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BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION  
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
COMMUNITY INPUT HEARING  
HOZHO ACADEMY  
July 18, 2016  
8:30 a.m.  
Gallup/McKinley County Schools Board Room  
640 S. Boardman  
Gallup, New Mexico

REPORTED BY: Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219  
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A P P E A R A N C E S

COMMISSIONERS:

- MS. PATRICIA GIPSON, Chair
- MS. KARYL ANN ARMBRUSTER, Secretary
- MR. JAMES CONYERS, Member
- MS. CAROLYN SHEARMAN, Member
- MS. CARMIE TOULOUSE, Member

STAFF:

- MS. KATIE POULOS, Director, Options for Parents

1 THE CHAIR: Good morning. This is the  
2 Public Education Commission Community Input Hearings  
3 for HoAc -- is it "School" or "Academy," sir? I  
4 don't remember.

5 MR. PATRICK MASON: It's Hozho -- Hozho  
6 Academy.

7 THE CHAIR: Hozho.

8 MR. PATRICK MASON: So we abbreviated it  
9 "HoAc," just for the purposes of the 400-page  
10 application.

11 THE CHAIR: Thank you so much.

12 We will begin first with the Pledge of  
13 Allegiance. I'll ask Commissioner Conyers to lead  
14 us in the Pledge of Allegiance, and Commissioner  
15 Shearman in the New Mexico Salute.

16 (Pledge of Allegiance and Salute  
17 to the New Mexico Flag.)

18 THE CHAIR: Thank you. And maybe it would  
19 be easier for Commissioner Armbruster if, through  
20 roll call, we just introduced ourselves, so people  
21 know who we are and where we come from.

22 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Just -- if we'd  
23 just --

24 THE CHAIR: Okay. We'll just go down.

25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. Do you

1 want me to go first?

2 THE CHAIR: Sure.

3 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I'm Karyl Ann  
4 Armbruster. I represent District 4 in Los Alamos,  
5 and Rio Rancho and Corrales and -- is this on?

6 MR. PATRICK MASON: I'm not sure.

7 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: No. They don't  
8 like me. Okay. No IT; no mic.

9 And I'm really happy to be here with  
10 everybody.

11 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I'm Carmie  
12 Toulouse from District 3, which is the bulk of  
13 Albuquerque.

14 THE CHAIR: I'm Pattie Gipson, and I am  
15 from District 7, which is all of Doña Ana and a  
16 smidgen of Otero County.

17 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: I'm Carolyn  
18 Shearman. I represent District 9. It's the eastern  
19 edge of the state, a long, skinny area.

20 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Good morning. My  
21 name is Jim Conyers. I represent District 5, which  
22 includes McKinley County, all of McKinley, all of  
23 San Juan, part of Rio Arriba, and part of Sandoval  
24 County.

25 Thank you.

1 THE CHAIR: Okay. I can project.

2 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: But you're not the  
3 only one that's going to be speaking. We do need to  
4 be able to hear everyone.

5 THE CHAIR: I'll go through my legal stuff  
6 while we're waiting for the -- for, hopefully, a  
7 mic. There's actually -- there's a mic down here  
8 that's on. I hate to -- you know, if one of my --  
9 this meeting is being conducted pursuant to  
10 New Mexico Statutes Annotated, Title 22, Section  
11 8B-6J, 2009.

12 The purpose of these Community Input  
13 Hearings that will be held from July 18th through  
14 July 20th is to obtain information from the  
15 applicants and to receive community input to assist  
16 the Public Education Commission in its decision  
17 whether to grant the proposed charter applications.

18 According to this section of the law, the  
19 Commission may appoint a subcommittee of no fewer  
20 than three members to hold a public hearing.

21 According to law, these hearings are being  
22 transcribed by a professional court reporter.

23 The total time allocated to each  
24 application is 90 minutes, which will be timed to  
25 ensure an equitable opportunity to present

1 applications.

2           During the hearing, the Commission will  
3 allow the community input about the charter  
4 application. The time for public comments will be  
5 limited to 20 minutes. If you wish to speak  
6 regarding the application, please sign in at least  
7 15 minutes before the applicant's presentation.

8           And there are sign-in sheets in the back  
9 of the room, in case you did not see them.

10           MS. POULOS: Commissioner, one is labeled  
11 for sign-in, and one is labeled for community input.

12           THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

13           Please be sure that you indicate on the  
14 sign-up sheet whether you are here in opposition or  
15 support of the charter school. The Commission  
16 Chair, based on the number of requests to comment,  
17 will allocate time to those wishing to speak. If  
18 there are a large number of supporters or opponents,  
19 they are asked to select a speaker to represent  
20 common opinion. We will try to allocate an  
21 equitable amount of time to represent the community  
22 accurately.

23           The Commission will follow the process --  
24 this process for each Community Input hearing:

25           The Commission will ask each applicant or

1 group to present at the table in front. They will  
2 be given 20 minutes to present their application in  
3 the manner they deem appropriate.

4 The Commission will not accept any written  
5 documentation from the applicant; but the applicant  
6 may use exhibits to describe their school, if  
7 necessary. However, the setup time for exhibits,  
8 et cetera, will be included in the 20 minutes.

9 Following the applicant's presentation,  
10 the local school district representatives, which  
11 include the superintendent, administrators, and  
12 board members, will be given 10 minutes to comment.

13 Subsequently, the Commission will allow  
14 20 minutes for public comment, as described above.

15 Finally, the Commission will be given  
16 40 minutes to ask questions of the applicant.

17 Commissioners, are we ready to start?

18 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I believe so.

19 THE CHAIR: Okay, thank you. And Hozho is  
20 already here; so I don't have to ask them to come  
21 forward.

22 And please, for the record, state the name  
23 of your school, the names of the founders of the  
24 school, and any other person who is here today on  
25 behalf of your school. And you will have 20 minutes

1 to present your information.

2 MR. PATRICK MASON: Thank you,  
3 Madam Chair. May I proceed, or --

4 MS. POULOS: I've asked them, and they're  
5 working on the mic.

6 THE CHAIR: I don't think we're going to  
7 have any problem hearing Mr. Mason.

8 MR. PATRICK MASON: Maybe after -- maybe  
9 afterwards. Can everybody hear me back there?

10 THE CHAIR: Katie is timing.

11 MR. PATRICK MASON: I'd better look at my  
12 watch too, make sure I don't go over.

13 Madam Chair, members of the PEC, thank you  
14 very much for coming out to Gallup, New Mexico,  
15 today. My name is Patrick Mason. I'm actually an  
16 attorney here in town. I practice law at a law firm  
17 here in town. My primary client is the Navajo  
18 Nation, though; and I actually travel across the  
19 country doing Indian law, primarily for the Navajo  
20 Nation, but for other tribes, as well.

21 Here with me today is my wife, Rachel  
22 Mason. She used to be a teacher at David Skeet  
23 Elementary, a school here just south of Gallup on  
24 the Navajo Reservation. We actually met here in  
25 Gallup.



1 I'm born and raised here in Gallup, came  
2 back after being away from for a number of years.  
3 Never thought I'd meet my wife in Gallup; but I did.  
4 Our fourth founder, Rita Yazzie, she's an attorney  
5 with the Navajo Department of Justice. Her father  
6 passed away, I think, last week. She's unable to  
7 attend today. She did send her apologies, and  
8 she'll probably, at the next PEC meeting, hopefully  
9 be there.

10 She's actually been practicing on the  
11 Navajo Nation since the early '80s. Her and my  
12 father were both entered into the Navajo Nation Bar  
13 Association at the same time. We've known each  
14 other for a long time, going way back.

15 And that's all that we have here today  
16 from our -- directly associated with our school,  
17 which is Hozho Academy. And "hozho" is a word --  
18 it's a Navajo word that I actually use often in my  
19 practice. It kind of has a meaning of harmony or  
20 balance. It's not really enlightenment; that's kind  
21 of an Eastern idea. It's more of an idea of when  
22 you've achieved harmony with yourself, balance with  
23 yourself, you achieve goodness, you achieve a good  
24 sense.

25 It's also about the relationships with

1 others, balance in the relationships with others.  
2 And I think Plato, being that we're a classical  
3 academy -- I better quote at least a little bit of  
4 Plato -- I think Plato and Aristotle would probably  
5 associate it maybe with the idea of justice, which  
6 is probably why we use it so much in the legal  
7 field, as well; like, achieving justice within  
8 yourself, within your relationships with other  
9 people.

10 And we thought that was a very appropriate  
11 idea, a very appropriate word for our school, where  
12 we're really trying to achieve harmony, balance,  
13 justice for our students.

14 The need and target population of our  
15 area, as I'm sure you on the PEC are very familiar  
16 with, is very great. We have 12,000 students in our  
17 district; 80 percent Indian, 14 percent Hispanic,  
18 1 percent Asian, 5 percent Caucasian. 28 percent  
19 English Language Learners. 90 percent of our  
20 students are considered economically disadvantaged.

21 So we are in a tough situation here. And  
22 really, that's why we got involved. We, as members  
23 of the community, as a teacher, as -- and I see a  
24 lot of great members of our community here, too,  
25 that are actively involved in education -- is

1 because we know the need; we see the need.

2 My wife taught at David Skeet, which at  
3 the time, was one of the worst schools in the  
4 district. Now, under great leadership, they're  
5 thriving. It shows you what happens when you have  
6 great people involved at a school.

7 No matter how hard or tough the situation  
8 great people, great leadership can bring schools to  
9 new heights.

10 But she saw it. She was teaching there.  
11 She didn't have a question of could her kids read.  
12 She had a question, could her kids talk, could her  
13 kids speak any language, Navajo, English, whatever.

14 So we're, like, this is the situation  
15 we're faced with. What can we do? We've been  
16 talking about it for a number of years, basically  
17 since we got married. So we had to have something  
18 to talk about; so we talked about education.

19 A couple of years ago, we decided, "You  
20 know what? A charter school might be a piece of the  
21 puzzle to help with this situation."

22 We've been working on it. This year, we  
23 finally thought we were ready, and it was time to  
24 proceed; and so we did.

25 And we were talking about what type of

1 charter school, what could we bring to Gallup that  
2 Gallup has never seen before that they don't have,  
3 try something unique to the area and something that  
4 maybe might lift some of these people up that have  
5 so far, despite all best efforts, been kind of left  
6 behind.

7 As you know, the State is, I think, around  
8 24 percent at grade level, I think, if you look at  
9 the averages in different areas. We're around 8 or  
10 9 percent in our district, and we're, like, man,  
11 that is a tough -- that's a tough number to face,  
12 and it's a tough situation.

13 There's a school in the state, Estancia  
14 Valley Classical Academy in Moriarty, I believe.  
15 And they're kind of -- they're a classical school  
16 based on the same model and a lot of the same  
17 support infrastructure that we have. They're, in  
18 some cases, achieving 84 percent at grade level.  
19 And we're, like, "You know what? That might be  
20 something that might work here, as well."

21 You know, we're not going to be the same.  
22 We're obviously a different population than  
23 Estancia Valley. But some of that stuff that  
24 they're doing, we can adopt here.

25 So really, we have that classical model,

1 and we think it's really great to push community  
2 involvement, as well, and buy-in. We're going to  
3 have -- we've talked -- as you've read all of our  
4 application, a big part of this is not going to be  
5 just having the curriculum and having the model, but  
6 also having the community buy-in and making a school  
7 that actually fits the situation facing our  
8 families.

9 A big part of that is what our parents --  
10 a lot of them are single parents or grandparents or  
11 others taking care of children. So we're actually  
12 going to be open from 8:00 to 5:00 every day -- 7:45  
13 to 5:15, even though -- that's all education time;  
14 that's not all curriculum time. We are going to  
15 have stuff for the students to do from 7:45 until  
16 8:15 [verbatim], whether it's photography, music,  
17 choir, piano, extra art lessons, whatever it is;  
18 study time, sports. Whatever it is, we'll have  
19 stuff going on outside of those hours; but where  
20 we're going to have our students there and encourage  
21 our parents to keep those students there for the  
22 extended day, so that -- you know what?

23 Our -- how many students in Gallup  
24 actually have a chance to take piano lessons? Very  
25 few. But that doesn't mean that they don't want

1 piano lessons; right? So let's offer that. Let's  
2 see what they could do.

3 Our Native children in Gallup are some of  
4 the most talented artists you've ever seen. Let's  
5 give them the tools and resources to expand upon  
6 their art capabilities. Those are the kind of  
7 things they'll be offering outside of our regular  
8 educational hours. And, again, it aligns with the  
9 workday, and it'll hopefully encourage our parents  
10 to not just have their kids at home by themselves  
11 playing video games, but in a situation where they  
12 can really improve upon themselves.

13 And that's all going to be part of the  
14 community buy-in we talk about. Hand-in-hand with  
15 that is -- and this one might be more controversial;  
16 but that's -- again, we have an extended day -- is  
17 no homework. It's tough when you're -- and I know  
18 people in the situation themselves -- when your kid  
19 comes home with an algebra worksheet, and they go to  
20 their parents for help, and their parents might be  
21 slightly embarrassed because they didn't even  
22 graduate high school, or they didn't finish that  
23 situation.

24 So we're trying to get away from those  
25 types of homework assignments like worksheets and

1 things and get into more family-oriented projects.  
2 It would be, you know, like, you're in third grade.  
3 "Take this book home and read it to your parents.  
4 That's your assignment for the day."

