

13 In the area of special education, the
14 report stated that they noticed that we were out of
15 compliance in regard to IEPs, hours of service, and
16 the process. We did include all of the artifacts
17 and evidence provided; and it was not in the final
18 report.

19 However, I verified the hours of service
20 required for all of our special ed students. CSD
21 did, in fact, state that it was 178 hours. And
22 after I reviewed every IEP, it was, in fact, 23
23 hours of service that needed to be delivered.

24 I also made sure that we did not have any
25 initial evaluations. And we don't have any at this

1 time.

2 And we also followed up on a home language
3 survey in regard to our special ed population. The
4 diagnostician is a person who looks at the home
5 language survey and takes that into account when she
6 makes her evaluations. If the student is, in fact,
7 an ELL, it is indicated on the IEP.

8 In the areas of SAT and RTI, the report
9 claimed that we did not have a policy or system in
10 place. All of -- all of the policies that were
11 given to us by the PED SpEd Bureau were taken to the
12 board; they were approved, and they were sent as
13 artifacts to the CSD.

14 The SAT team does meet monthly to inspect
15 the packets that are created by the classroom
16 teacher. The classroom teacher is the first point
17 of contact. When the student is struggling, they
18 fill out the packet. They bring it to the team.
19 The team is comprised of the parents, the student,
20 and a team of teachers. They create an intervention
21 plan. An intervention plan is put in place. And
22 then we move on to see how the student is doing
23 after the intervention plan is in place for several
24 weeks.

25 In respect to RTI, New America did provide

1 our Short-Cycle Assessments, which we use MAP's. We
2 use that to indicate where our students are -- where
3 is their greatest area of need. That greatest area
4 of need we look is in writing, reading, math; and we
5 put them in a smaller RTI group every day for
6 30 minutes as an intervention. All of our teachers
7 have an intervention class. And this, too, was
8 provided.

9 In the area of instructional hours. In
10 our original application in 2001, our waiver for
11 instruction -- excuse me, 2011; excuse me -- a
12 waiver for instructional hours -- thank you --
13 waiver for instructional hours was submitted and
14 approved by the PED and the PEC. It was brought to
15 you. And it did reflect a four-day school week
16 operating from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., and it's a
17 flexible daily schedule.

18 It was also determined at that time to
19 comply with statutory school day and hour
20 requirements. The school has maintained that same
21 schedule throughout the charter. The laws about
22 school days and minutes haven't changed; so we don't
23 believe that the CSD's conclusion that could be said
24 we're violating it is correct.

25 According to the statute governing school

1 days and hours, students are to be in
2 school-directed programs for a required 7 hours and
3 12 minutes per day. And everything but lunch and
4 release time for in-service training counts in the
5 minutes provided by the school. And if you look at
6 Page 419 of your final report, details were given as
7 to how we are meeting those minutes.

8 Instructional hours can be a mixture of
9 in-class instruction, online instruction, work
10 experience, and dual credit programs.

11 And we ask that the PEC look at the
12 accurate information and take it into account.

13 Another concern by the CSD was our teacher
14 retention. They calculated it differently than we
15 did. We used a report from S.T.A.R.S., which
16 doesn't penalize teachers from moving within the
17 school. And we used the Verified Exit Teachers
18 Report. And when you look at that specific report,
19 it does indicate that the threshold of 80 percent
20 retention, teacher retention, we have met at four
21 years. The highest level was a 93 percent retention
22 rate for teachers.

23 Our student retention, which was also a
24 concern for CSD, was -- was a concern. And we
25 understand that we have a very high mobility rate.

1 And that's why we have applied for two separate
2 grants. One of the grants is an early warning
3 system, and a truancy officer. In one year, we did
4 reduce our truancy rate from 69 percent to
5 49 percent.

6 And the retention rate -- we're retaining
7 more students, and it's an upward trend. When CSD
8 did go back and recalculate, her -- their data
9 matched our data. So we were very pleased to see
10 that it did match.

11 Finally, New America is certainly doing
12 everything that we can to meet the needs of our
13 students in our community. We have a very diverse
14 population, and we feel that the upward trend of our
15 letter grade, our attendance rate, our student
16 retention, our teacher retention, that we are very
17 close to a "B," and we believe that we will continue
18 this trajectory, and we feel that a three-year
19 renewal would not be sufficient time enough for us
20 to demonstrate that we can continue this and support
21 our students.

22 So thank you.

23 MR. FERNANDO MACIAS: Madam Chair,
24 Commissioners and Ms. Poulos. My name is Fernando
25 Macias; for your record, M-A-C-I-A-S. I'm a

1 relatively recent addition to the board. I want to
2 follow up with Mr. Muñoz' appeal to you to grant a
3 five-year extension.

4 This is a high school. To be able to
5 follow through with the very aggressive recruitment
6 efforts that the school is undertaking, we have to
7 be able to represent that an individual, a student
8 who starts with New America, versus many who come to
9 us from other schools, that they will be able to
10 graduate from this school. That carries a more --
11 and I'm sure it's not a unique argument that you're
12 hearing -- but certainly, it's different from an
13 elementary.

14 If you're beginning with a high school,
15 you want to end; you want to graduate. I want to
16 encourage you that the lack of a five -- five-year
17 extension would potentially impact or compromise
18 that ability to make that representation.

19 Thank you.

20 THE CHAIR: Thank you. That was the
21 signal for your time up. We now have the public
22 portion. And there are two people that have signed
23 up for the public portion. And the first one is
24 Oscar -- is it "Juarez"?

25 FROM THE FLOOR: Juarez, yes, ma'am.

1 Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, and the
2 Chairman, I am Oscar Juarez. I am 51 years old. I
3 just graduated from the New America in 2015.

4 I had dropped out of school when I was 18,
5 didn't know what to do. Went to work, had a family,
6 had to support the family, as well.

7 At that time, I didn't think about
8 education or furthering my education, in other
9 words. But at -- at the -- I'm already getting
10 started but -- 2013, I lost my job, didn't know
11 where I was going to go. But I ended up looking at
12 a billboard going home every day.

13 And I saw, "New America, come and get your
14 diploma." So that's what I did. And I went to
15 school there for two years, okay? And I was a
16 2.5 average GPA when I graduated from New America.
17 And then I'm currently in college now -- this is my
18 third semester -- a 3.5 GPA. So, actually, I -- I'm
19 meeting my goals that I want to get my education as
20 an adult.

21 There's a lot of adults out there that
22 don't even know about New America. But we emphasize
23 a lot of people -- or we give out the word as much
24 as we can, especially me; because I work at a fast
25 food industry. But I have a lot of young people and

1 adults that are -- don't have education. And I send
2 them there to get their education, because it's the
3 one thing that we need.

4 I really appreciate it. I'm really
5 nervous.

6 THE CHAIR: You're doing great.

7 FROM THE FLOOR: And I just joined the
8 board, as well. So I'm giving back to the community
9 as well, as much as to the school, because I enjoyed
10 it while -- while I was there, and I made a lot
11 of -- I met a lot of people. And I met -- had new
12 friends, like Ms. Porter. She's a role model, just
13 like every other teacher that we had. And I really
14 appreciate it for the time. Sorry. I'm very
15 nervous.

16 THE CHAIR: That's fine. Thank you very
17 much.

18 FROM THE FLOOR: Thank you.

19 THE CHAIR: And finally LaTricia Mathis.

20 FROM THE FLOOR: Yes. Thank you. I'm
21 also nervous. So you know, I've got letters here
22 from the community members from Las Cruces and their
23 testament to what New America School, Las Cruces,
24 does for the community, what the students do for the
25 community.

1 Is there a mobility rate? Yes. But as
2 has been stated, we see students go and come back.
3 And those students graduate. What it would mean for
4 a high school that is a safe place to be pulled from
5 a community can gut a community. And in these
6 tenuous times, as we serve immigrants, as we serve
7 ELL students, there's kind of a nervous air in this
8 state.

9 I ask that you grant them five years so
10 they can graduate their freshman class -- this is a
11 high school -- so that the community feels that
12 there is a secure place that welcomes immigrants.

13 We educate all of our students. And I
14 guess that's what I would ask you today, to please
15 grant five years so New America School, Las Cruces,
16 can continue to do everything they do for their
17 families, their students, pull those students back
18 in, and their community. Thank you.

19 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.

20 Commissioners? Commissioner Carr?

21 COMMISSIONER CARR: I'm kind of inclined
22 if they're good for three, they're good for five,
23 type of thing, too. But this particular school, I
24 see it differently than the other school I talked
25 about.

1 The last speaker brought up a -- a very
2 trying point. And in light of what could happen if
3 threats are indeed come to realization, is that --
4 you know, I don't -- how many students are you going
5 to lose? I -- you know, we're in high school. We
6 can't legally ask students, "Are you undocumented?"
7 I usually know.

8 And the only reason I want to know of
9 because I want to know what the situation is. I
10 don't care, you know, if they're here in that
11 capacity or not, or their parents are undocumented
12 and the children were born here, which is quite
13 often the case; right?

14 So how many -- how many students is it --
15 how many students might you lose if they were all
16 deported?

17 MS. MARGARITA PORTER: So foreign-born, we
18 can say we have 47 students. Now, of those 47, we
19 don't question their -- but we do -- if anyone comes
20 to our door, it is our duty to educate them. And so
21 that is -- we did look at that number. And that's
22 how many are foreign-born.

23 Now, possibly they're all documented. I
24 don't know; I don't ask that. We only have the
25 capacity to change their lives the minute they walk

1 in our door and the minute they walk out.

2 COMMISSIONER CARR: And, you know, we
3 shouldn't base our decision on this at all, you
4 know. It's just -- but it is food for thought,
5 because we have a lot of schools in that situation.

6 MS. MARGARITA PORTER: So at 40-day, we
7 clocked in at 314 students.

8 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Johnston?

9 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Thank you,
10 Madam Chair. You don't know me; but I know you.

11 MS. MARGARITA PORTER: Oh.

12 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: And it's good.

13 MS. MARGARITA PORTER: Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: I just retired
15 from the position of Education Superintendent for
16 the Juvenile Justice Facility. And John Paul Taylor
17 is a school, and New America. I called Jimmy Moya
18 last week, just to make sure that my perception --
19 you have been invaluable to students.

20 The fact that you have a "C" grade, you
21 have to define success. You are working with the
22 least of the least and the most scrutinized
23 population.

24 I wanted to ask you, what is the average
25 age of your students?

1 MS. MARGARITA PORTER: We have -- and I
2 don't know what it is. But we have students who are
3 14 who just left eighth grade coming into ninth
4 grade who are 14. And our oldest gentleman right
5 now is 63.

6 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: So your average
7 age is older. I've been just frantically taking
8 notes, so that you would know that the things that
9 you're doing to have a 30 to 40 percent retention
10 rate, to have an ELL proficiency rate, if I wrote it
11 down correctly, of 70 percent on the WIDA, to have
12 credit accumulation, to have graduated 266 students
13 in four years, you are going -- and you know this --
14 you will be scrutinized.

15 You have the good fortune of functioning
16 with a Charter School Division that is excellent and
17 with a Public Education Commission that is behind
18 you 100 percent.

19 But three years is not a penalty; it's
20 your opportunity to show where you excel and to do
21 it in the language that the Charter School Division
22 really needs you to use, so that we can look better
23 in this collaboration. They are asking that you
24 help them make you look better; because growth is
25 resulting from what you are doing.

1 You're very non-traditional. Your
2 students come to school all day long for any amount
3 of time. They earn credits in very non-traditional
4 ways that have to be recorded in a very explicit way
5 for -- for PED purposes.

6 I can't think of anything that you're not
7 doing correctly. The bureaucratic part of it is the
8 most difficult for you. You are saving young people
9 and old people on a daily basis.

10 Remember your definition of success. And
11 someone said to me, in juvenile justice -- I said,
12 or someone said, in a conversation, that we were
13 their last chance. And a man looked at us and said,
14 "No, we're the first chance."

15 And that's what you are. But I don't have
16 any problem with a three-year recommendation and
17 these conditions, because I have not a doubt in my
18 mind that you will rise to this, and that you will
19 be able to talk the talk that the Charter School
20 Division needs you to talk the talk when you write a
21 report; because you have done tremendous things.
22 You really have. And you continue to do them.

23 And I thank you for all the chances that
24 you gave young people who are coming out of
25 commitments that many of the school districts in the

1 state of New Mexico are frightened to take a chance
2 on. So, thank you.

3 MS. MARGARITA PORTER: Thank you.

4 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Toulouse?

5 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, this
6 is one of the class of schools I've been fighting
7 for for my four years on this Commission, our SAM
8 schools, our schools that take these students who
9 have been everywhere else and nowhere else and get
10 them through.

11 And it bothers me -- because most of those
12 schools, just by the way the formula works, are
13 never going to be higher than a "C" school. To me,
14 one of the best functioning schools in Albuquerque
15 is Cesar Chavez. And I'm very familiar with that.
16 And I spent 30 years in the Human Services
17 Department, most of them in the Income Support side.
18 I know the families that these kids come from, and I
19 know of who they are.

20 And it concerns me if -- are we going to
21 make this an example, that every one of these SAM
22 schools that's a "C," but it's a good "C" -- it's
23 the equivalent to me of an "A" from any other
24 schools -- are we going to make them all three-year
25 schools and say they're lesser, when they are doing

1 the top job?

2 I realize there's a bureaucratic problem.
3 I know that needs to be fixed. Unfortunately, in
4 today's culture, you've got to do the numbers. But
5 I think the bottom line, their job is to educate,
6 and they're doing it.

7 And I would like -- I would rather put in
8 some conditions about, making them do the paperwork
9 on time and complete and whatever, but give them the
10 five years; because I don't want -- when a couple of
11 our other SAM schools to come up, to say, "Yeah,
12 well, they're 'C' schools, but we gave New America
13 three years, so we're just going to give them
14 three."

