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BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
COMMUNITY INPUT HEARING
The STEAM Academy
August 17, 2015
1:09 p.m.
St. Joseph's Mission School
26 School Road
San Fidel, New Mexico

REPORTED BY: Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219
Bean & Associates, Inc.
Professional Court Reporting Service
201 Third Street, NW, Suite 1630
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

JOB NO.: 3503L(CC)

SANTA FE OFFICE
119 East Marcy, Suite 110
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 989-4949
FAX (505) 820-6349



MAIN OFFICE
201 Third NW, Suite 1630
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 843-9494
FAX (505) 843-9492
1-800-669-9492
e-mail: info@litsupport.com

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A P P E A R A N C E S

COMMISSIONERS:

MR. VINCE BERGMAN, Vice Chair
MS. KARYL ANN ARMBRUSTER, Member
MR. JAMES CONYERS, Member
MS. PATRICIA GIPSON, Member
MS. CARMIE TOULOUSE, Member

STAFF:

MS. KATIE POULOS, Director, Charter Schools Division
MS. JULIE LUCERO, General Manager, Options for
Parents

SANTA FE OFFICE
119 East Marcy, Suite 110
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 989-4949
FAX (505) 820-6349



MAIN OFFICE
201 Third NW, Suite 1630
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 843-9494
FAX (505) 843-9492
1-800-669-9492
e-mail: info@litsupport.com

1 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: This is -- I will
2 actually call back into session this Community Input
3 hearing, conducted by the Public Education
4 Commission, for The STEAM Academy.

5 It is Monday, August 17th, 2015. Before I
6 read my statement here, we will do an informal roll
7 call, I guess.

8 I am Commissioner Vince Bergman. I
9 represent District 8. I am vice chair of the
10 Commission. I will conduct this hearing today.

11 I represent Roswell and the southern
12 counties and the central counties, running all the
13 way up to Mora County.

14 So why don't we start down with
15 Commissioner Gipson? Please identify yourself and
16 where you're from.

17 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: I am Patti Gipson,
18 and I represent District 7, which is Doña Ana and a
19 little bit of Otero County.

20 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I'm Carmie
21 Toulouse. I represent District 3, which is the
22 majority of Albuquerque.

23 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And I am
24 Karyl Ann Armbruster. I am in District 4. I
25 represent Los Alamos, Jemez, some part of Santa Fe,

1 Rio Rancho, and all those places at the top of
2 Albuquerque that you don't.

3 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Corrales. That's
4 right.

5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Corrales.

6 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: I'm Jim Conyers.
7 I'm from Bloomfield. I represent District 5, which
8 is all of San Juan, all of McKinley County, part of
9 Sandoval County, and part of Rio Arriba County.

10 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Excellent. Thank
11 you. That gives us five members present. By State
12 statute, we have to have three; so we have satisfied
13 that requirement.

14 I -- here again, I think, even though we
15 did it this morning, this is a different agenda.

16 Would someone move that we accept this
17 agenda?

18 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: So moved.

19 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Do I have a second?

20 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Second.

21 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: All in favor, say
22 "Aye."

23 (Commissioners so indicate.)

24 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: All right. We have
25 an approved agenda.

1 As I noted, this is the Community Input
2 hearing for The STEAM Academy. And I'll read this
3 following statement:

4 This meeting is being conducted pursuant
5 to the New Mexico Statutes Annotated, Title 22,
6 Section 8B-6J, 2009. The purpose of these community
7 input hearings that will be held from August 17th
8 through August 21st, 2015, is to obtain information
9 from the applicant and to receive community input to
10 assist the Public Education Commission in its
11 decision whether to grant the proposed charter
12 application.

13 According to this section of the law, the
14 Commission may appoint a subcommittee of no fewer
15 than three members to hold a public hearing.
16 According to law, these hearings are being
17 transcribed by a professional court reporter. The
18 total time allotted to each application is
19 90 minutes, which will be timed to ensure an
20 equitable opportunity to present applications.

21 During the hearing, the Commission will
22 allow for community input about the charter
23 application. The time for public comments will be
24 limited to 20 minutes. If you wish to speak
25 regarding the application, please sign in at least

1 15 minutes before the applicant's presentation.

2 Here again, I remind you if you just
3 arrived, and you haven't signed the list and you
4 want to speak, please do so.

5 Please be sure that you indicate on the
6 sign-up sheet whether you are here in opposition or
7 support of the charter school.

8 The Commission Chair -- or in this case,
9 the Acting Chair -- based on the number of requests
10 to comment, will allocate time to those wishing to
11 speak. If there are a large number of supporters or
12 opponents, they are asked to select a speaker to
13 represent common opinions. We will try to allocate
14 an equitable amount of time to represent the
15 community accurately.

16 The Commission will follow this process
17 for each community input hearing:

18 The Commission will ask each applicant or
19 group to present at the table in front. They will
20 be given 20 minutes to present their application in
21 the manner they deem appropriate. The Commission
22 will not accept any written documentation from the
23 applicant; but the applicant may use exhibits to
24 describe their school if necessary. However, the
25 setup time for exhibits, et cetera, will be included

1 in the 20 minutes.

2 Following the applicant's presentation,
3 the local school district representatives, which
4 includes the superintendent, administrators, and
5 board members, will be given ten minutes to comment.

6 Subsequently, the Commission will allow
7 20 minutes for public comment, as described above.

8 Finally, the Commission will be given
9 40 minutes to ask questions of the applicant.

10 I believe we are ready to proceed.

11 Commissioners, are you ready to proceed?

12 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: Yes.

13 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: I would ask The STEAM
14 Academy to come forward. And I assume you are
15 already forward. I will ask that you speak up,
16 because we don't have microphones. And if you feel
17 it's necessary, please spell your name for the court
18 reporter.

19 I will ask you to introduce yourselves.
20 Your clock is not running yet. That will not start
21 until after your introductions. Please tell us who
22 you are and your relationship to this application.

23 Go ahead, wherever you want to start.

24 DR. FRANCIS: Oh, me. Good afternoon. My
25 name is Dr. Lee Francis. I am one of the founders

1 for The STEAM Academy.

2 MS. DOUMA: Hi. My name is Shannon Douma,
3 and I am a parent and community member and involved
4 in The STEAM Academy, and a founder, also.

5 MR. SANCHEZ: My name is Gilbert Sanchez.
6 I'm a supporter of the charter community school,
7 original -- originally, the person who was --
8 applied for this and supporter of the program
9 itself.

10 MR. RILEY: Philip Riley from the Pueblo
11 of Acoma. I'm part of The STEAM Academy.

12 MS. CAVNAR: And good afternoon again.
13 Carmen Cavnar, Director of Finance.

14 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Okay. Thank you very
15 much. You all just have quiet voices. Can you hear
16 in the back, or -- I see some heads shaking "No."
17 Please, when you speak, you're going to have to
18 almost shout. I know it's not part of your nature;
19 but they need to be able to hear in the back.

20 All right. I think we're now ready to
21 proceed. Katie, will you be taking the time again?

22 Katie will be timing you. She will tell
23 you when your time is up. You may proceed in any
24 way you like. Your 20 minutes starts now.

25 DR. FRANCIS: Well, good afternoon again,

1 Commissioners. Thank you for being here, and to all
2 of our guests and supporters and folks that are
3 here, as well, as well as our young people that are
4 part of this. We really like to see all of you
5 sitting here and being a part of this process.

6 We really appreciate the opportunity to be
7 able to present to all of you about our proposal and
8 our application for The STEAM Academy. "STEAM"
9 stands for "Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts,
10 and Mathematics," for those of you that were unaware
11 of that. And the "Academy" is what we have put
12 together.

13 But I'll begin a little bit sort of
14 setting the scene. I began working out here in the
15 community -- my family is from the Pueblo of Laguna
16 from the Village of Pagate, which is about 20 miles
17 in that direction, straight as the crow flies. I
18 started working here in Laguna in 2002, the winter
19 of 2002. I was fresh out of working a number of
20 workshops and programs. I had no educational
21 background; but I came out here with Mr. Sanchez to
22 be able to teach the Laguna History and Culture
23 class at the high school.

24 And what I saw was a lot of wonderful
25 students doing some amazing things; but there was

1 not a lot of support for these students.

2 And over the course and a number of years,
3 we saw a lot of issues that were going on with the
4 high school itself, local high schools, as well as
5 Laguna-Acoma High School. Part of that is around
6 the demographics. It's a rural school. 90 percent
7 of the students are considered Native American,
8 about 45 percent of those, 45 percent from the
9 Pueblo of Acoma, 45 percent from the Pueblo of
10 Laguna. And the other 10 percent are from the
11 communities of Seboyeta and Cubero, the other land
12 grants around here. We worked with all of these
13 students throughout the years.

14 In my role as a teacher, we were able to
15 interface with them. We had a number of students
16 who came into the class. What we saw was the way
17 that the school was not really as supportive of the
18 students as they could have been. That began a lot
19 of conversations in the community stretching back
20 even farther than when I began, around something to
21 do to be able to improve the education of the
22 students, but also to improve the general culture
23 around the students and the supportive nature from
24 the school itself.

25 And I'll actually let Mr. Sanchez talk a

1 little bit about the history, because he's been here
2 for quite some time; so I'll let Mr. Sanchez talk
3 about that at this moment.

4 MR. SANCHEZ: Okay, thanks. Yes, I guess
5 I can say I've been here -- geez -- probably as long
6 as whatever has been growing around here. It feels
7 that way.

8 But I originally got my start back at the
9 '80s at Acoma, when I was the assistant principal
10 there at the BIA school. I later moved on to Laguna
11 as the elementary principal, and then spent some
12 years there with the BIA in the elementary school,
13 and then founded the Laguna Department of Education,
14 which was a tribal education system, back in 1992
15 and up to 2007.

16 Currently, I'm the director of the Laguna
17 Community Foundation.

18 But I think one of the things I wanted to
19 do is frame the -- the -- the education system that
20 we've had here from those years up to the present
21 and to see how the evolution has taken us. So
22 everything from back then has been driven by Public
23 Education or federal, the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
24 And one of the issues that has always arisen has
25 been the quality of education.

1 And communities always strive for wanting
2 the best for their children to the point where they
3 would even send their children off on their own,
4 either to a school outside the system or to a
5 boarding school. And so this evolution of education
6 has been where the tribes have now taken on the
7 responsibility of the schools itself to serve their
8 communities, and to the point where now that we have
9 this opportunity for a charter school, it's going to
10 the point where the community -- it's a
11 community-based approach, where rather than have a
12 governmental system -- and that's how we found out
13 about this, because on the Laguna side, prior to
14 2012, I was leading the effort to establish a
15 charter school, working with the tribal government.
16 But looking at the laws and regulations, tribal
17 governments couldn't be involved in a charter
18 school. It had to come from the grassroots level.
19 And that's when at that point, we stopped the
20 movement of continuing on with the charter school
21 from the government side, supporting it.

22 And then the other thing that drove it to
23 that point was New Mexico had lost, I guess, its
24 grant with the U.S. Department of Education to
25 provide start-up funds for charter schools back in,

1 I think, 2013. So at that point, we suspended that.
2 And later on, this whole initiative, from the
3 grassroots level, developed.

