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BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
COMMUNITY INPUT HEARING
Desert Willow School
August 20, 2015
1:00 p.m.
Grant County Office Building
Commissioners Chambers
1400 Highway 180 East
Silver City, New Mexico

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

COMMISSIONERS:

MR. VINCE BERGMAN, Vice Chair
MS. KARYL ANN ARMBRUSTER, Member
MS. CARMIE TOULOUSE, Member

STAFF:

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

1 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Ladies and gentlemen,
2 I'm going to start the meeting. It looks like
3 they're still lined up into the parking lot, and I
4 have a feeling we must be getting close to the
5 capacity of this hearing chamber anyway.

6 I will say this. This is the -- this is
7 the sixth hearing that we've had this week, and if
8 we were having a contest for the largest crowd, you
9 guys win. I want to compliment you on that.

10 I am going to call the New Mexico Public
11 Education Commission back from recess. That's all
12 we did this morning. We did not adjourn. We had
13 another hearing this morning. We recessed.

14 So we will dispense with the Pledge of
15 Allegiance and the Salute to the New Mexico Flag
16 today.

17 This Community Input hearing is being held
18 on Thursday, August 20th, 2015, in Silver City, for
19 the Desert Willow Charter School application.

20 Now, let's see. I will do a little
21 different roll call than the public is probably used
22 to. We're going to identify ourselves and say a
23 little bit about ourselves, and that will constitute
24 our roll call.

25 I am Vince Bergman. I am the vice chair

1 of the Public Education Commission. Our chair,
2 Chairwoman Shearman, had an unfortunate health issue
3 last week, and her doctor would not allow her to
4 drive; so she sends her regrets. She -- till this
5 year, she had never missed one of these hearings in
6 the previous six years; so she is sad she could not
7 be here today.

8 As I said, I represent District 8. I live
9 in Roswell, New Mexico. My district is Chaves,
10 Otero, Lincoln Counties, Torrance, DeBaca,
11 Guadalupe, Rio Arriba, and Mora County, if you can
12 believe that. I go all the way up almost from the
13 Texas border to the Colorado border.

14 Please introduce yourselves and give just
15 a quick bio here.

16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I'm Karyl Ann
17 Armbruster. I live in Los Alamos. I am -- I
18 represent District 4, which is all of Los Alamos,
19 parts of Santa Fe, parts of Albuquerque, parts of
20 Corrales, parts of Rio Rancho, and parts of Jemez.
21 And I may have left something out; but it's a lot.

22 And I will say that just as -- because I
23 didn't say this last time, I am a former teacher. I
24 taught special education for 39 years; so I've been
25 in the trenches. Just gives you an idea. Each of

1 us has different areas of expertise. Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I'm Carmie Lynn
3 Toulouse. And I have the compact district. I
4 represent District 3, which is the bulk of
5 Albuquerque, and it's the smallest geographically;
6 but it's the one that has the majority of
7 State-chartered charter schools in it, and it has
8 most of the schools that APS charters.

9 My background is not education. I trained
10 as an anthropologist and was a single parent and
11 went to work for Human Services. And I worked for
12 the State for 30 years and have been retired.

13 I've been on the CNM Governing Board for
14 the Central New Mexico Community College, and I'm
15 now doing this. I've done it long enough now, I
16 think I've learned what I needed to learn; but I'm
17 expanding beyond that in all of these.

18 And I love Silver City. When -- this was
19 my grandfather's stomping grounds in the early
20 1900s. And he had lots of friends down here. And
21 when I was small, in the Dark Ages, I had relatives
22 down here, and I would come down. And the town was
23 small then. And I was allowed to walk the couple of
24 blocks from their house down to where the old hotel
25 was.

1 And some of my grandfather's old buddies
2 were sitting there. And they would always call me
3 over and buy me Cokes. And that's my fondest memory
4 of Silver City, because my mother didn't let me have
5 Cokes when I was at home.

6 So when I was visiting -- and my
7 grandfather was called "The Major." He was in the
8 National Guard, the military. I was always "The
9 Major's granddaughter."