15 The idea is charters are supposed to be
16 five years. And I would very much not like to make
17 a precedent here of this school, that it's doing the
18 job it's supposed to do and simply putting a
19 condition that they do their bureaucratic work a lot
20 better and report on it.

21 I mean, I think we need some kind of
22 Corrective Action Plan toward doing that, you know,
23 to report to us. But I don't see why that should
24 stop a five-year.

25 Thank you.

1 THE CHAIR: I'm doing to concur with
2 Commissioners Carr and Toulouse. This is my -- this
3 is my homeland, the school comes from. So there's
4 no doubt that I hear from every aspect of the
5 community what a great job this school does.

6 And it's attested to in all the
7 documentation you've created. And I absolutely
8 agree there are always those areas where we can make
9 improvement, and paperwork needs to be worked on a
10 little bit. And I concur that a Corrective Action
11 Plan, with a five-year renewal, I would be more than
12 happy with, because I think it would send a great,
13 positive message to your school community that we
14 absolutely appreciate the hard work and efforts.
15 And the results are certainly there. And I want to
16 publicly thank you for the work that you do.

17 MS. MARGARITA PORTER: Thank you.

18 MR. JOHN MUÑOZ: Thanks.

19 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Armbruster?

20 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I don't know.
21 Katie, you might be the person to explain this.

22 When I look at their report card -- and
23 maybe this is because it's a SAM school -- I don't
24 understand why they don't have a graduation grade or
25 a career and college readiness.

1 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman,
2 Commissioner Armbruster, it's based on the number of
3 years the school has been operating. And so
4 certainly, any SAM school, any high school, will be
5 eligible to have the graduation, as well as the
6 college-and-career-readiness school. In fact, we
7 make variances to give them additional credit or --
8 you know, to judge them differently in those two
9 areas, specifically.

10 My understanding from Cindy -- and I
11 apologize I should have gotten her in here to be
12 able to answer these questions -- is that this
13 school hasn't operated long enough to receive those
14 grades yet. So they will, potentially, with their
15 fifth year, have that rating.

16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I got it. I see
17 what you're saying.

18 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, can I
19 ask a question?

20 THE CHAIR: Sure.

21 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Was this the
22 first-year school on a contract? No. So this will
23 be your first time.

24 THE CHAIR: This is their first contract.

25 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: So that's why,

1 too. It will be very different when you come back
2 with the performance framework than looking at these
3 goals and assessing them this way.

4 THE CHAIR: Right. This is the last group
5 of schools that we have that do not have a contract;
6 correct?

7 MS. POULOS: That is correct; although,
8 you will see a few schools over the next few days
9 that had short-term renewals that are under
10 contract.

11 THE CHAIR: But you're the last bulk of
12 schools that will, for now, come under a contract.
13 So you're correct. It's a different --

14 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Looking at the
15 evaluation of the goals, I'm not sure how much that
16 carries forward, then, into a contract negotiation,
17 where things are done very differently.

18 MS. MARGARITA PORTER: Right.

19 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Johnston?

20 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Thank you,
21 Madam Chair. Just two brief questions.

22 One is, we're so idealistic, all of us.
23 An ACT score of 18? Are you sticking with it?

24 MS. MARGARITA PORTER: If we are renewed,
25 we're going to concentrate on four different areas.

1 These were -- that was one of the goals that was
2 written before we really understood who was going to
3 show up at our door.

4 We are -- we are pleased that more
5 students are taking the ACT; however, given our
6 population, they can enter Doña Ana Community
7 College with a COMPASS test, and they don't need the
8 ACT.

9 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: And that score of
10 18, traditional high schools would be very pleased
11 with that.

12 MS. MARGARITA PORTER: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: And the other --
14 with all due respect to my fellow Commissioners and
15 to you, I'm going to stick -- if this Commission
16 votes to give you five years, please look at three
17 years for yourselves, internally, and these goals
18 that you've set, and work with that three years;
19 because I firmly believe that in three years, you
20 will be there. And I think if we give you five
21 years, it's like hedging, somehow, like we think
22 maybe you can't do it. And I know you can.

23 So thank you.

24 THE CHAIR: Just so Commissioner Johnston
25 is aware, we negotiate their goals after the

1 contract -- after their renewal; so that it is a
2 five-year rollout of those goals.

3 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Yes. But anything
4 that they have here, where there are conditions, I
5 encourage them to keep their eyes on that mark.

6 MS. SUSIE KIMBLE: Sooner rather than
7 later.

8 THE CHAIR: The Corrective Action Plan
9 would have specific time frames that would be -- in
10 my estimation, many of them would have to be
11 completed well before a three-year time period.
12 Giving them a three-year time period on some of them
13 would be a little too generous.

14 So those Corrective Action Plans will be
15 done, and they will have to provide a time frame for
16 those.

17 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, I
18 would also suggest that, as well as they're doing,
19 they don't -- they don't need to wait till three
20 years. I'm willing to bet they're evaluating
21 continually. And every year -- which is what we
22 want with the performance framework, that they at
23 least look at it -- that because they are doing as
24 well as they are, I think they could tell you right
25 now where they stood on almost anything.

1 And so I think this type of school, to get
2 a "C," has to be doing that.

3 Again, I've been around this -- I'm
4 comfortable -- I'm not an educator. I was on the
5 CNM Board, so I know higher ed. But 30 years a
6 bureaucrat, I understand where things are coming
7 from. And I know that these SAM schools have got to
8 be on top of it, or they're not "C" schools; they're
9 "D" and "F" schools.

10 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: And, Madam Chair,
11 while you're doing that, one more thing. I just
12 don't want to lessen this gentleman who has
13 graduated and is in that third semester of school,
14 sir. You have my highest admiration. And to let
15 that go like that is just one of those things. No.
16 Congratulations.

17 THE CHAIR: Commissioners, I'll entertain
18 a motion.

19 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I've done mine for
20 the day. I'm not getting beaten up anymore.

21 THE CHAIR: I guess I need a little bit of
22 a clarification from the Director. When we're
23 looking at the bullet point for Corrective Action
24 Plans, I'm looking at the fact that there would be
25 four separate Corrective Action Plans created: One

1 for ELLs; one for Next Step Plans; and so on? Is
2 that -- I'm not exactly sure; because the wording
3 there is to reach out to appropriate PED divisions.

4 I don't know how that's going to work in
5 terms of the creation of a Corrective Action Plan,
6 for them to lay out how they prove that they do
7 this. So are you looking at Corrective Action Plans
8 in four of those areas? Is that what the
9 recommendation is?

10 MS. McKEE: And, Director, we're looking
11 at the summary. Yeah.

12 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman,
13 Commissioners, those are areas where we had our most
14 severe concerns.

15 THE CHAIR: Right.

16 MS. POULOS: And how that is played out,
17 we did not have, necessarily, an opinion on. We do
18 think that this school needs to work with the
19 specific bureau -- we actually have our Bilingual
20 and Multicultural Education Bureau represented
21 here -- I think the director stepped out for a
22 minute -- because they are highly interested in how
23 well ELL students are being served.

24 And so I do think it is important that the
25 right -- is where there is a right bureau; so the

1 instructional hours gets more challenging.

2 Those bureaus are given the opportunity to
3 give the school support and technical assistance.

4 And so that's what that is intended to do, is we
5 don't think necessarily just creating the plan is
6 going to be good enough; because what we've heard
7 leads us to believe, I think, that potentially, the
8 school doesn't know what they need to do.

9 And so we want to make sure they get the
10 right support. And so that's really what that is
11 targeted to.

12 And I think maybe if the Commission is
13 moving towards a Corrective Action Plan, it is that
14 each of the plans is developed in consultation with
15 the appropriate bureau. And so, you know, I don't
16 know what that is. But that is our intent.

17 THE CHAIR: Right. See, my concern is if
18 we recommend that a Corrective -- if a condition is
19 that a Corrective Action Plan be created, and
20 through discussion with the bureau, there's no need
21 for the Corrective Action Plan --

22 MS. McKEE: The way that I read this, it
23 is that -- is that they just -- they get with PED
24 and talk about that, if anything needs to be done.
25 That's how I read that.

1 Because it says, "Corrective action
2 requirements, including requirements that the school
3 work with CSD to affirmatively reach out to
4 appropriate PED divisions to seek support and
5 assistance and improve operations in the following
6 areas."

7 So it's just -- the condition would be
8 that the school work with CSD to -- to reach out to
9 these appropriate PED divisions and implement a
10 Corrective Action Plan, if necessary. That's how I
11 read that is -- Director, is that -- was that the
12 intent?

13 MS. POULOS: Yes, that is.

14 THE CHAIR: We're got it worked out, I
15 think. I think we've got it worked out. Hopefully,
16 we're not going to redo this.

17 Commissioners?

18 Commissioner Peralta?

19 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Madam Chair, I move
20 to approve the renewal application for five years
21 for the New America School in Las Cruces with the
22 following conditions:

23 That the corrective action requirements
24 include the requirements that the school work with
25 the PE- -- the appropriate PED bureaus to improve

1 operations in the following areas: ELL students,
2 Next Step Plans, instructional hours, special
3 education, and RTI; and that they also continue to
4 perform -- they also continue to ensure continued
5 performance in the letter grade and improved
6 performance in the school and mission-specific
7 goals, period.

8 COMMISSIONER CARR: Second.

9 THE CHAIR: There's a motion by
10 Commissioner Peralta and a second by Commissioner
11 Carr. Commissioner Armbruster?

12 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
13 Gipson?

14 THE CHAIR: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
16 Toulouse?

17 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
19 Pogna?

20 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.

21 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
22 Carr?

23 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
25 Chavez?

1 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
3 Johnston?

4 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner
6 Armbruster votes "Yes."

7 Commissioner Peralta?

8 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: That is a eight
10 to -- that is a unanimous vote to renew this charter
11 for five years.

12 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, and
13 congratulations.

14 Commissioners, if we could take a
15 ten-minute break, and I promise I'll be back on
16 time.

17 (Recess held, 3:20 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.)

18 THE CHAIR: I'm going to bring us back
19 into session, please. And we are now on to
20 letter E, Estancia Valley Classical Academy in
21 Moriarty.

22 Director?

23 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Can I interrupt?

24 THE CHAIR: Certainly.

25 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: I'm not going to be

1 able to be on for the entire presentation and the
2 vote; so I think now would be a good time for me
3 to -- to get off.

4 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you very much.
5 We appreciate it.

6 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: You're welcome.
7 Thank you, all.

8 THE CHAIR: Director?

9 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman,
10 Commissioners, as the CSD -- or sorry -- as the
11 Commission can see in the recommendation from the
12 PED, we have recommended a renewal of this charter
13 school, Estancia Valley Classical Academy, for a
14 five-year renewal term. This school does have a
15 three-year average letter grade of a -- an A;
16 although their current letter grade for 2016 was a
17 C.

18 In addition, when we look at the measures
19 that the school has met on the analysis, the school
20 is meeting the Department's standards of excellence,
21 which the CSD has most heavily weighted.

22 Again, there were some terms on the
23 material terms that CSD felt were not being met;
24 specifically, with regards to the -- providing
25 modern and Classical languages, which CSD was unable

1 to observe offering modern languages.

2 In addition, CSD did see variance from the
3 number of hours that were indicated would be
4 provided, versus the number that are -- are
5 provided.

6 I do want to note, however, that the
7 school is certainly providing a K-12 -- or a 7-12
8 program that exceeds the minimum number of
9 instructional hours. And the method of calculation
10 may have been to blame for that difference.

11 And so those were the issues that -- that
12 CSD observed with regards to the contract material
13 terms.

14 With regards to the student performance
15 standards in the charter contract, there were a
16 variety of goals. In addition, this school had come
17 forward with an amendment request to amend at least
18 one of those goals; specifically, the goal related
19 to the SBA State assessment. In relation relates to
20 schools, the school did not meet or make substantial
21 progress toward all of the goals.

22 We did see that there was kind of a -- a
23 variety of what was occurring. In some grade
24 levels, we saw improvements in proficiency; in some
25 grades, we saw declines. Certainly, the decline

1 between 2015 and 2016 in the Short-Cycle Assessments
2 is also reflected in the school's letter grade; but,
3 again, that school has maintained a letter grade
4 that, overall, meets the Department's standards.

5 The school has not met all generally
6 accepted standards of fiscal management. And that
7 is based on a finding with relation to the audits of
8 the school; specifically, I believe the school had
9 some material weaknesses in their audits that were
10 concerning to the CSD and to the PED. However,
11 the -- let me just make sure; I want to make sure I
12 got that -- the material weaknesses, yes.

13 The most recent 2015 audit, I believe, had
14 no material weaknesses. So this would have been
15 their 2014 audit that had the material weaknesses;
16 but the 2015 audit did have one significant
17 deficiency.

18 In addition, there were some concerns
19 about legal compliance, specifically, with regards
20 to instructional hours, specifically, regarding,
21 again, that match between the calendar that's
22 provided as part of the budgeting process and the
23 calendar that's being implemented. Again, there's
24 no concerns about whether the school is meeting
25 minimum instructional hours.

1 And then there were also concerns about
2 appropriate identification and service of English
3 Language Learners. There were some other minor
4 concerns about the Next Step Plans.

5 The Commission will see, in the school's
6 responses, the school did indicate the practices
7 that it has implemented since being provided with
8 the site visit report. The school has been very
9 responsive to the concerns and the findings that
10 were identified during the site visit.

11 In addition, this -- the Commission may
12 remember that we did have a concern about enrollment
13 practices at this school. There was a communication
14 between PED and the school, and the school was very
15 responsive and quickly corrected the concerns that
16 PED had brought to their attention with regard to
17 enrollment practices.