5 But the worksheets and the problem  
6 solving, all which are necessary, can actually be  
7 done during the school day or during those extended  
8 periods after -- after the prime -- prime education  
9 is done.

10 That's kind of -- and then on top of that,  
11 too, we also have financial literacy programs and  
12 financial literacy incentives that we've tried to  
13 integrate with our school. And we've partnered with  
14 Pinnacle Bank, a large community bank here in town.  
15 They're going to provide us with all the materials,  
16 financial outreach, and literacy to not just our  
17 students, but to the parents.

18 For example, one of the things we've  
19 talked about doing -- and obviously, this is going  
20 to depend a lot on the principal and the teachers to  
21 implement. But our ideas with this are every day,  
22 you show up -- attendance is a huge problem -- every  
23 day you show up, you get a dollar into your bank  
24 account. And we'll have a school store. And every  
25 "A" you get, you'll get a certain amount into your

1 account, or other things like that, that at the end  
2 of the year, maybe you get to buy an iPad or  
3 whatever it is with your account.

4 But along the way, we teach them how to  
5 balance the checkbook, how to make a budget, how to  
6 do different kind of financial projects, with the  
7 idea that these are the kind of tools that will  
8 serve them for a lifetime.

9 And that really is what our school is  
10 about.

11 So going into now our mission statement.  
12 "Hozho Academy is committed to the tradition of a  
13 classical education. We're committed to a rigorous  
14 program that will develop students who are educated  
15 in all of the liberal arts and sciences, as well as  
16 in moral character and civic virtue. Our goal is  
17 for high achieving and holistically educated  
18 students from all backgrounds and permit a full  
19 understanding of all cultures in the Four Corners  
20 area."

21 How are we going to achieve that beyond  
22 the specifics that I already laid out for you is a  
23 classical education, education of the whole person;  
24 not just math and reading, but science, art, music,  
25 rhetoric, logic, grammar. A lot of original



1 sources; so we're not just going to give them a  
2 textbook, and say, "Read about the Code Talkers."  
3 We're going to give them a book and say, "Here's a  
4 handwritten autobiography of a Navajo Code Talker.  
5 Read that book."

6 Don't just learn about Aristotle; read  
7 Aristotle. Don't just learn about Shakespeare; read  
8 Shakespeare, with the idea being let's get back to  
9 what I think a lot of people, 50, 60 years ago, just  
10 considered education, you know.

11 Let's read these sources; let's read these  
12 books; and let's do our best -- I know we're facing  
13 a lot of hard things here. But that doesn't mean  
14 that we can't still take those models that work.

15 We really want to teach our children the  
16 why behind things; not just the tricks to get their  
17 math done, but why the math works, why the math is  
18 there, the reasoning behind science and other  
19 things.

20 We want to teach them to learn. We want  
21 to prepare them for the future, no matter what they  
22 choose. We want -- "If you want to" -- "If you want  
23 to go to college" -- we want our kids to be able to  
24 get in the best college in the country. If our  
25 children want to go and be farmers on the Navajo

1 Nation, we want to give them the best opportunity to  
2 be those -- to be the best farmers that they can be.

3 We really want to form them in their  
4 humanity to allow them that step-up in life that  
5 they may otherwise be missing.

6 I went to a classical liberal arts college  
7 out in California, actually. And what they told us  
8 our first year was, "By the end -- by the end of  
9 your four years, we hope to show you how little you  
10 actually know; but we also hope to give you the  
11 tools that you need to seek out the true, the good,  
12 and the beautiful, until the day that you take your  
13 last breath."

14 That's what we're trying to achieve here.  
15 We want our children to have the tools to seek out  
16 the true, the good, and the beautiful for the rest  
17 of their life.

18 And that -- whether that means college,  
19 whether that means a mechanic, whether that means  
20 farming; whatever that is, we want our children to  
21 have those tools. And the beauty of the classical  
22 education is it treats all students the same. I  
23 don't care what your background is. I don't care if  
24 you come from the Upper East Side of New York, or  
25 you come from Chinle, Arizona, or -- I guess not a

1 New Mexico public school -- Navajo, New Mexico --  
2 you can learn in the same way.

3 The idea of a classical education is human  
4 beings are human beings. And they can learn, no  
5 matter where they come from. And that's the idea  
6 and the principle behind our school.

7 To go into the specifics of that, my wife,  
8 Rachel Mason, will be talking about our curriculum  
9 and our educational philosophy.

10 MS. RACHEL MASON: Thank you for being  
11 here.

12 And the classical liberal arts program is  
13 really what differentiates us from a lot of what is  
14 happening at the other charter schools here, and the  
15 public school, as well as the parochial schools.

16 And some specifics to the classical  
17 program are we use traditional teaching  
18 methodologies, including a strong phonics program  
19 and Socratic questioning in the older grades to  
20 encourage critical thinking.

21 (Reporter interjects.)

22 MS. RACHEL MASON: Also, we will be  
23 teaching Latin and other modern foreign languages,  
24 starting modern foreign languages in kindergarten,  
25 and Latin starting in sixth grade.

1 Another specific to a classical program is  
2 a content-rich curriculum. And so instead of  
3 doing -- teaching skills just for their own sake,  
4 which, obviously, the skills are very important, we  
5 are weighting them in an interesting, engaging,  
6 content-rich curriculum for our students that's  
7 going to apply to them and is going to interest  
8 them.

9 Also, we have a broad-based program and  
10 multifaceted program; so that includes, as Patrick  
11 talked about, art, science, history, music, all of  
12 those things that sometimes are left out in our  
13 public schools now, because the focus is so strongly  
14 on math and reading. But we think we can use all of  
15 these, a broad-based liberal arts curriculum that  
16 can -- I guess I don't project as well as my  
17 husband -- a multifaceted curriculum that can  
18 incorporate all of those things, as well as more  
19 effectively teach students to read and do math.

20 Our curricular choices align with that  
21 mission and that classical mindset. We will be  
22 using Core Knowledge, which is a -- kind of that  
23 liberal arts curriculum that I talked about. It  
24 includes a lot of content-rich topics, including  
25 things like -- like early exploration, teaching the

1 presidents, using ancient civilizations, those kinds  
2 of things that are really going to be interesting to  
3 our students.

4 Also, we're using Riggs phonics, which is  
5 something that we strongly believe in. Especially  
6 in our area, the literacy is very low. And up until  
7 third grade you are learning to read. From that  
8 point, you're reading to learn. And so if our  
9 students are not able to read by third grade, they  
10 just begin to fall further and further behind. And  
11 we really believe the role that a strong phonics  
12 program plays in teaching students how to read.

13 We will also be using Singapore Math,  
14 which teaches a fuller understanding of the math  
15 concepts. And we have a -- as Patrick talked about,  
16 we have a moral character and civic virtue program  
17 that is not -- it's more than just Character  
18 Counts -- it's integrated into our curriculum.

19 And so we will be reading stories about  
20 courageous Code Talkers or Harriet Tubman and the  
21 courageous things that she has done. And those  
22 virtues that we're teaching are compassion,  
23 perseverance, respect, courage, responsibility,  
24 temperance, diligence, and speaking with integrity.

25 We also have something else that sets us

1     apart is we have language study, as I mentioned,  
2     Latin, as well as modern languages. And students  
3     and parents will be able to choose Navajo or Spanish  
4     starting in kindergarten.

5             We also -- we've partnered with the Barney  
6     Charter School Initiative. And this is important  
7     because it ensures that our teachers and our faculty  
8     will be able to teach this rigorous curriculum that  
9     we are presenting.

10            And there -- additionally, coming out to  
11     Gallup for two weeks before the school year starts,  
12     two trained teachers in the method and -- to help  
13     our administration get things off the ground and  
14     ready for students at our school. They are an  
15     advisory organization, only; so they really -- they  
16     have no real -- well, anyway, they're advisory.

17            And they've also -- they've opened 16 very  
18     successful charter schools across the nation. And  
19     so they have a documented -- they have success with  
20     this program that they've implemented in other  
21     schools across the nation; so that's really  
22     important to us to have that support.

23            MR. PATRICK MASON: Finally, we're going  
24     to talk about how we get to that point after  
25     we're -- after our approval. We're already looking

1 at a building, as I'm sure you've seen in our  
2 application. Juan De Oñate will be closing on  
3 January 17th. Their amazing principal is in the  
4 back of the room. They're moving to a new building.

5 We've talked to the District about using  
6 that building, as long as we can get it up to Public  
7 School Facility Authority's standards.

8 Shortly after that, we're going to be  
9 working with REDW out of Albuquerque. It's a great  
10 accounting firm that does a lot of work in this  
11 area. We'll be moving along -- rather than going  
12 along the whole time line, I'll tell you some of our  
13 big points we're going to be hitting throughout the  
14 next year.

15 In December, we're going to be putting out  
16 request for applications for principals. We've  
17 already had three principals that used to be  
18 principals in Gallup, but have moved away, that are  
19 interested in coming back and interested in applying  
20 for the job.

21 We also have partnerships with colleges  
22 around the country, especially classical colleges,  
23 classical liberal-arts-type colleges, that want us  
24 to come out and present to their students about  
25 coming to Gallup to teach. We're hoping to

1 attract -- we're kind of understaffed in the area of  
2 teachers here in Gallup; so we're hoping to attract  
3 both Gallupians that have hopefully moved away and  
4 have moved back -- that's what -- you're honorary  
5 Gallupians for the day -- but also attract new  
6 people, new teachers to the area to, hopefully, be a  
7 stream of new teachers and young families and young  
8 people to come back to Gallup.

9           And you know what? A rising tide lifts  
10 all boats. We hope that by bringing these teachers  
11 in -- I've seen this in other schools in the area,  
12 like at some of the private schools, where a teacher  
13 will be teaching at the private school for a while.  
14 They go to the public school, or maybe go to a  
15 different school. But the idea being is you bring  
16 great teachers in and bring great people back to  
17 Gallup. And, hopefully, all of our schools will  
18 benefit from that.

19           Really, in closing, what I'd like to say  
20 is that that idea of "A rising tide lifts all boats"  
21 is kind of what's central to our idea of why we  
22 wanted to form this charter school, is you don't  
23 just need private schools; you don't just need a  
24 Catholic school; you don't just need a Christian  
25 school, a parochial school, public schools; you



1 don't just need charter schools.

2 In order to accomplish good education of  
3 your students, you need all of those things. And  
4 you all need to be working together. And we all  
5 need to be working together in those areas, because  
6 realistically, what works for one student may not  
7 work for another student. What works for one  
8 community may not work for another community. And  
9 Gallup-McKinley County is a giant community.

10 Part of the idea is -- or one of the  
11 reasons we really wanted to found this is right now,  
12 you have basically five members of the school  
13 district that have to judge what's going to be best  
14 for the entire county. The idea of public schools,  
15 when they were first started was, "You know what?  
16 Let's get the communities and the neighborhoods to  
17 have as much input into those schools as we can."

18 And I love the idea of a charter school,  
19 because it kind of gets us back to that original  
20 public-school model in some ways. Obviously, we've  
21 achieved great things with the -- with the modern  
22 public-school model. But there are some areas,  
23 especially in a large county, like McKinley County,  
24 where this will give our community more input into  
25 education and more buy-in -- we talked about

1 buy-in -- into the education of our children.

2 I think we're just one small piece of the  
3 puzzle. And I don't envy the school district that  
4 has to deal with issues like busing and food service  
5 for the entire school district, where we get to kind  
6 of just focus on our students. I know it's a  
7 difficult situation. But that's why we got to talk  
8 with the school district. And they're very  
9 supportive -- because they really recognize that all  
10 of us are in for the education of our students.

11 Thank you, Madam Chairwoman and members of  
12 the PEC.

13 THE CHAIR: Thank you. If the Gallup  
14 McKinley-County School District will please come  
15 forward? Is there anyone here from Gallup  
16 McKinley-County?

17 MR. FRANK CHIAPETTI: Yes. We weren't  
18 planning on speaking for or against.

19 (Reporter interjects.)

20 MR. FRANK CHIAPETTI: I'm the  
21 Superintendent, Frank Chiapetti.

22 THE CHAIR: I'm going to ask you to  
23 (indicates) give the space for other speakers that  
24 are going to come up.

25 MR. PATRICK MASON: Should I --

1 THE CHAIR: Yeah. Yeah.

2 So we'll move on to the public comment  
3 then, all right? We will now hear public comment  
4 from the community.

5 MR. PATRICK MASON: Madam Chair, would you  
6 like the mic right here?

7 THE CHAIR: I think that's fine.

8 MR. PATRICK MASON: Okay.

9 THE CHAIR: We have three members of the  
10 community that have signed up. I don't expect that  
11 they were planning on using up all 7 minutes of  
12 time. So -- but each person does have up to  
13 seven minutes to speak.

14 So the first person on the list is Fran  
15 Pawlowski.

16 THE CHAIR: And if you would please state  
17 your name for the record and spell it?

18 MS. FRAN PAWLOWSKI: My first name is  
19 Fran, short for "Francis." Last name is Pawlowski,  
20 P-A-W-L-O-W-S-K-I. Three separate words. I told a  
21 legal secretary that one time. I got a letter to  
22 Mr. P-A-W, capital "P," capital L-O-W, capital  
23 S-K-I. I get I didn't explain it too well.