4 But one of the things that, you know, we
5 saw -- or I saw as to be important here is that the
6 community wanted to see, you know, quality
7 education. So the emphasis of this STEAM Academy, I
8 think has been over the years, we've talked about,
9 talking about having a rigorous curriculum to
10 something that will best reflect preparing the
11 students for tomorrow, the world of work; but also
12 inclusive of language and culture, as well, and
13 hence, the whole aspect of focus of art to be an
14 integral part of the school.

15 So I think with that, this next part,
16 where, if given the opportunity, I think this
17 charter school could really be an asset to the
18 community of providing choice, the choice of either
19 something of what's been there for a number of
20 years, over the years, a public education system,
21 with something now that more reflects the values of
22 the communities of the eastern side of
23 Cibola County, the land grant communities, along
24 with the tribal communities, as well, working
25 collectively to look at, you know, what they would

1 like to see for their children and providing those
2 opportunities, as well.

3 So just a brief overview in terms of where
4 we came from, and at this point, looking at a
5 community-based charter school.

6 DR. FRANCIS: Thank you. And I think that
7 that's one of the things that we've tried to -- when
8 we began this process and I took this process over
9 from Mr. Sanchez, I think that one of the things
10 that we really hit on was that not all schools fit
11 all students. And that's one of the main principles
12 that we understand about charter schools, that it is
13 about this idea of choice.

14 We know that within this community, we
15 have a choice of five elementary schools, three
16 middle schools, but only one high school. Anybody
17 else has to drive 50 miles into Albuquerque or
18 30 miles into Grants to have any other choice for
19 their education from nine through 12.

20 What we also know is that a number of
21 students and families have made that choice, the
22 choice not to be within their own local community,
23 to uproot those families to drive that distance to
24 be at a different school. We know directly that
25 there are 64 students that are split between the

1 Native American Community Academy and the Santa Fe
2 Indian School that don't attend school in the local
3 community.

4 And the parents that we've talked to and
5 the families that we talked to have expressed an
6 interest and a desire to be rooted here, to be
7 rooted where their families come from, either from
8 Acoma or from Laguna, within this particular
9 community and this area. And that's one of the
10 things that we also point out with this is that not
11 only is it with Native communities, but rural
12 communities, very rarely get that kind of a choice.

13 Rural communities don't have a particular
14 option to be able to open up a number of
15 institutions for young people to attend to get a
16 different type of education, not simply a
17 straight-up public education, but something that is
18 innovative, that's imaginative, and they can fit a
19 different type of learner.

20 I think that's where we came from. When
21 we interviewed our community, when we talked to our
22 community members the response and feedback we got
23 was around real-world skills, the necessity for
24 real-world skills, the necessity for science and
25 math training. They talked to us about being ready

1 for college or careers, because there's a definite
2 need within the community for both of those.

3 And so what we developed was our strategy,
4 our vision, and our mission that talks about
5 post-secondary success, that's determined by the
6 students and their families, to find out what's best
7 here. Some will want to go off to college. Some
8 will want to get a job. Some will want to be
9 anchors in the community.

10 We have a number of community positions
11 that are often not considered within those fields,
12 you know, either a workforce or a college
13 preparation.

14 And so as this has gone on, we are -- we
15 know that, in the past, one of the main reasons
16 Laguna-Acoma High School was founded was because all
17 the students 40 years ago were being bussed into
18 Grants. And so the community enacted and wanted
19 something different here then; and now the community
20 is enacting and wanting something different now.
21 We're at that next iteration.

22 So as we said -- Mr. Sanchez used the word
23 "evolution." That was a really striking word.
24 Developing the school has been, and continues to be,
25 a process of collaboration and evolution. I think

1 in our initial document, you can see part of that
2 evolution. We started out as Kawaik'a High School
3 of Tradition and Technology. Talking with some of
4 our colleagues from down the road and one of our
5 possible governance council members, we felt that
6 that wasn't inclusive enough of our communities that
7 were existent here.

8 So it wasn't just dependent upon Laguna,
9 and it wasn't dependent upon that area. We wanted
10 to bring in more, create those options for Acoma
11 students who wouldn't feel disenfranchised by
12 something that was located in a different section.

13 So we decided to expand that; we continue
14 that evolution, we continue to try to engage those
15 particular communities, because we also know that as
16 this evolves, this is -- it has to be done from that
17 level. We have to take into consideration and talk
18 with our communities and our families and our young
19 people to make sure that their input is taken,
20 because what we know is that we're not going to have
21 the right answers immediately. This is not a school
22 in a box. Schools are living organisms. Schools
23 are developed because there's people in them.

24 And that's part of -- that's one of the
25 most amazing things that makes our schools different

1 than anything else. So I think that as we continue
2 to move forward, we continue to work towards that
3 direction of being more inclusive for the number of
4 students that may or may not be in the system, that
5 may want a different option.

6 Our initial intent was to try and bring
7 those kids that were not here back in the system,
8 the students that were dropouts, that didn't quite
9 fit in the local public education, the students that
10 are traveling outside of the bounds of this
11 community, to go to school.

12 There are a number of key supporters to
13 help us with this. I think we've got the smartest
14 people in the room at the table. I like all of
15 them, a lot of them in the back; so -- I'm glad
16 they're all here. I'll give you all credit. I'm
17 glad they're all here to help me in this process and
18 to help provide a lot of guidance.

19 I think that, you know, one of the assets
20 that we have, we have some great supporters. We
21 have the Laguna Community Foundation that's a part
22 of this process. We have the NACA Inspired Schools
23 Network that's been a part of that process. We have
24 a number of supporters and partners that have helped
25 us move into this direction. And I think that that

1 is really critical that we make these decisions as a
2 group and that we move forward as a group when we're
3 thinking about this.

4 That brings us to the question of
5 readiness, and we know that's kind of what we're
6 here for today. That's what the PEC decides is how
7 ready is this school and the community for this
8 thing, that it is a process, and we're here as a
9 part of that process.

10 We know that there's three areas that we
11 have kind of identified in this area of readiness.
12 One is the ability to raise academic achievement;
13 the second is the ability or the structure to govern
14 and be fiscally responsible; and the third is to be
15 sustainable. So it's not something that's here and
16 gone, which is something that we often see in rural
17 communities and Native communities, as well.

18 So as we established our mission and our
19 goals, we were really thinking about how we would
20 build a culture for the school. That's the most
21 important part as we think of all of this coming
22 together is how this culture is built and developed.
23 The best schools that we know have a culture of
24 success. Whatever that success geared towards for,
25 that culture is developed year after year after

1 year. And so we wanted to set high standards for
2 our students, and we wanted to have a culture that
3 focused on the students, that they have
4 post-secondary success. That's our goal, however
5 the students themselves define that.

6 It's not just getting the student through
7 the system and then waving at the doors I've seen at
8 many schools I've looked at. The water -- it stops
9 at the water's edge. Twelfth grade. Thank you very
10 much. We've got our numbers. Because this is the
11 community we're looking to develop their skills,
12 because we believe they are capable of growing, but
13 also giving back to the community, to renew,
14 revitalize, and reengage their communities in a way
15 that makes the whole area prosperous.

16 So one of the things we looked at is how
17 we would do that. Looking at the fact that
18 oftentimes rural communities, Native American
19 communities, don't get the access to technology, we
20 wanted to get a focus on that. One of the things we
21 learned from our middle school is they wanted to
22 have a technological focus. Students needed to be
23 ready for the 21st Century. So we wanted to have an
24 access to that.

25 Although there has been some turnaround at

SANTA FE OFFICE
119 East Marcy, Suite 110
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 989-4949
FAX (505) 820-6349



MAIN OFFICE
201 Third NW, Suite 1630
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 843-9494
FAX (505) 843-9492
1-800-669-9492
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1 Laguna-Acoma High School, science scores aren't
2 quite where they could possibly be; so we wanted to
3 be able to provide that alternative, to provide
4 something for students to be able to work towards.
5 We looked at STEAM, because bringing that arts
6 component in, science, technology, engineering,
7 arts, and mathematics, to bring that in with the
8 STEM foundation, and art is the expression the
9 students have as they move forward in their
10 projects.

11 And so "STEAM" is the learning that takes
12 place. The other is our project-based learning; so
13 putting students together to be able to do projects
14 and put those projects in the community.

15 And that final aspect is the
16 community-mindedness; so the idea that students when
17 they engage in these particular activities, that
18 it's not just about a public service that they do
19 some hours and they're done, but that all of their
20 work, all of their commitment, all of their learning
21 is dedicated towards supporting their community.
22 This is the way that we've been raised, all of our
23 communities here; the land grant communities and our
24 pueblos have all been raised in that way.

25 One of the things we wanted to do is

1 create that strong, supportive system and create
2 that community, because what we realize is that a
3 healthy community lends to a well-prepared and a
4 healthy child.

5 And engaging these students in these types
6 of activities and projects that require them to have
7 deeper thinking, solve and apply real-world skills,
8 this aligns with Common Core; this aligns with the
9 real-world skills and the college readiness that
10 they need when they move beyond these doors.

11 We know this is going to take strong
12 professional development and to bring in some
13 amazing supporters and people to be able to do this
14 kind of work with young people.

15 We know that we're also going to draw upon
16 the internal resources that we have. We ask a lot
17 of people to make these types of commitments and
18 some sacrifices. When you're working within a new
19 school, we realize with any start-up, any nonprofit,
20 any type of start-up, we realize that this is --
21 sometimes there are not always the resources
22 available. So we're asking for that commitment; but
23 we're drawing upon the knowledge, we're drawing upon
24 the intentions, we're drawing upon the heart of the
25 people in the room to be able to create this

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119 East Marcy, Suite 110
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 989-4949
FAX (505) 820-6349



MAIN OFFICE
201 Third NW, Suite 1630
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 843-9494
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1 community, so we're all learning from each other.

2 The second part that we look at is fiscal
3 accountability and the policies and structures that
4 are there to be able to govern and to be able to
5 seek two things, which we look at as efficiency and
6 effectiveness.

7 When we focus on the professional
8 development aspect, we're looking for our governance
9 council to bring in their skills and their ability.
10 Mr. Sanchez brings in 20-plus years as a founder of
11 a school district, as well as a superintendent, can
12 bring in a lot of background knowledge.

13 As we continue through the planning year,
14 hopefully, we'll be able to look at how we continue
15 to develop and evolve these particular aspects, to
16 continue to strengthen the school. We know that
17 particular roles between the head administrator, as
18 well as the school director, will directly focus on
19 engaging both the governance council, as well as the
20 staff in this type of learning.

21 Furthermore, within terms of our fiscal
22 accountability, as we develop the policies that --
23 that continue to strengthen that, we also realize
24 that we are very, very cautious and conservative in
25 the ways that we approached our budget, using only

1 the SEG formula. We wanted to also make sure that
2 we had something that we could build from, with
3 extra resources that would become available, federal
4 as well as private dollars, working with Laguna
5 Community Foundation, as well as outside entities
6 that would continue to be able to help support our
7 students in these areas. And all of these are the
8 types of things that we could continue to develop if
9 we move forward.