18 The school is still working, I believe, on
19 meeting the requirements for PSFA, to certify that
20 they have met the facilities requirements. So they
21 have, I think, one certification left to provide to
22 the PSFA, at which point the PSFA will be able to
23 certify that they have met facilities requirements.
24 We simply don't have that information yet.

25 Ultimately, CSD has made a recommendation

1 to approve this school for a full five-year renewal
2 term, with recommended corrective action
3 requirements that the school report on the
4 corrective actions that they have described in their
5 renewal responses.

6 Again, the school has been very
7 responsive, when issues are brought to their
8 attention, to try and quickly address those. And so
9 we want to certainly recognize them for that and
10 appreciate that.

11 We ask that they work directly with PSFA
12 to verify compliance with facilities requirements,
13 provide evidence of corrections based on the audit
14 findings, and documentation of their compliance
15 verification.

16 We have also recommended that the school's
17 performance framework include specific goals related
18 to graduation rate and lowest performing students.
19 Although the school does have an A average and a
20 current-year C letter grade, those are two
21 indicators within which they either performed at a D
22 or an F level, which is why we felt it was
23 appropriate to add a performance indicator in
24 relation to those.

25 And then also that the school's

1 performance framework include specific
2 organizational goals related to audit findings.

3 In addition, this school has requested an
4 amendment as part of their renewal application.
5 They have specifically requested to increase their
6 enrollment cap from 575 students to 780 students.

7 Again, because the school has met the
8 Department's standards of excellence, CSD has
9 recommended the approval of that amendment request.

10 THE CHAIR: Thank you. And before you
11 begin, I'll just remind the Commissioners that we
12 will deal with the amendment as a separate entity
13 after.

14 Okay. Thank you.

15 Good afternoon.

16 MR. ROGER LENARD: Good afternoon
17 Madam Chair, and ladies and gentlemen of the PEC. I
18 am --

19 THE CHAIR: I'm sorry. If you could
20 please hold the button down?

21 MR. ROGER LENARD: Usually, I'm told that
22 I am so loud that I don't need a microphone. But
23 I'm Roger Lenard. I'm President of the Governing
24 Council. This is Mr. Thiery, our Executive
25 Director. This is Mr. Harlan Lawson, who is our

1 vice president of the Governing Council.

2 Before I start, I would like to recognize
3 a somber Pearl Harbor Day, the 75th anniversary of
4 Pearl Harbor, for those of us who are vets in the
5 room. This is indeed a somber occasion.

6 So I have some kind of -- could we --
7 could we do some task sharing? Could you hold that
8 button down?

9 THE CHAIR: Could I interrupt for a second
10 and remind people, if they wish to comment during
11 the public input portion, that you sign up with
12 Beverly right here?

13 Thank you.

14 MR. ROGER LENARD: Thank you, ma'am. Good
15 afternoon, ladies and gentlemen of the Public
16 Education Commission. We thank you for this
17 opportunity to address you regarding our charter
18 renewal.

19 I will admit that the past five years have
20 been quite a journey, filled with learning at all
21 levels and trying to find the proper balance between
22 character development, which is very important to
23 us, and such areas as dress code -- never very
24 popular with students, by the way -- and a rigorous
25 academic curriculum.

1 And as the only founder of the school who
2 has also been a Governing Council member throughout
3 the past five years, I sort of have a unique
4 perspective of the progress of the school, and, in
5 particular, the progress of the Governing Council in
6 learning to govern a charter school in the State of
7 New Mexico.

8 We believe that while there is still a lot
9 of room for improvement, our graduates are already
10 being noticed for their academic prowess.

11 One of last year's graduates who entered
12 the University of Montana on a full ROTC scholarship
13 was so advanced in literature, the entire English
14 curriculum for the freshman year was waived.
15 Another student at UNM has had the entire first
16 semester of English literature waived. So our
17 graduates are doing a pretty good job.

18 We maintain an excellent relationship with
19 the Charter Schools Division of the Public Education
20 Department.

21 It is unlikely, however, that any charter
22 school in its first years is going to be able to
23 meet every requirement to the letter; although we do
24 strive to be responsive in all areas and try to
25 correct them when they're discovered. We really

1 appreciate Ms. Poulos for her ability, and her
2 team's ability -- as short-staffed as they are, by
3 the way -- to point out deficiencies and help us
4 come to a resolution.

5 Two examples come to mind. If we
6 experience an audit finding, we try to take
7 immediate action for corrective procedures. When we
8 discovered that the PSFA was requiring affidavits
9 which we had not completed, it wasn't because we
10 didn't know about it; it's we -- it was because we
11 didn't know about it. And the very next day, we
12 started corrective actions.

13 And Ms. Poulos has -- replied, we only
14 have one left to complete, and that will be done
15 this week, and out to the PSFA next week. So we'll
16 be compliant in those affidavits.

17 It goes without saying that had we been
18 informed of this issue beforehand, we would have
19 complied. And we view that as not so much an issue
20 of the PED, but the PSFA.

21 We have found that there is a very
22 productive balance, wherein we assist our Executive
23 Director to manage the school with centralized
24 control, but decentralized execution.

25 One of our greatest problems, however, has

1 been budgetary. The transition from a school
2 receiving the Small School Adjustment to the
3 guillotine reduction, once we passed the 400-student
4 barrier, was a particularly traumatic year, causing
5 an undesirable RIF and a lot of overloaded teachers.

6 This is the first year we aren't hanging
7 on by our financial fingernails. This allows us to
8 provide our school with additional staff, more
9 books, and better support. The situation is much
10 better.

11 I'd like to take a few minutes to talk
12 about special education. It's taken us about four
13 years to establish our student services for SpEd and
14 ELL to the level desired. We have manifested
15 substantial progress from the management of our IEPs
16 and our students are thriving. We had had many
17 educational successes in this area, and Mr. Thiery
18 will later give you some concrete examples.

19 We note that some of our students are
20 ready to actually transition out of SpEd into our
21 mainstream curriculum, which gives us actually great
22 joy and satisfaction. While this generally means
23 less money for our school, there is no substitute
24 for the joy of a SpEd student realizing they don't
25 have to be captive to a universe of low

1 expectations.

2 At the EVCA, we know that our mind- and
3 character-based curriculum, coupled with our
4 fantastic teachers and staff there are making a real
5 difference in SpEd students' lives.

6 In our site visit on October 27th, we
7 received a very good rating of our SpEd program. So
8 we're -- we're happy that the evaluation by the PED
9 turned up that finding.

10 In the CSD's recommendation for a renewal
11 report, there were several corrective actions
12 identified. And I'd like to go over those, because
13 we want to ensure to you and the PED that we take
14 these seriously.

15 First, the school regularly reports on
16 corrective actions described in the renewal report
17 responses, working directly with the PSFA to verify
18 compliance with the facility requirements, provide
19 evidence of corrective actions based on audit
20 findings, and provide the CSD with documentation of
21 compliance verification.

22 I would like to note it wasn't until we
23 had a conference call with the Director of the CSD
24 that we understood we were responding to the PSFA
25 with the -- with a different issue than the PSFA was

1 citing. Once we received the proper affidavits from
2 PSFA, we began work to complete them.

3 While the specific issue which this
4 recommendation identified is already in the process
5 of correction, as we are planning to occupy a new
6 facility this fall, we understand that there are
7 going to be more issues with which to deal in the
8 coming years; therefore, a biannual reporting of our
9 facility situation, I think, is a good idea.

10 Because there have been several instances
11 where we could have done a better job meeting our
12 school's goals, we have taken the following steps:

13 We have discussed our approach with the
14 Director of CSD regarding biannual face-to-face or
15 teleconference calls, in addition to site visits, to
16 review the progress toward full compliance with
17 areas of concern.

18 And we plan to do that. In recent
19 Hillsdale training for governing school councils
20 associated with the Barney Charter School
21 Initiative, the conference leader indicated that,
22 "You only get what you expect when you inspect."

23 What this means is we are instituting a
24 requirement for regular reporting from various
25 divisions within the school, through the Executive

1 Director to the Governing Council, so we can ensure
2 that which we expect to see is actually being
3 accomplished.

4 In certain areas, such as reconciling the
5 ledger with the bank statement, our finance team was
6 gratified to learn that they had already been
7 performing the required inspection on the
8 recommended items which are most conducive to
9 preventing fraud, and have been verifying them each
10 month for fiscal compliance. We did note that we
11 learned that these inspections should be more
12 specifically detailed in our minutes. In other
13 words, if you don't document it, it didn't happen.

14 So that's an important thing that we
15 learned.

16 The school's performance framework
17 includes specific academic goals related to
18 graduation rate. Our response to this is that we
19 will work with the CSD during our goals negotiation
20 efforts early next year to identify and implement
21 specific graduation rate goals to improve in that
22 particular area.

23 We have expanded our domain of
24 after-school activities, which, by the way, has been
25 sort of a concern of a lot of students, and they

1 expressed that was the reason for departing the
2 school.

3 And we have expanded our online dual
4 credit offerings, including Modern Languages. So
5 that is how we address the issue of Modern
6 Languages. While we have an excellent relationship
7 with Moriarty School District in certain sports, the
8 logistics are somewhat difficult at times. Our
9 proposed new facilities will eventually provide for
10 more indigenous sports for our students. We think
11 this is important and will probably reduce one of
12 the reasons that students cite for leaving.

13 Growth of our lowest performing students.

14 Q1: Our Q1 students are of particular
15 importance to the EVCA. And we observe a rapidly
16 growing influx of students who have been academic
17 casualties from other approaches to learning than
18 those espoused by the EVCA. For several years, we
19 have attempted to identify precisely who the Q1
20 cohort was, but were not able to get these data.
21 But because of Ms. Poulos' interaction, we have been
22 able to identify this cohort.

23 We think that's important.

24 At this point, I'd like to turn this
25 segment over to our Executive Director, Mr. Tim

1 Thiery, to explain how our intervention and
2 remediation programs work, along with some specific
3 examples of success.

4 MR. TIM THIERY: Madam Chairwoman and
5 community members, good late afternoon, and thank
6 you for your dedication to public education. I know
7 this is a long process, and you have long meetings
8 to assure quality education for our students. And
9 so I want to say I appreciate your service.

10 Okay. I do want to respond to the -- the
11 attention drawn to our Q1 students are of great
12 concern. We're concerned that all of our students
13 succeed. And so we've been tracking the progress of
14 our Q1 for three years now.

15 And the first year, we surmised who the
16 students likely were. And again, Ms. Poulos got us
17 the specific list this last year. So I drew from
18 our data on these students and examples that you see
19 in the handout that you were provided with.

20 And essentially, our data, when we look at
21 individual students, we see quite a bit of growth,
22 even dramatic growth, as you can see from some of
23 the examples.

24 Starts out with some fifth -- fifth-grade
25 math student, one student denoted as "V." began in

1 first-grade math just this last year. And due to
2 intervention and remediation strategies that we've
3 employed -- and a list of those was provided in our
4 response -- the student has gone from a first-grade
5 math level in one year up to 4-B in the Singapore
6 sequence. That would be the second semester of
7 fourth grade in one year.

8 And, again, I encourage you to look
9 through these, of course, on your own. But I would
10 point out some of these dramatic improvements.

11 Down taking a sixth-grade student example,
12 under student "A.," see that there -- this one
13 references the Lexia program in language arts. And
14 our data here indicate that this student, over a
15 one-year time period, showed a growth of 3.1
16 grade-level-equivalent, based on these
17 interventions.

18 And finally, for my part -- our time is
19 falling away -- I would mention that we've also
20 seen, referencing Student "B." in the seventh grade,
21 an increase in PARCC scores from 15 to 16, as well.

22 So comment was made earlier today that
23 we're getting PARCC scores to transitioning their
24 scores in class and local -- multiple measures to
25 the PARCC is a bit of challenge; but we also note we

1 have evidence that our students are improving on the
2 PARCC scores, as well. So we are confident of our
3 program, and our students who take advantage of that
4 are showing remarkable improvement.

5 MR. ROGER LENARD: I'd like to -- since
6 time is limited, I'd like to draw your attention to
7 the EVCA Results graph that is on the
8 next-to-the-last page -- well, actually, the
9 third-to-the-last page.

10 This is -- this is based on the modified
11 goal that was approved by the PEC last year. And
12 basically, what this shows is that there are only
13 two areas where our students fall either below or
14 well below. There's only one area that they fall
15 well below; and that is on eighth-grade Discovery
16 math. And all other areas are either "Proficient"
17 or "Exceeds" on this battery of tests.

18 Another benchmark is our DIBELS results
19 shown on the next page. What I'd like to point out
20 is that the red "Well Below Benchmark" and the
21 yellow, "Below Benchmark," all diminish over time.
22 And those that are "Proficient" or "Advanced" has an
23 increase.

24 And as you can see, end of year,
25 kindergarten, 94 percent are "Proficient" or

1 "Advanced." And so while, for the most part, our
2 students score at or above the State average, and
3 even above the State average in PARCC for most
4 grades, and the PSAT, they do an exceptional job, we
5 are still well below proficiency measures for the
6 PARCC assessment, particularly in the upper
7 elementary grades. You can check the chart that we
8 have in here.

9 This really gives us great pause, as the
10 PARCC is only two years old. It seems to us it must
11 not be well-benchmarked. Using it as the primary
12 assessment point for student grading, we don't think
13 is indicative. If you take a look at Grade 3, for
14 example, the PARCC score above 3 or 4, shows
15 56 percent are advanced, while DIBELS is 88 percent,
16 and Discovery is 75 percent.

17 MS. FRIEDMAN: Excuse me, Madam Chair.
18 Time is up.

19 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER CARR: The alarm didn't go
21 off.

