

**Academic Improvement Plans  
PEC Meeting: February 9, 2018**

**PEC-Approved School Improvement Plans**

According to Public Education Commission's (PEC) approved Performance Framework, state-authorized charter schools that earn a D or F school grade are required to submit a School Improvement Plan (SIP) within 40 days of the release of School Grading Report Cards. The 2017 School Grading Report Cards were released on August 22, 2017. **Currently, there are 21 state-authorized charter schools that earned a D or F and must meet this requirement.** Nine (9) schools earned a D and 12 schools earned an F grade on the 2017 school grade reporting. See Appendix A for a complete list of state-authorized charter schools requiring improvement. The SIP must be approved by the state-authorized charter school's governing board. The state-authorized charter school's head administrator/principal was required to upload the Improvement Plan and supporting documentation into the Web EPSS Portal. The due date for submitting PEC Improvement Plans was October 1, 2017.

**NM DASH – PED's System of Continuous School Improvement**

State-authorized charter schools identified as Comprehensive Support and Intervention (CSI) or Targeted Support and Intervention (TSI) schools, per the state's approved ESSA plan, are required to implement NM DASH plans<sup>1</sup>. The NM DASH system was offered to all state-authorized charter schools that have earned a D or F on its school grade report card as a new opportunity to engage in continuous school improvement. All districts and schools in New Mexico will utilize the NM Data, Accountability, Sustainability, and High Achievement (DASH), formerly known as the Web EPSS, a web-based action-planning tool identified for developing school improvement plans and identifying evidence- or research-based interventions it has put into place for the school year. Ninety-day (90) day planning is part of the cycle of continuous improvement. Through this process schools develop an annual plan that includes developing a core team, conducting root-cause analyses, outlining critical actions and desired outcomes, progress monitoring and reflection. This represents a contrast to the SIP, which is a template that schools can use to outline action steps, responsible parties and timelines.

**Specific Support for Charter Schools Offered**

To get off to a strong start in the 2017-2018 school year and extend the opportunity and provide additional support to charter schools, the PED's Charter School Division (CSD) and Priority School Bureau (PSB) coordinated to provide a three-session series of trainings specifically to charter schools during the fall 2017. Training focused on the development of NM DASH plans were provided in August, October, and November and offered in Albuquerque and Las Cruces, with a September make-up session for any schools that did not want to miss out on the opportunity. The due date for submitting NM DASH draft plans for PSB feedback was October 16, 2017. Schools that met the due dates and whose plans met the outlined requirements by the last NM DASH training were able to attend, receive credentials to access to the NM DASH system, and receive additional support in entering their plans online at the NM DASH

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<sup>1</sup> CSI schools are those in the lowest 5% of all Title I schools as identified by overall points on the 2017 school grades or schools whose 4-year high school graduation rates were lower than 67% in two of the last three years. TSI schools are those schools with at least one low-performing subgroup as identified by poorly performing as all students in a CSI school. On December 5, 2017, the PED released the list of CSI and TSI schools.

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training. A few schools initially submitted plans but then did not follow-up and move forward with entering their plans in the system and/or implementation. Charter schools opting to implement NM DASH receive additional support from PED staff, via PSB training and feedback in plan development and the CSD through feedback of NM DASH plan implementation during annual site visits.

**CHARTER SCHOOLS LEVERAGING ADDITIONAL PED-OFFERED RESOURCES AND SUPPORT**

**Charter Schools Implementing NM DASH**

The PED is pleased that several schools demonstrated high interest early and were able to leverage the offer of additional support in plan development and in implementation support. The following schools attended all the trainings provided, submitted plans, and have received user credentials to enter their plans into the online NM DASH system. After providing the schools with training, a couple of schools only required one round of review. Other schools in this group resubmitted their plans right away after initial feedback and were able to receive user credentials to begin entering in their plans in the online system. Below, Table 1 lists the state-authorized charter schools that have opted into the NM DASH as the method for working towards continuous school improvement.