10 Finally, we look at sustainability. One
11 of the main issues with sustainability that we look
12 at is the facilities. And, of course, you're
13 sitting in one of the facilities. We've had some
14 amazing conversations. Although an older school, it
15 is an integral part of these communities.

16 My uncle went to school here about
17 50 years ago; so this is very special to me. And if
18 you look around at the students and the faculty and
19 the staff that are here, it is a representation in
20 this particular community here at St. Joseph's
21 Elementary.

22 We have had the chance to speak with
23 Principal Trujillo about the possibility of
24 co-locating here. And so those conversations will
25 be ongoing. We have not, at this particular moment,

1 had the chance for PSFA to come out and review the
2 facility; but we believe that this is one of the
3 major aspects, is making sure that there's a place
4 to exist and to operate that will be supportive of
5 young people and the mission and vision of the
6 school.

7 We also know that -- we also realize that
8 part of this is about continuing our outreach and
9 our planning with our community. And I'll let
10 Ms. Douma talk about that for a few minutes, about
11 the efforts that have been done so far.

12 MS. DOUMA: Hi. My name is Shannon Douma.
13 I'm here as a community member, but also as a
14 mother. I have a son who is entering eighth grade
15 today, and he'll be a freshman next year. So
16 currently, I am looking for options for him.

17 I live in this area, have grown up here.
18 I have been involved in my community and been
19 involved in education through my mother, who is --
20 who is an educator, who has been a teacher here
21 30-plus years at Laguna, and also at Sky City
22 Community School.

23 And so I'm -- part of my involvement is
24 really looking for what's a good option for him, as
25 a parent; because I have been involved at another

1 charter school, at NACA, and that's where I've
2 learned about the whole charter school and the
3 charter school process.

4 And so the outreach that we've been doing
5 as part The STEAM Academy team is being able to talk
6 with our community members in Laguna, in the
7 surrounding communities. A lot of the outreach has
8 been at our village meetings that we have every
9 Thursday in our community. And a lot of the
10 conversation has been around education and what are
11 the options for our students, because our students
12 are traveling 30 to 50 miles outside of our
13 community, and so what can we do to bring our
14 children back into our community, to utilize the
15 resources that we do have so that we're building the
16 capacity of our infrastructure, but also building
17 the capacity of our young people.

18 And so the outreach that we're doing in
19 terms of getting that input is parents wanting
20 another option, parents wanting students to have the
21 hands-on experience that they can relate to the
22 real-world experience, and also being able to go to
23 college.

24 And so in terms of our outreach now and
25 into the future is really about the door-to-door and

1 having that conversation with our families and
2 making sure that their feedback is heard, and, you
3 know, part of the school, in terms of the
4 development, will prosper into -- into the year.

5 DR. FRANCIS: So I think, sort of, as we
6 close this out, as we move into this transition, I
7 have been blessed to be able to be a fellow, to be
8 able to work through, as part of this, through the
9 NISN, this network. And this is my full-time role.
10 Part of this is my responsibility to continue to
11 guide and do this. I get to do this for the whole
12 next year.

13 If this moves forward, this is my
14 full-time role, to be able to work with everybody in
15 this particular space. And I think that's a major
16 advantage and a major asset, in terms of being able
17 to move all these particular pieces forward.

18 I'm blessed to have the option of being
19 this guide for this school, and to be able to come
20 back and continue the work in the community where I
21 began my teaching career.

22 I think we are embarking on something
23 incredibly unique. We have this option to be able
24 to do this. We have young people that are engaged
25 and excited, and families that are looking for

1 something different, something unique, something
2 new, something that can fulfill this promise of
3 education and this engagement with their community.

4 Thank you very much.

5 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you. That's
6 all? Yeah, okay. Thank you very much.

7 The next part of that will be the local
8 school district, which, in this case, is Grants.
9 I'm a little confused, because we're so far from
10 Grants. But you're setting your school in the
11 Grants School District; is that correct?

12 DR. FRANCIS: Yes, sir.

13 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Okay. Not in the
14 Laguna District.

15 DR. FRANCIS: Unh-unh.

16 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: You'll be in the
17 Grants -- so is there anyone from the Grants School
18 District that is here to speak to this application
19 today?

20 Could you guys give him the table for a
21 second, please?

22 DR. SPACE: I can stand. That way it's
23 easier for everybody to see me.

24 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Do you mind that?

25 DR. SPACE: I was a principal for seven

1 years; so everybody should be able to hear me.

2 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Okay, sir. You have
3 ten minutes.

4 DR. SPACE: I'm Dr. Marc Space. I'm the
5 Superintendent for the Grants-Cibola County Schools.
6 And we go from Seboyeta Elementary all the way to
7 Bluewater Elementary. We have two high schools in
8 between, as well as a middle school in town.

9 I was absolutely floored that this meeting
10 was taking place. Nobody told me. There was no
11 open communication on this. In fact, on your own
12 schedule, you guys have this located in Gallup.

13 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Yeah, that's a
14 mistake.

15 DR. SPACE: So I think, in openness, we
16 have one meeting -- we had scheduled the meeting
17 with the board of directors. They had wanted to
18 meet with us. And by "us," I mean my board
19 representative from Laguna, Emily Hunt-Dailey, and
20 my board representative from Acoma, which is --
21 well, he's not on the board now -- but Will Estevan.
22 I thought let's meet at Laguna-Acoma High School.
23 That way, it's closer for everybody.

24 So we met; but the only board of director
25 that was there was Dr. Francis. So we had what I

1 thought was a very good, productive conversation.
2 We talked about what could even be an alternative to
3 a charter school, such as a magnet school.

4 When I was a superintendent in the Taos
5 Municipal Schools, I created that magnet school on
6 Taos Pueblo to serve the population that they had
7 made reference to. As a matter of fact, next week,
8 I go back -- I was invited to return there. They're
9 celebrating their tenth anniversary of being open.

10 I'm not opposed to charter schools; but I
11 am concerned about a couple of things. And one is
12 the -- what I see as a lack of transparency. After
13 that meeting, we were going to have subsequent
14 meetings. The one that was scheduled was canceled,
15 and not by us.

16 I actually did not know that there had
17 been a formal application made until I got the
18 information from the Executive Director of the
19 New Mexico School Boards Association, who told me
20 about the hearing, who told me that indeed The STEAM
21 Academy had made a formal application.

22 I didn't even know that there was
23 opportunities for the school district to speak at
24 this. I thought -- I signed in because I thought I
25 was going to be just like a community member

1 speaking.

2 So I -- I have some real concerns there,
3 just on the terms of communication. I worked very
4 closely with my charter schools in Taos. And, you
5 know, you could speak to them to this day. Michelle
6 Hunt is still the director of Anansi Charter School.
7 And we had a very positive relationship.

8 But I don't know what kind of relationship
9 we're going to have here, because I don't see that
10 openness of communication. And that really worries
11 me.

12 I do know that the Laguna Tribal Council
13 does not support the creation of this school. I do
14 know that.

15 And the other, and probably most important
16 concern I have is there is, in the state, a lack of
17 science and math teachers. We're struggling just to
18 find science and math teachers at Laguna-Acoma. I
19 know Rio Rancho Public Schools, just to the east of
20 us, is also struggling to find them. And now we're
21 going to be in competition with a charter school, if
22 approved, to try to find science and math teachers.

23 So those are some of my concerns that I
24 have. And I do hope, if indeed this is approved,
25 that that communication will be a little bit more

1 open, because, again, you wouldn't have seen me here
2 if Joe Guillen hadn't sent me the e-mail about this.
3 No knowledge of it.

4 I thank you for your time.

5 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you, sir, for
6 your comments. And let me clarify. I don't wish to
7 be argumentative -- I'm not going to be
8 argumentative. But a part of State statute states
9 that every applicant must also send a letter to
10 their local school district.

11 And, Katie, was it verified that they sent
12 the notification -- so someone in the Grants School
13 District got that letter.

14 DR. SPACE: We received a letter. And
15 that's what prompted the meeting, okay?

16 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Okay.

17 DR. SPACE: But we thought there was going
18 to be a follow-up conversation. That letter was in
19 January that we met. There was nothing that
20 followed after. I thought we were -- then I asked
21 around. My -- my board member from Laguna, my board
22 member from Acoma. None of them had heard anything.

23 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: That's all the
24 statute requires of them, to send that letter.
25 There's no requirement for follow-up.

1 DR. SPACE: Right.

2 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: It would be nice. In
3 an ideal world, it might be.

4 DR. SPACE: I think in a real world, when
5 you're going to be working with the same kids, that
6 you have that open communication.

7 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: And I would encourage
8 that in the future, too; but since they did not
9 apply to you, they applied to us, they will be an
10 independent school and will not answer to the Grants
11 Schools.

12 DR. SPACE: That's correct, yeah.

13 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: I'm sure you
14 understood that.

15 But thank you for taking the time to be
16 here today, sir. Thank you for your input.

17 DR. SPACE: Thank you.

18 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: We are now ready for
19 the public input portion of this. She will get me
20 the sign-in sheet, and we will then move forward.

21 Just as further clarification, as this
22 State statute I quoted, there were actually seven
23 applicants that did not notify their local school
24 districts. And that's part of the law, and their
25 applications were not accepted. So we do not accept

1 it if they don't let the local folks know they're
2 applying. We're very firm on that.

3 It looks like I have six people who have
4 indicated they'd like to speak. I would ask for
5 your forbearance if I happen to mispronounce your
6 name. I try to get them right.

7 This session actually allows for
8 20 minutes, total. So I will allow each speaker to
9 have three minutes. Your three minutes will be
10 timed, and I will interrupt you at the end of the
11 three minutes. I'm not doing it to be rude; but we
12 try to adhere to the time limit. So it will be
13 three minutes.

14 The first name on the list is Claudia
15 Douma.

16 MS. C. DOUMA: I'm just going to sit here,
17 because I can't --

18 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: You'll need to speak
19 up and spell your name for our recorder, please.

20 MS. C. DOUMA: Okay. My name is Claudia
21 Douma. D-O-U-M-A is the last name. And I live in
22 Laguna. I work at Sky City Community School, and
23 I've been an educator for many years. I've worked
24 at Laguna Elementary; I've worked at Tohajilee
25 Community School; and I've worked at Sky City

1 Community School.

2 And I have four children. And I sent two
3 of them here to this school, St. Joseph's School.
4 And I've had kids at Laguna Elementary School, and I
5 sent one of my children to school in Albuquerque, to
6 high school.

7 And I -- I have a passion for Native
8 students to really get a good education. And I
9 don't think I've been in any school where they've
10 really offered that. They say, "Yeah, we have
11 culture. We have -- we have art. We have science.
12 We have" -- but they're -- it doesn't fully touch on
13 all of that. And our students are missing out on
14 what some students at public schools are getting.

15 And to me, as a student at Laguna-Acoma
16 High School, I was a number to Grants community
17 school [verbatim], a head count, money for their
18 school. \$300, my -- my -- that's what I was worth.