24 I've been a teacher since I was 13 years  
25 old. So that means for the past 54 years, I've been

1 in the business of education. I taught at  
2 UNM-Gallup; I taught at St. Michael Indian School.  
3 I taught at the college in Ganado. I taught at the  
4 Crownpoint Institute of Technology, which is now  
5 under a different name, "Navajo Technical  
6 University." Most recently, I taught at Middle  
7 College High School here in town for five years.

8 I like what's written behind you,  
9 Commissioners, that the purpose of education is to  
10 provide quality education in a safe and healthy  
11 environment.

12 I think that can be achieved many  
13 different ways. I've seen a lot of success stories.  
14 And I think that a charter school offers another  
15 opportunity, if it's done properly. That's why I  
16 came here.

17 I had no idea that this was being planned.  
18 And I live here in the community, and have, for  
19 45 years. And I'm very proud of it. You can't  
20 guarantee that the results will be entirely  
21 positive. But each time we have an opportunity to  
22 present something different in an environment which  
23 really struggles with education, I think it's a  
24 positive step, again, if it's done correctly.

25 I think a lot of planning has gone into

1 putting this program together, potentially. I'm  
2 very familiar with the -- with the building itself,  
3 as I've spent a lot of time in there. And it's  
4 great if it can be all pulled together.

5 Bottom line, I would support the effort of  
6 this group that's trying to pull this off. They may  
7 come up a little bit short. But better to have high  
8 expectations and solve some of them, rather than to  
9 have no expectations and solve nothing at all.

10 Thank you for your time.

11 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Next on the list  
12 is Heidi Norton.

13 MS. HEIDI NORTON: Good morning. My name  
14 is Heidi Norton. I've lived in Gallup for three  
15 years. I decided to come, because I know Rachel and  
16 Patrick, and also because two years ago, I started a  
17 home school network. I have been home schooling my  
18 children for most of their education.

19 I am an education student -- I mean, I  
20 graduated with an education degree. And we were  
21 living overseas, where there were no other options.  
22 When we moved here, I have one child that  
23 specifically is thriving in home school. But there  
24 was not really a lot of good options for us for our  
25 other child.

1           And I just would like to say that among  
2 the many families that I have collected into this  
3 network for the home school, there is a very -- a  
4 lot of them that are doing home school because they  
5 are frustrated by their choices in Gallup; not  
6 necessarily they want to home school. And so I  
7 think there really is a desire for other options in  
8 Gallup. And so I support this.

9           THE CHAIR: Thank you. And, finally, it's  
10 Jeremy Boucher.

11           MR. JEREMY BOUCHER: Boucher.

12           THE CHAIR: Boucher. Sorry.

13           MR. JEREMY BOUCHER: That's all right.  
14 I'll spell it for you.

15           Good morning. My name is Jeremy Boucher.  
16 It's B-O-U-C-H-E-R. I'm here this morning to voice  
17 my support.

18           I, too, come from a liberal arts education  
19 background. I went to a liberal arts college, as  
20 did my wife. We -- we home-school our seven  
21 children. In effect, we're sort of part of the home  
22 school association here in town.

23           I understand the frustration that some  
24 families have with, you know, feeling like there are  
25 a lack of choices. We home-school, partly for that

1 reason; but we also home-school because we feel it's  
2 at this point, the best thing for our children and  
3 for our family.

4 But we know that we need to keep our  
5 option open. As our family grows, children get  
6 older; they have different needs. And so we're  
7 really excited that -- that this sort of opportunity  
8 is available.

9 The classical model of education is very  
10 important to us, because we -- you know, we got that  
11 education ourselves; and it's brought so much -- so  
12 much to our lives. So we're very supportive of,  
13 especially, that model.

14 The 8:00-to-5:00 school day, honestly,  
15 when I first heard about that, I thought, "Gosh,  
16 it's a long time for a child to be sort of in an  
17 institution."

18 But in having conversations with Patrick,  
19 I've -- I've come to appreciate that, you know, for  
20 this area, especially, that's something a lot of  
21 families may need. If you can have a child whose  
22 both parents work, maybe, trying to just make ends  
23 meet, or a single parent who has to work, what  
24 better way to sort of give them structure during the  
25 day while their parents are, you know, trying to

1 make a living than to have them in an environment  
2 where people are dedicated to their education for  
3 that whole time; whether it's, you know, classroom  
4 time, whether it's getting some help outside of the  
5 classroom to -- to, you know, help them catch up or  
6 stay on track; I think adding music lessons,  
7 supports, all those things into that day, so that  
8 when the child is done, they're done, and they can  
9 go spend time with their family?

10 So families are exhausted at the end of  
11 the day, right? They're extending all this time  
12 working and trying to make ends meet. And it can be  
13 difficult to have children, homework, and all these  
14 other activities that you have to be going here and  
15 there and doing all these other things; so if they  
16 can have those things done during the daytime so  
17 when you get home, the rest of the evening can be  
18 family time, I think that can be positive for the  
19 education of the child and for family life at home.

20 So thank you.

21 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. And that  
22 is the end of public comment.

23 We are now moving on to Public Education  
24 Commission questions. So the Commissioners will  
25 have 40 minutes to ask questions.



1 I'm going to take the prerogative of  
2 saying a few -- asking a few things, not taking up a  
3 lot of time, and then I will hand it over.

4 I'm curious as to why you chose Hillsdale  
5 College to sort of partner with. I don't know how  
6 else to phrase it.

7 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yeah, I understand.  
8 And I'll tell you, I was hesitant, especially -- I  
9 mean, I don't know -- I don't want to bring politics  
10 into anything. But I'm a -- you know, I'm --  
11 whenever I see Hillsdale, I know they get into  
12 politics sometimes; and it can be a little  
13 controversial.

14 We didn't actually seek them out. What we  
15 were doing is we had an idea of the model we wanted  
16 for our students. And we wanted Core Knowledge, and  
17 we wanted Riggs phonics, and we wanted  
18 Singapore Math. And so we were talking -- we said,  
19 "You know what? I bet you there's somebody out  
20 there that uses at least part of that model that we  
21 want that might be able to -- rather than having to  
22 develop everything from scratch, develop a program  
23 completely from scratch, I bet there is something  
24 out there that is already using at least some of the  
25 those things."

1           So my wife got on the Internet, and she  
2 searched for "classical school," "Riggs phonics,"  
3 "Singapore Math," and the first thing that popped up  
4 was the Barney Charter School Initiative, where --  
5 I'm not sure exactly how they got formed; but their  
6 donor, obviously, that formed their foundation, you  
7 know, is associated with Hillsdale. He really liked  
8 the idea of a classical curriculum using  
9 Core Knowledge, Riggs phonics and Singapore Math.

10           So when we saw that -- again, I'll tell  
11 you my wife was more excited, because she was doing  
12 the curriculum stuff. But me being more -- I'm  
13 involved in politics sometimes. I was very hesitant  
14 I'll tell you, at first, to use Hillsdale. But --  
15 and it took a long time before we were willing to  
16 get into that relationship.

17           But they came out; we met with them. And  
18 we told them, you know, this isn't -- you're  
19 advisory and we appreciate that. And we appreciate  
20 the training, because training our teachers is so  
21 essential in using this type of -- these programs  
22 are tough programs. So we have to have our teachers  
23 trained in them, and we can't provide the training.

24           So we appreciate the training; but we  
25 don't want -- number one, we want to make sure that

1 no politics are ever injected into our school. And,  
2 number two, we need to be able to tweak our school  
3 in a way that fits our community. "And if you guys  
4 are not okay with that" -- and we told them, like,  
5 for example, Native American issues, right? When  
6 we're dealing with Native American issues, we need  
7 to deal with them in a real way, without  
8 sugar-coating anything, without the great, you  
9 know -- without just saying that America did  
10 everything right and nothing wrong. We have to deal  
11 with those issues in a real way, and in a fair way,  
12 you know?

13 America didn't do everything right but;  
14 they didn't do everything wrong, either. Let's deal  
15 with this in a proper way. And we need to be able  
16 to integrate things like Code Talkers and Chief  
17 Manuelito and other heroes of the Native Navajo and  
18 pueblo people in our area.

19 And we said, "If you're not okay with any  
20 of this, then you're out."

21 They said, "All we do is send people in to  
22 train your people how to do these programs."

23 We said, "Okay."

24 That's how we got involved. We actually  
25 think they have some great people there. They've

1 done a great job at other schools with amazingly  
2 diverse communities and background.

3 THE CHAIR: I'll be honest. It's not a  
4 political issue for me. It's when you research and  
5 you go on their site, it's a very Christian-focused  
6 school. And that, you know, concerns me, when I  
7 open up a website and there's, you know, the Bible  
8 sitting there. It really seems like there's -- you  
9 know, I don't know how you keep that separate.

10 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yeah. I mean, I  
11 guess -- sorry, I didn't even think -- even think in  
12 that realm.

13 THE CHAIR: It has nothing to do with  
14 politics.

15 MR. PATRICK MASON: So, I mean, I think --  
16 that's just a given. You're a charter school;  
17 you're a public school. You keep that separate.  
18 And if you can't keep that separate, then you can't  
19 succeed.

20 We have not gotten -- if you look at  
21 Core Knowledge, Riggs, and Singapore, which is  
22 basically the only support they're giving us, all  
23 three of those are completely secular programs.

24 THE CHAIR: Right.

25 MR. PATRICK MASON: Not affiliated with

1 any kind of religious institution. So in our mind,  
2 they're only supporting us in training them in that  
3 regard. And that, I guess, is something that we'd  
4 have to be aware of to make sure that that situation  
5 stays in place. And that is something that -- I  
6 mean, as the governing council, I think,  
7 especially -- and it's a good thing that they're  
8 advisory only, because if it ever gets to that point  
9 where they are being inappropriate in their -- in  
10 their kind of Christian influence, then I think  
11 that's up to the governing council, really, to say,  
12 "Well, it's been a great ride, but our relationship  
13 has ended."

14 I think that's something that we have to  
15 be aware of. I think they understand that. If  
16 you -- with talking with them, their charter school  
17 initiative is very separate from the college.  
18 It's -- it's affiliated with the college. But the  
19 director of the program -- and they're aware of  
20 those issues; they're aware that -- I mean, you  
21 can't do a charter school -- it's -- a charter  
22 school is not a religious school, and it should not  
23 be a replacement for that, you know.

24 We're both Catholic. And we would love --  
25 and love Catholic school. We think Catholic school

1 is great. But that's not -- that's very different  
2 than a charter school. You have to keep -- you have  
3 to keep those separate. And we are very aware of  
4 that.

5 THE CHAIR: Okay. I'll just throw in one  
6 more, before I pass it off.

7 I think you're biting off a lot when  
8 you're trying to start K-through-8 and almost 160  
9 students when you're look at the profound amount of  
10 curriculum that's going to have to be generated in,  
11 really, also, in my mind, a very short period of  
12 time, when you're looking at the scope of your  
13 curriculum that you're attempting to offer. And  
14 having spent a lot of years writing curriculum, I  
15 don't think you've put enough time in to adequately  
16 be able to write that curriculum. And having to do  
17 a K-through-8 in that short time period, I think  
18 that's a lot, you know, that it's --

19 MS. RACHEL MASON: Yeah. No, I do realize  
20 that. Thank you for that input. Is this on? So  
21 Hillsdale does have a lot of support in that way,  
22 since they've done it before at several different  
23 schools. There are specific Riggs advisers that can  
24 help with remediation and how to adjust the  
25 curriculum precisely to your students. So we do

1 have a lot of support in that way.

2 I -- we do have professional development  
3 days built in. I think we have three full days  
4 built into our year to help with some of the  
5 curriculum. Also, hopefully, teachers are going to  
6 be able to use planning periods and that kind of  
7 stuff in a structured way -- I will obviously have  
8 to go over this with the principal -- but in a  
9 structured way to be able to develop that  
10 curriculum.

11 And I think -- I think you're right. It  
12 is -- it is a lot to do. We do have a lot of time  
13 built into -- before the beginning of the -- before  
14 students come, to kind of develop all of that. And  
15 a lot of it is going to be the teachers. And also,  
16 we have the dean of instruction that's going to be  
17 involved with the teachers, actively involved  
18 helping them develop their curriculum and write  
19 lesson plans.

20 So it does sound like a lot; but I think  
21 we're also going to expect a lot of our teachers.

22 THE CHAIR: I was looking at that time  
23 frame in the summer. I don't even think it's a  
24 month. Is it just a month? Okay.

25 With that amount of curriculum, to me,

1 I've never seen that, personally, done with that  
2 amount of curriculum that you're asking to be ready.

3 MR. PATRICK MASON: No. I think -- and I  
4 think you're right. I think another thing,  
5 Core Knowledge does have a lot of pre-prepared  
6 lesson plans and pre- -- you're right. I mean --  
7 and we -- we went back and forth multiple times.

8 "Do we do K-through-5 to start and then go  
9 one" -- and the reason we -- well, there's multiple  
10 reasons. But one of the reasons we settled on  
11 K-through-8 is kind of an administrative issue.

12 If we want to have -- I should be -- I'm  
13 used to -- I should stand up, as if I'm in court.

14 One of the things that we're used to, or  
15 that we wanted, was to that coordinator, a  
16 curriculum coordinator, that's not teaching one  
17 class, but is actually coordinating the curriculum  
18 with everybody.

19 And just budgetarily, when we were doing  
20 the budget and working it out, the best way to  
21 achieve some of those goals was to do a K-through-8,  
22 where you can have some of those -- some of those  
23 administrative tasks.