<b>Table 1. State-Authorized Charter Schools that Earned a D or F, were Required to Submit an Improvement Plan, Opted into the NM DASH System , and in the Implementation Phase</b>				
<b>Charter School</b>	<b>2017 Grade</b>	<b>CSI/TSI Status</b>	<b>Plan Type</b>	<b>Initial Date Submitted</b>
Cesar Chavez Community School	D	CSI (grad rate)	NM DASH	10/16/17
La Academia Dolores Huerta	F	TSI	NM DASH	10/23/17
La Promesa Early Learning Center	D	TSI	NM DASH	09/05/17
Las Montañas Charter High School	F	CSI	NM DASH	10/16/17
New America School (ABQ)	D	CSI (grad rate)	NM DASH	10/16/17
New America School - Las Cruces	D	-	NM DASH	10/16/17
Tierra Encantada Charter School (PPE) <sup>2</sup>	F	CSI (grad rate)	NM DASH	Summer 2017

As illustrated above, there are 7 schools that realized the value of support offered by the PED and capitalized on the additional resources in plan development. The implementation of the schools' NM DASH plan is monitored during the CSD's annual site visits, in some cases, with PSB staff support. Some of these schools have biannual site visits and those that do not have been offered a second site visit that would be more focused on NM DASH implementation. The NM DASH plans and supporting documentation for this group of schools are provided in Appendix B.

<sup>2</sup> Tierra Encantada Charter School is currently participating in Principals Pursuing Excellence (PPE) lead through the PSB, the PED's highly-touted program supporting school turnaround efforts. School data demonstrates the success of PPE and the PED is pleased to have three state-authorized charter schools participating for the first time this school year. The CSD is supportive of charter schools taking advantage of this opportunity and will continue to encourage state-authorized charters to apply for PPE.

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**Charter Schools Moving Toward Implementing NM DASH**

A second, smaller group of schools had initially expressed varying levels of interest and commitment to implementing the NM DASH system. All three schools had teams attend all the required trainings for developing NM DASH plans. Table 2, below, lists these schools. The available NM DASH plans and supporting documentation for this group of schools are provided in Appendix C.

**Table 2. State-Authorized Charter Schools that Earned a D or F, were Required to Submit an Improvement Plan, are Interested in the NM DASH System , but not at Implementation Phase**

<b>Charter School</b>	<b>2017 Grade</b>	<b>CSI/TSI Status</b>	<b>Plan Type</b>	<b>Initial Date Submitted</b>
American Sign Language Academy	D	-	NM DASH	01/18/18
McCurdy Charter School	D	TSI	NM DASH	10/16/17
Six Directions Indigenous School	F	CSI	NM DASH	11/07/17

In early January 2018, schools that had not yet submitted an Improvement Plan or had not submitted an NM DASH plan and/or had not met the requirements for submission of NM DASH plan online were reminded that such plans would be monitored on upcoming site visits.

McCurdy Charter School initially submitted its NM DASH plan to the PSB for feedback on the due date. However, the initial feedback provided on November 2, 2017 indicated that plan had not met the requirements for submission to the online NM Dash system (13 or more indicators in *Solid Progress*, 3 or fewer in *Limited Progress*, and 0 *Not Evident*). On January 12, 2018 the school resubmitted its revised plan to the PSB for additional feedback and on January 29, 2018, the plan met the requirements for submission to the online NM DASH system.

Six Directions Indigenous School (SDIS) initially submitted its plan three weeks late on November 7, 2017, the date of the final training. Consequently, it was not possible for the PSB to review the plan at that time. Later, the CSD reached out to the school to inquire about its interest in receiving feedback on its plan and implementing the NM DASH system. Since the school indicated it was still interested, the school's plan was subsequently reviewed by the PSB. On January 29, 2018, the PSB provided the school with feedback on the plan resulting in 10 indicators rated as *Solid Progress*, 5 as *Limited Progress* and 1 as *Not Evident*. At this time, the school has not indicated what its plans are for working towards school improvement as a result of earning an F grade on the 2017 school grade report card.

The ASL Academy initially indicated high interest in developing an NM DASH plan. In the latest communications, the school reiterated its interest in developing a plan that adequately addressed the school's concerns with its special populations and assessment. The school indicated it would be finalizing its plan, presenting it before its governing council, and would be submitting the plan for PSB feedback. The plan was uploaded into WebEPSS on January 18, 2018 and it has not yet been reviewed by the PSB. The school's CSD site visit is scheduled for February 6, 2018 and PSB staff is scheduled to

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also attend. At that time, the CSD and PSB can provide technical assistance on the plan development and/or and monitor implementation of the school's NM DASH plan.

**CHARTER SCHOOLS NOT LEVERAGING ADDITIONAL PED-OFFERED RESOURCES AND SUPPORT**

**Charter Schools Opting for SIPs**

While some schools are taking full advantage of the additional support that the PED is providing to state-authorized charter schools, some schools opted to submit a SIP. It is disappointing that schools did not fully take advantage of additional PED-offered resources and support, especially since the PEC strongly encouraged the NM DASH system. Below, Table 3 lists the schools that opted to submit the PEC-approved School Improvement Plan.