19 But we didn't get half the things Grants
20 school system students got. We were over here with
21 what we used to call our Easter egg bus. We had an
22 activity bus that was just so -- it was really
23 grand, and they had all the high-tech stuff here in
24 Grants.

25 So here in our community, as a teacher, I

1 have always advocated for our students to really get
2 a quality education. I sent my youngest son to
3 Highland High School. He commuted every single day
4 for four years to high school to get the best
5 education. But he always came back home, because he
6 says, "Mom, I need to go home every night to get
7 re-energized to go back to the city."

8 And now my son is an attorney. And that's
9 what he's given back to our community; because he's
10 had the opportunity to be exposed to the dominant
11 society, the outside world. He went to Highland
12 High School -- I mean, Highland High School. And he
13 went to the Haskell Indian Nations University, where
14 there's also a diversity in tribes out there.

15 And I would like -- my passion is for all
16 of our students here, our minority, our pueblo, our
17 Hispanic kids, to get an education like the kids in
18 Grants get, like the kids in Albuquerque get.

19 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Time is up. Thank
20 you for your comments.

21 MS. C. DOUMA: Thank you.

22 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: The next name on the
23 list is Philip Riley.

24 MR. RILEY: I'm right here. I'm one of --
25 I'm part of the STEAM council. I'll go ahead and

1 start and speak two minutes on my experience as a
2 student who came out of this system.

3 I was -- I went to Laguna-Acoma High
4 School, and I wasn't prepared. As a product of
5 GCCS, I was not prepared at all. The standard of
6 education over at Laguna-Acoma High School was not
7 adequate for me to survive in college.

8 But with the help of the organization that
9 Dr. Francis just spoke about in the beginning, the
10 organization that came out of it, it helped my class
11 succeed. Most of the graduates from there didn't
12 think about going to school. And so what his --
13 what came out of that was that it offered us a
14 choice.

15 And what The STEAM Academy is opening is
16 that chance to have those students who didn't get
17 what they need from Laguna-Acoma High School to come
18 over here and to get that college preparatory. And
19 that -- it's a choice. And a lot of Acoma students
20 who -- who -- we're stuck in the middle. Either we
21 go to Laguna-Acoma High School, or we go to Grants
22 20 miles away.

23 And this is going to be an academy right
24 down the street, which will offer us good
25 preparation for college and workforce, whether we

1 choose or not to go.

2 So it's a choice that will be available
3 for the communities.

4 But also, I have to read a letter from
5 Mr. Ahmie, who's also -- who sits on our board.
6 John "Chris" Ahmie. He's a part of -- the business
7 development officer at The STEAM Academy.

8 And he says, "As a Pueblo of Laguna
9 Registered Tribal Member and parent of three
10 children enrolled at Laguna Head Start, Laguna
11 Elementary School, Laguna Middle School, and Laguna
12 High School, I am in complete support of the
13 community-based charter school effort.

14 "I've resided in the Pueblo of Laguna for
15 over 25 years and recognize the need for developing
16 a skilled workforce to support planned economic
17 growth in the future, creating educational options
18 and that's aligned with our vision of the future and
19 our core values in excellence in education.

20 "Over the years, I've witnessed a decline
21 in our communities' participation in our own
22 educational system. More and more parents are
23 opting to send their children off reservation for
24 their education. Obviously, they believe their
25 education needs are better met outside our

1 community.

2 "This trend needs to be reversed, and our
3 community is in desperate need of an alternative
4 approach. Dr. Francis has proposed to our community
5 such an alternative in the form of a new charter
6 high school, a positive way to reengage with the
7 community.

8 "Pueblo of Acoma is committed to
9 supporting education for its tribal members, and I
10 believe that the school will be great benefit for
11 those families and students who desire strong
12 educational outcomes rooted in community-based
13 educational activities."

14 And this is a signed letter from, again,
15 John "Chris" Ahmie.

16 That's all I have to say.

17 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you very much.
18 Jodi Burshea [ph] or Burshia.

19 MS. BURSHIA: Hello. Good afternoon.

20 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Speak up and spell
21 your name, please.

22 MS. BURSHIA: Okay. Hello. Good
23 afternoon. My name is Jodi Burshia, B-U-R-S-H-I-A.
24 And I actually live in Albuquerque, but I'm from the
25 Pueblo of Laguna from the Village of Seama. And I'm

1 very, very supportive of this STEAM Academy. And I
2 definitely acknowledge what Dr. Francis had said
3 earlier, that our students and our youth need an
4 actual choice, and in terms of the actual school
5 district or the school, the choices they have
6 available currently. And so I think it would be
7 fantastic.

8 As a former educator, I've worked with
9 Laguna-Acoma High School. I've worked with schools
10 here in New Mexico. And then I'm finishing up work
11 over at the University of New Mexico there. I think
12 it's really imperative that our students have the
13 choice there to do that. And so I'm very, very
14 supportive of this actual school here, to see how it
15 comes together.

16 Thank you.

17 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you. Next
18 speaker actually was at our hearing this morning.

19 Alan Brauer?

20 MR. BRAUER: Good afternoon,
21 Commissioners. Thanks for the opportunity to speak
22 to you both morning and afternoon today.

23 I am here to speak on behalf of STEAM
24 Academy and Lee Francis as part of our fellowship
25 with NACA Inspired Schools. As I mentioned earlier

1 today, Lee and his governing council has a team of
2 ten folks that work within our nonprofit
3 organization to support everything from facility
4 build-out, financial support, as well as other
5 operational support. And we also have a team that
6 focuses on the educational support, as well,
7 teaching them learning, building curriculum and
8 instruction, and coaching teachers when the time
9 comes.

10 And I -- I have been really impressed, you
11 know, in reviewing -- in reviewing STEAM's
12 application. I think the thing that really draws me
13 to -- to really support this school, beyond my role,
14 is the innovation that's within it. I grew up on a
15 small dairy farm about 60 miles away from Baltimore,
16 Maryland, very similar to San Fidel or Acoma or
17 Laguna in terms of its proximity to the big city.

18 When I hear from the governing council and
19 Lee Francis the desire to open up a school that
20 would allow our local students to not have to go to
21 the big city to learn about, you know, student
22 leadership development, to learn about project-based
23 learning, to learn about STEAM, which, in itself, is
24 an innovation to me -- I've never heard that before.
25 I've heard a lot about STEM in the last ten years,

1 but never STEAM.

2 Hearing about that happening right here in
3 the community and serving Laguna-Acoma and our
4 Latino students is just really heartening to me.
5 The combination of STEAM, along with the big focus
6 on -- big focus on community, you know, service, I
7 think is another thing that just makes the school
8 really innovative.

9 Instead of counting hours -- I'm from
10 Maryland, so I had to get 75 hours of community
11 service before graduating from high school. I'm not
12 sure what it's like here in the State of New Mexico.
13 But Lee and his team have created a system where
14 instead of counting hours, there are real purposeful
15 projects that students are going to sink their teeth
16 and their souls into that are going to make dramatic
17 impact in the communities in which they live. And I
18 think that is something that truly speaks to the
19 focus in on student leadership at its finest.

20 And finally, I'll just share that all of
21 that is through the lens of college readiness, you
22 know, making sure that our students locally are
23 ready for college and their careers for the
24 long-term, and coming here to their community and
25 staying here in their community to do the hard work

SANTA FE OFFICE
119 East Marcy, Suite 110
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 989-4949
FAX (505) 820-6349



MAIN OFFICE
201 Third NW, Suite 1630
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 843-9494
FAX (505) 843-9492
1-800-669-9492
e-mail: info@litsupport.com

1 of the transformation that I think a lot of folks
2 here are really deserving of and desire at this
3 point.

4 So thank you very much.

5 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you.

6 Antonio Trujillo?

7 MR. TRUJILLO: Yes. My name is Antonio
8 Trujillo, T-R-U-J-I-L-L-O. And I'm the principal
9 here at St. Joseph's School. I live up the road.
10 I'm from San Fidel, originally from San Rafael.

11 And I've been the principal for five years
12 here. I came when there was only 12 students in the
13 school; right now, we're at 46, and we're hoping to
14 grow every year.

15 One of the things is that education is a
16 big buzz word that's always a lightning rod in many
17 issues. One of the things is that Catholic
18 education in this area has always been one of those
19 choices. Most of -- all of the students here are
20 driven from Pagate, from Mesita. Their parents
21 really make an effort to come, not only bring their
22 children, but also pay at -- the tuition. And so
23 there is a commitment from the community to have the
24 best that's available.

25 One of the things that I'm very proud of,

1 that in our time that I've been here, I have some
2 wonderful, fantastic teachers, so much so that I
3 like -- we're going toward "STREAM." The only thing
4 is "R" is for "Religion" in our thing. But we've
5 had a lot of people who have graduated from
6 St. Joseph's. And one of them is Michael Gottlieb,
7 who was down in Roswell for many years. He came to
8 the school; he's from this area.

9 But we have a lot of tribal leaders.
10 We've had a lot of others that have gone to
11 Creighton, Georgetown, to Notre Dame, because here,
12 our goal has always been -- our goal is to make sure
13 that our students hit those top-level universities.
14 And it just happens to be Catholic for us.

15 But anyway, the thing is, is that that's
16 our standard; that's our goal. But the thing is, is
17 that we're a choice that parents make to send their
18 kids here, and we have to deliver.

19 The other part is that I like what I hear,
20 because -- and I was getting to -- is our students,
21 they all -- most of them went to the State finals
22 for the science fair. That's real big for us. Not
23 only do we have science, but we also have a garden,
24 agriculture. And so we're teaching the kids how to
25 do that according to their traditional ways.

1 90 percent of our students are from
2 Laguna-Acoma, and, again, 10 percent come from here
3 in San Fidel and Cubero and Seboyeta. I think
4 another choice is good. I always put myself into
5 the shoes of what if it was another elementary
6 school in the area? How would I feel?

7 I would feel very defensive. I would have
8 to get my act together, being another principal.
9 What am I doing that I need to do to get my school
10 in top shape?

11 So I'm all for competition. And it helps
12 us get on our toes. And if STEAM Academy came here,
13 I think it would up the -- the accountability for
14 everyone.

15 Now, on the other hand, I just want to
16 say --

17 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Time is up.

18 MS. TRUJILLO: -- communication. Final
19 thing is communication is very important.

20 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you for that
21 about "Mike." I did not know that. Next time I see
22 him, I'm going to ask him about his history here.

23 The last name on the list I didn't notice
24 is Mr. Space, who's already spoken. So you've said
25 your piece?

1 DR. SPACE: Yeah, yeah. I don't want to
2 bore people.

3 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: It's not boring at
4 all. But that leaves us, I would say, three
5 minutes. So is there anyone that did not sign up?
6 I want to be sure everybody had the opportunity to
7 speak today.

8 Well, I can't do three of you. I can do
9 one person. So pick a member. Come sign the list,
10 please. Then I'll let you speak.

11 Like I say, I can't allow three of you to
12 speak; just one of you.

13 SPEAKER: No? Are you joking, or that's
14 what -- that's it? Okay.

15 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: We had had the
16 20-minute limit.