22 THE CHAIR: As we begin the public input
23 portion, I am in receipt of a letter from Tom
24 Sullivan, who is the Superintendent of Moriarty
25 Schools. And he made a request that this be read

1 into the public portion.

2 So I will read it as quickly as I can, and
3 then I'll -- I'll give you a copy so you can include
4 it in the record.

5 "Commission Members, I am unable to attend
6 your scheduled charter school renewal hearings this
7 week, but respectfully submit the following comments
8 relative to the Estancia Valley Classical Academy.

9 "In most ways, the relationship between
10 MESD and EVCA is positive. We have worked well to
11 ensure their students' access to a variety of
12 extracurricular activities and facilities. We have
13 improved communication and opened access to shared
14 capital resources. And we have even had a number of
15 educators in the community move seamlessly between
16 our two systems.

17 "There is, however, one area of concern
18 that I feel obliged to bring to the Commission's
19 attention. There has been a noticeable pattern of
20 parents with special needs students re- or enrolling
21 in our schools, reporting having been encouraged to
22 leave EVCA and being told EVCA could not accommodate
23 their needs.

24 "This pattern has not only been disruptive
25 for students, but likely would raise serious issues

1 with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of
2 Civil Rights.

3 "Our district currently serves
4 approximately 15 percent of our total student
5 population with special education services. EVCA
6 currently has less than 5 percent of their enrolled
7 students identified as receiving special ed
8 services.

9 "Assuming that EVCA will, in fact, have
10 its charter renewed, MESD would respectfully ask
11 that both the PEC and PED see that EVCA staff are
12 provided the legal training and oversight to ensure
13 that families' rights are honored and that MESD does
14 not disproportionately carry that responsibility in
15 this region."

16 "Sincerely, Tom Sullivan, MESD
17 Superintendent."

18 And the next on -- the only person on the
19 list is Crystal West.

20 MS. CRYSTAL WEST: Hi. I'm pretty loud.
21 Do you want a microphone? I'm often told to shush.

22 So my name is Crystal West. I'm a parent
23 at EVCA. I'm also a very active parent. It took me
24 three years to actually get into that role as an
25 active parent.

1 When I say, "get into," I don't mean that
2 to be let in the door to volunteer; I just mean to
3 really understand what's going on. You know, I
4 think when you start a new school, you always have
5 to see all aspects, and you're trying to figure out
6 where you belong.

7 And so I found, really, a good home there.

8 I also -- before I say more about EVCA, I
9 think it's important that I also tell you that --
10 and I always cry -- that I'm also a
11 first-generation, non-traditional recent college
12 graduate. So I think that's important, because I
13 want to speak to the diversity that actually isn't
14 always shined upon at EVCA; but it is a very diverse
15 place. And I think they've done an amazing job to
16 catering to such a vast area.

17 In Torrance/Santa Fe County and Bernalillo
18 County -- we even have some people that come from
19 Rio Rancho -- we cover such an area. But
20 specifically in the East Mountain area, not only is
21 it very rural; it's also a very poor area. There is
22 really no balance. There is, "Johnny can afford
23 electricity." "Johnny is well-off." And, "Johnny
24 is dirt-poor."

25 So you have to be very diverse in what

1 you're catering to when you're out there.

2 We've been there three years. So we came
3 at one of the really good high point -- or lower
4 points. We were -- we started at the very high
5 point, where we had tons of money. We went through
6 to the next year, where we were hanging on by our
7 fingernails, as Mr. Lenard said. And now we've gone
8 into this year.

9 My son is only in the fifth grade. He
10 struggles with EVCA. When I say "he struggles," I
11 mean he's that kid, like his mom, that doesn't want
12 to work really hard. However, he is quite -- one of
13 the things that happens; he's always successful
14 there -- is that the teachers instill in him, and I
15 instill in him, and the administration instills in
16 him, is that the only failure is to not try at all.

17 So one thing I've noticed with my son is
18 that he goes into this rigorous education, "Oh, man,
19 I have to work at this." For a moment, he might
20 step down and drop the ball, only to be given the
21 ball, pick it up himself again, and lead himself to
22 success.

23 And in my opinion, that is almost more
24 than any kind of education can give, when your child
25 knows they're making a mistake.

1 One of the things I found at EVCA, when
2 you're trying to find balance as a parent, you don't
3 want -- is your child having too much homework? Are
4 they not having enough? Do you let them play -- are
5 they playing too many sports? Are they doing too
6 many extracurricular activities?

7 One of the things that I found that the
8 best answer I got when I went to my son when we
9 first started there is, "Is this working for you?"

10 And his answer was this: "If they don't
11 challenge me, Mom, I'm never going to do the best I
12 can, and I'm never going to succeed."

13 If you ask me, for a ten-year-old, that's
14 the answer to education and what success is.

15 Thank you.

16 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

17 Commissioners? Comment?

18 Commissioner Toulouse?

19 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Of course. I have
20 a comment, and I have a question or two.

21 My comment is I was -- I've been on the
22 Commission four years; but you had been approved the
23 year prior to my getting on.

24 I have concerns about the Hillsdale
25 curriculum. To me, that is a Christian school, and

1 their curriculum is a Christian curriculum. And
2 that is not allowed, one way or the other, in public
3 schools. So I am greatly concerned that that is
4 your curriculum.

5 I do not remember. Have you come to us
6 and reported you were looking to move to a new
7 facility? Because I don't remember seeing you on
8 the list; because we have to approve any move, and
9 we have asked all the schools to let us know. And I
10 cannot remember seeing your school on the list.

11 MR. ROGER LENARD: No. We only reported
12 it to PED, ma'am.

13 MS. POULOS: I'm -- I need to look. Has
14 the school moved, or is the school looking to move?

15 MR. ROGER LENARD: The school is looking
16 to move.

17 MS. POULOS: Okay. And I don't have the
18 list right in front of me; so I would have to check
19 that. And if it -- it is our error, then it is our
20 error.

21 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Because I do not
22 remember it on our list; so --

23 MR. ROGER LENARD: Now, we are not moving
24 out of district.

25 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: No. Our

1 question -- we have to approve wherever you are.

2 MR. ROGER LENARD: Okay. Right.

3 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: And we have asked
4 each school, when beginning to look to move -- we
5 have several schools that are still looking for a
6 new place; but they are on the list, because we've
7 had problems of people moving into a new building,
8 and then coming in and saying, "Oh, we want approval
9 for the move we made last week."

10 And, I mean, literally, we could turn
11 people out of the school at that point and say, "No,
12 you're not approved," so basically you have no
13 school. And that's why we have tried to maintain
14 this list of people who are looking to move and make
15 sure you come to us as soon as the plans are made,
16 so we can approve and work with you for that
17 transition.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. ROGER LENARD: We will ensure that
20 we -- we will ensure that you are informed and keep
21 you in the loop from now on.

22 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: I just wanted -- my
23 understanding is you guys, just, basically -- you're
24 in the designing or planning stage; is that correct?

25 MR. HARLAN LAWSON: Correct. We don't

1 plan to move for probably ten to twelve months.

2 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: And so this is --
3 your coordination with that has been through PED or
4 the PSFA?

5 MR. HARLAN LAWSON: We've been in touch
6 with PSFA, as well. They have not given us final
7 approval on the plans; but I'm sure that'll be in
8 the next few weeks. So...

9 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Okay. Thank you.

10 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Toulouse, do you
11 want them to respond to the Hillsdale --

12 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Well, it was a
13 comment, because I'm not sure what we can do at this
14 point. They're already approved. But I have -- I
15 have real concerns. And I just wanted to make a
16 comment.

17 MR. ROGER LENARD: Let me alleviate your
18 concerns. Hillsdale is not a religious institution.
19 It does not have a, quote, "Christian curriculum,"
20 unquote. It is a school that is a Classical,
21 liberal arts school. And it observes no particular
22 observance to any religion.

23 It's a Classical curriculum; so it teaches
24 about the Greek Pantheon, the Roman religious
25 system, other religions, without any discrimination

1 whatsoever.

2 So I'd like to clarify that it is not a
3 Christian curriculum. It has, in fact, been aligned
4 with the New Mexico Standards and Benchmarks, when
5 we started. It's been aligned with Common Core.
6 The Public Education Department team came out and
7 reviewed thoroughly our curriculum guidance, and
8 they had absolutely no problems.

9 As a matter of fact, they gave us an "A"
10 on our curriculum when they came and reviewed it
11 prior to our start-up.

12 So there may be -- there may be some
13 folklore about what Hillsdale is; but as a Christian
14 school, it is not that.

15 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Pogna?

16 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes. Just a comment
17 to the Christian courses. I have been a member of
18 Hillsdale College organization for many, many years.
19 And I just sent in my annual contribution to the
20 college. It is the most fabulous Classical college
21 in the nation or anywhere.

22 What they are -- I have never heard that
23 it was ever a Christian Classical organization. The
24 one -- the one thing that they are very well-known
25 for is that it is the only college or university in

1 the nation that does not accept federal funds. They
2 are private funds and contributions. So they do not
3 accept federal funds, and they do a fantastic job.

4 I would like for my grandchildren to have
5 gone there, except they played football and they had
6 to have a team. I would have sponsored their
7 college educations if they had gone to Hillsdale.

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

9 Commissioner Carr?

10 COMMISSIONER CARR: I guess I -- I could
11 clear it up, too, really quick. I can answer a
12 couple of key questions about your curriculum.

13 Do you teach Creationism?

14 MR. ROGER LENARD: No.

15 COMMISSIONER CARR: Do you teach
16 Evolution?

17 MR. ROGER LENARD: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER CARR: Okay. Okay.
19 Tradition -- yeah, so you know. Those are two big
20 red flags.

21 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: The website
22 concerns me, because there's a Bible on the first
23 page of the website.

24 COMMISSIONER CARR: Okay.

25 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: That's usually an

1 indicator, having dealt with the Christian colleges,
2 who do not, either, accept federal money, because
3 they don't want the federal oversight. There's a
4 whole series of Christian colleges around the
5 country who, almost none of them, are accredited in
6 any way. And they don't take federal money.

7 MR. ROGER LENARD: Okay. So I can't --
8 look. Hillsdale College isn't applying for renewal
9 to you guys, okay? So because -- because we
10 happened to be teamed with them to have them provide
11 us curricular guidance on the Classics, literature,
12 civics, government and so on, why did we do that?

13 One, because they're the best. And, two,
14 because they reach out and want to help schools.
15 And we wanted to take advantage of that, okay?

16 So, I mean, I don't not mean to sound
17 abrupt. But we're the ones that are asking for a
18 charter renewal. And whatever they have on their
19 website is up to them. We are pretty sure that our
20 website is -- has -- is religious-neutral, okay, has
21 nothing on it that you would either gather that we
22 are any kind of a school, from that perspective.
23 And we think that that's the way the U.S. government
24 wants it, for us to be religion-neutral. And that's
25 what we strive to be.

1 COMMISSIONER CARR: And I was here. And I
2 actually brought up -- and I think other people
3 did -- bring up these concerns at the time that we
4 voted on them the first time. And so, you know,
5 I -- so I'm okay. I -- you know, I just -- I
6 thought if I -- if you answered those two questions,
7 that would pretty much take care of it; because --
8 the -- but here is something else.

9 Now, you know -- and I'm not trying to --
10 I -- I think you're doing a great job. And -- you
11 know. And, of course, by the way, the ancient
12 Romans and ancient Greeks were not Christian. But
13 they did teach a lot of highly -- a lot of ethics.
14 Put it that way.

15 But so I -- I heard -- and there's nothing
16 technically wrong with this -- is that you guys
17 raised some money; by -- with guns. That's fine. I
18 don't think there's anything legally wrong with
19 that. I probably wouldn't suggest that my director
20 do that at her -- she probably wouldn't do it.

21 But the -- but some people, you know,
22 might get upset about that. So if you're -- you
23 know, if you're worried about appearances or
24 something like that -- it was probably very
25 successful, I'm guessing.

1 MR. ROGER LENARD: Well, I'd like to
2 comment on two things. One, it was our foundation
3 that raised the funds, okay, number one. And,
4 number two, it was very successful.

5 So, you know, what we did stipulate is
6 that none of the guns show up on campus, okay? So
7 the point is, we like our foundation to be
8 innovative in fundraising. And they're very
9 creative at times, okay? And yet there are -- there
10 is a line of demarcation between what is theirs and
11 what is ours, okay?

12 So, whereas, we -- we -- we're happy that
13 they raised money, we could neither support
14 affirmatively that particular fundraising effort,
15 nor denigrate it. We just said, "That's what you
16 choose to do," amongst many other things.

17 COMMISSIONER CARR: Right.

18 MR. ROGER LENARD: So if -- so long as you
19 abide by our stipulations, "No guns on campus,"
20 we're fine.

21 COMMISSIONER CARR: Okay, okay. Yeah,
22 it's always -- in the age we live in, with all
23 the -- you know, I -- you know, I was raised in the
24 country. I'm a veteran, all that kind of thing, you
25 know. It's, like -- I don't -- you know. But on

1 the other hand, too, I go through drills with my
2 kids.

3 I'm sure you guys go through the lockdowns
4 and all those things. And those are -- it's a
5 highly charged and emotional issue right now,
6 obviously. You know, it might be something to talk
7 about -- you probably already had a conversation
8 with them.

9 So -- and here was another one. So you
10 have an armed security guard on campus?

11 MR. ROGER LENARD: We do.

12 COMMISSIONER CARR: And he's licensed
13 and --

14 MR. ROGER LENARD: He's a retired
15 Albuquerque policeman, okay? He has finished all of
16 his qualifications. So he fills the role of a
17 licensed peace officer.