24 And -- but, yeah, you're right. I hope --  
25 I hope we are -- and we do have a lot of support



1 staff, support in place in the community and  
2 elsewhere. But you're right; I hope we're not  
3 biting off too much.

4 THE CHAIR: Yeah, because I guess I have a  
5 concern that if, you know, five sixth-graders apply,  
6 the amount of time and effort that you're going to  
7 have to put in for that curriculum, and you may  
8 not -- you know, what if you just have one  
9 seventh-grader that applies?

10 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yeah.

11 THE CHAIR: You know? And I think -- I'm  
12 sorry. And I think the time was -- if the month  
13 would be allotted if you were able to get funding  
14 for the principal to start earlier. Was that not  
15 what I read, that you were looking to fundraise so  
16 that you could start your head administrator  
17 earlier, so that a lot of this was contingent on  
18 being able to put that head administrator in early?

19 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yeah. So the training  
20 is not contingent on that. The training happens no  
21 matter what, July -- no matter what, the head  
22 administrator is going to start by July 1; and  
23 probably by June 1, no matter what.

24 THE CHAIR: But June 1 is contingent on  
25 funding.

1 MR. PATRICK MASON: And I should say one  
2 of the issues -- and this is more my area of  
3 expertise more -- is I work with a lot of  
4 nonprofits. I think you actually had one of the  
5 nonprofits that I was on in front of you just a few  
6 weeks ago.

7 But the -- we do like -- the -- Excellent  
8 Schools New Mexico.

9 THE CHAIR: Excellent Schools New Mexico.

10 MR. PATRICK MASON: And, again, this all  
11 kind of developed independent from each other.  
12 Everybody is doing everything, it seems.

13 But we do Land of Enchantment Opera, for  
14 example. We do a lot of fundraising. We have some  
15 of our business community, a City Councilor here,  
16 actually, Yogash Patel [verbatim], that when we  
17 presented on our charter school, he was ready to  
18 write us a check walking out the door.

19 We've actually -- if we can raise \$50,000,  
20 which I think is a very realistic number, we'll  
21 actually be able to get our principal in a lot  
22 earlier to be able to do even more of that  
23 curriculum stuff. No matter what, starting June 1,  
24 they're going to hit the ground running.

25 THE CHAIR: Now, I'll turn it over to the

1 rest of the Commission.

2 Commissioner Shearman?

3 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Thank you very  
4 much. I don't see you have a computer -- yeah, you  
5 do; I'm sorry -- because a lot of my questions are  
6 going to be on the budget. That's where I go first.

7 MR. PATRICK MASON: I've got it. I'll  
8 bring it up.

9 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Let me just say,  
10 I've been on this Commission a lot of years. And  
11 one of the things that I think it's important for us  
12 to let you all know -- and I'm sure you may have  
13 already heard this -- is that this Commission must  
14 make their decision on whether to grant this charter  
15 or not based solely on the information that has been  
16 turned in to us.

17 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: We want to hear  
19 what you have to say. It may clarify something for  
20 us, that sort of thing; but we must stick with what  
21 we've got.

22 I want to, first, look at your  
23 application, which is Part C. I'm looking at the  
24 Academic Framework, where you talk about school  
25 size.

1 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Pardon me,  
2 Commissioner Shearman. Could you tell me what page  
3 you're on? Are you reading from --

4 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: I'm reading from  
5 the application. I'm looking at Page 5 of 130. Or  
6 the page number on the application itself is Page 4.

7 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Got it.

8 MR. PATRICK MASON: Okay.

9 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Okay? I'm looking  
10 at your 1 through 5 years of number of students.

11 MR. PATRICK MASON: Right.

12 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: And you get to  
13 Year 5, and it's 383. Then below that, it's at  
14 capacity of 728.

15 I just want to make sure there's no  
16 confusion there whatsoever. If this charter is  
17 approved, your enrollment cap would be 383. If  
18 you're speaking of 728 at some future point in time,  
19 that's exactly the way we -- or I -- understand it.

20 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yes. So our five-year  
21 enrollment cap would be 383, with the 728 would be  
22 kind of our end goal, once we had K-through-12 maybe  
23 10 years down the line, 15 years down the line; but  
24 yeah, our five-year enrollment cap would be 383.

25 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Thanks very much.

1           The other thing I want to mention, you may  
2 not be aware of it yet; but PED has a new  
3 interpretation of some of their budget rules. And  
4 one of those is that a new school commencing  
5 operation is budgeted on the number of students  
6 actually enrolled, not your projection.

7           MR. PATRICK MASON: Right. We understand  
8 that.

9           COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: And so we've got a  
10 problem with that right now with a school that has  
11 17 students enrolled; and they are really in a bad  
12 situation trying to get more students so that they  
13 can open. You can't open with 17 students, I don't  
14 think.

15           But, anyway, just so long as you're aware  
16 of that.

17           MR. PATRICK MASON: We are. We actually  
18 have a very aggressive enrollment -- I guess --  
19 enrollment action plan, I guess I would call it.  
20 We've partnered with numerous large local businesses  
21 that will be doing constant enrollment, daily  
22 enrollments, have basically a counter at their  
23 businesses, where people can enroll. And they're  
24 attracting -- we're talking tens of thousands of  
25 people.

1 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Wouldn't the word  
2 be "apply," not "enroll"?

3 MR. PATRICK MASON: Sorry. I'm not in  
4 education. I sometimes get the terms mixed up. But  
5 no, we do understand that. That's an issue. I  
6 think that's probably the most daunting issue in a  
7 lot of ways is the funding, the financial issues.  
8 You have to get these kids enrolled. And even once  
9 they're enrolled, when July 1 hits around, what  
10 happens if they don't all show up, and your 60-day  
11 numbers, they drop out?

12 So what we've tried to do is be very  
13 conservative in our budgeting, and very -- I guess  
14 I'd call nimble and dynamic in our ability to  
15 quickly change who our teachers are, what teachers  
16 we're hiring, what positions we're hiring.

17 We've really got to thank the school  
18 district. One of the biggest issues is going to be,  
19 obviously -- one of the biggest expenses for charter  
20 schools is buildings and transportation and food  
21 service and things like that. We're -- actually  
22 have a great partnership with the district, where I  
23 think we're going to be able to work on a lot of  
24 those issues.

25 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Let's get to that

1 in a minute. Oh, I do have some questions. All  
2 right. Thank you for that information. I want to  
3 look at your budget.

4 Now, actually, I want to look at your  
5 910B5s first.

6 MR. PATRICK MASON: Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: And that is --  
8 Appendix F.

9 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yes, I have it open.

10 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Just tell me when  
11 you're ready.

12 MR. PATRICK MASON: I'm ready. I'm ready.

13 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: I'm looking at --  
14 I don't suppose it makes a lot of difference;  
15 they're all pretty similar, except for number of  
16 students. But I'm looking at your Year 1, 910B5 I'm  
17 looking at gifted students, in the very, very first  
18 section.

19 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yes, I see that here.

20 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: They're all  
21 gifted. The only students you have that are special  
22 education are gifted.

23 MS. RACHEL MASON: I'm sorry. I  
24 understand -- that may have been my mistake. I  
25 understood that to be C-level special education, or

1 either way; so C-level special needs or C-level  
2 gifted. But maybe I was doing that incorrectly.

3 MR. PATRICK MASON: We -- and reading it,  
4 it says "C & C-gifted." We assumed that was either  
5 C or C-gifted. In fact --

6 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: So your intention  
7 was not gifted.

8 MR. PATRICK MASON: No. In fact,  
9 especially in our area, we imagine most -- probably  
10 all of those would actually be C-level, not C-level  
11 gifted.

12 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: And is that  
13 15 percent of your projected enrollment?

14 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yes, it is, based  
15 upon -- if you take the two of them together, that's  
16 18. So both C-level and D-level, that's 18 of  
17 the -- if you actually look down to the special  
18 education section, you have the 18; plus, then, we  
19 do the A- and B-level, which would be another 5. So  
20 that's 23, plus the 2, and that's how we got to the  
21 15 percent.

22 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Okay. I needed  
23 clarification there, because I really was not sure  
24 what your intent was there.

25 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yeah, our intent is



1 not gifted; it is C-level and D-level.

2 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Okay. Good deal.

3 Let's go on to your budget, please.

4 MR. PATRICK MASON: Okay. I have it open.

5 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: The budget is  
6 Appendix G. And can you see the Excel line numbers  
7 in yours?

8 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yeah. You know --

9 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Please feel free  
10 to sit.

11 MR. PATRICK MASON: Thank you,  
12 Commissioner. I'm used to a judge that might hold  
13 me in contempt if I don't stand.

14 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: I'm looking at  
15 line 63.

16 MR. PATRICK MASON: Okay. And, Your  
17 Honor, one of the things that's --

18 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Commissioners, is  
19 everybody ready in the same place?

20 Okay. Line 63 says, "Teachers, Other  
21 Instruction."

22 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yes.

23 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: And you have one  
24 FTE in year one, two FTE in year two. What teachers  
25 are those?

1 MR. PATRICK MASON: That would actually be  
2 our -- so it's full-time equivalent, not full-time  
3 teacher. So what we were thinking is that would  
4 actually be primarily our language teachers.

5 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: What are they  
6 teaching?

7 MR. PATRICK MASON: Language.

8 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Language.

9 MR. PATRICK MASON: So Latin, Navajo --  
10 it's not just language. It's also Navajo culture.  
11 So it would be our Navajo culture and language,  
12 Latin; it would also be Spanish. Those are our  
13 language teachers.

14 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Okay.

15 THE CHAIR: Can I just ask one question?

16 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Sure. Sure.

17 THE CHAIR: Have you looked to see how  
18 easy it is to find a teacher who's certified to  
19 teach Latin?

20 MR. PATRICK MASON: We actually have one.

21 THE CHAIR: Do you, really? Let me  
22 congratulate you; because I came from a metropolitan  
23 area, and we couldn't find --

24 MR. PATRICK MASON: Sorry. I forget. No,  
25 we -- force of habit.

1           But, yeah, we -- actually, so I went to  
2           the Catholic school in town, and they always offered  
3           Latin. And, in fact, there's a number -- there's  
4           not many; but there's actually two -- and I'd have  
5           to look again. They tell me that they're certified;  
6           so they may not actually be. But there are two  
7           individuals in town that have both taught Latin  
8           before and they say they're certified. But, I mean,  
9           again, I'd have to look at their --

10           THE CHAIR: I think being at a Catholic  
11           school, it could be possible that they're not  
12           certified.

13           MR. PATRICK MASON: We're also partnered  
14           with a lot of classical schools -- classical  
15           colleges that do have that type of thing. And so  
16           we're -- our intent is -- we recognize that might be  
17           an issue. If that is an issue, then we may have  
18           to -- we may have to adjust that. Yeah, we do  
19           recognize that issue.

20           THE CHAIR: Thank you.

21           COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: But you realize  
22           that you have put in the teaching of Latin as a  
23           requirement. Actually, you're making it a  
24           graduation requirement and doing away with career  
25           readiness and replacing it with Latin. That's a

1 requirement in your contract, in your charter. You  
2 can't just change it.

3 MR. PATRICK MASON: No. Yeah, we do  
4 understand that. I shouldn't have said change it.  
5 We're going to -- if that becomes an issue, we're  
6 going to have to find out the best way to address  
7 that issue, whether -- and I think -- and I think we  
8 have a plan for that; namely, these classical  
9 schools that do have Latin-certified teachers, to  
10 partner with them. And I don't know. Maybe you can  
11 address that, as well.

12 MS. RACHEL MASON: Yeah. Well, also, I  
13 guess, in one scenario, if a principal has an  
14 administrator that we hire who has -- ideally it's  
15 one of our preferred requirements -- if they have  
16 experience in classical education, they will likely  
17 have experience in Latin, as well. And if we do not  
18 have -- if the principal -- he could teach a couple  
19 of Latin classes, if he needed to.

20 Or if he is not certified, and we do not  
21 have a teacher the first year that's certified,  
22 we're going to have them on board right away.  
23 They're coming from a classical school. They may  
24 have a Latin background already. But we could  
25 probably provide funding for them to get certified

1 within a couple of years, and then they'll be able  
2 to teach our high school program.

3 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: I hate to be such  
4 a downer on Monday morning. But you do realize in  
5 your budget, your head administrator, your principal  
6 is a 1 FTE. If you have them teaching, they're not  
7 a 1 FTE principal. So you've got to split that out  
8 and show exactly where the money is coming from,  
9 okay?

10 THE CHAIR: And you're starting your Latin  
11 in sixth grade. So it's not a high school issue.  
12 So you need to do that right away, because you're  
13 opening K-8.

14 MR. PATRICK MASON: And actually -- and  
15 the coordinator is the one we're thinking of, not  
16 necessarily the principal; but the coordinator, what  
17 might be considered a vice-principal type thing.

18 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: And where is that  
19 coordinator in your budget?

20 MR. PATRICK MASON: That coordinator would  
21 be -- I think he's in the same section as the  
22 principal. They call it a coordinator or -- it's  
23 under "Administration." I have to look at the line.  
24 They are Coordinator, slash, Subject Matter  
25 Specialists. And that's at line 818.

1 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Say that again?

2 MR. PATRICK MASON: 818, in the Excel  
3 spreadsheet.

4 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Let me go back to  
5 line 63; I wasn't quite finished with my questions  
6 there. Your line 63 and your line 69, your  
7 teachers, Other Instruction, and your Grades 1  
8 through 12.