17 I will tell you how to make a written
18 comment after the meeting and where to send it and
19 everything. You will all have an opportunity to do
20 that.

21 Actually, if you want -- and I just
22 told -- if you want to just speak for a minute, you
23 can't really say anything in a minute. But I'll let
24 all three of you speak for one minute each; but you
25 can't really say anything in a minute. Are you

1 Morris [verbatim] Aragon?

2 MR. FELIPE: No, Nicholas Felipe.

3 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Here again, if you
4 want to split up the time --

5 MR. ARAGON: All I have to say, Mr. Vice
6 Chair, is I believe choice is helpful in our
7 community. Again, I'm Marvis Aragon. I'm from the
8 Acoma community. And having more choice where our
9 high school students can go would be good.

10 Thank you.

11 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Nicholas, go ahead.
12 And, ma'am, if you want to speak, come on up. I'll
13 give you a very short amount of time. I want to be
14 fair and be sure to hear from the community. We try
15 to stick to the guidelines; but I don't want anyone
16 to say they didn't get the chance.

17 MR. FELIPE: My name is Nicholas Felipe,
18 F-E-L-I-P-E. I'm a member of the Pueblo of Acoma.
19 I graduated in 2012 from the Native American
20 Community Academy; so it's -- so NACA is the
21 foundation for that NACA Inspired Schools.

22 And I'm here to support the STEAM Academy,
23 because I communicated with Lee Francis, Dr. Lee
24 Francis quite a bit. He's helped me do a number of
25 things, through national competitions, to applying

1 to different schools and stuff like that. And I
2 think what he's doing within this community is very
3 unique.

4 STEM is a program -- or STEAM -- is a
5 program that's more -- more recent in its
6 development. The collegiate -- on the collegiate
7 level, it's still being acknowledged, and even
8 accepted, in some respects. I am a part of the
9 STEAM community at Lawrence University in Appleton,
10 Wisconsin, where I attend school, and I will be a
11 rising senior this next year, majoring in
12 environmental studies with a focus in business and
13 anthropology.

14 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: I hate to cut you
15 off, but you've gone past your limit.

16 MR. FELIPE: Oh, that was three?

17 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Would you -- you're
18 sure?

19 Go ahead and finish your thought, then.

20 MR. FELIPE: I think it's a very unique
21 program, very innovative, and I think we should all
22 support it, because it not only represents the idea
23 of community, but also the value of culture.

24 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Okay. Thank you very
25 much. As I say, we make every effort to be fair.

1 We try to be fair with the folks; so -- all right.

2 That was the end of that list, huh?

3 All right. We have finished with the
4 Public Comment period.

5 We now move into the Public Education
6 Commission's question period. We will now ask you
7 questions. We will give ourselves -- since this is
8 our hearing, we'll give ourselves 40 minutes.

9 And I can tell you, Katie cut me off right
10 in the middle of a sentence this morning herself.

11 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: And then you
12 continued.

13 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: But then I continued,
14 because that's part of the privilege of being the
15 Chair of the proceedings.

16 So, Katie, if you'll start the clock.

17 Commissioners, who would like to get us
18 started with some questions for the applicant?

19 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: I guess I will. I'm
20 sorry. I'm scrolling through my notes that I put on
21 the application, and I left the computer; so I'm
22 reading off my phone. So it's not the easiest
23 thing.

24 I guess I'm looking at -- and I -- I'm
25 looking at your school day. And I'm looking at

1 the -- the early -- I think your morning is going to
2 be with the blended instruction with some online.
3 And I just can't find anything about afternoon.

4 It -- you know, I'm trying to scroll
5 through. And I know you're looking at
6 community-based projects.

7 Do you have any sort of idea of what they
8 might be doing and what that day is going to better
9 look like?

10 DR. FRANCIS: Absolutely. Let me pull up
11 my document, as well. But I can begin talking while
12 I'm doing that.

13 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: Okay. That's fine.

14 DR. FRANCIS: We're actually really
15 careful to consider the amount of time for studies
16 within that, as well as the blended instruction. So
17 the morning has the instructional period. It's on
18 a -- basically, an A and B block. So the A block
19 will be, I think, science and -- science and social
20 studies; and then the B block is the language arts
21 and mathematics. And those alternate days.

22 The way that we set -- we have big blocks
23 of time -- and this was very intentional -- was the
24 idea that we have a longer advisory period in the
25 morning than most schools do; because part of that

1 advisory is to have the one-on-one facilitation with
2 the instructor, based on some of the needs that they
3 may have to do. Maybe they are missing some
4 homework; they need to do that. So that fills in
5 that time in terms of the instructional hours.

6 In the back half of the afternoon, they
7 have, I believe, their technology coursework and the
8 project itself. And that project is really the
9 application of what they're doing in the morning
10 with a hands-on approach with their instructors.

11 So those instructors will be doing things
12 like we have things within -- that we talked about
13 on the Laguna side, say, re-stuccoing houses. So
14 one aspect is to be able to bring in the
15 engineering, the science, the language arts.
16 Dr. Shelley Valdez who also serves on our board and
17 is our science adviser in all of this has worked for
18 years on the Chaco Canyon expedition.

19 And so the idea of being able to work in
20 Chaco Canyon where, in the morning, you would learn
21 the skills, the blended learning; you're learning
22 your isosceles triangles; you're learning grammar,
23 and you're learning those various things.

24 And then all in the afternoon is the
25 application. How do you take the first part in the

1 morning, and the teacher -- the instructor there,
2 being able to guide that through, saying, "You just
3 learned triangles," to apply this to how they built
4 their buildings in Chaco Canyon.

5 We're going to build a scaled project of
6 that. We're doing an astronomy project to be able
7 to see how pueblo people and ancient people looked
8 at the stars, and then we're going to calculate
9 actual distances from what you just read. And so
10 the online instruction, that blended coursework, go
11 both from class, as well as online, based on the
12 Common Core standards and Benchmarks.

13 So -- and I think we built out additional
14 time during the -- almost a full day, which I think
15 is the Wednesday, as we set -- but it can really be
16 any day -- but it is a full day where they will
17 continue to engage in those projects. And whatever
18 is necessary to be able to bring that in with both
19 their community engagement piece, as well as that --
20 the learning that comes in, that's all sort of
21 blended in with that, so that they make sure they
22 have the correct number of hours for their courses;
23 but then they also do something that engages in the
24 community.

25 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: And I guess just a

1 follow-up. I guess I have a concern about
2 facilities, because we've heard that, fortunately,
3 their -- their student population is growing. And
4 I'm -- I'm not the building expert. And I recall
5 out at lunch someone saying someone needs to become
6 the building expert; but I'm not. I'm thinking you
7 may have trouble with PSFA.

8 DR. FRANCIS: So we've looked at -- this
9 is the one that we've talked with Mr. Trujillo about
10 mostly. I know that we've talked about a number of
11 spaces within this --

12 MS. TRUJILLO: There's a building that
13 might be vacated by next year, that it's about the
14 same size as this school; but we would not use it.
15 So it's the building across the street there.

16 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: Okay.

17 DR. FRANCIS: So in our conversations, we
18 have both -- there's a building in the back that you
19 can see that we've identified as one area, the
20 building that's over here, as well as we've talked
21 about if the necessity grows, that there is land
22 that's available that's wired and powered and has
23 the ability to be able to put some portables. And
24 we've also had that discussion in addition to that.

25 So there are -- at least there's the

1 facility options. We have not had a review of this
2 particular facility.

3 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: Right.

4 DR. FRANCIS: We have -- we have received
5 our business license from the Pueblo of Laguna. And
6 so we can continue to engage them in a conversation
7 about the Mesita facility, which is out there. It's
8 at the western -- or the eastern entrance to the
9 pueblo itself. And that was actually what -- the
10 facility that was reviewed by PSFA in the initial
11 application. And that --

12 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: It was approved?

13 DR. FRANCIS: That one was reviewed and
14 approved, with minor improvements. We haven't done
15 contracting or the E-Occupancy rules.

16 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: Those minor things
17 that cost money.

18 DR. FRANCIS: We did look at that. So
19 those are two options.

20 The third option that we looked at that we
21 reviewed, as well, was the Laguna Department of
22 Education may have some facility space coming up; so
23 we've looked at that one.

24 As we talked with Mr. Trujillo and what
25 Mr. Riley outlined, we would like to be in this

1 community, because it is closer to Acoma, because it
2 is our first choice. We're waiting to get back with
3 PSFA to review the sites, the facility itself.

4 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: My last comment is
5 the mission-specific indicators are not in
6 percentage format -- are not in formats that we
7 normally use when we negotiate; so that those would,
8 you know, certainly have to be fixed.

9 And the one -- you know, although I know
10 it's a graduation one, it can't be measured until
11 they're gone. So there needs to be something that
12 can be looked at on a yearly basis with them, what
13 the math -- I think it was your math -- the math
14 SMART goal isn't in a format that we negotiate.

15 DR. FRANCIS: The percentage. What we
16 wanted to do -- and it was sort of a hybrid. Our
17 initial goal was set up around ACT Prep, because
18 we're looking at -- we were looking at the college
19 benchmarks. But we did -- when we started
20 discussing what the contract work would be as part
21 of our network conversations, based on this NWEA
22 percentage of growth for each one of the students,
23 what we wanted to do was we benchmarked that, sort
24 of a hybrid model with both, that could be -- you
25 know, if we do move forward, partly for

1 negotiations.

2 But we wanted it still benchmarked on
3 those ACT scores, because the work that I've done
4 with higher education out here, we still found that
5 that is one of the prime indicators for how well
6 they're going to do, being able to remain in
7 college, not just being able to matriculate to
8 college.

9 So when we looked at it, we looked at sort
10 of a range. And I think that was in our Appendix A,
11 the research that supports that for the
12 benchmarking.

13 And I think, you know, as we move forward
14 we'll kind of see what the process looks like. If
15 it needs to be more percentage-based, then that's
16 fine; but we also wanted to have our students kind
17 of keep an eye on the prize.

18 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: All right. Thanks.

19 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Is that all,
20 Commissioner?

21 Yeah, let me address that. Is
22 St. Joseph's -- is that a private religious school?

23 MS. TRUJILLO: Yes, it is, under the
24 Diocese of Gallup.

25 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: I would say you have

1 to be very careful. As I say, the State statutes
2 and the Charter School Act, they say there can't be
3 religious. I can't say I agree with that. That's
4 what the statute is. You would have to explore
5 whether you could use private -- are these
6 facilities used by a church?

7 MS. TRUJILLO: Yes.

8 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: McCurdy -- you've
9 heard of McCurdy Mission for a number of years.
10 They were a private school up by Española. Well,
11 they came to us and applied to be a private school.
12 All their buildings were owned by a church
13 foundation.

14 We had a mess with that. They're still
15 having problems with their facilities. You'd have
16 to explore that very greatly and probably get an
17 attorney involved to do that.

18 I don't give legal advice. That's not my
19 job. But there are folks that get very upset when
20 we talk about religious-attached. So if we did
21 share spaces, you'd have to be very careful with
22 that.