18 COMMISSIONER CARR: Okay.

19 MR. ROGER LENARD: And we -- I will state
20 this for the record. The FBI has noticed that
21 schools with armed presence are far less likely to
22 have an active shooter scenario.

23 COMMISSIONER CARR: Right. And I'm not
24 making a judgment about that.

25 MR. ROGER LENARD: Okay.

1 COMMISSIONER CARR: I was just -- I just
2 wanted to make -- because we have a police officer
3 that's actually assigned to our schools in Taos.
4 And he comes to Taos Academy. I've known him for
5 years at Taos High School. And he works especially
6 well with the kids.

7 And that's an important factor, too. I
8 just wanted to make sure that he was -- he was
9 licensed and all that. Sounds like he's
10 well-qualified. So I just wanted to bring that out
11 in the open and make sure that, you know, there's no
12 questions about that. That's all.

13 MR. ROGER LENARD: We have no problem with
14 that at all.

15 COMMISSIONER CARR: Okay. Thank you.

16 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Pogna?

17 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Just another very
18 short comment. We see all these millions of young
19 paid protesters in the streets. How wonderful if a
20 few of them would have gone to a Hillsdale College
21 instruction. They would have learned about America,
22 about the Declaration, about the Constitution. They
23 would have learned the Classics.

24 I attended their graduation commencement
25 exercise last year. And, horrors, they had

1 classical music. Isn't that amazing? It just
2 doesn't seem possible.

3 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

4 Commissioner Johnston?

5 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Thank you,
6 Madam Chair.

7 Question about Modern Languages and your
8 commitment. And either I read, or someone said,
9 that you offer Modern Languages online? Could you
10 just speak to that a little bit?

11 MR. ROGER LENARD: Sure, yes. I stated
12 that. It turns out that while we do have
13 460 students, the number of students who will go on
14 to a modern Classical -- Modern Language after they
15 finish Latin, which is what we require, is actually
16 kind of small in number. And it's very difficult,
17 at our size, to be able to afford an instructor
18 for -- by the way, German, Spanish, French, and a
19 whole bunch of other languages, okay, specific to
20 each student's needs.

21 So what we decided, as a Governing
22 Council, is that we'd work with the administration
23 to have high-quality online courses. And we've had
24 a number of students finish three or four years of
25 Modern Languages.

1 So that is a decision on our part, since
2 we couldn't afford a specific instructor, for each
3 language that a student wanted to take.

4 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Thank you. What
5 online program do you use?

6 MR. ROGER LENARD: Well, we actually use a
7 variety of online programs.

8 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Okay.

9 MR. ROGER LENARD: For example, in math,
10 we use Khan Academy. Okay. That serves a good
11 function. Any other recommendations?

12 MR. TIM THIERY: We use IDEAL New Mexico.

13 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: For the Modern
14 Language is what I was after. You use IDEAL?

15 MR. TIM THIERY: We have another -- yeah,
16 that's most of our -- I think all of our languages
17 so far have been through IDEAL New Mexico.

18 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Okay. And could
19 you please explain, then, you continue to offer the
20 Latin. How do you integrate that?

21 MR. ROGER LENARD: Why don't you do that,
22 since you're the ED.

23 MR. TIM THIERY: Right. So in our
24 graduation course requirements, we require two years
25 of Latin as a foundation to literacy and going on to

1 foreign languages.

2 So they -- students may take that in
3 seventh and eighth grade for high school credit.
4 And that opens up more opportunity, in the upper
5 school, with that Latin foundation, to particularly
6 explore other related Romantic Languages. Now if
7 they go into Chinese or something like that, which
8 is possible, they're not going to see much crossover
9 there.

10 But we see it as foundational. And so
11 once they've completed that course, then they can
12 take Modern Languages, if they choose.

13 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Does that require
14 an endorsement, to teach Latin?

15 MR. TIM THIERY: Yes, it does.

16 COMMISSIONER CARR: Did you find a Latin
17 teacher?

18 MR. TIM THIERY: Yes.

19 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: That's good.
20 Those are hard to find.

21 MR. ROGER LENARD: Good ones are hard to
22 find.

23 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: And then you have
24 stated -- and I think PED recognized,
25 particularly -- the needs of English Language

1 Learners and the struggle that you've had internally
2 with meeting the needs of ELL students and with
3 students on IEPs.

4 Can you tell me a little bit about your
5 program, your special ed program, and your programs
6 for English Language Learners?

7 MR. TIM THIERY: Now, the difficulty and
8 the problem that was identified recently in the
9 visit from the CSD was not with respect to our
10 program, as we understand it, but with respect to
11 identifying them.

12 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Yes.

13 MR. TIM THIERY: And so the forms were --
14 we were keeping -- at registration, we were issuing
15 a new form every year. We figured it would update
16 the information. But then we were instructed by
17 Mr. Gloudemans that, no, that's not correct, we need
18 to keep the original one. So that was the main
19 issue --

20 MR. ROGER LENARD: This would be the Home
21 Language Survey, okay?

22 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Yes.

23 MR. ROGER LENARD: So that was really the
24 problem, is that -- in lieu of any guidance, we just
25 said, "Okay, fill this out," and that wasn't the

1 proper procedure.

2 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Okay. And do you
3 have -- you have English Language Learner students
4 you've identified.

5 MR. TIM THIERY: We've had some, right.
6 And most of them have graduated out of the program
7 over the four-and-a-half years.

8 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: And how have you
9 addressed those interventions? Because they are
10 standard interventions there that follow -- if
11 they're identified and assessed.

12 MR. TIM THIERY: Right. So we have an IEP
13 plan for -- for that. Or -- and we have two faculty
14 members who are TESOL-certified that we consult
15 with, and mainly service them in the regular
16 classroom. We haven't had any tested at a level
17 where they needed to have a sheltered English type
18 of program, to date.

19 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Thank you. And
20 just talk to me a little bit about -- about your
21 special ed program as it is now, based on
22 Mr. Sullivan's letter and your comments about
23 developing a strong program. Can you just tell me a
24 little bit about it?

25 MR. ROGER LENARD: Okay. I'm going to be

1 blunt. We reject a lot of the contents of that
2 letter, okay? There is no way in the world that we
3 would turn away a family and tell them they weren't
4 welcome at our school.

5 First off, it's against the law, okay?
6 Second off, we care about those kids. We have
7 absolutely no idea where that charge came from.
8 And -- and as is sometimes frequent, there is
9 transportation and migration of students between
10 school districts. You know, parents may find that
11 services offered in one district are more suited to
12 them than others.

13 But if they come to us, they're a part of
14 our school, and they are important to us. And I'm
15 telling you, our objective to get these kids so they
16 are productive members of society and so that they
17 feel good about the educational experience that they
18 have at EVCA.

19 So this letter actually took us kind of as
20 a sideswipe. We were blindsided. We had no idea it
21 was coming. So that's our response.

22 And, by the way -- and, additionally --
23 the site visits showed that we had a very good grade
24 on our SpEd program. So that's all -- I mean, I am
25 not going to dignify the letter any more than that.

1 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: No. And I guess,
2 really, my question was, in lieu of all of this and
3 your comment, was what does the Classical Academy
4 special ed program look like? Do you have endorsed
5 teachers? Is it inclusion? Is it modified? What
6 related services?

7 MR. TIM THIERY: All of the above, right.
8 I think if you would come, you would find it looks
9 very -- it looks legal and normal. And we have all
10 the things you mentioned. We spent quite a bit of
11 resources and time. We're highly motivated -- we
12 didn't do it grudgingly at all. We're highly
13 motivated to begin setting up -- as our student
14 services director has seen some more profound
15 students that are growing up in our program, and
16 we're learning what their limitations are, we are
17 investing a lot of resources and time to develop a
18 program for these type of students. And, honestly,
19 they are thriving.

20 One example, of a mom -- a mother who had
21 a daughter and son. And they decide -- and it's a
22 school of choice. So the daughter wanted to go to
23 the local school district. And mom was talked into
24 it, or however that happened.

25 But the younger son, who's one of our

1 special ed students, said, "I am going to EVCA."

2 And mom is, like, "Okay."

3 So she drives two different places, brings
4 the son to our program, our special ed program, and
5 the daughter goes to her regular class at a
6 different school.

7 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Okay. Thank you.
8 And this is a fiscal question. It seems like this
9 year, you're in a good position fiscally. But
10 related services are very comprehensive. How do you
11 provide related services, being a small school?

12 MR. TIM THIERY: Somewhat sacrificially.
13 But we're committed to it. We have to be, and we
14 want to be. And, so, yeah, we've hired on more help
15 with school psychology this year. We just dedicate
16 money. Social work. We just -- we do it. Tighten
17 our belts in other areas.

18 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Okay. So you
19 contract directly with these related service
20 providers?

21 MR. TIM THIERY: Yes. Yes.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Before I go on,
23 does Mr. Craig wish to weigh in this school? I know
24 his time is limited.

25 That's okay. I noticed that he was here;

1 so...

2 MR. CRAIG: Madam Chair Gipson and members
3 of the Commission, thank you for having me once
4 again. I only have what I believe -- have been
5 given, which is probably the same handout you guys
6 see about the Small School Size Adjustment
7 reduction. I'll say this. Estancia Valley
8 Classical Academy's budget this year is about
9 \$2.35 million. Last year, it was \$2.378 million.

10 So last year, when they got the Small
11 Schools Size Adjustment, they were at \$2.378
12 million. And this year, they're at \$2.35 million,
13 without the Small School Size Adjustment.

14 I believe last year, they got 7.9 units in
15 Small School Size Adjustments. That would translate
16 to about \$31,000. So the statement that it was
17 about a teacher is probably accurate.

18 I will say, just like this morning, when I
19 said we have a minimum expectation of people running
20 multimillion-dollar organizations to be able to
21 respond to Corrective Action Plans for financial
22 audits, we have expectation on our side that if
23 you're running a multimillion-dollar operation for
24 \$2.5 million, you can absorb \$32,000 worth of a
25 deferred increase, if you will. \$180,000 increase

1 is what they would have gotten if they kept the
2 small school size; \$150,000 is what they got without
3 the small school size. So that's all the comments I
4 have. Thank you.

5 THE CHAIR: Thank you. We appreciate it.
6 Commissioner Toulouse?

7 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, I've
8 been sitting here waiting to see if any of my
9 colleagues were going to look at what I see glaring
10 out at me on this graph, that your letter grade,
11 overall letter grade, while your average is an "A,"
12 dropped 24 points from the last year that we have to
13 the final year; you know, from the second to the
14 third year. That's a huge drop.

15 We've had people who have been saying,
16 "Well, we went up a couple of points," and now here,
17 you have this big drop, and nobody here has asked
18 that yet.

19 How do you account for that drop from an
20 "A" to a "C" and from 84 to 60 on your points?

21 MR. ROGER LENARD: It has to do with the
22 inclusion of graduation rates, okay? Prior to that,
23 we were -- we were too young a school to have been
24 graded in graduation. And candidly, while we
25 disagree with some of the numbers the -- or PEC was

1 using --

2 MR. HARLAN LAWSON: PED.

3 MR. ROGER LENARD: Pardon me. The PED was
4 using -- we received an F in graduation rates.
5 That's why it has been flagged by the CSD for -- for
6 heightened scrutiny.

7 And, you know, it doesn't take very many
8 "F's" to drop your grade quite a few points. So
9 that's the primary reason.

10 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Well, I see at
11 least one other "F" on here. But I just was looking
12 at the overall drop, because that is a huge drop.
13 Graduation drops aren't weighted as high as some
14 other things are. But I know they affect many
15 schools.

16 Also, just as an aside, if you really want
17 to increase to 780, you're going to lose the Small
18 School Adjustment, or most of it, anyway; and, in
19 addition to which --

20 THE CHAIR: They already lost it.

21 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: But with money
22 being tight, nobody's going to have those, anyway I
23 don't think, coming up; so...

24 MR. ROGER LENARD: We passed the "400"
25 mark two years ago. So we dealt with that agony two

1 years ago. And now, it's much better, because we
2 have 460 students.

3 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: One other
4 question. I'm just curious. Because you're one of
5 the couple of charter schools out in that
6 East Mountain and Torrance County area, do you have
7 a waiting list? Do you have to run lotteries for
8 student admissions?

9 MR. ROGER LENARD: Well, we have to run
10 lotteries, anyway. But we -- we have some grades at
11 the beginning of the year with a waiting list. I
12 don't think we have a waiting list for any grades
13 right now, do we?

14 FROM THE FLOOR: Kindergarten has two.

15 MR. ROGER LENARD: Kindergarten. Okay.
16 So, yes, we have a waiting list in one grade.

17 THE CHAIR: Okay. I will try to make this
18 brief.

19 My -- I had concerns when I read that
20 parents expressed concerns that difficult children
21 do not seem to fit in at the school.

22 And I looked at your demographics. And
23 your demographics don't look like the rest of
24 New Mexico, let alone Moriarty. So that concerned
25 me, as well, that why is there such a skew in those

1 numbers.

2 And then the letter came in from the
3 Superintendent. So I did a little more digging.
4 And I looked at a -- I was looking through a lot of
5 the paperwork that had been submitted. And as an
6 example, with some of your employment roles and
7 responsibilities, you list "Physical Demands," and
8 you list things like, "The employee must be able to
9 see and hear on a continuous basis, as well as speak
10 frequently."

11 "The employee must be able to move quickly
12 from place to place on occasion, walk through
13 classrooms, and be able to maneuver tight spaces."

14 And then in your discrimination --
15 employment policies, under "Employees with
16 Disabilities," you make a statement that says that,
17 "EVCA will make -- a reasonable accommodation exists
18 which would allow the employee to perform the
19 essential functions of the job without imposing an
20 undue hardship on EVCA or other employees."