<b>Table 3. State-Authorized Charter Schools that Earned a D or F and are Required to Submit a School Improvement Plan</b>				
<b>Charter School</b>	<b>2017 Grade</b>	<b>CSI/TSI Status</b>	<b>Plan Type</b>	<b>Date Submitted</b>
Cariños de los Niños Charter School	F	CSI	Unique	01/25/18
Dream Diné	F	-	SIP	09/29/17
La Tierra Montessori School	D	-	SIP	09/11/17

In January 2018, communications with respect to upcoming site visits included agendas, site visit guidance, and a reminder to schools that had earned a D or F and were required to submit an Improvement Plan and that the plans would be monitored on site visits.

**Dream Diné** uploaded its school's governing-body approved SIPs and supporting documentation into WebEPSS. **La Tierra Montessori School** uploaded two SIPs into WebEPSS. No governing body minutes were provided. A reading SIP was dated as September 9, 2017 with a governing board approval date of September 26, 2017. The math SIP was dated as August 31, 2017 with a governing board approval date of September 28, 2017. A review of available governing board meeting agenda and minutes available on the school's website indicate that a meeting was held on September 26, 2017, however, the minutes do not clearly indicate discussion or that any action was taken on the school's submitted SIPs.

**Cariños de los Niños Charter School.** This school is listed with this group of schools since it did not opt to pursue the NM DASH system and the SIP is the default option. This school's annual site visit was conducted on December 6, 2017. At the site visit, the school provided the CSD team with a copy of what it purported was a governing-body approved SIP, however, the plan was dated for April 2017. The CSD team informed the school that the plan appeared to be for the previous school year albeit several months late as school grades are released in August or September and therefore SIPs would be due in October or November. However, as illustrated above in Table 3, Cariños de los Niños Charter School submitted a "School Improvement Plan" for the current school year on January 25, 2018. Further, the

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plan is not the PEC-approved SIP and no governing body minutes were uploaded. It appears the school's governing body held a meeting on January 31, 2018 at which the submitted plan may have been an agenda item. Upon review of the plan, dates from the prior school year are visible and the document appears to be a description of the school's programming and general in nature, rather than an intentional plan designed to describe specific actions to be taken by the school to improve the persistent low academic performance.

The available NM DASH plans and supporting documentation for this group of schools are provided in Appendix D.

**Charters School Applicants for Renewal with the PEC**

The following schools were applicants for renewal with the PEC and earned a D or F on the 2017 school grade report, which required them to submit an improvement plan. Three of the four schools opted for submitting a SIP. During its December 2017 meeting, the PEC voted to not renew Anthony Charter School, New Mexico Connections Academy, or Taos International School. The PEC voted for a three-year renewal term for Horizon Academy West with conditions that include implementing the NM DASH system. It is disappointing that these school did not choose to fully leverage the additional PED-offered supports and resources to improve school performance and outcomes.

**Taos International School.** The school attended all the trainings and submitted its plan for PSB feedback by the due date. However, the initial feedback provided on November 3, 2017 indicated that plan did not meet the requirements for submission to the online NM Dash system (13 or more indicators in *Solid Progress*, 3 or fewer in *Limited Progress*, and 0 *Not Evident*). The PSB provided the school with feedback on the plan resulting in 9 indicators rated as *Solid Progress* and 7 as *Limited Progress*. **The school did not resubmit a revised plan for additional feedback until December 20, 2017** – well after the final NM DASH training in early November and six days after the PEC's December meeting on renewals at which the PEC voted to not renew the school's charter. Again, it is unfortunate that the school did not take full advantage of the additional PED-offered resources and support to improve school performance until after the PEC voted for the school's non-renewal.

<b>Table 4. State-Authorized Charter Schools that Earned a D or F Required to Submit a School Improvement Plan that Applied for Renewal with the PEC</b>				
<b>Charter School</b>	<b>2017 Grade</b>	<b>CSI/TSI Status</b>	<b>Plan Type</b>	<b>Date Submitted</b>
Anthony Charter School	D	-	SIP	10/02/17
Horizon Academy West	D	-	SIP	09/28/17
New Mexico Connections Academy	F	TSI	SIP	09/29/17
Taos International School	F	TSI	NM DASH	10/16/17

The available NM DASH plans and supporting documentation for this group of schools are provided in Appendix E.