23 DR. FRANCIS: Thank you, sir.

24 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Commissioners?
25 Commissioner Toulouse?

1 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Mr. Chair, there's
2 one of the things -- and this has to do with
3 facilities, too. If you're going with the technical
4 side of things, you would also need to make sure
5 that all of these buildings could do your modern
6 technology; not just computer stuff, but laboratory
7 equipment, the design equipment. And I would not be
8 sure that the wiring in all the old buildings and
9 all would function with that.

10 So before I would approve any final
11 facility, we would need to make sure that that all
12 worked; because it's -- you know, as you know, it's
13 more than you're going to need if it was a regular,
14 all-purpose school. And I'm concerned that you have
15 the proper equipment, if you're going to teach 21st
16 Century science, that you have 21st Century
17 equipment.

18 I know computers are in most classrooms
19 now, and that isn't usually a big problem. But what
20 is your computer access here? Is it good?

21 DR. FRANCIS: We do -- you do have the lab
22 set up here?

23 MS. TRUJILLO: No, we don't.

24 DR. FRANCIS: Not yet? Okay. So who we
25 looked at -- our initial conversations are talking

1 about how we would bring out the type of wiring that
2 would be necessary; so we have been considering that
3 in terms of our planning-year dollars and the things
4 we would be looking for.

5 I know I've spoken with that with both
6 Mr. Sanchez with the Laguna Community Foundation,
7 and we've been investigating some of the technology
8 grants that we could apply for, as well as
9 Ms. Carmen, as well, in terms of our budget
10 management through our transition year with the
11 Network. So we have some of the resources that may
12 be available for that.

13 The other option is we do have some --
14 especially if we look over at the Laguna Department
15 of Education and some of the options that we have in
16 some of the local spaces is to be able to use some
17 of the labs that are available there for the
18 technology.

19 We know some of the charter schools have
20 Learning Lab-type situations and setups;
21 specifically, I think Taos has something like that.
22 So that's also -- we're investigating that, as well.
23 So we are trying to keep an eye on making sure we do
24 have the technology infrastructure to be able to
25 meet our goals.

1 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I just know for
2 various computer access, when you're not in the
3 Rio Grande Corridor, it's much more difficult for
4 anybody, whether it's a citizen, school, State
5 government, or anybody, to have adequate access that
6 stays up, works fast enough to get something done.

7 So I would want to make sure, because you
8 are looking at the technical side -- which, by the
9 way, I am very glad you added the "A" in there.

10 DR. FRANCIS: Me, too.

11 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Students need the
12 arts. And they need all the arts. And you can
13 teach math and science around art very nicely. So I
14 am very glad that you added that in there.

15 So at this point, Mr. Chair, that's all I
16 have thought of. I don't guarantee I won't think of
17 something, as other answers go on. But right now,
18 that was the main thing I thought about this.

19 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: I understand that. I
20 have a coherent thought myself that was a little
21 late. Next?

22 Commissioner Armbruster?

23 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I want to say
24 that I was trying to read it, and mine's smaller
25 than hers. So I wasn't being impolite and reading

1 e-mail. But it's very difficult with this tiny
2 screen.

3 So I have some questions, some of which
4 are just informational. So parents got together,
5 and there's a Laguna-Acoma High School that the
6 parents pushed for and were able to succeed in
7 getting; is that what I understood?

8 I was trying to take notes here.

9 MR. SANCHEZ: That was in 1963 under 874,
10 federal funds that the Pueblo of Laguna advocated
11 for the creation -- or the building of Laguna-Acoma
12 High School.

13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So did they get
14 the SEG funds from the State then?

15 DR. FRANCIS: Yes. And it is located in
16 Grants-Cibola County. So it is a public high
17 school.

18 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Got it. Okay.
19 This is sort of an omnibus question, because it's
20 really true of everything.

21 I understand what the Superintendent,
22 Marc -- I don't know to spell your name.

23 DR. SPACE: How could you forget Space,
24 "Space" as a last name?

25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Space. How

1 could I forget? It is a concern of mine, also. I
2 live in Los Alamos. I came from California. And
3 everywhere in the country, because of different
4 regulations and evaluations and blah-blah-blah, are
5 having problems getting -- I'm going to add one to
6 your science and math. Special ed.

7 DR. FRANCIS: Uh-huh.

8 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Which is what I
9 taught for 39 years. Very difficult to get.

10 So my question is, if you have teachers
11 here whom -- you know, to be a charter, you want to
12 do something different. And you're not the only one
13 to whom I'm saying this, by the way.

14 So where are you going to get those
15 teachers from? Possibly from the same teachers who
16 are already teaching. And are they not doing as
17 good a job, or they're not caring about kids, or
18 they're not having advisory?

19 They're not -- you know, I -- it concerns
20 me, like, how is this going to -- how will you find
21 people who are better? Does that make sense to you
22 what I'm asking you?

23 DR. FRANCIS: Yes, absolutely. I think in
24 terms of the point that the Superintendent brought
25 up -- and I've seen this in a number of locations --

1 first off, we have two different points of access
2 than the district would have. I think that's one of
3 the things that the flexibility of a charter school
4 enables is that there are the State requirements and
5 the laws that are in there; but there are different
6 pools that we can draw from.

7 I can tell you that I've already talked to
8 two young people, that went through my college prep
9 program, that have science degrees and science
10 backgrounds and wanted to come back and teach and
11 didn't have the option to be able to do that. So
12 they wanted to have that particular space.

13 Our adviser, you know, Dr. Valdez, who is
14 not in attendance today, has access to a number
15 of -- she teaches Native American science. So she
16 is a scientist that has access to a number of
17 institutions of higher education that we can draw
18 from, and we can draw those resources from.

19 In fact, one of them we got through her is
20 our connection and partnership with the University
21 of California-Berkeley and their STEM/STEAM NASA
22 training that they do. So that allows us a number
23 of different options that we would not be seeking
24 from the same pool.

25 I think we've given this a lot of thought,

1 because this was one of the questions that came from
2 our community, as well, when we were having these
3 conversations, is this idea of being able to start
4 our pipeline. And that's one of the things that, in
5 my background, in my expertise, and when we
6 initially thought of this, starting this school, is
7 the idea of, like, we've got to start now, of, like,
8 you know, our students that are graduating, "Want to
9 teach? Want to teach? Want to teach? We've got
10 science and math. Come on."

11 We have a young man right here that's
12 going to be completing his college education next
13 year. He's a fellow with the First Nations
14 Development Institute around science and agriculture
15 who is interested in staying here in this community
16 and teaching.

17 We have a lot of options. I think our
18 work needs to be about getting them through that
19 process as quickly and efficiently as possible.

20 That's the other partnership that we have
21 with the University of New Mexico and their -- what
22 they call the ZETAC program, which is "Zuni Engaging
23 Teachers And Community," and their whole work around
24 that -- and we've already discussed with them about
25 being the second location -- is helping to get all

1 their teachers certified and accredited.

2 So we've been trying to make the
3 groundwork to try and do that; so different pools
4 and creating our own pipeline system for that.

5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So are these
6 mostly Native American?

7 DR. FRANCIS: A number of them are; and
8 some of them are not.

9 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It's a mix.

10 DR. FRANCIS: No, it's not. It's a mix of
11 them. It's for any teacher within the Zuni Public
12 School District, and that's a range of both.

13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So can
14 Superintendent Space use the same people?

15 DR. FRANCIS: Yes, absolutely.

16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So everybody is
17 grabbing these folks; right?

18 DR. SPACE: We have two -- we have at
19 least two, if not three, teachers that it's -- the
20 shortage is so bad, we have three teachers on
21 waivers, two engineers that are looking to get
22 either a math or a science waiver.

23 Here at Laguna-Acoma, we were kind of
24 torn -- I hire principals by committee. And our
25 committee, which was representative of faculty and

1 community members from Laguna and Acoma, selected
2 the principal, the new principal of Laguna-Acoma,
3 who was one of our math teachers. And we knew for a
4 while, "Well, what do we do there?" But we went
5 with the wishes of the committee.

6 And we had to restructure. She had to
7 come in and restructure, so as not to fill that
8 position, when ideally, we would have loved to fill
9 that position.

10 I see it as an ever increasing burden.
11 Special ed, I agree with you. I don't think that's
12 going to be a challenge here, though, specifically,
13 with this school.

14 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: But you're still
15 kind of concerned about the teachers that --

16 DR. SPACE: Well, I think we're -- I think
17 everybody --

18 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: -- that --
19 okay -- of the current high school -- what I'm
20 hearing -- and I'm not necessarily hearing this
21 correctly. But what I'm hearing is, "We want to
22 start a different school, because our kids are going
23 to Grants; they're going to Santa Fe; they're going
24 to Albuquerque, because this high school is not
25 giving them the technology, the -- I don't know

1 what -- love -- you know, the connectedness."

2 And so that's why -- so we're not really
3 improving that school; we're just thinking we need
4 to start a new school.

5 DR. FRANCIS: The point is the high
6 academics and continuing that on. I think that's a
7 component of it; it needs to be. I think that is
8 some of the response that we've received from
9 parents is that they want that particular
10 opportunity.

11 But I also think it's around the support
12 and the culture. I think it's very important;
13 because we do have -- I serve on the Rural Schools
14 and Community Trust, you know. It's this board that
15 looks at, you know, rural schools in rural
16 communities. And what we know is a lot of them are
17 dying because of the brain drain.

18 What happens is if you do really excellent
19 work, and you send the students, they don't
20 necessarily come home. So what we're trying to do
21 is also develop that, as well. So it's not only the
22 academic excellence, but also the option to be
23 connected within the community, to come back and
24 help revitalize those communities, these
25 communities.

1 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And that's a
2 hard thing to do. It's, like, the State of New
3 Mexico.

4 DR. FRANCIS: Absolutely.

5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Thank you.

6 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you.

7 Mr. Conyers, do you have anything? Any
8 questions?

9 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: I guess going last,
10 or next to last, my question was kind of the same as
11 Mrs. Armbruster on the staffing.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We can't hear you
13 back here.

14 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: I think you've
15 answered that adequately on staffing; so --

16 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Anything else?

17 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: No.

18 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you. I have
19 some specific questions; yes, I do.

20 First thing I noted down there, you
21 mentioned a business license. Why would you
22 require -- what kind of a business license were you
23 required to get? Charter schools don't need
24 business licenses.

25 DR. FRANCIS: To operate on the Pueblo of

1 Laguna on Pueblo land, it's a requirement, for them,
2 that you have to have a business license, if we were
3 going to utilize their space, their location at the
4 Mesita facility. That was one of the things -- when
5 we first started negotiating with them and began
6 talking with them, that was one of their
7 requirements. To operate any nonprofit, school,
8 whatever, to utilize a facility, you have to have a
9 business license, as required by the Pueblo.

10 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: That's a new one for
11 me.

12 DR. FRANCIS: It was a new one for us,
13 too.

14 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: All right. Let me --
15 Commissioner Gipson has already talked about your
16 goals.