21 I don't understand how you can make a
22 statement like this, in all sincerity. This, I
23 think, violates every Americans With Disabilities
24 and the U.S. government Department of Civil
25 Liberties. You know, I'm -- frankly, I was -- I was

1 appalled when I saw that.

2 MR. ROGER LENARD: Was that in our
3 original -- was that in our original charter?

4 THE CHAIR: I will be perfectly honest
5 with you. I printed it off; but I -- we had, like,
6 a thousand pages. So I can't attest 100 percent
7 exactly where I received that from. But it was in
8 the documents that we received to look at and
9 evaluate.

10 MS. POULOS: Madam Chairwoman and
11 Commissioners, that would have been in the original
12 application that was approved by the Commission.

13 COMMISSIONER CARR: Oh. We missed that
14 one.

15 THE CHAIR: But -- excuse me? It can be
16 fixed; but I don't know if it has been fixed.

17 MR. ROGER LENARD: Well, I believe it
18 was -- if it was part of our original charter, then
19 it was approved by the PEC.

20 Now, if you want corrective action on
21 that, we'd be happy to work with the Charter Schools
22 Division to make sure that we are in compliance on
23 the job description.

24 THE CHAIR: Well, it's not just the job
25 description; but it's your policy for employees with

1 disabilities.

2 MR. ROGER LENARD: Okay. We will --

3 THE CHAIR: So it goes beyond a job
4 description. And I understand that that job
5 description was culled from another charter school,
6 yeah, because it's documented in the "Pick up the
7 report at... ."

8 So it was culled from another charter
9 school; so that, I know for sure.

10 MR. ROGER LENARD: Yeah. I didn't
11 recognize it. So -- okay.

12 THE CHAIR: But it was approved by your
13 Governance Council. All of these policies have to
14 be approved by your Governance Council. The
15 document that -- the employee description was culled
16 from another charter school; but it was approved --
17 all of these policies have been approved -- should
18 have been read and approved by your Governance
19 Council.

20 So I hesitate to accept a school at this
21 point in time that is in such blatant violation of
22 civil liberties. I truly do.

23 COMMISSIONER CARR: Madam Chair?

24 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Carr?

25 COMMISSIONER CARR: Great job in finding

1 that. I feel awful that we didn't find it when it
2 first came before us.

3 The -- I mean, we -- what about putting it
4 in as a condition, and then they come back here
5 and/or -- anyway, that's -- I mean, that's one way
6 to fix it.

7 THE CHAIR: I appreciate that thought. My
8 thought, however, personally -- and this is from
9 me -- this is a sentiment of a culture, if you put
10 something like that in as a policy. And if you take
11 a look at the demographics of that school, it sort
12 of plays into that culture.

13 Parents have expressed concerns over
14 students not fitting in. The Moriarty
15 Superintendent did, as well. And based on a policy
16 like that, I can't see any difference.

17 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Madam Chair, and
18 administrators, when I was reading through the
19 comments, when we -- when PEC interviewed parents,
20 there is a comment in here, too, that, "Difficult
21 children do not fit in."

22 And I didn't understand it. But you've
23 received a copy of this -- this document; correct?
24 The analysis?

25 MR. ROGER LENARD: Uh-huh.

1 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: So do you remember
2 that statement? It jumped out at me. Can you --
3 can you clarify why there would be a parent who was
4 interviewed who would be concerned that difficult
5 students do not fit in?

6 Can we discuss that?

7 I'll find it. It's in here.

8 THE CHAIR: Yeah. And actually, I think
9 it's a plural, that it was through the -- the
10 renewal site visit --

11 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Yes.

12 THE CHAIR: -- with the interviews with
13 parents. The citation -- because I wrote it down.
14 It says, "Parents expressed concern."

15 So it wasn't just, "A parent expressed
16 concern." It was "parents."

17 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: "That difficult
18 children do not seem to fit into the program and are
19 helped to -- helped to fit into the school model.
20 Parents feel there are students who should have
21 IEPs, and it's not being done. They expressed
22 concern that there are only two special education
23 teachers."

24 It's on Page -- it's in the Parent
25 Comments -- one, two, three -- about Page 3 or 4.

1 Can you comment on that?

2 MR. TIM THIERY: Well, it is true that we
3 have just two certified special education teachers.
4 And that's not a reflection, at least in my mind, of
5 a commitment or not, to special education. It's in
6 terms of our budget, and that's where we are right
7 now. We are sensitive to whether students are
8 getting service adequately.

9 As I said, we've added more staff recently
10 to -- to address increasing numbers of students on
11 IEPs. And we continue to strategize in that
12 direction, knowing that we are committed, and must
13 be committed, to servicing students as they need to
14 be serviced.

15 We have not denied testing to parents who
16 request it. We've been, recently, just in this last
17 year, building our program, reviewing programs with
18 experts from UNMH. We've got legal counsel, because
19 we do want to do everything correctly and
20 responsibly and certainly start there. If we go
21 beyond that, that's okay with us. We do want to
22 service the students.

23 But the -- the advice that we were given
24 is that if parents request testing, that we do it.
25 And that's the policy we've been following.

1 And with reference to the -- the hiring
2 practices, this may be a ding against me. But I'm
3 not aware of the -- of all the wording in the
4 hiring. But I guarantee you, I have not hired or
5 been in interviews or had that wording cross my mind
6 at all. It has nothing to do with my hiring
7 practices. And I would certainly take the
8 recommendation of the committee and --

9 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair?

10 MR. ROGER LENARD: I would like to also
11 comment. We do have an EVCA staff policy that I
12 would like to read.

13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Use the
14 microphone.

15 MR. ROGER LENARD: I would like to read
16 into the record --

17 MR. HARLAN LAWSON: Just this year.

18 MR. ROGER LENARD: And this was approved
19 just this year.

20 THE CHAIR: No, I'm sorry. Your
21 15 minutes for your report is up. I don't think
22 this addresses directly a question.

23 MR. ROGER LENARD: Well, I mean, you have
24 made -- you have made a statement that --

25 THE CHAIR: I did. I made a statement. I

1 didn't pose a question. I made a statement.

2 FROM THE FLOOR: She asked if it was
3 current.

4 MR. ROGER LENARD: And so you are not
5 going to allow us to tell you what our --

6 THE CHAIR: I didn't ask for -- I posed a
7 statement of my personal belief of the violation.
8 But that was not a question that was posed to you.

9 MR. ROGER LENARD: But I guess my response
10 is we have --

11 THE CHAIR: There is no response to a
12 statement.

13 MR. ROGER LENARD: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair, I
15 have a question, based on the response, on the IEPs.
16 You mean you wait for a parent to ask?

17 I'm the parent -- I'm the grandparent of a
18 kid with an IEP. And my understanding is that in
19 parent-teacher conferences and all, that a child
20 who's been identified as possibly needing services
21 needs to be recommended to the parents for testing.
22 Then if the parents say "No," that's fine.

23 But you -- I didn't think you were
24 supposed to wait and just say, "Oh, if the parent
25 wants them tested," you test; because parents often

1 don't understand all of the things that can be
2 difficult with a child. So if you're not offering
3 it before they ask, I have a problem.

4 MR. TIM THIERY: No. Thank you for
5 mentioning that. Very important point.

6 And, yeah, with the -- the steps in the
7 RTI process, we have that worked in as we need to,
8 for best practice and to be legal.

9 So we do identify students through the SAT
10 process, and then bring that up, too. I was just
11 trying to imagine a parent leaving frustrated. I
12 just imagined them being aware that, "Well, I needed
13 these services, and I didn't get them."

14 Well, maybe the testing didn't
15 corroborate. But even so, we sit down with parents
16 and the team, and in the event, the testing doesn't
17 come out, we still might, if the team members agree.
18 But point well-taken, that it can come either way.

19 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Armbruster?

20 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Sorry. I have a
21 number of questions.

22 Number one -- this is a question; so you
23 can answer.

24 How many of your students graduated who, I
25 guess, began in ninth grade, or at least were in a

1 senior class? I should put it that way. Didn't
2 necessarily have to be there in ninth grade.

3 MR. ROGER LENARD: What was that? 11?

4 MR. HARLAN LAWSON: Ten last year.

5 MR. ROGER LENARD: We had ten graduate
6 last year.

7 MR. TIM THIERY: Seven last year; ten the
8 first year.

9 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: That was out of
10 how many seniors?

11 MR. ROGER LENARD: Well, 100 percent of
12 students who were seniors starting at the senior
13 year, 100 percent graduated. But 22 started as
14 freshmen; so that was quite a -- that was quite a
15 migration to various places.

16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Have you had any
17 OCR complaints? Or have you had any findings from
18 the Special Ed Bureau?

19 MR. TIM THIERY: No findings. We had an
20 OCR complaint; in fact, one that's currently just
21 about to be resolved. The -- the feedback
22 requirement that we have had so far is that we need
23 to change the wording of the -- in how we advertise
24 our contact for filing an OCR complaint. That was
25 the outcome of that, as far as we know.

1 It's not completely resolved. But it's
2 almost there, according to what our lawyer is
3 saying. And that was the one thing that we were
4 asked to do was more correctly identify and publish
5 who a parent would contact with a complaint.

6 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And what was the
7 complaint?

8 MR. TIM THIERY: The -- yeah, the
9 complaint had to do with essentially, they were just
10 talking about in terms of whether a student gets
11 tested when a parent comes forth and requests it.
12 And my student services director was -- her
13 understanding, from a lot of experience, and with
14 respect to the RTI process, was that we would try
15 to -- some other interventions and be more thorough
16 and persistent with other possible remedies prior
17 to -- to testing.

18 But in this process of reviewing it
19 through -- I think it's the legal process working
20 well -- our legal counsel saying, "No, the
21 perspectives have been changing more toward don't --
22 don't be so persistent with looking at alternative
23 interventions, but to go ahead and do the testing."

24 So we've followed that directive, that
25 advice.

1 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So let me just
2 see if I'm saying that correctly. So a parent
3 wanted a child tested for special ed. You needed
4 to -- your belief was that they needed to go through
5 the RTI process prior to being tested.

6 MR. TIM THIERY: Right. And so we were of
7 a position to pursue that a little bit more
8 thoroughly and exhaustively. And the parents kind
9 of lost patience with that.

10 And we were still persisting with that
11 understanding. We still thought that we could solve
12 this without going to an IEP. And that was kind of
13 the nature -- the essential nature of the complaint.

14 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And so how long
15 is your Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 intervention?
16 How long does that take to go from heads-up to
17 possibly IEP, testing?

18 MR. TIM THIERY: In terms of the actual
19 time. Yeah, we had submitted a document about the
20 steps. But your question is, is there a general
21 time period, or -- that's a good question.

22 I -- our student services director would
23 be a better one to answer that. If I -- if I had to
24 say that -- within a school year, we try to work
25 through that whole process.

1 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It sounds like
2 you maybe want to get some more information about
3 that. That's a pretty important thing.

4 MR. TIM THIERY: Yeah.

5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I'm sorry. But
6 I have some more questions.

7 THE CHAIR: I'm here until Friday.

8 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So I -- I looked
9 at your report card from 2014-'15, and then this
10 one. And you had an -- in 2014, you had an "F" in
11 lowest performing students, then a "D" in '15. Then
12 an "F" again in '16.

13 To me, that would seem, since you have a
14 very skewed population of students, that that would
15 be a red flag, telling you that there -- something's
16 not working exactly the way you want it to and would
17 expect it to do, and that there needed to be
18 interventions, whether it was an RTI or just
19 interventions for a non-disabled child.

20 And so I'm not sure that I see that
21 anything's been done; because, clearly, your highest
22 performing students are doing well. But I'm the one
23 who always grumps about the one who's not. So I
24 don't want to go out of character here.

25 But, really, educating very smart,

1 motivated, or even not motivated students, they kind
2 of learn, and they can learn by osmosis, even though
3 it's better to have an education. It's the ones who
4 can't do that, even with instruction, who are the
5 ones that we need to take care of. And my concern
6 is that you had an "F." And it did go to a "D,"
7 which was positive. And then it went back to an
8 "F." And I don't see or hear -- and maybe I've
9 missed it -- what you have done to make that better.

10 MR. TIM THIERY: Well, I think you're
11 touching on the -- the big question in public
12 education today across the country is what about
13 that segment of the population that struggles and
14 continues to struggle? Our mission statement states
15 a rigorous education. And part of the solution is
16 maintaining high standards. And it's kind of
17 slow-going.

18 Nobody understands a quick fix to that, if
19 the standards are kept up. And so that's -- we're
20 committed to that. We want to figure this out.
21 We -- as I mentioned earlier, we believe there's a
22 disagreement in this -- in the result of the various
23 metrics. You know, we look at some of the testing,
24 Discovery, DIBELS, End-of-Course assessments, and we
25 see a fairly strong showing across the board.

1 And -- but it's not showing up in the
2 letter grade. And we are -- we are serious about
3 trying to figure that out, why it's not showing up
4 in the State's calculation to the same degree that
5 we see it locally. And then when we look at
6 individual students, and we see the students make
7 dramatic improvement, and the more we look, the more
8 we see improvement. And we're wondering, "Why
9 doesn't that show up on the State's metrics?" And
10 that's a big question.

11 But we spend a lot of time thinking and
12 talking and planning and searching, even for how
13 do -- how do we move these students up? And there
14 are many of them across the country that's -- and
15 certainly, across New Mexico.

16 And we're looking -- I even responded to
17 Mr. Sullivan at the MESD. I'd like to get together
18 and talk about it. What are some of the specifics?
19 What is frustrating, and what do they see as some of
20 the solutions they feel like they have found; so...