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**Charters School Applicants for Renewal with a Local Authorizer**

The following schools are state-authorized and earned a D or F on the 2017 school grade report, which required them to submit an improvement plan. Table 5, below, illustrates that two schools submitted the required SIP whereas one school opted for the NM DASH, and one school did not submit anything.

<b>Table 5. State-Authorized Charter Schools that Earned a D or F Required to Submit a School Improvement Plan that Applied for Renewal with a Local Authorizer</b>				
<b>Charter School</b>	<b>2017 Grade</b>	<b>CSI/TSI Status</b>	<b>Plan Type</b>	<b>Date Submitted</b>
Academy of Trades and Technology*	F	CSI	-	-
ACE Leadership High School	F	CSI	SIP	08/31/17
Health Leadership High School	F	CSI	NM DASH	10/16/17
Technology Leadership High School	F	CSI	SIP	10/18/17

*\*The Local Authorizer voted to not grant the school a charter renewal.*

**Heath Leadership High School.** Of the schools that opted to seek renewal with a local authorizer instead of the PEC, Health Leadership High school was the only one to take advantage of the PED-offered supports and opted to address low academic performance by pursuing the newly-offered NM DASH system. Further, it was one of a few charter schools that submitted a plan that met the requirements for entering the plan into the online NM DASH system on the first submission. The available NM DASH plans and supporting documentation for this group of schools are provided in Appendix F.

**Concluding Remarks and Next Steps**

The PED is pleased that approximately half the schools that are required to implement school improvement plans elected to adopt the NM DASH system before having been identified as a CSI or TSI school that would have required its use. Further, the PED is encouraged by charter schools that have pursued programs like PPE that are showing promise and getting results for schools. Conversely, it is disappointing that schools in need of serious improvement and whose students deserve increased high-quality education opportunities did not fully take advantage of the additional resources and support that the PED made available to charter schools. School improvement is a choice and schools must take decisive action to dramatically improve themselves for the benefit of the children they are charged with serving. Ineffective schools do not serve children well and thus do not represent true educational options for New Mexico families.

The CSD team looks forward to observing schools' active implementation of continuous school improvement during scheduled annual site visits and providing updates, at the request of the PEC, about progress observed. Attached are the submitted school improvement plans (SIP or NMDASH) for the review and approval of the PEC. At this time, the CSD requests direction from the PEC regarding the criteria and standards with which the CSD is to review and monitor compliance and implementation of plans, and the frequency of progress updates to be reported to the PEC.

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**Appendix A. State-Authorized Charter Schools Earning a D or F Grade Requiring School Improvement Plans**

School	2017 Grade	CSI/TSI Status	Plan Type	Date Submitted
Academy of Trades and Technology Charter School	F	CSI	-	-
ACE Leadership High School	F	CSI	SIP	08/31/17
Albuquerque Sign Language Academy Charter	D	-	NM DASH	01/18/18
Anthony Charter School	D	-	SIP	10/02/17
Cariños de los Niños Charter School	F	CSI	Unique	01/25/18
Cesar Chavez Community School	D	CSI (grad rate)	NM DASH	10/16/17
Dream Diné	F	-	SIP	09/29/17
Health Leadership High School	F	CSI	NM DASH	10/16/17
Horizon Academy West	D	-	SIP	09/28/17
La Academia Dolores Huerta	F	TSI	NM DASH	10/23/17
La Promesa Early Learning Center	D	TSI	NM DASH	09/05/17
La Tierra Montessori School	D	-	SIP	09/11/17
Las Montañas Charter High School	F	CSI	NM DASH	10/16/17
McCurdy Charter School	D	TSI	NM DASH	10/16/17
New America School (ABQ)	D	CSI (grad rate)	NM DASH	10/16/17
New America School - Las Cruces	D	-	NM DASH	10/16/17
New Mexico Connections Academy	F	TSI	SIP	09/29/17
Six Directions Indigenous School	F	CSI	NM DASH	11/08/17
Taos International School	F	TSI	DASH	10/16/17
Technology Leadership High School	F	CSI	SIP	10/18/17
Tierra Encantada Charter School	F	CSI (grad rate)	NM DASH	Summer 2017**

Note: The 2017 School Grade Reports were released on August 22, 2017. Governing body-approved School Improvement Plans were due on October 1, 2017. Initial NM DASH Plans (for PSB feedback) were due on October 16, 2017.

*\*\*Tierra Encantada Charter School submitted an NM DASH plan as part of participation in the PED's Principals Pursuing Excellence (PPE) program before the 2017 school grades were released.*