17 I'm just speaking personally now, solely
18 for myself, as a single Commissioner. I'm always
19 disappointed when applicants choose -- we provide an
20 example of how we like to see your academic
21 indicators laid out for us. We want to know you
22 understand what we're talking about when we talk
23 about an academic performance indicator or a goal,
24 whatever you want to talk about.

25 You used a cohort average. We use cohorts

1 all the time to define the pool; but you're the
2 first group that's ever just wanted to take all the
3 students and average their scores together and send
4 that to the PEC as a goal.

5 Just, here again, speaking personally, I
6 am not comfortable with that. I don't like that
7 concept. I understand that you went to great
8 lengths to try and explain why you were doing that;
9 but I'm not comfortable with that aspect, because
10 we're talking about individual students. We're not
11 talking about groups.

12 When we average scores like that, as you
13 well know, 30 percent can ace the test, and the
14 other 70 can do poorly; but the average score is
15 going to look at least acceptable. Do you see what
16 I'm saying?

17 And what about that 70 percent that needs
18 the -- I know you, internally, will know what all
19 your students did. But you've got to convince us
20 that you know how you're doing. And we want to know
21 how those individual students are doing, also.

22 So you're going to need to -- should you
23 be approved, a part of the current Charter School
24 Act, every approved new or renewal application, that
25 group has to sit down with the Public Education

1 Commission at some point in the future, and we
2 negotiate -- it's been briefly mentioned -- a
3 performance contract with you.

4 The Legislature is very adamant about that
5 word "performance." Senator Sapien was the sponsor
6 of that bill, and he told me, personally -- he said,
7 "That's the key word, because I did this bill
8 because I wanted the students in this state to
9 perform. They're not performing to the levels, as
10 most of us feel that they probably should be."

11 And that's what you want to do here with
12 your school. You want them to perform. Those
13 performance contracts come with three associated
14 performance frameworks: An academic -- that's where
15 we will do the goals, should we get to that point.
16 A financial, where you go through all the financials
17 that you're going to have, because you're talking
18 about taxpayers' money; you've got to prove you're
19 spending it wisely. And there's an organizational
20 part, which is part of your organization.

21 We will sit down and coordinate that.
22 We've done 48 of those so far, and I've been at 45
23 of them; so you will probably see me, if it comes to
24 that, at that session. And we will then talk about
25 those goals very specifically.

SANTA FE OFFICE
119 East Marcy, Suite 110
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 989-4949
FAX (505) 820-6349



MAIN OFFICE
201 Third NW, Suite 1630
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 843-9494
FAX (505) 843-9492
1-800-669-9492
e-mail: info@litsupport.com

1 Like I say, we need to do something
2 different in that area. So you may need to want to
3 start thinking about it. The Charter School
4 Division will, at the appropriate time, be there to
5 help you with that. Should it come to that, you
6 would have a specific charter school employee that
7 would be assigned to you as a liaison.

8 So that's down the road; but I want --
9 that -- this is -- I'm just uncomfortable with the
10 way you did this.

11 Let's talk about innovative and unique,
12 because that's a part of the Charter School Act, to
13 specific-- -- those two words are in the Charter
14 School Act. A charter must be unique, and it must
15 be innovative. I think it may even go on to say,
16 "If you're just duplicating existing schools..." --
17 whether they're in Grants or Laguna or wherever they
18 are -- "...that's not a suitable reason for us to
19 authorize a charter school." Some of you have heard
20 that before.

21 So tell me now. You've already done that
22 in some of the comments and the answers that have
23 been given. But what will set your school apart
24 from, let's say, Grants High School and Laguna-Acoma
25 High School, or whatever it's called?

1 DR. FRANCIS: So I think we're looking
2 specifically -- I mean, we've mentioned STEAM; but
3 that idea of rural technology and community
4 engagement, and community engagement different than
5 what I've seen at the local public school level and
6 even some charter schools, where it's measured on
7 community service hours.

8 We're focusing all our projects and
9 efforts on community betterment and community
10 engagement. So that means that the students are
11 going to be in the field; they're going to be in the
12 community; they're going to be working with the
13 communities -- communities -- I'm saying
14 "communities," one. But each student has the option
15 to work within their home location, home area.
16 That's really what we're trying to bring to this.

17 The second area that we have is the
18 difference in our approach towards guiding our
19 students through; so we have what's called our
20 "mentoring core circle of care." What we've noticed
21 is when we have high performing schools, especially
22 in urban areas, they have a number of supports that
23 are built in automatically. And so what we wanted
24 to try and do is provide more than, say, just an
25 adviser or parent-teacher committee. We -- or a

1 counselor.

2 What we wanted to do was surround these
3 students all the way through with five particular
4 mentors. So we have a community elder to be able to
5 pass on that community knowledge. We have a
6 health-care provider, and we've worked out some
7 arrangements with some of the health-care systems in
8 here to work through both the physical health, the
9 mental health, any of the issues that students may
10 have.

11 We have a community professional. That, I
12 think, is actually one of the key and innovative
13 components that we have, because I am where I am
14 because I had someone to mentor me. Mr. Sanchez
15 brought me out here to work, and I still have a
16 relationship with him almost 15 years later.

17 We know that that's instrumental in young
18 people's lives. That's why they have a system,
19 support groups, like Big Boys -- Boys and Girls
20 Club; we have one out in Acoma. And so we also want
21 to do that at the school level; so that it's about
22 moving beyond just the school, just the grade work,
23 but how are you going to be out in life? How are
24 you going to be in the world?

25 And then finally, engaging parents or

1 guardians, as part of that whole group.

2 And then lastly our teacher, our adviser,
3 that person to kind of keep track on day-to-day
4 helping with their academics. And as this
5 particular group, can guide them all the way
6 through, support the student through all of their
7 efforts and help them.

8 And I think one of the things with what
9 we've seen with the NACA Inspired Schools, and NACA
10 itself, is the fact that you have a number of
11 students -- that's, in many ways, the way that NACA
12 is configured, on an informal basis, to provide
13 those supports.

14 And what they're seeing is students coming
15 back, students coming back and working during the
16 summer, students coming back and being a part of --
17 and we've seen this in a number of schools, at least
18 in Albuquerque, in charter schools that have these
19 really strong connections with young people in their
20 communities.

21 So I think those are some of the unique
22 features and the innovative features that we have,
23 being smaller and more flexible. I think that's one
24 of the things. And trying to find a niche so that
25 it's not duplicating the same services. We know

SANTA FE OFFICE
119 East Marcy, Suite 110
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 989-4949
FAX (505) 820-6349



MAIN OFFICE
201 Third NW, Suite 1630
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 843-9494
FAX (505) 843-9492
1-800-669-9492
e-mail: info@litsupport.com

1 that students are -- you know, Laguna-Acoma High
2 School has a great athletics program. There's a
3 number of other benefits. We know students can go
4 there, too.

5 So we try to find this particular niche
6 for students that want to learn differently. And I
7 think that core route, project-based learning
8 revolving around STEAM, I think that's what gives us
9 that uniqueness and innovation.

10 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you for that.

11 Now, one of the things that the Charter
12 School Division does for us is they give us a
13 preliminary analysis of your application. I
14 understand that they gave that to you; so you've,
15 I'm sure, had a chance to review that.

16 I just -- I'm a dinosaur, see? All these
17 computer -- young people that I serve with are
18 computer people. When I went to school, you had to
19 move the dinosaurs to get into the building. And so
20 I do paper. I keep telling the staff, I've got to
21 have paper, because I can write on paper and make
22 myself notes.

23 I can't write on a computer screen. Or at
24 least, I don't know how, if you can, do that. So I
25 make myself little notes, as I read.

1 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: You're killing
2 trees.

3 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: That's why I'm
4 shuffling paper here. It's old-fashioned and slow.
5 That's -- I just want to read this one paragraph.
6 They were talking about your assessments and what
7 you want to do with your students. And the word in
8 there was "student."

9 That's why I am kind of harping on the
10 individual instead of the group, because you look at
11 the prompts, and what we're talking about here is
12 "students." I'll say that again.

13 "This description did not provide research
14 as to how this program..." -- and here's the key
15 words -- "...will increase student achievement."
16 That's what you guys want to do, as opposed to what
17 you have apparently available to you now, and your
18 kids. And that's what this Commission firmly
19 believes in. Every Commissioner -- I don't normally
20 speak for my fellow Commissioners. I've heard them
21 all say it. We believe in improving student
22 achievement, and we're willing and will do whatever
23 we can to help you do that.

24 But they said, "And it does not articulate
25 how it is innovative." That's why I'm kind of -- I

1 know you tried. I know you made a good-faith
2 effort on that. We are concerned about the student
3 achievement.

4 Does anyone else have a follow-up question
5 while I thumb through my paper? I think we have a
6 few minutes yet.

7 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I will address
8 special education. I can see you're going to have
9 somewhat of a dual certification, which may or may
10 not be true, because a lot of people, such as I in
11 New Mexico, I must say, only had a special ed
12 credential. In California, I had many.

13 So you're going to have this person who is
14 going to oversee all these other classrooms, because
15 those students won't have special ed.

16 So you're going to have an EA?
17 Instructional assistants, whatever you call them.

18 MR. SANCHEZ: EAs.

19 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: EAs, in
20 Los Alamos -- or IAs -- you'll have those people
21 helping students individually? Because I'm assuming
22 you're going to have a significant population of
23 special education students.

24 DR. FRANCIS: What we looked at in terms
25 of planning for the EAs and the folks that we have

1 with our -- our special education population, what I
2 know from my research around the schools is it's
3 around between 15 and 19 percent that's been
4 identified as needing special education, various
5 ranges for that, some that need individual
6 assistance, some that don't.

7 We have planned initially for around --
8 for using this surrounding -- and I don't know if we
9 initially planned for an EA within that particular
10 setup for the individual. But if it's required, and
11 we start to screen, as students come in -- we do
12 have some flexibility or at least some movement in
13 the budget to be able to bring in EAs for that
14 individual support.

15 So -- and I think that's just based on my
16 previous experience, that there was not a lot of
17 students that I've seen -- I have not spoken with
18 the District on this -- but that have significant
19 additional assistance requirements. So that's where
20 we were -- it's kind of a wait-and-see would be the
21 closest.

22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Depending on who
23 comes.

24 DR. FRANCIS: Depending on who comes in
25 the door. We would be able to move within our

1 network structure and find some of the resources we
2 would need.

3 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I don't know.
4 Katie, maybe you can correct me. It's certainly
5 possible. But under a 504 plan, if you have a child
6 who has major physical or mental impairments, I'm
7 thinking that's probably an IEP and not a 504 plan;
8 because 504 plans may just be -- you could just have
9 an EA with a child in a wheelchair with a
10 ventilator; that's a possibility.

11 But if you have a child with significant
12 mental impairments -- I don't know -- I'm just
13 saying that to you, and maybe you all know more than
14 I do at the moment. But I just think that might be
15 a child -- if you have something significant, it's,
16 like, a lot of time and time in the day is what
17 determines the difference between a 504 student and
18 someone who has an IEP. And it's a funding thing,
19 too, by the way, of course.