21 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Perhaps. It is
22 a difficult thing. It's particularly difficult in
23 New Mexico. And now, you're getting those students
24 who see, "Wow, this, is a great school. It seems
25 like a safe school. It seems like good kids go

1 there; so I want to send my child, who's not
2 succeeding, there," for various reasons. I mean,
3 for various reasons, this child isn't succeeding.

4 But I believe that your obligation as a
5 school, and your mission is to not have an "F" or a
6 "D" in your lowest performing students. You would
7 expect to have at least a "C," because those are the
8 ones who are the most difficult and for whom you are
9 supposed to be spending more money -- "money"
10 money -- money on services to raise them up from the
11 bottom, to get them up to -- you know, a level.

12 Of course, there's also going to be a
13 bottom quartile, if there's a top. But they aren't
14 showing growth in what we're seeing, and that's one
15 of my concerns.

16 Another one -- sorry --

17 THE CHAIR: Don't keep apologizing. I
18 haven't said anything.

19 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: In your
20 statement -- one that you just gave us -- it's
21 troubling to me that -- the comment, even, that it
22 says, "While it's taken almost four years to
23 establish our student services for special ed and
24 ELL..." -- I don't -- that's a bothersome statement
25 to me, that it's taken almost four years to

1 establish this, when, to me, that would have been
2 the first thing you would establish as a school,
3 like, "What am I going to do? We're going to get
4 GATE kids. We're going to get your regular folks."

5 And you're going to get kids with
6 disabilities. And they could be disabilities from
7 living skills students to students on -- with ASD to
8 students with learning disabilities, dyslexia,
9 whatever, and that I don't see that it was planned
10 for.

11 And that is an issue for me. And then
12 it's reflecting, of course, in your -- in your F-D-F
13 scores on your lowest performing students. And
14 that's not something you have to answer. I just
15 wanted to point that out to you.

16 But the other part is that when you were
17 talking about, "We know that some students are ready
18 to transition out of special ed into our mainstream
19 curriculum."

20 Is that because they were in inclusion
21 classes with a special ed teacher was in that class,
22 and they've been provided extra help? Or are you
23 telling me just because of the Classical program --
24 which, by the way, I think is great -- but how do
25 they get out of special ed? How is that occurring?

1 MR. TIM THIERY: Good. Thank you for the
2 question. The -- I wouldn't say it's the Classical
3 program. I think the -- it's the -- and I've been
4 in public education for, now, 27 years, started in
5 the Midwest for a long time, and have been observing
6 things. My understanding is that the real goal of
7 the special ed program is to equip students to
8 access the regular curriculum and be -- and succeed,
9 that they don't have deficiencies in their mental
10 abilities; they have some sort of a block, a special
11 need.

12 But if we can provide them with
13 strategies, then they can use those strategies, even
14 and especially on their own, because there won't
15 always be a teacher there, you know, alongside them.
16 And then they can perform just like any other
17 student.

18 And I've seen it many times in my career,
19 and students using those strategies. And so that's
20 essentially how they -- and it's happened in our
21 school, where the student has picked up those
22 strategies, has learned to implement them
23 independently.

24 And so they go from -- you know, to a
25 consult mode. So we keep an eye on them. And then

1 a couple of them eventually -- they've learned to
2 use their -- these strategies that we've taught
3 them.

4 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Pogna?

5 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Madam Chair, I call
6 for the question. We've been here all night
7 concerning individual subject matters.

8 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: We don't have a
9 motion to vote on to call the question.

10 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I can just take
11 up more thing, and then I can stop, and then you can
12 do that.

13 I mean, just for your information -- and I
14 believe, as we've figured out, that you've already
15 read all this. So I think that I'm going to take
16 your word that you have a regular curriculum. It's
17 not Judeo-Christian; it has Muslim or whatever in
18 it. I'm going on your word.

19 But I think when you read the comments
20 that the kids and the teachers and the parents said,
21 like, they support Christian schools, very
22 conservative -- and I'm sure that's partly because
23 of your uniforms. But it supports Christian
24 principles, and teachers are espousing Christian
25 principles, but we're not sure if they're

1 challenging us or they're teaching us that. And it
2 can go either way.

3 Another comment was they're sheltered --
4 from parents -- they were sheltered from the bubble
5 of traditional schools, and they were bringing back
6 old-fashioned values.

7 And those are just comments that would
8 lead someone, who is not at your school and doesn't
9 really know about your school, to think that there
10 are a push or a leaning towards different principles
11 than eclectic principles.

12 So that's for your information, and you
13 have it, and you can look at it. It wasn't
14 something I made up, or the Commission. It's
15 something that's the perception of the people who
16 attend your school or send their children to your
17 school.

18 THE CHAIR: Commissioners? Anything else?
19 I will entertain a motion.

20 MS. McKEE: I'll be happy to -- you know,
21 to circle one of the options on this form that you
22 can use. If you want to approve the renewal
23 application, including excluding the amendment; if
24 you want to approve the renewal application for
25 so-many years for this school, excluding the

1 amendment; if you want to deny the renewal
2 application.

3 I don't know what to give you, because I
4 don't know what you're doing. So someone needs to
5 let me know.

6 (Commissioner Carr consults with
7 the Chair.)

8 (The Chair consults with Counsel.)

9 THE CHAIR: I move to deny the renewal
10 application of Estancia Valley Classical Academy for
11 the following reasons:

12 The school committed a material violation
13 of the conditions, standards, or procedures set
14 forth in the charter school contract because the the
15 school's policies are in direct violation of federal
16 law.

17 And the school violated any provisions of
18 law from which the charter school was not
19 specifically exempted, because, once again, they are
20 in violation of federal law.

21 Do I have a second?

22 COMMISSIONER CARR: I'll second.

23 THE CHAIR: Second by Commissioner Carr.

24 Commissioner Armbruster?

25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

1 Pogna?

2 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Absolutely not.

3 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

4 Toulouse?

5 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

7 Gipson?

8 THE CHAIR: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

10 Johnston?

11 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

13 Carr?

14 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

16 Armbruster votes "Yes."

17 Commissioner Peralta?

18 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.

19 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: The motion

20 passes.

21 THE CHAIR: Six-to-one. It's a six-one

22 vote in favor of non-renewing. And you will receive

23 a letter in the mail with information on the appeals

24 process, as well. Thank you.

25 MR. ROGER LENARD: I didn't hear what you

1 said, ma'am.

2 MR. HARLAN LAWSON: We will receive a
3 letter on the appeals process.

4 MR. ROGER LENARD: Oh. Okay.

5 MR. TIM THIERY: Thank you for your time.

6 THE CHAIR: Before everyone goes, Beverly,
7 do you want this -- all of today's taken out, except
8 for the -- the front page, which is the agenda page?

9 MS. FRIEDMAN: That's correct. That's
10 correct. If you'll take them out of your notebook
11 and just stack them on the desk next to you, I can
12 come by and pick them up. And the -- tomorrow's
13 notebook is in front of you in the rubber bands. If
14 you want to put it in, or if you want me to put it
15 in later or tomorrow morning...

16 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: And for
17 clarification, do we take our dividers also?

18 MS. FRIEDMAN: No. Yeah, everything.

19 COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON: But the agenda?

20 MS. FRIEDMAN: Everything but the agenda.

21 THE CHAIR: The time is now 5:00. And we
22 will reconvene tomorrow morning at 9:00.

23 (Proceedings in recess at 5:00 p.m.)

24

25

BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR, CCR #219, Certified
Court Reporter in the State of New Mexico, do hereby
certify that the foregoing pages constitute a true
transcript of proceedings had before the said
NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, held in the
State of New Mexico, County of Santa Fe, in the
matter therein stated.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my
hand on December 21, 2016.

Cynthia Chapman
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HANNA SKANDERA
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

SUSANA MARTINEZ
Governor

VISITORS ATTENDING PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

Meeting

December 7, 8, & 9, 2016

Please Sign-in

Name (Print)	Representing
BRUCE HEENER	ACES
Kade Pichl	NACSA
Michael Vail	TUG
Bree E. Langston	MAS Charter
John Myers	MAS Charter
Jenn Tena	MAS Charter
Juan Monreal	MAS Charter
Leon Gaslye	MAS Charter
Serena Salvador	MAS Charter
Jonathan Cordero	MAS Charter
Her Grogan	MAS Charter
Jacob Bryant	MAS Charter
Carlos Gallegos	MAS Charter
Donna Eldredge	Coral Community Charter
Krista Martinez	Coral Community Charter
James Richardson	Coral Community Charter
Susan Fox	Matthews PK & C
Eileen Montoya	Sage Montessori
Mike Vigil II	TUG LLC
Amber Pena	TUG
Judy Dengs	APS
Leanna Guerrero	Sage Montessori
Patricio H. Rojas	Coral Comm School
John Murray	New America School
Katy Frenz	CCCS
Gregg Pires	CCCS
Christina Weller	CCCS

EXHIBIT

1

BEAN
ASSOCIATES

December 7, 8 & 9, 2016

Name (Print)	Representing	
WADE RANDALL	New America School	
Kaitia HARRIS	NAS	
Liz Martin	Sage Montessori	
Xisheng		
Gene Bush		
Oscar Juarez Jr	The New American school	



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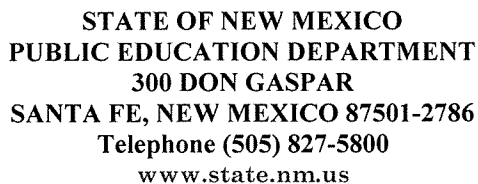
December 7, 8, & 9, 2016

Please Sign-in

Name (Print)	Representing
Jahiz Nancija	Sage Montessori charter
Keshy Callahan	NMCCS
Ann McCollum	Matthew's Fox PC
Anthony Morales	MAS Charter
Natalia Berrin	MAS charter
Andres Salazar	MAS charter
Raeagan Murphy	MAS charter
Chloe Carey	MAS charter
Yania Sanchez	MAS charter School #1
Blair Murphy	MAS Charter School
Claudia Chavez	MAS Charter School
Justine Barnagani	MAS Charter School
Ashley Gutierrez	MAS Charter School
Ashley Bustillos	MAS Charter School
Fabian Vasquez	MAS charter school
Alexis Valenzuela	MAS charter school
Corina Gonzalez	MAS Charter School
Omar Hernandez	MAS Charter School
Adamaris Michel	MAS Charter School
Anthony Martinez	MAS Charter School
Mitchell Price	MAS charter school
Dan Lundberg	MAS charter
Daniel Canale	MAS Charter School
Crystal West	EVCA
Harlan Layson	EVCA
Gerrit Furdhot	EVCA
Kenny Wang	Sage Montessori Charter School

December 7, 8 & 9, 2016

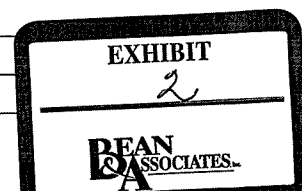
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SUSANA MARTINEZ
Governor

December 7, 8, & 9, 2016

Please select one spokesperson per group

[illegible]

Public Comment

B. Coral Community - 5 minutes

1. Chloe Williamson
2. John Paul Catter
3. Xavier Olivo
4. Benicio Mondragon
5. Jill Urban
6. Greg Reas
7. Tamra Olivo
8. Karen Catter

Students

C. Sage Montessori

† Lajuan Guerrero

✓ 2 Dr. India Northrop Pratt

✗ Elias Martinez

Kathryn Frugu

D. New America School ~~TX~~

5 minutes

1. Oscar Juarez Jr

2. LaTricia Mathis

Public Comment

E. Estancia Valley
Crystal West

December 2016

NM Public Education Commission

300 Don Gaspar, SF, NM 87501

Commission Members,

I am unable to attend your scheduled Charter School renewal hearings this week, but respectfully submit the following comments relative to the Estancia Valley Classical Academy.

In most ways the relationship between MESD and EVCA is positive. We have worked well to insure their students' access to a variety of extracurricular activities and facilities.

We have improved communication and opened access to shared capital resources. And we have even had a number of educators in the community move seamlessly between our two systems.

There is, however, one area of concern that I feel obliged to bring to the Commission's attention.

There has been a noticeable pattern of parents with special needs students (re)enrolling in our schools, reporting having been encouraged to leave EVCA, and being told EVCA could not accommodate their needs .

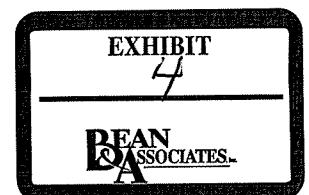
This pattern has not only been disruptive for students, but likely would raise serious issues with the U.S. Dept. of Education's Office of Civil Rights. Our District currently serves approx. 15% of our total student population with Special Education services; EVCA currently has less than 5% of their enrolled students identified as receiving Spec. Ed services.

Assuming that EVCA will, in fact, have its Charter renewed, MESD would respectfully ask that both the PEC and PED see that EVCA staff are provided the legal training and oversight to ensure that families' rights are honored; and that MESD does not disproportionately carry that responsibility in this region.

Sincerely ,



Tom Sullivan, MESD Superintendent



Achieve Your Highest Potential!



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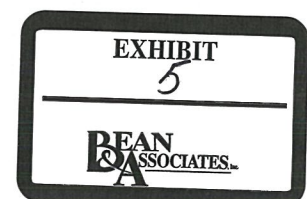
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Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen of the PEC. Thank you for this opportunity to address you regarding our charter renewal. The past five years have been quite a journey, filled with learning at all levels, trying to find a proper balance between character development in such areas as dress code and a rigorous academic program. As the only Founder of the school who has also been a Governing Council member throughout the past five years, I have a unique perspective on the progress of the school, and in particular the progress of the Governing Council in learning to govern a charter school in the state of New Mexico. While there is still room for improvement, our graduates are already being noticed for their academic prowess. One of last year's graduates, who entered the University of Montana on a full ROTC scholarship, was so advanced in literature that the entire first year of the English curriculum was waived. Another student at UNM has the entire first semester of English literature waived.