9 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Their salary  
11 averages out to \$34,312.

12 MR. PATRICK MASON: In our first year.

13 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: You do realize  
14 that's a Level 1 teacher, barely away from  
15 absolutely no experience at all. Level 1, no  
16 experience, starts at \$32,000.

17 MR. PATRICK MASON: And we are -- we talk  
18 about this on our application is we are going to be  
19 looking at a lot of new teachers, primarily because  
20 of the -- not primarily. One of the reasons is  
21 because of the lack of teachers in our area, we're  
22 going to have to be looking at a lot of new teachers  
23 straight out of college. We do -- which will be at  
24 the \$32,000 level.

25 We did try to average in that there are

1 going to be some more experienced teachers. But  
2 realistically -- and it's the type curriculum, too.  
3 It's not what most teachers are used to. We do want  
4 a teacher that is fairly new to the teaching game  
5 that's going to come in with an open mind and not  
6 get bogged down, I mean, teaching phonics and things  
7 like that, that they've never done before and get  
8 frustrated.

9 We do -- we did build extra into the  
10 budget, with the idea being -- even within -- even  
11 within the teacher areas -- that when you average  
12 them all out, we have, like, probably two extra  
13 positions in there.

14 So if we do have more experienced  
15 teachers -- and the coordinator. The idea of the  
16 coordinator is a very experienced person in the  
17 coordinator position that can actually help with  
18 these new teachers, and have just a couple of the  
19 teachers that are obviously going to be more  
20 experienced. And if you average it out, we figure  
21 that, you know, you're going to have about three --  
22 three, four, five year -- that have been teaching  
23 for four or five years, and most of them, one or two  
24 years, and the coordinator who would have many  
25 years' of experience.

1                   COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Anybody with more  
2 than five years is going to have Level 2, and that's  
3 going to cost you \$42,000, at least. And actually,  
4 if they've got that more years of experience, it's  
5 going to cost you more than \$42,000.

6                   MR. PATRICK MASON: That would be our  
7 coordinator position we have at \$44,000.

8                   COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: I'm talking about  
9 teachers.

10                  MR. PATRICK MASON: I understand that.  
11 Our pay scale, once they're up to a Level 2, it  
12 should pay them that.

13                  COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Okay. While we're  
14 still on teachers, I don't think you've got enough  
15 money in teachers. I know in year two, the teachers  
16 that you have here, the FTE that you have here, that  
17 averages out to everybody gets a \$10,000 raise. But  
18 that's year two.

19                  First, you've got to get those teachers in  
20 here. I've been on the school board in Artesia for  
21 30 years. I will tell you getting teachers is  
22 tough, really tough. We've gone to the extreme of  
23 teacherages now. We have housing that is a lure to  
24 have teachers come to our town, even a brand new  
25 teacher.



1           It is tough. At \$32,000, you're going to  
2 have a hard time getting them in here.

3           Let me ask one other thing. In your  
4 application, Part C of the application, starting on  
5 Page 14 of the application, you talk about the time  
6 line for curriculum development, that the teachers  
7 are going to work July 24th through August 11th,  
8 designing curriculum matters.

9           Where is the money to pay for that extra  
10 time?

11           MR. PATRICK MASON: To the -- for the  
12 teachers?

13           COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Yeah.

14           MS. RACHEL MASON: That -- that's part of  
15 their contracted days. That's their first day.

16           THE CHAIR: July?

17           MS. RACHEL MASON: For teachers.

18           COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: They're going to  
19 work almost a month for \$34,000. You're not going  
20 to get anybody but brand new, first-year-teachers.  
21 And they don't know how to write curriculum, for the  
22 most part. They don't. Curriculum maps are big  
23 stuff. It takes experience to write a curriculum  
24 map, in my opinion, okay?

25           MS. RACHEL MASON: So we will -- so we

1 will have the principal advising them during that  
2 period. We will have Hillsdale working with us  
3 during that period. And we will have the  
4 coordinator, as well, helping train teachers on how  
5 to do that, during that period of time.

6 THE CHAIR: It's very difficult to train  
7 someone to do something while they're supposed to be  
8 doing it. So to take the time to train someone on  
9 how to write curriculum takes a good -- to me, it  
10 takes years to learn how to write good curriculum.

11 So now you're asking people to come in to  
12 get trained on how to write curriculum and write the  
13 curriculum within that one-month time frame, and  
14 asking them to work a month as -- am I correct? -- a  
15 month more than most other school districts are  
16 asking for that money; there's no additional  
17 compensation there for it.

18 MR. PATRICK MASON: And I think you're --  
19 and I think you're right. That might be an issue.  
20 We do have -- I think it was more of, like, a  
21 workshop, a curriculum workshop. It's not, "Here's  
22 how you write it." We're going to have a number of  
23 people on the ground from the Barney Charter School  
24 Initiative that will be actually working with them  
25 hands-on as they write it. So it's a kind of

1 hands-on approach to writing curriculum. But that  
2 being said, I do understand the issue --

3 THE CHAIR: But you're asking people to  
4 write something that they don't know how to write.

5 MR. PATRICK MASON: Right. I --

6 THE CHAIR: You know, it's not like you're  
7 getting people who have experience with this, so all  
8 they really need is some guidance on the classical  
9 components of it. And you're asking these people to  
10 write K-through-8 curriculum in this amount of time.  
11 And I'm sorry. I don't remember -- now I'm eating  
12 up your time.

13 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: No, that's fine.

14 THE CHAIR: Are you anticipating that  
15 there could be a potential for someone teaching  
16 third and fourth grade, if the numbers are low? I  
17 don't -- I don't remember seeing that.

18 MS. RACHEL MASON: That -- that would not  
19 be ideal. I think he has other soft points in the  
20 budget for that, for other -- other ways that we  
21 could adjust the budget besides combining classes.

22 THE CHAIR: So.

23 MS. RACHEL MASON: So our staff -- our  
24 teachers are 195-day employees. I'm not sure what  
25 the -- what the -- what the school district does.

1 But the total days, including that time, would be  
2 195 days.

3 THE CHAIR: Including the curriculum time  
4 is 195 days?

5 MS. RACHEL MASON: That's correct.

6 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: 181 is --

7 THE CHAIR: Right. But the curriculum --  
8 so it's only 15 additional days, then, that you're  
9 doing -- it's three weeks, you're doing curriculum;  
10 so it's even less time.

11 MS. RACHEL MASON: So I --

12 THE CHAIR: And they're not getting paid  
13 for it.

14 MS. RACHEL MASON: Well, that's included  
15 in their contract.

16 THE CHAIR: I understand. But when you're  
17 looking at they're competing for -- you know, a  
18 commodity that is a quality teacher, you're asking  
19 them to do more for less money than if they went to  
20 another school district.

21 MS. RACHEL MASON: I think, too, I'm  
22 hoping that the type of curriculum that we'll be  
23 having at our school is going to attract teachers  
24 who are excited to be -- to be able to teach this  
25 type of curriculum; because -- and I know when I was

1 teaching, I was frustrated that I was teaching just  
2 the -- the Basal Reading program and just the math  
3 program, and I wasn't able to integrate all of these  
4 other things that I wanted to integrate into my  
5 curriculum.

6 And so I'm hoping that this type of  
7 education will be a draw, also, for talented  
8 teachers who are invested in education, believe in  
9 this model of education, and would like to come --  
10 come do that.

11 THE CHAIR: I understand that. But I --  
12 I'm of the -- I'm of the mind that you get paid for  
13 the work that you do.

14 MR. PATRICK MASON: No. And we agree.  
15 And I think -- and especially if you want to keep  
16 teachers in the community, you need to get to those  
17 level -- I think you're right, that -- and, again,  
18 this is coming from a lawyer doing the budget. We  
19 have REDW doing our first-year budget. They'll  
20 probably have to adjust that; like I say, put more  
21 money into teachers.

22 From one point of having an attractive  
23 commodity, we have a Catholic school in town and a  
24 Christian school in town. They have no problem  
25 getting a lot of teachers in from out of community.

1 So when you go to a Catholic college, and you say,  
2 "Hey, do you want to come out to an area and teach  
3 at a Catholic school that has A, B, and C"?

4 They get paid \$22,000. The Christian  
5 school doesn't get paid much more than that. In  
6 fact, a lot of the teachers at the Christian school,  
7 including the one who has his master's in classical  
8 education and is certified in Latin, as well,  
9 they're getting paid \$28,000 right now.

10 So you're right. They would have to be,  
11 based off their years of experience, paid more under  
12 our model. But I think that if you have something  
13 that people want to teach, we're hopeful.

14 Again, maybe this is not founded. But we  
15 are hopeful that we'll be able to attract a new  
16 stream of teachers into the area that have not, up  
17 to this point, been attracted.

18 And in Estancia Valley, in Moriarty -- how  
19 many people would you expect to live in Moriarty? --  
20 they have -- we had a walk-through of their school.  
21 And they have many, many young teachers, a lot of  
22 them from out of state, that have come there  
23 specifically to teach at their classical school.

24 THE CHAIR: I don't want to keep busting  
25 your bubble. If you're looking to attract teachers

1 from all around the country trained in classical,  
2 New Mexico doesn't pay as well as many other states;  
3 so you're also going to be competing.

4 MR. PATRICK MASON: With the other states?  
5 Yeah, I could see that.

6 THE CHAIR: Yeah, right. So that's --  
7 that can be a concern.

8 Okay.

9 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Let me ask you  
10 about the after-school program, those extended  
11 hours. Where is the money for that?

12 MR. PATRICK MASON: So the money is -- we  
13 do have some money budgeted for the actual -- if you  
14 look throughout the budget -- let me find the line  
15 numbers -- we do have our co-curricular and  
16 extracurricular instructors with the full-time --  
17 with the full-time equivalents being they're not  
18 going to be a full-time day. So we can have  
19 multiple part-time.

20 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Line 131?

21 MR. PATRICK MASON: Let me see. Yeah,  
22 that would be -- that would be line 131.

23 And then, also, if you look into the  
24 actual supplies, we have, built in into the budget,  
25 room for the supplies. Obviously, our first year, I

1 think our after-school program is going to be --  
2 "light" would be the word; because it's just not in  
3 the budget. It's just not in the budget. We do go  
4 up after our first year.

5 And to be clear on this budget, too, we're  
6 only taking into account SEG funds. We're not  
7 taking into account any --

8 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: That's all we  
9 wanted.

10 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yeah. And so there  
11 will be additional funds. But just assuming -- we  
12 wanted to be conservative. So our first year, we're  
13 obviously not going to have all the extracurriculars  
14 we like; probably even in our second year. That's  
15 going to be a program we have to slowly build up.

16 What we did budget for was enough to  
17 have -- it's going to take community involvement.  
18 It's going to take parents and community members  
19 volunteering to do piano lessons, volunteering to  
20 do -- and, again, this is not our education; this is  
21 an extracurricular -- volunteering to teach tennis,  
22 volunteering to work with students on the business.  
23 So that's really where it comes.

24 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Let me ask you  
25 about your year two, where everybody is getting a



1 \$10,000 raise.

2 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yeah. And that was  
3 something I noticed -- so when I first --

4 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Let me ask a  
5 question. Who wrote this budget?

6 MR. PATRICK MASON: I did.

7 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: So how did  
8 everybody get a \$10,000 raise?

9 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yeah, that wasn't  
10 intended to be a \$10,000 raise. What that was  
11 intended to be was, again, full-time equivalents,  
12 not full-time teachers.

13 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: FTE is full-time  
14 equivalents; right?

15 MR. PATRICK MASON: Right. So we actually  
16 had a number of part-time teachers built into the  
17 budget that would actually assist with the classes.  
18 We have larger class sizes than normal. The idea  
19 being not a \$10,000 raise; but that hopefully, we'll  
20 be having additional part-time teachers that can  
21 assist -- not just teachers aides, like we have  
22 built in elsewhere, but additional part-time  
23 teachers.

24 And we're going to start attracting --  
25 part of the reasons we have to focus on

1 inexperienced teachers might be a budgetary concern.  
2 I'd like, after our first year, to hopefully be  
3 attracting some of those sixth-year teachers, those  
4 eighth-year teachers that have been in there. Now,  
5 they're looking at us, and we're established, right?  
6 After year one, we're established. Hopefully, we  
7 can attract some of these more experienced teachers,  
8 and, additionally, we'll bring more of them in to  
9 handle the class sizes.

10 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: So you have  
11 part-time teachers built into your FTE.

12 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yes. Unless I did  
13 that incorrectly, I thought I was able to do that.

14 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: It's certainly not  
15 clear, but -- your head administrator also gets a  
16 \$10,000 raise in year two? That's line 817.

17 MR. PATRICK MASON: And that was probably  
18 a mis- -- a mistake on my part. When I was -- where  
19 is that? Excuse me.

20 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Line 817.

21 MR. PATRICK MASON: Line 817.

22 MS. RACHEL MASON: I think that year, too,  
23 we jumped from being just a K-through-8 to having  
24 high school, as well. And so we'll have to pay our  
25 principal more, because he will be a high school

1 principal at that point; 'cause we'll be K-through-8  
2 the first year, and then the next year, K-through-9.

3 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: I'm looking at  
4 your benefits on line 853. I believe your benefits  
5 are too low. They're 26 percent. I understand  
6 benefits are running above 30 percent, like 33 to  
7 35.