20 DR. FRANCIS: Absolutely. And we have
21 that. We didn't sort of stretch that out in the
22 application; but we did address that, and we have
23 the notes for that, as well.

24 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Did I give you
25 enough time?

1 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: You tell me.

2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I'm fine it was
3 just odd for me to look at that, and I wasn't
4 putting those pieces together.

5 DR. FRANCIS: Okay.

6 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Yeah. I'm just --
7 I'm just checking my notes, because I don't ask on
8 everything I make notes on.

9 But I did want to touch on this a little
10 bit. In the application, your target students are
11 going to be those that have dropped out -- okay? --
12 who do not attend the local high school, or are
13 traveling, or students who would prefer a
14 project-based, real-world approach.

15 That's greatly admirable. Yes, it is.
16 Here, again -- and I don't want to be redundant,
17 because it's already been talked about. So to get
18 that target audience, you're going to have to be
19 able to offer them -- you're going to have to have
20 facilities with the proper technology, and you're
21 going to have to have the proper teachers. You've
22 set yourself a higher standard, really.

23 And even as the Superintendent -- highly
24 qualified science and technology teachers are not
25 just wandering out on every street corner, and

1 they're hard to find. Same with mathematics. And
2 there's all -- even the public schools and the
3 charter schools are all competing for this same
4 small pool.

5 And then you put in the fact that you're
6 way out here in rural New Mexico, away from
7 everywhere. They noted that your plan was a little
8 weak in that area, on your staffing, particularly.
9 You're really going to have to work on that if we
10 get to that point.

11 And, yeah, it's a chore. The major
12 problems that charter schools face right now is
13 facilities and special ed. We're having all kinds
14 of fun in charter schools with all kinds of special
15 ed. That's why we sometimes harp on it. That's why
16 the staff and the review teams harped on them so
17 much in their analysis. That's how important it is.

18 Those kids deserve the same quality
19 education as everybody else does; but it's difficult
20 because the Feds are involved, and the State is
21 involved. And I guess the book with the rules is
22 probably that thick or something. And we're all
23 just human beings. So I just wanted to talk about
24 that.

25 And we haven't talked about budget. That

1 is because our chairman, who had a very late health
2 issue and couldn't be here -- which kills her,
3 because she's -- until this year, she had attended
4 six solid years of these hearings and never missed a
5 one -- she was our budget expert. She's on the
6 board at the Artesia Schools; and so she was our
7 budget expert.

8 But the staff noted you did not provide
9 for student recruitment. You probably thought you
10 did. But can you address that, just very briefly?

11 DR. FRANCIS: Yeah, very quickly on that.
12 Carmen and I have been working on that, as well.

13 Late in the game, we had some issues in
14 technology with me receiving the e-mails; because
15 when Mr. Sanchez handed it over, he stayed on the
16 list. So I actually didn't get the 2015 budget
17 worksheet until about the last day.

18 And we were told that we needed to have --
19 we had to use that one. So I was, like, "Okay." So
20 I was trying to transfer everything over from 2014
21 to 2015. There was various things that got
22 misaligned.

23 There's a few things in the review that
24 they're -- some things got doubled; some things got
25 switched or swapped. The main thing is, in terms of

1 recruitment, that's my position. So part of this
2 fellowship is to be able to go out and do
3 recruitment. With Ms. Douma here, we're going to
4 tag-team that together.

5 The resources are not necessarily to be
6 built in, because that was pretty much on my
7 shoulders. And I think that's also part of the
8 school director's job. I think there was a little
9 bit of misunderstanding between the head
10 administrator and the school director, in terms of
11 the language. And those are two separate positions.

12 So I'm sort of filling the school
13 director's role. I'll be pounding the pavement.
14 And it's not necessarily something that's budgeted
15 in.

16 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: And I understand, you
17 just said it again, that's your responsibility. I'm
18 old-fashioned, as I've already noted. If you're
19 operating a quality charter school, as far as I'm
20 concerned, every person that works in that charter
21 school, down to the custodian, is responsible for
22 student recruitment and is a potential recruiting
23 tool for you, because they all know people. They
24 all know kids.

25 That's, I guess, what I was trying to go

1 for. It's a joint effort is what I would like to
2 see.

3 DR. FRANCIS: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Mr. Chair?

5 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Go ahead.

6 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I just wanted to
7 say, sometimes recruitment is easier in these rural
8 communities, because everybody talks to everybody
9 else. In the urban communities, you don't always
10 talk to your neighbors, much less other people.

11 So I think word of mouth, once you
12 actually are approved and are getting ready for your
13 planning year, if that's what works this year, the
14 word will get out.

15 DR. FRANCIS: Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Everybody will
17 know. So I think recruitment will be easier from
18 that standpoint.

19 DR. FRANCIS: Yeah, I agree. Thank you.

20 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you.

21 Commissioner Gipson, we do have a couple
22 of minutes. I do have one more comment. Do you
23 have something?

24 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: Are you confident
25 that you're going to get the 40 you said you were

1 going to start with?

2 DR. FRANCIS: Pretty confident at this
3 point. We've already done internal -- we've done
4 some folks. We don't have commitments, obviously.
5 But we do have some folks that are significantly
6 interested if this school's opened. I think we can
7 reach the 40; although -- and also speaking to the
8 budget, we're planning multiple variations of that.

9 So if we reach -- we're going to plan for
10 20, as well; so about 50 percent of that. If we
11 reach that, that's our bottom. That's our floor.
12 And anything over that will be good.

13 But I think we can probably reach about
14 20 -- excuse me -- reach about 40.

15 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: Forty? I'm done.

16 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Good?

17 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: Uh-huh.

18 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: One last question,
19 and I expect we're about to run out of time, I
20 think. We try to hold our shows to the time, too,
21 also.

22 You indicated you're going to do food
23 service. However, the staff noted in their analysis
24 that you've provided no money in the budget. It's a
25 little bit hard to do food service without money.

1 And you just have minimal information. That is
2 something that would certainly have to be fleshed
3 out.

4 DR. FRANCIS: That was one of the
5 transitory pieces that got lost in the budget, the
6 year-to-year budget shuffle. So that was -- our
7 apologies, and we've actually talked about where
8 we'll be able to pick that up, should this be
9 approved.

10 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: That's something
11 the Feds have a book this big that you've got to
12 serve food to your kids. Probably rightly so; but
13 maybe not.

14 How much time do we have?

15 MS. POULOS: A minute and four seconds.

16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Now it's two
17 seconds.

18 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Now it's two seconds.

19 All right. Let me see if there's anything
20 else I wanted to talk about. They did have
21 questions on your outreach efforts. That goes along
22 with identifying the students and so on and so forth
23 and making the community aware that you're
24 available, that there might be a school down the
25 road potentially here.

1 I -- I think we will just stop a minute or
2 so early then. I mean, I do have some instructions
3 for you.

4 As we noted before, there is an
5 opportunity, here, again, for any of you that are
6 hearing me today, to make additional comments. But
7 you have a very short amount of time to do it. You
8 see this over there? (Indicates.)

9 I think it's on the table. It's our
10 agenda. Down in the bottom last two paragraphs, it
11 tells you who you would send your comments, or your
12 information to, the -- now, it says you can mail
13 them. I don't think you're going to mail it to
14 Santa Fe and get it there in three days. So I would
15 suggest either a fax or an e-mail or however --
16 e-mail, probably, however you can do that.

17 You can send it to -- I have a date here
18 for this. Your deadline for sending that
19 information would be Thursday, August 20th, 2015, at
20 5:00 p.m.; not 5:01 or 5:02. They shut it down
21 exactly at 5:00 p.m.

22 The person it gets to will then see that
23 it gets to the proper people that should have that
24 information. So you have one final opportunity.

25 And make sure you identify which school

1 you're talking about. You'd be surprised how many
2 people send an e-mail promoting a school, and they
3 don't mention which school they're promoting.

4 Please be sure you mention the applicant,
5 that you're doing that.

6 Let's see if I'm missing anything.

7 I do thank you for your presentations
8 today. I thank you for the water that you took time
9 to provide. And whichever one of you took the time
10 to put those signs out there on the road, I thank
11 you for that. It made it easier for us city folks
12 to drive around in the country.

13 I enjoy this tour. That's not what it's
14 called, but -- because we're on this thing until
15 Friday. We'll be in Deming and Silver City on
16 Friday. It's a long week for us; but we enjoy it.
17 We get a chance to meet people and talk about
18 something we're all interested in, and that's the
19 school kids.

20 DR. FRANCIS: Thank you very much.

21 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Again, I thank you
22 for your presentation. We will meet in Santa Fe --
23 these are important dates for you -- September 24th
24 and 25th, 2015. That's what we call our "decision"
25 days. Each of the seven applicants will then hear

1 at that time. There will be a short opportunity for
2 you to speak again.

3 If you've thought of anything that you
4 missed today or didn't cover in your application,
5 you'd have that -- it's not a very long time, five
6 or ten minutes -- to make any final comments you
7 want to make. That's your chance to, again, get
8 face to face with the Commissioners, and do -- make
9 your last effort. So the public doesn't comment;
10 but you will have that opportunity for that. That's
11 when we'll either approve or deny the applications.

12 I believe if there's nothing else,
13 Commissioners, or Staff --

14 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I move we adjourn.

15 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Let me say this.
16 Actually, we're going to recess.

17 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: You mean, so we
18 don't have to go through all that stuff?

19 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Actually, I do want
20 to go through that. Would you rather adjourn and
21 start over tomorrow?

22 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Let's start at a
23 new location.

24 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: I have a motion to
25 adjourn. Do I have a second?

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COMMISSIONER GIPSON: Second.

VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: All in favor?

(Commissioners so indicate.)

VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Opposed? No?

We are adjourned. Again, thank so you
much and thank you for having us in your community.

(Proceedings adjourned at 2:45 p.m.)

SANTA FE OFFICE
119 East Marcy, Suite 110
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 989-4949
FAX (505) 820-6349

**BEAN
& ASSOCIATES, Inc.**
PROFESSIONAL COURT
REPORTING SERVICE

MAIN OFFICE
201 Third NW, Suite 1630
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 843-9494
FAX (505) 843-9492
1-800-669-9492
e-mail: info@litsupport.com

1 BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

2 STATE OF NEW MEXICO

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6
7 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

8 I, Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR, CCR #219, Certified
9 Court Reporter in the State of New Mexico, do hereby
10 certify that the foregoing pages constitute a true
11 transcript of proceedings had before the said
12 NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, held in the
13 State of New Mexico, County of Cibola, in the matter
14 therein stated.

15 In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my
16 hand on August 26, 2015.

17
18
19 *Cynthia Chapman*

20 Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219
21 BEAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.
22 201 Third Street, NW, Suite 1630
23 Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

24
25 Job No.: 3503L (CC)

SANTA FE OFFICE
119 East Marcy, Suite 110
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 989-4949
FAX (505) 820-6349

BEAN
& ASSOCIATES, Inc.
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REPORTING SERVICE

MAIN OFFICE
201 Third NW, Suite 1630
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 843-9494
FAX (505) 843-9492
1-800-669-9492
e-mail: info@litsupport.com