We maintain an excellent relationship with the Charter Schools Division of the PED. It is unlikely that any charter school in its first years is going to be able to meet every requirement to the letter, however, the EVCA strives to be responsive to findings in all areas and to correct them when they are discovered. Two examples come to mind. First, if we experience an audit finding, we take immediate action to develop corrective actions. Second, when we discovered that the PSFA was requiring affidavits which we had not completed because they never informed us of the shortcoming, the very next day we corrected the problem. It goes without saying that had we been informed of the issue beforehand, we would have complied. We have found that there is a very productive balance wherein we assist our Executive Director to manage the school with centralized control, but decentralized execution. One of our greatest problems has been budgetary. The transition from a school receiving the small school adjustment, to the guillotine reduction in funding once we crossed the 400 student barrier was a particularly traumatic year causing an undesirable RIF and a lot of overloaded teachers. This is our first year where we aren't hanging on by our financial fingernails. We are providing our school with additional staff, more books and overall better support. The situation is much better.

While it has taken almost four years to establish our Students Services (for SPED and ELL students) to the level desired, we have manifested substantial progress in the management of our IEPs, and our students are thriving. We have had many educational successes in this area. While some of our SPED students may not be able to achieve the exceptionally rigorous curriculum demanded by the EVCA, we note that some students are ready to transition out of SPED into our mainstream curriculum. While this generally means less money for our school, there is no substitute for the joy of a SPED student realizing that they are no longer captive to a pre-EVCA universe of low expectations. At EVCA we know that our mind and character-based curriculum, coupled with our fantastic and dedicated teachers are making a real difference in SPED students' lives.

In the CSD's recommendation for renewal report, there were several corrective actions identified.





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1. That the school regularly report on the corrective actions described in the renewal report responses, working directly with the PSFA to verify compliance with facility requirements, provide evidence of corrections based on audit findings and provide CSD with documentation of compliance verification. It wasn't until we had a conference call with the Director of the CSD that we understood that we were responding to a different issue than the PSFA was citing. We received the proper affidavits from PSFA on Monday of this week and completed them and submitted them to PSFA yesterday. While the specific issue which this recommendation identified has already been corrected, as we are planning to occupy a new facility this fall, we understand that there will be more issues with which to deal over the coming years, therefore a bi-annual reporting of our facility situation is a good idea.
2. Because there have been several instances where we could have done a better job of meeting our school's goals, we have taken the following steps:
 - a. We have discussed our approach with the director, CSD, regarding bi-annual face-to-face or telephone conference calls in addition to site visits to review the progress toward full compliance with areas of concern.
 - b. In recent Hillsdale training for Governing Councils associated with the Barney Charter School Initiative, the conference leader indicated that you only get what you expect when you inspect. This is leading us to institute a requirement for reporting regularly from the various divisions of the school through the Executive Director to the Governing Council.
3. In certain areas, such as reconciling the ledger with the bank statement, our finance was gratified to learn that they have already been inspecting the recommended items which are most conducive to preventing fraud and have been verifying them each month for fiscal compliance. They did learn to note these inspections more specifically in our minutes.
4. The school's performance framework includes specific academics goals related to:
 - a. Graduation rate: Our response to this is that we will work with the CSD during our goals negotiation efforts early next year to identify and implement specific graduations rate goals to improve that particular area. We have expanded our domain of after-school activities over the last two years, which has been a concern of some of our high school students, and is cited as a reason for leaving the school. We have also greatly expanded our online dual-credit offerings. While we have an excellent relationship with the Moriarty-Edgewood School District in certain sports, the logistics are somewhat difficult. Our proposed new facility will eventually provide for many more indigenous sports for our students.
 - b. Growth of the lowest performing students (Q1): Our Q1 students are of particular importance to the EVCA, and we observe a rapidly growing influx of students who have been academic casualties from other approaches to learning than those espoused by the EVCA. For several years we have attempted to identify precisely who the Q1 cohort was, but were not able to get those data. Because of Ms. Poulos' interaction, this year is the first year that we have been able to



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positively identify this cohort, although we requested this information annually in the past, and we believe that we are already making progress in this area. I'd like to turn this segment over to our Executive Director, Mr. Tim Thiery to explain our intervention and remediation program, along with specific examples of success.

- c. Here are four case studies of Q1 5th grade students (a key point of transition to the higher level concepts of pre-Algebra) that demonstrate our remediation approaches in math, and the evidence we observe that these approaches are effective:
- "V had been in a first grade math class the year prior to coming to 5th grade. His beginning of year Singapore test in 5th grade showed a score of 8 on Singapore 4A. In response to the **remediation strategies** that we employed (identifying skill gaps, providing extra instruction, providing extra help with homework), at the end of the school year, he scored a 77 on the Singapore 4B EOC math test. He was able to multiply and divide accurately and showed good skill with fractions."
 - "Student A was new to our school and had an IEP. Student A scored a 42 in 4A at the beginning of the year (Singapore). In response to the remediation strategies, A was able to score 83 on Singapore 4B EOC."
 - A, J, and K were placed in my lower level math class at the beginning of 5th grade. In response to the **remediation strategies** that we employed, they were able to score as well as students who were in advanced math classes."

Examples of successes with Q1 students:

Student A (6th grade)

Student A worked closely with **Student Services** and utilized the **LEXIA tutoring program**.

On the reading section of the Gates-MacGinitie test, his improvements are:

Vocabulary: 3.8 to 5.9 (Grade level equivalent)

Comprehension: 3.8 to 7.8 (Grade level equivalent)

Overall improvement: 3.8 to 6.9 (Grade level equivalent)

These test scores show a 3.1 grade equivalent improvement.

Student B (7th grade)

2015 PARCC Math score 754 Level 4

2016 PARCC Math score 770 Level 4

This is a student who is listed on our Q1 data, but who is already a year ahead in math, and doing very well at "above" grade-level work.

Student C (4th grade)

In first grade, student C was below grade level in math. As a support, she received tutoring from another teacher and was placed in a **math intervention program** where she worked extensively on **IXL**. **Due to interventions**, she showed an overall improvement of 13% on 3rd grade IXL math skills, improved to show 100% mastery of 49 different math skills, and is now "on grade level" according to Singapore Math testing.



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Student D

Student D started at EVCA in 2014 with a 60% average in math. This student received intervention with **foundational math instruction** and **tutoring**, and utilized both **IXL** and **Khan Academy coaching** to strengthen his math foundation. The next year, he earned a 79% average in math. This year (2016) he has an 87% on his most recent progress report. He was able to progress from PARCC Level 1 to PARCC Level 2.

Student E

In 2014, student E had a C average and was a year below grade level according to Singapore math placement. In 2015 we utilized an **intervention math class** and she improved to an 81.5% average and gained ground in returning to grade level according to Singapore Math placement. This fall semester, she has a 92% average in math and is set to take Algebra 1 next year so that she will be back on track.

Our plan during the coming years, if you choose to recharter us, is to institute a rigorous plan of data tracking, validation and analysis, recording those data in a common location, so the Governing Council is fully informed of the data upon which the PED makes its review.

When we were drafting our charter, we hired a consultant who claimed to have experience with charter school charter documents. In that charter, we were encouraged by our consultant to include a wide range of goals, which we interpreted to be more like aspirations. For example, our charter includes the following goal:

By the end of the second year of operation (2013-2014), 90% of parents and/or guardians will "Agree or Strongly Agree" that EVCA staff maintains consistent discipline which is conducive to learning on the annually-required NMPED Quality of Education Survey.

EVCA achieved 88% parental agreement on this goal by our fourth year.

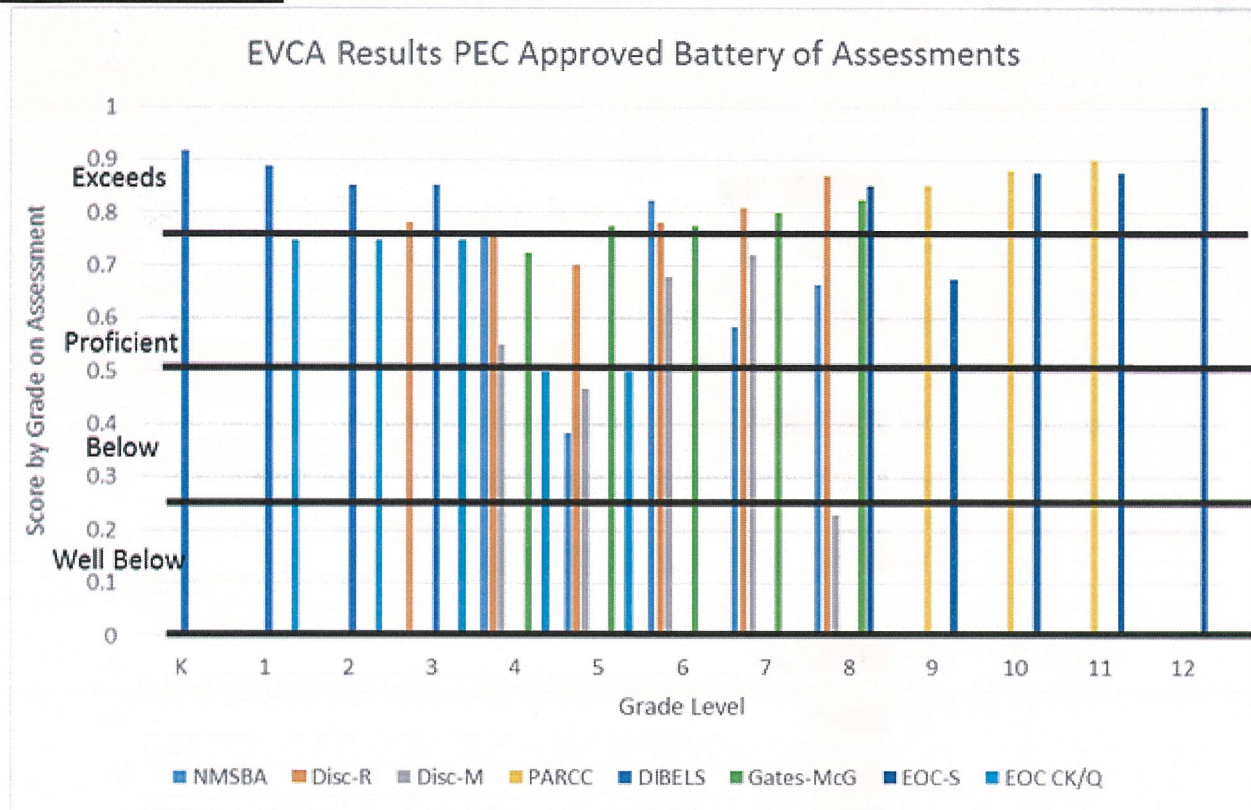
Finally, there are some areas that EVCA, among other charter and non-charter public schools are very concerned about. One of these is the PARCC assessment. The EVCA uses an ensemble of assessments, including: DIBELS, Gates-Macginitie, Discovery, PARCC and the Statewide and CK/Questar End of Course assessments to measure students' progress. Included below are our school's results on these assessments.



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As is clear, our students are proficient or advanced in all but two cases: 5th grade Discovery Mathematics, and 8th grade Discovery Mathematics. Another benchmark is our DIBELS results shown below. In all grades, over the past year, students are progressing well. Indeed, our cohort of the lowest performing students decreases throughout the year, which leads us to wonder why we have not done better on our lowest performing school grade.



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While, for the most part, our students score above the state average and even above the national average in the PARCC for most grades and on the PSAT, we are still well below the proficiency measures for the PARCC assessment, particularly in the upper elementary grades as shown below. We generally do well in the upper high school grades.



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Data—Percent of Students Proficient and Advanced								
Grade Level	Year 1 School Year 12-13		Year 2 School Year 13-14		Year 3 School Year 14-15		Year 4 School Year 15-16	
Test Category	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
3	78 %	39 %	71 %	58 %	76 %	67 %	56 %	42 %
4	46 %	46 %	63 %	47 %	39 %	28 %	33 %	35 %
5	63 %	56 %	82 %	63 %	82 %	34 %	42 %	17 %
6	47 %	33 %	53 %	58 %	59 %	32 %	68 %	32 %
7	72 %	52 %	61 %	39 %	66 %	38 %	51 %	44 %
8	68 %	63 %	90 %	74 %	42 %	17 %	56 %	59 %
9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	86 %	65 %	32 %	37 %
H2	71 %	47 %	67 %	53 %	>98 %	86 %	78 %	61 %
H3	N/A	N/A	93 %	86 %	90 %	100 %	>98 %	88 %

This gives us great pause, as the PARCC is only two years old, and it seems to us is not well benchmarked. Using it as the primary assessment tool for school grading is not indicative of our students' performance. As an example, for grade 3 reading, the PARCC, (above, year 4) shows 56% proficient or advanced while for DIBELS, the score is 88% and Discovery is 75%. This is not an isolated situation, our 7th graders on PARCC show 51% (reading) and 44% (mathematics) proficient or advanced, while for Discovery Reading, it's 81% and for Discovery Mathematics it's 72%. These are remarkably large disparities. For this reason we will continue to use the ensemble of assessment tools in our Goal Oriented Academic Program for academics.

Another area, is school grading. For many areas, the PED's school grading approaches require additional attention. We, along with many other charter schools, welcome the opportunity to work with the PED to make school grading a more transparent and scrutable process. The EVCA looks forward to its charter renewal and taking residence in our new facility. We thank the Charter School Division for a positive renewal recommendation; we look forward to serving our community for another five rewarding years. Mr. Thiery and I would be happy to answer your questions.

Roger X. Lenard
President, EVCA Governing Council

Timothy Thiery
Executive Director, EVCA