8 MR. PATRICK MASON: And that was something  
9 that was pointed out to us in our PED meeting. The  
10 way I calculated benefits was I took five schools,  
11 and I averaged them out. And I -- and then she told  
12 me what she should have done is just calculate the  
13 benefits at 30 percent; so that was actually an  
14 error on my part. They should be calculated higher.  
15 But, again, I just took that from real-world  
16 averages is how I came up with those numbers.

17 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: I notice in your  
18 application, on Page 19 -- no, let's go to Page 17  
19 first. I really have to say, I'm very concerned. I  
20 understand your -- your intention to have a  
21 high-quality classical education. But as you said  
22 earlier, you have children that come in to schools  
23 here in this community that don't speak any  
24 language. And so you're going to start two  
25 languages in kindergarten for those: English and

1 either Spanish or Navajo. Then, when they hit sixth  
2 grade, they're going to start in Latin.

3 That's a lot for a kid. And Latin, I --  
4 it's a classical language; I understand that. Lots  
5 of Jeopardy questions on Latin. But I just -- I  
6 wonder, for kids who come from an economic  
7 background that's struggling, as you said, to have  
8 Latin instead of career readiness as a graduation  
9 requirement --

10 (Timer indicates.)

11 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: It doesn't matter.  
12 We can have all the time we want. So I'm sorry;  
13 I'll shut up here in just a minute.

14 MR. PATRICK MASON: So I think -- and this  
15 is something in my personal life, as well. When you  
16 talk about career readiness and Latin, I think that  
17 is actually one of the things that prepared me very  
18 well -- I mean, not just because I'm a lawyer and  
19 use Latin more than many professions -- and doctors,  
20 obviously, and some professions really use Latin.

21 But the idea of career readiness, to me,  
22 is that logical thinking, thinking on your feet,  
23 being able to take a problem and find a solution to  
24 that problem -- I don't think there's anything --  
25 anything better for career readiness than those

1 types -- than that type of training.

2 And in my personal experience, I went to  
3 school here in Gallup. And I actually did take  
4 Latin. And I did not understand why I was taking  
5 Latin, versus Spanish, at the time. And I do wish I  
6 had Spanish, as well.

7 But I -- but I have Latin. And I'll tell  
8 you that when I see just the way that Latin is  
9 taught is in a very logical -- it's almost like  
10 teaching logic. This is something we did at my  
11 college, too. The way you teach logic is not  
12 necessarily going in and saying A, B, C; you know, A  
13 plus B equals C. What you do is you teach Euclid --  
14 right? -- a very logical math system. Or you  
15 teach -- or you read a very logical work.

16 And I think Latin is one of the best ways  
17 to teach logic because -- I'm sure a lot of people  
18 used to diagram sentences; right? Latin -- Latin  
19 is -- and they don't really diagram sentences  
20 anymore. In Latin, you have no choice but to  
21 diagram sentences.

22 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Kids in an  
23 economically depressed area, they're not going to be  
24 an attorney; they're not going to be on Jeopardy. I  
25 haven't been on Jeopardy.

1 MR. PATRICK MASON: I was thinking more  
2 the attorney, not the Jeopardy.

3 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Are they going to  
4 get those skills somewhere else?

5 MR. PATRICK MASON: I wish Rita was here.  
6 She grew up in a hogan with dirt floors, no running  
7 water. She was taken -- with a middle-class,  
8 upper-class family, for Navajo people. She was  
9 taken out of the hogan, placed in a boarding school.  
10 This is one of our founders we're talking about.

11 This is a woman who -- everybody said that  
12 right there. "You can't be an attorney. You can't  
13 do this. You could barely talk. You live on dirt  
14 floors."

15 She is a successful attorney. She sent  
16 her child to Notre Dame. Rita Yazzie, who has such  
17 a strong Navajo accent, you may not be able to  
18 understand her when she's speaking English, is very  
19 fluent in Latin, as are her children who went to  
20 Notre Dame college. And these are all children who  
21 said, "You can't do it."

22 But Rita Yazzie, and many people on the  
23 Navajo Reservation, when given those opportunities,  
24 it's amazing how much they can accomplish.

25 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Please understand

1 me. I didn't say those children would not be able  
2 to be anything they wanted to.

3 MR. PATRICK MASON: Oh, I'm sorry. I  
4 thought that's --

5 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: I simply say you  
6 describe the economy here in this area. That says  
7 to me a lot of those students are going to go to  
8 work. They do in my area. They don't necessarily  
9 go on to college. They get a job and support their  
10 families.

11 MR. PATRICK MASON: You're right.

12 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: I am simply -- I  
13 would like to be reassured that somewhere in your  
14 school, you're going to teach job readiness.

15 MR. PATRICK MASON: That's actually --  
16 you're absolutely right about that. Job readiness,  
17 especially in our area, is essential. And I think  
18 the number one way we prepare for job readiness is  
19 just teaching them to read well and write well and  
20 interact well with others.

21 I know that's being on the -- I'm the  
22 President of the Chamber of Commerce, as well. And  
23 I know that's one of our biggest issues facing our  
24 employers. And that's one of the reasons that we  
25 strongly try to emphasize we're not a college prep

1 school, necessarily. If you want to go to college,  
2 we're going to give you the tools to go to college.

3 But we recognize that in our area -- and  
4 it's not a bad thing, either -- if you want to go  
5 back and be a farmer on the Navajo Reservation, we  
6 want you to do that. We don't want to discourage  
7 you from doing that.

8 If you want to be a mechanic, we want you  
9 to do that.

10 We've talked about partnering with various  
11 businesses in the area. Murphy Builders, who's a  
12 big construction firm, we've talked with them about  
13 setting up machine shops and wood shops, all in the  
14 after-school area. During the day, you still get  
15 that central education that every human needs. But  
16 then in the after-school program, that's where we  
17 focus on job readiness.

18 In fact, just this morning, I got an  
19 e-mail from the largest CDL trainer in Gallup  
20 saying, "We want to partner with your school."

21 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: I've taken up more  
22 than my time.

23 MR. PATRICK MASON: I hope that addresses  
24 that.

25 THE CHAIR: Commissioners, can I ask that



1 we take a five-minute break before we continue on?

2 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yeah. Thank you.

3 (Recess taken, 9:58 a.m. to 10:06 a.m.)

4 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Conyers, do you  
5 have questions?

6 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Maybe questions or  
7 comments.

8 THE CHAIR: Okay.

9 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Partially, a  
10 disclaimer. As someone who took two years of Latin  
11 in high school, I feel like it has done me no harm,  
12 that I'm aware of; and I think it's probably a good  
13 thing, probably challenging.

14 Like the other Commissioners, I realize  
15 your program is very hopeful and kind of, I guess,  
16 ambitious, in terms of what you're doing and  
17 requires a lot of, you know, community support.

18 And I notice on the community input  
19 portion here -- I know we have another person who  
20 wants to speak that may be a part of this -- but  
21 the -- I didn't really see representatives of the  
22 Native American community here today. And  
23 usually -- usually, for community input, we have,  
24 you know, more people. But that's I guess neither  
25 here nor there. But that was just something that

1 I'm wondering about.

2 The other issue that's been mentioned is  
3 enrollment. And that's where schools struggle, you  
4 know. They say, "Oh, yeah, we're going to get all  
5 these people, and they're going to come. If we  
6 build it, then they'll come."

7 And so they build it, and they don't come.  
8 So that's one of the challenges I see that you're  
9 facing there.

10 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yeah. If I can  
11 address some of those concerns?

12 One of the reasons we chose the location  
13 where we're hopeful we're going to be set up is that  
14 that's one of the most highly concentrated  
15 populations in the city. It's also -- it's also in  
16 a very low-income area.

17 We actually just did a radio interview for  
18 three stations regarding -- that contacted us to  
19 do -- because of their interest in those  
20 communities, where people from those communities  
21 that had expressed interest in our school had  
22 submitted questions and talked with us.

23 And that actually just aired yesterday  
24 morning. You're right. I was actually a little  
25 disappointed, as well, as far as the attendance

1 today goes. I think part of the reason is, you  
2 know, it's hard to get people to show up at 8:30 on  
3 a Monday, sometimes.

4 But we do have -- as far as when we've had  
5 our meetings with the community, we've always --  
6 we've had some great attendance, especially when  
7 I've been meeting with some of the Navajo Nation  
8 chapters and others on the Navajo Nation that do --  
9 that have given us a lot of really great feedback  
10 and input.

11 We have, I think, over 200 Likes on our  
12 Facebook. We have a mailing list of over 800 people  
13 right now. We have, over the last -- just really  
14 since January -- we've accumulated a large number of  
15 people that are receiving our e-mail newsletters,  
16 that are -- that are interested in sending their  
17 children, that are -- so you're right. It is  
18 disappointing when -- I was kind of hoping for a  
19 packed house.

20 But I think sometimes -- and this might be  
21 a good sign; I know I've been to other PEC  
22 meetings -- that sometimes the packed house, when  
23 there's community outrage over something, as opposed  
24 to necessarily community support, that most of the  
25 times I've seen the room packed has been when, for

1 example, all the teachers are against us, or the  
2 school district, or whoever, is against them.

3 We've done a really good job, I think, of  
4 building relationships with the different groups.  
5 And so I think part of the reason you haven't seen a  
6 packed house today is nobody is trying to fight us  
7 on bringing this school here; right now, at least.

8 So far, we haven't had anybody stand up  
9 and say, "You will not do this. We will stand  
10 against you, and you will not do this."

11 Everybody's been, like, "Oh, yeah, we want  
12 to support you in the best way we can."

13 On the enrollment issue, that's clearly  
14 going to be the small heart attacks that I have  
15 between now and next July. We -- we do have a  
16 strong enrollment action plan. But I recognize  
17 that -- again, we're talking about -- that's one of  
18 the reasons we're not going to be hiring,  
19 unfortunately, until later is not just the financial  
20 reasons, because also because we need to have really  
21 firm enrollment numbers before we get to that point.

22 But I am confident, being -- having  
23 organized these types of numbers before -- I mean,  
24 and organized these types of activities before -- I  
25 think -- I think we will be able to pull off those

1 enrollment numbers, if for no other reason than on  
2 the North Side where the Juan De Oñate building is,  
3 if we can go in there, there's four low-income  
4 housing communities, large low-income housing  
5 communities within a half-a-mile walk of the school.

6 That school, right now, is completely  
7 overfilled and overpacked. If we got a tenth of  
8 that community alone, we would hit our enrollment.

9 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Okay. Yeah, I --  
10 just as a -- I don't know -- a word of advice. If  
11 you do get approved, the last school I retired from  
12 was Dzilh-na-o-dith-hle, south of Bloomfield. And  
13 what seemed to work for us was -- it's a grant  
14 school, which is the Navajo Nation's equivalent of a  
15 charter school.

16 And we had our liaison people basically  
17 going door-to-door out meeting people in the  
18 community there to kind of bring them in. And that  
19 seemed to be -- I mean, you can make announcements  
20 and all that thing; but I'm not --

21 MR. PATRICK MASON: Boots on the ground?

22 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Yeah, that's  
23 exactly right.

24 MR. PATRICK MASON: Thank you. That's  
25 actually a great -- we appreciate that.

1 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Okay. Thank you.

2 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

3 Commissioner Toulouse?

4 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Madam Chair? I  
5 think my voice can be heard. Can you hear me back  
6 there?

7 I have a few more comments than I really  
8 have questions.

9 I am concerned on the K-to-8. In my going  
10 on four years on the Commission, we have never  
11 approved more than two years for a new school; or  
12 even now, when people wanting add-on, to do that. I  
13 am really concerned how you're going to get through  
14 eighth grade, also, knowing that there are special  
15 problems with middle-school students.

16 I am not an educator; but I'm a parent and  
17 a grandparent, and I spent 30 years in Human  
18 Services programs, and my background is in  
19 anthropology. I have a broad enough background, I  
20 know what we're getting -- not to mention my father  
21 helped codify the first Navajo Tribal Code as an  
22 attorney.

23 MR. PATRICK MASON: Oh, wow.

24 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: And I was out  
25 here -- he had many clients here. He worked for the

1 Tribe well before your father was doing any of that.

2 And I also lived/worked on the  
3 reservation.

4 But -- so I'm well aware of the community.  
5 And I think that to draw in those older kids, you  
6 may need to draw in the younger kids first and get  
7 other siblings and cousins and people, if that's the  
8 community you're looking at.

9 But I'm not convinced you're looking at a  
10 Native community. I think it's open to that, if the  
11 students want to come. If you're looking at the  
12 Estancia Valley Academy, they don't draw a  
13 broad-based group. And they do have -- by the way,  
14 they also have an easier time finding teachers,  
15 because that whole east side of the mountains is  
16 built up, and there's people who live there -- you  
17 know, I have relatives who live out in that area who  
18 teach at East Mountain High School.

19 So my comment is I think you've bitten off  
20 too much. And while, because it's a public school  
21 you're open to everybody, I'm not sure that's who  
22 you're really addressing.

23 I also have problems with the Hillsdale  
24 thing; but I think you've explained that you will  
25 keep it separate from the religious component of

1 that school.

2 My other issue is your involvement with  
3 the Excellent Schools New Mexico and the fact that  
4 you were interviewing Bellwether -- we were totally  
5 left out of the whole loop, and we could not find  
6 out what was going on. It took us subterfuge to  
7 find out what went on. That doesn't give me a  
8 personal feeling --

9 MR. PATRICK MASON: I understand.

10 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: -- toward you.  
11 That will not necessarily affect a vote. But I  
12 wanted you to understand, it sets up, especially  
13 when you are still now on the board for that group,  
14 who are not working with us yet.

15 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yeah. And I do  
16 understand that. And that's -- and, again, it kind  
17 of -- it kind of blindsided me, as well, in a sense  
18 of -- so I am just passionate about education,  
19 obviously. And I was working on this far before any  
20 of that happened.

21 And then we -- you know, I was contacted  
22 by various people to say, "You know what? We're  
23 looking at trying to do this charter organization,  
24 and would you be interested in helping out?"

25 And then I started getting more and more



1 involved, and then all while simultaneously working  
2 on this.

3 And I've told them -- and I told them this  
4 straight up. And I was, like, "I wish I had not  
5 been involved, if for no other reason than maybe you  
6 can help me fund my planning year."

7 But I think it's too big of a conflict.  
8 So I've actually offered to, if need be, at any  
9 time, you know, resign from them.

10 I do -- I do hope -- again, I'm talk- --  
11 you think about one piece of the puzzle. Something  
12 that I've noticed -- I think you've interviewed  
13 Scott -- who is actually --

14 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: He came and  
15 presented to us. I also heard his presentation at  
16 the LESC, which actually, from my standpoint, didn't  
17 go as well as it should have.

18 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yeah. And so I think  
19 I would like to actually, hopefully, be somebody  
20 that brings -- and I've talked with Scott about  
21 this, and I've talked with others about this, and  
22 other individuals and other groups. And I think we  
23 all -- we all are on the same page, in one sense.  
24 We all want a better education for our kids.

25 And so I think -- I think one of the ways

1 we all achieve that is by better communication. I  
2 think you're absolutely right, that there was -- I  
3 don't think it was intentional. I think what it was  
4 is we haven't done anything yet on the Excellent  
5 Schools. And so we wanted to actually -- we  
6 actually just got our 501(c)(3) status approved last  
7 week. It was kind of a surprise to us, too. We're  
8 nobody. Why does anybody even want to talk to us?

9 I think that was a mistake on our part. I  
10 should have realized when we're going into such a  
11 hot area, we needed to have better communication.  
12 And hopefully, I hope that we've started to resolve  
13 that. I've directed our director to make sure  
14 that's an issue going forward -- that's not an issue  
15 going forward -- that we work on the communication.

16 As far as this school goes, you talk about  
17 our target population. I think in a way, clearly,  
18 the ones that we're not going to have a problem  
19 enrolling are the people that already know what a  
20 classical education is. The people that showed up  
21 today, they said, "We know what a classical  
22 education is, and we want that."

23 But our target population is,  
24 legitimately, people that don't even know they want  
25 a classical education. That's where somebody like

1 Rita is essential. She is one of the biggest  
2 community leaders on the Navajo Nation. She has two  
3 siblings that are medicine men. She knows how to  
4 reach them.

5 I've worked closely with them, too. She  
6 knows how to reach them. There's a reason we're  
7 putting our charter school in the lowest-income part  
8 of town; that is who we want to reach. We want  
9 those people that are only going to come because  
10 they live across the street from the school. We  
11 want them to come to us because that's who we want  
12 to come.

13 On the K-through-8 issue the reason we did  
14 that -- originally, we were looking at K-through-5.  
15 You're absolutely right; we don't have those issues.  
16 Our sixth-graders through eighth-graders are going  
17 to be the toughest ones, the most remediations.

18 The reason we decided to go through the  
19 six through eight was the number of interested  
20 parents that came up and said, "Oh, you're only  
21 opening up to five?"

22 I don't know if he's still here. Jeremy  
23 Boucher, in the back there, he's going to have an  
24 eighth-grader starting in 2017. I mean, these are  
25 the kinds of people that come to us. We're already

1 at half of our enrollment numbers from sixth through  
2 eighth grade. We probably should look at doing  
3 this.

4 And that's one of the reasons we looked at  
5 going -- I know it's ambitious. I don't want you to  
6 think we're just pie in the sky, and that -- it  
7 does -- I know how ambitious this seems. And I'm  
8 sure you've seen 100 people that have come and --  
9 with similar ambitious plans that have fallen flat  
10 on our face.

11 Hopefully, that's not us. I think we do  
12 have a really strong action plan to maybe be -- if  
13 not reach our full ambition, get very close to it.

14 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: You understand you  
15 have to run lotteries, if you get more than --  
16 enrollees, because --

17 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yes, we do understand,  
18 which would be the happiest day of our life.

19 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: -- to not turn  
20 down any student. Because we've had that problem  
21 occasionally.

22 MR. PATRICK MASON: We understand we want  
23 that. We don't want to say we want the worst of the  
24 worst. We want those kids who have not succeeded  
25 anywhere else at our school.

1           COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Because you also  
2 are going to have to meet the State testing  
3 requirements and all and the State grade stuff,  
4 which most of us don't agree with, but it's in the  
5 law, and you have to do.

6           So when you're taking kids in at eighth  
7 grade who haven't had any of this, and they're  
8 testing, your school grade is not going to be --

9           MR. PATRICK MASON: And, you know, I  
10 understand. And the one thing that gives me hope in  
11 that area is my -- because, like I said, I was born  
12 and raised in Gallup, and I went to the Catholic  
13 school. There was only 15 kids in my class when I  
14 graduated from high school. There was only two  
15 White kids in my class that graduated from high  
16 school.

17           It's the same demographic at our other  
18 school in the community. Thankfully, we have  
19 foundations that provide scholarships for Indian  
20 schools. And actually, Jeremy Boucher, his  
21 foundation builds houses all around the reservation  
22 for Indian families and provides assistance,  
23 financial and others, for Navajo families,  
24 primarily.

25           But we would get these kids that went to

1 the alternative school and got kicked out of the  
2 alternative school. We're talking kids that  
3 everybody had given up on, and the only reason they  
4 were enrolled in a Catholic school is because we  
5 were the only ones that would take them.

6 And these are my classmates. I remember  
7 one of those kids in particular, this Zuni kid,  
8 gangster Zuni kid, getting up during poetry class,  
9 where we had a great poetry teacher. And she said,  
10 "You have to put -- you have to read a poem -- you  
11 have to write a poem, and read it."

12 And this gangster kid from Zuni, who maybe  
13 spoke three words a day, got up there and had half  
14 the class in tears. And it was a very moving thing  
15 about his family, and about how the people on the  
16 street wanted to kill him and things like that.

17 But this is the type of opportunity that I  
18 know, if we give those kids that opportunity, I know  
19 they can succeed. And of my 15 kids, most of whom  
20 everybody had given up on -- of the 15 kids in my  
21 class -- 11 of us went to college. And we just had  
22 our ten-year -- actually, there's 13 of us. Eleven  
23 of us went to college. We just had our ten-year  
24 reunion, and only one of those kids, I would say,  
25 has not really succeeded in life.

1           So I think it's possible. I do think it's  
2 possible, as long as we don't give up on these kids.

3           COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I had both Latin  
4 and Greek, and it didn't do a whole lot for me,  
5 either. But it did look good on a transcript.

6           But I just -- I'm still concerned that  
7 you're reaching too far, too fast. And we've  
8 approved a school that's opening this fall in  
9 Gallup. We approved one that had its first year out  
10 on the reservation, Gallup Public Schools. And so  
11 clearly, there is a need here.

12           But with both of these, either we had the  
13 hearing on the reservation -- we had a packed  
14 chapter house. When we held the one, which was a  
15 Monday morning last year; but it was in August  
16 before we got the laws changed where we could do  
17 this in July. Up at the college, it was a packed  
18 room at 8:30 on a Monday morning. So I also am  
19 concerned --

20           MR. PATRICK MASON: Okay.

21           COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: -- that we don't  
22 have the people here.

23           I know, clearly, because there are these  
24 applications coming in, and people seem interested,  
25 there seems to be a need for charter schools here,

1 that there is a certain amount of concern here, too.

2 But anyway, I just said what I want to  
3 say. I think you're ambitious. I think that you  
4 have a lot more thinking to do on it. I think that  
5 you're a little top-heavy on your plans for  
6 administration and also possibly in the teaching  
7 area, depending on what your first-year students are  
8 going to be.

9 And because you kicked off -- or think  
10 you're going to kick off with K-through-8, that's  
11 more teachers than you may need for the students you  
12 have.

13 So I think we have to vote and go with the  
14 application; but I also think you have to rethink  
15 some of, just, the logistics of it. I know 30 years  
16 in State government, 21 of them in management, I  
17 know how to think through budgets and think through  
18 planning and look at times when the money is tight.

19 I was in Human Services. The money was  
20 also tight, and there never were enough positions to  
21 deal with people. That's one of those areas they  
22 cut first. And yet they yell- -- you know, I don't  
23 agree with what's going on with the food stamp  
24 program right now; but I understand how it got  
25 there, when you're getting pressures from everybody



1 that you've got to meet deadlines, you've got to do  
2 things.

3 And I think the same things happen in our  
4 school systems. You've got to make the grade, pass  
5 the test, and all of a sudden, it's back to teaching  
6 to the tests. And I don't want that to happen to  
7 our charter schools.

8 And I -- we're having debates now on what  
9 are we doing with schools that make Cs and Ds and  
10 whatever; because, again, when you have a small  
11 number of students rather than a huge school to do  
12 an average on to get your grades, it becomes -- you  
13 get one or two kids that do poorly.

14 So I just think you need to take your good  
15 ideas and really think them through and present  
16 us -- without changing your application -- but  
17 present us a slightly different approach when you  
18 come in front of us when we do the final vote.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. PATRICK MASON: Thank you.

21 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Armbruster?

22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Hi. I do not  
23 have a microphone; but I was a middle school  
24 teacher. I think you can hear me. But maybe not.

25 Okay. I think there's a number of

1 positives about your -- your school. I like the --  
2 I like your goals. I love the fact that you are  
3 providing -- if this is not the right word -- but  
4 day care-plus, because I think that's a huge issue.  
5 And I don't know why schools are not funded for  
6 that. I'm not sure how you're going to fund that,  
7 which is a concern.

8 But I'd like that -- I like the Core  
9 education, because I think that's mainstream  
10 America, and I don't think that we're necessarily  
11 having mainstream America -- sorry to say; but I  
12 grew up in Indiana. But I think -- sorry. I'm  
13 apologizing.

14 But, anyway, I do think that that Core  
15 education and general cultural literacy and all of  
16 that, I think that's a great way of looking at  
17 things.

18 I'm suspecting -- and this is why I want  
19 you to sort of think this through and really, like  
20 everyone else is saying, it's really not a  
21 criticism, but a reality test, maybe, is a better  
22 way of looking at it -- is that you are looking at  
23 maybe getting brand new teachers. And I believe the  
24 starting salary -- but I could be wrong -- I think  
25 it's \$34,000? No. 32?

1 MR. FRANK CHIAPETTI: 34.

2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: 43 is for  
3 Level II. And I don't think they changed Level III;  
4 am I right?

5 MR. FRANK CHIAPETTI: Level III is now 52.

6 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: 34, 43, 52? So  
7 those are good numbers; not enough, by the way for a  
8 teacher, as you well know.

9 But I'm thinking that because of what your  
10 school is offering, you might get people who are  
11 applying who are Level II and Level III teachers  
12 already; and then you're in a little overload there.  
13 There's good and bad with that, of course; bad for  
14 the budget, but good for your kids.

15 And so another thought -- just throwing it  
16 out there -- is if you apparently have your 6, 7,  
17 and kind of like, "Wow, we really want to go to  
18 that," maybe you would just do it by the K-1 and a  
19 6-7-8, and then add your three going that direction.

20 There are schools who do that. And,  
21 basically, I recall at least one of the schools who  
22 did that, did that because when they got the  
23 sixth-graders -- and I -- and I'm going to say this  
24 only because you said it -- is that you have 8 to  
25 9 percent of your kids who are proficient; so to

1 think that you are going to be the only children who  
2 are proficient, and you look at many who are because  
3 of home schools, you're also going to get many who  
4 are not.

5 And so when you grow your own from  
6 kindergarten and first grade, then you're starting  
7 them the right way. I don't know if that was an  
8 Orton-Gillingham type of reading program. Is that  
9 what it is?

10 MS. RACHEL MASON: Yeah, that's what it  
11 is.

12 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: When you do  
13 that, you're going to grow your own, and you can go  
14 up to those middle schools.

15 I can see the frustration, because you  
16 have people who have third-graders and  
17 fifth-graders. "But what about us?"

18 But the overall numbers and your budget  
19 and being able to do the before and after school,  
20 which I think is fabulous -- I'm not sure about this  
21 budget. I'm sure Carolyn -- they do budgets for  
22 money. I do education.

23 So those are my concerns.

24 And I also -- and I don't want to do this,  
25 because it's really been quite long. But I wanted

1 to ask this one question. I would like an answer.  
2 So if you're going to teach Spanish and Navajo, are  
3 Anglo children allowed to take Navajo?

4 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So they are. So  
6 they can choose which one to get. And that's fine.

7 And I'm assuming students do not have to  
8 be there early and late. They can just come. If  
9 your parents were not working, like home-school  
10 parents now, they may say, "Hey, I want to pick up  
11 my kid at 3:00." That's okay?

12 MR. PATRICK MASON: One of the things  
13 we're trying to address on that is -- and I think  
14 part of it is going to be the full-bore drafting  
15 policies -- we want to strongly encourage that  
16 before and after. And at one point, we thought this  
17 should be mandatory; but realistically, it's not  
18 going to work for everybody.

19 So what we're thinking is maybe something  
20 like mandatory, with a strong liberal exemption  
21 policy. "Write us a letter, and you're exempted  
22 from it," that that type of thing. We recognize  
23 that reality. That's one of the reasons we're doing  
24 a part-day kindergarten too, what works for one  
25 family doesn't necessarily work for all families.

1 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So that was  
2 another question. So you are offering full-day  
3 kindergarten?

4 MR. PATRICK MASON: And part-time.

5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Or. And they  
6 can choose which one. And if they're doing half-day  
7 kindergarten, they're going to have a very long day  
8 until 5:00? Or they're going home?

9 MS. RACHEL MASON: Oh, they -- for the  
10 half-day kindergarten, they will go home. I think I  
11 said 1:00. I can't remember exactly what it said on  
12 there. And so it's actually longer than a half-day.  
13 The instructional hours is a larger amount than is  
14 required for a half-day kindergarten.

15 But -- so the bulk -- they would be with  
16 the full-day students for a lot of that. And the  
17 bulk of the -- the real curriculum that they need is  
18 going to be covered prior to 1:00.

19 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And because I'm  
20 not totally knowledgeable about kindergarten, why  
21 don't parents want their children to go half-day  
22 when they could go whole? I imagine you'd know the  
23 answer to that.

24 MS. RACHEL MASON: I've done -- I can't  
25 say I've done a lot of research; but I've looked a

1 fair amount at the -- kind of the developmental age  
2 of kindergarteners. Sometimes a five-year-old, it  
3 really is a long day for them to be in school all  
4 day. And it's maybe not necessary for them,  
5 especially if -- like, for example, with my own --  
6 my own children -- I have a three-year-old and a  
7 one-year-old.

8 We do a lot of stuff in the day, like  
9 playing with Play-Doh and developmental things. And  
10 I'm trying to teach him his colors, even though he's  
11 not doing well with that; I don't know if it's  
12 appropriate for a three-year-old.

13 But, anyway, so there's a lot of that,  
14 cooking with me, those kinds of things, that can be  
15 covered at the home. And I think a lot of parents  
16 want to be doing -- and it's not going to be the  
17 same population that needs to send their kids to the  
18 after-school program.

19 But we're trying to -- to target all  
20 groups of people in Gallup. And there are some  
21 families, myself included -- exactly -- that I don't  
22 want to get -- my five-year-old, I don't know -- he  
23 might be; but I don't know if he's going to be ready  
24 to be in a classroom all day when a lot of -- a lot  
25 of that stuff, I want to do at home with him.

1 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Core  
2 kindergarten used to do Play-Doh and cook. And  
3 that's fine. I just was curious, because most  
4 people -- "Oh, thank you. A full-day kindergarten."  
5 So I can see.

6 MS. RACHEL MASON: And like you said, a  
7 lot of kindergarten now is being pushed beyond what  
8 they're developmentally ready for, anyway. And so I  
9 think they can cover what they need up until 1:00.

10 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I have other  
11 ones; but I think it's time --

12 THE CHAIR: Okay. I'm just --

13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: -- to go.

14 THE CHAIR: I'm just going to add one more  
15 thing, just a question, going back to facilities.

16 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yes.

17 THE CHAIR: And Carolyn digs through the  
18 meat of the budget better than most us. But I'm  
19 concerned; because I can't see where you've gotten  
20 budgeted for bringing that building up, if -- you  
21 know, because there's -- that's a big question.

22 MR. PATRICK MASON: Right.

23 THE CHAIR: Can it, and how much would it,  
24 if it could? And if it can't, I know you mentioned  
25 portables from the school district.



1           But there's -- you need pads and service  
2 and all of that. And I'll add one more to it. If  
3 it ends up being portables, how does that impact  
4 those kids all day being in portables, as opposed  
5 to, you know, a larger facility where there's more  
6 ability to move around?

7           MR. PATRICK MASON: And, honestly, that's  
8 our -- going to be our biggest issue over our  
9 planning year is going to be the facility. I think  
10 if the facility falls into place, I think a lot of  
11 our other pieces fall into place.

12           We've looked at -- so I spent a long time  
13 with the district's master plan, the district's  
14 Facility Master Plan, to see exactly where that  
15 facility stands. And I'm going to -- we actually  
16 have the principal of Juan De Oñate currently in the  
17 back of the room. I've talked with her about the  
18 condition of the building. We have our walk-through  
19 coming up.

20           I've talked to numerous contractors.  
21 We've looked at all the options. Realistically,  
22 that always happens, and you spend more on portables  
23 than you necessarily would getting that building up  
24 to the level it needs to be at for your students.

25           Another long-term goal is not to be in a

1 building. We have an architect that's chomping at  
2 the bit to design us a school. Multiple architects.  
3 They start contacting you as soon as they know  
4 you've put in an application. Realistically, we're  
5 not looking at State money. We have a lot of  
6 contacts in the community at large, in New York and  
7 LA, in Santa Fe, in Albuquerque, in south -- in  
8 Artesia and Hobbs and Roswell, all these places.

9 We're -- and, in fact, the local bank,  
10 we've already talked with the local bank about  
11 getting a -- a facility fund in place.

12 But most importantly, we've talked with  
13 the State Finance Authority; Patty Lundstrom, who is  
14 our local Representative. We had a round table up  
15 in Santa Fe in January, where afterwards, I was able  
16 to sit down -- the State actually gives low-interest  
17 to no-interest loans. And one of their areas that  
18 they will give -- and you have to pay those back,  
19 which you could pay back with your facilities funds;  
20 you get the \$750 per student which is not a part of  
21 this budget. That's accounted for as an income in  
22 there.

23 But we do get that income. And the idea  
24 being, when we've looked at all these options, we  
25 could actually get a substantial loan from the

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1 State. And they've already given us the application  
2 for getting our building up to par, which we will be  
3 able to pay back with those facility funds for -- to  
4 get that building up to speed.

5 And that's our ideal situation. And I  
6 know in just -- and as they've said, you know, it  
7 looks bad that we're building them a new school, and  
8 you're bringing students back into the school where  
9 they were building a new school for. But the  
10 reality is buildings in Gallup are -- are few and  
11 far between. And there's a huge community support  
12 to put something in that building; because if you  
13 put it in one of the worst parts of town, you leave  
14 an empty building like that, and it -- it suffers.  
15 That community suffers majorly when you have a big  
16 empty building like that.

17 So, actually, when we did these radio  
18 interviews, that was one of the biggest things was,  
19 "Thank goodness you're putting something in that  
20 building."

21 I said, "You know, we've got to make sure  
22 we can."

23 But you're right. That is one of the  
24 biggest issues is that facility. Hopefully, that  
25 addresses that question, to some extent.

1 THE CHAIR: I'm concerned about the money  
2 for it. And it's -- you know, I hesitate when  
3 it's -- hopefully, we're going to get outside monies  
4 to come in for it. And that State Finance  
5 Authority -- is that the correct term? -- that's not  
6 an easy task. We've got a school going through that  
7 process now. And it took three years.

8 So they may very willingly give you that  
9 application; but that doesn't mean that process.  
10 And they have; they've gone three years. They've  
11 been, you know, close to having to close because  
12 funding keeps falling apart, you know. Finance  
13 rates went up, and it's just -- it's not an easy  
14 task.

15 MR. PATRICK MASON: And just so you know,  
16 I'm also on the board of the local opera company.  
17 Everybody said, "How are you going to bring an opera  
18 company to Gallup? Number one, who's going to go to  
19 it? How are you going to get a \$150,000 summer  
20 opera company to Gallup?"

21 Every year, we've been able to raise that  
22 \$150,000 from the community. If you bring something  
23 that they want -- and I don't think that's -- I  
24 don't want to say that that's not true. But I do  
25 think that there are -- there is a group in this

1 community that's waiting for something like this for  
2 them to fund. And thankfully, I'm a little built  
3 into that community already.

4 THE CHAIR: Okay.

5 Commissioner Toulouse?

6 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I want to make  
7 sure, too, any of this outside money that comes in  
8 is going to have to go through your foundation, and  
9 that your foundation is subject to audit and can be  
10 audit exceptions against your school, as well.  
11 Because we've had that problem occurring.

12 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: We've had all the  
13 problems.

14 MR. PATRICK MASON: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: So make sure that  
16 they know exactly what they're doing and that they  
17 are -- that the foundation is all aboveboard too.

18 MR. PATRICK MASON: That is one of the  
19 nice things about having REDW. They are pros at all  
20 this stuff.

21 I do have to apologize. I did my best on  
22 this budget; but it's -- I've never seen a  
23 3,000-line-item budget before. So -- but REDW, we  
24 sat down with them. We wanted to get approval  
25 before I started a contract with them. They work a

1 lot with schools and work a lot with Native American  
2 enterprises and other things.

3 And they have already told me that my  
4 budget, if -- is not the worst; but it's not very  
5 good. And so they are going to work with us. I  
6 don't know if that's something that we should bring  
7 to the next -- like, a revised budget, or if  
8 that's -- I don't think we can. I think what it is  
9 is what it is.

10 THE CHAIR: You're stuck with that.

11 MR. PATRICK MASON: But I do want to  
12 assure the Commissioners that you had a lawyer doing  
13 the budget. I'm not the business manager. The  
14 business manager is contracted through REDW.  
15 They've already told me, "You're actually in better  
16 shape than you think you are; but you need to revise  
17 your budget." And I do realize that that is an  
18 issue, or a complication.

19 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Commissioners, any  
20 other questions?

21 We're going to deviate slightly, because  
22 we did have someone in the audience that asked --  
23 and we did not use up all the community input time.  
24 So I agreed that we will allow one additional  
25 comment. And that is Pauletta White.

1           And, please, once again, just state your  
2 name for the record.

3           DR. PAULETTA WHITE: Okay. My name is  
4 Dr. Pauletta White. I'm commenting as a Diné person  
5 representing part of the Navajo Nation tribe. I  
6 have several points.

7           First, like others, I looked into  
8 classical schools, classical education. And it does  
9 have a very strong emphasis on Christianity and the  
10 philosophies from that angle.

11           And I know the presenters here mentioned  
12 that they're going to have Navajo language and  
13 cultures taught into that; so I fail to see where  
14 the classical education fits in with Navajo language  
15 and culture. And if it does, it's not in line with  
16 the Navajo philosophy of education that we have.

17           Also, the focus on Latin as a requirement  
18 for language, I fail to see where that would fit in;  
19 because when you start teaching a language, to what  
20 degree, to what depth you need to teach that  
21 language and culture, that has not been defined.

22           And also, in New Mexico, we have the  
23 Indian Education Act that requires collaboration  
24 with the Navajo Nation to set up a school. And you  
25 have to have policies and procedures in place to

1 operate a school.

2 And finally, I found it personally very  
3 offensive, some of the things that were talked  
4 today, that were spoken today, by the presenters  
5 here. There was a mention of somebody named --  
6 having a heavy Navajo accent. That portrays -- that  
7 ongoing portrayal that I have personally on the  
8 stigma from language-learners, not just Navajo, but  
9 can be Hispanic, Zuni, other things. So that, I  
10 found it offensive.

11 Also, if the word "hozho" is being used, I  
12 don't know if that's going to be in line with the  
13 traditional philosophy of hozho. "Hozho" is  
14 different, and spelled differently. So that was my  
15 question is why is it being called "Hozho," or maybe  
16 I'm not -- I wasn't here when they presented the  
17 name and the philosophy behind that.

18 But I don't think it should be aligned  
19 with the Navajo word of "hozho."

20 Thank you.

21 THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you very  
22 much. Any further discussion?

23 In conclusion, any member of the public,  
24 including the applicants, may submit written input  
25 following this hearing. Written comments can be



1 sent to the Commission via the PED website, mailed  
2 or hand-delivered. The details and addresses are  
3 listed on the handout at the back of the room.

4 Make sure you identify the school you are  
5 commenting on in the drop-down menu. Please note  
6 that any written input must be received by no later  
7 than 5:00 p.m. on the third business day following  
8 the hearing on the application. So for this  
9 particular school, it would be Thursday, July 21st,  
10 2016, by 5:00 p.m.

11 Thank you for all your presentations  
12 today. The Public Education Commission will meet in  
13 Santa Fe on August 31st and September 1st, 2016, to  
14 render -- to render their decision on approval or  
15 denial of this and other new charter school  
16 applications.

17 The Commission will now recess this  
18 hearing until 2:00 p.m. in the community of  
19 Albuquerque.

20 Thank you very much.

21 (Proceedings in recess at 10:45 a.m.)

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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 McKinley, in the matter therein stated.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand on August 1, 2016.

*Cynthia Chapman*

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## VISITORS ATTENDING PUBLIC EDUCATION HEARING

For Hozo Academy in Gallup, NM

July 18, 2016

Please Sign-in

Name (Print)	Representing
FRAN PAWLOWSKI	Former CHARTER SCHOOL TEACHER
Heidi Norton	
Kelly Callahan	NMCCS
Lone Tower	
Joyita Kumar	City Council
Elizabeth Terrill	Gallup CFC
Shane Terrill	
Kristen Bischoff	
Jeremy Boucher	
Wade E. Bell	
Ryan Dashner	