10 So every time I come back here, I have a
11 real fondness for Silver City, and especially the
12 old part, which used to look a lot larger than it
13 does now.

14 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you,
15 Commissioners.

16 I -- we need to approve the agenda. We
17 have a very brief agenda. But do I have a motion to
18 approve the agenda?

19 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I so move.

20 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Second.

21 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Commissioner
22 Armbruster. I have a second from Commissioner
23 Toulouse. I have a very small Commission today.

24 All in favor, say Aye.

25 (Commissioners so indicate.)

1 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Any opposed?

2 (No response.)

3 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: No?

4 Thank you.

5 All right. I have a document to read
6 here. I'll begin.

7 Here again, we are doing the community
8 input hearings for the Desert Willow charter
9 application here in Silver City. This meeting is
10 being conducted pursuant to New Mexico Statutes
11 Annotated, Title 21, Section 8B-6J, 2009.

12 The purpose of these community input
13 hearings that will be held from August 17th through
14 August 21st, 2015, is to obtain information from the
15 applicant and to receive community input to assist
16 the Public Education Commission in its decision
17 whether to grant the proposed charter applications.

18 According to this section of the law, the
19 Commission may appoint a subcommittee of no fewer
20 than three members to hold a public hearing. And we
21 do meet that statutory requirement, but just barely,
22 according to -- we have had as many as eight this
23 week.

24 So according to law, these hearings are
25 being transcribed by a professional court reporter.

1 The total time allocated to each application is
2 90 minutes, which will be timed to ensure an
3 equitable opportunity to present applications.

4 During the hearing, the Commission will
5 allow for community input about the charter
6 application. The time for public comments will be
7 limited to 20 minutes. If you wish to speak
8 regarding the application, please sign in at least
9 15 minutes before the applicant's presentation.

10 And I'm going to digress for just a
11 second. Because of the size of this audience -- or
12 this crowd -- today, if a whole bunch of you signed
13 up to speak today, I would have to divide that time
14 up into -- you're fitting in 20 minutes.

15 So my suggestion is, if a group, that you
16 pick a person or two to represent your common
17 opinion; because the 20 minutes is set in stone.

18 And if you've got 40 of you, you're only
19 going to get 30 seconds, and you can barely tell who
20 your name is in 30 seconds.

21 Just be thinking about that. It'll be a
22 while before we get there.

23 Please be sure you indicate on the sign-up
24 sheet whether you are in opposition or support of
25 the charter school.

1 The Commission chair -- in this case, the
2 acting chair -- based on the number of requests to
3 comment, will allocate time to those wishing to
4 speak.

5 Now, I'll repeat this again. If there are
6 a large number of supporters or opponents, they are
7 asked to select a speaker to represent common
8 opinions. We will try to allocate an equitable
9 amount of time to represent the community
10 accurately.

11 The Commission will follow this process
12 for each community input hearing:

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

22 Following the applicant's presentation,
23 the local school district representative, which
24 shall include the superintendent, administrators,
25 and board members, will be given ten minutes to

1 comment.

2 Subsequently, the Commission will allow
3 the 20 minutes that I just told you about for public
4 comment, as described above.

5 Finally, the Commission will be given
6 40 minutes to ask questions of the applicant.

7 And I believe we are -- Cindy, I know
8 you're already ready, because I already proceeded
9 without asking you.

10 Commissioners, are you ready to proceed?
11 I am ready to proceed.

12 Katie, are we ready to proceed on your
13 timing?

14 MS. POULOS: (Indicates.)

15 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: I would ask that the
16 applicant, Desert Willow Charter School, please come
17 forward. And I believe you have already come
18 forward.

19 Please state the name of your school, the
20 names of the founders of the school, and any other
21 person who is here today on behalf your school. You
22 will have 20 minutes to present information about
23 your application.

24 And I would also add this: If some of you
25 that signed up to speak are founders, and you're not

1 up here, if you want to speak, you need to be a part
2 of the 20 minutes from the applicant group; so
3 you'll need to speak up here during that 20 minutes.
4 We don't -- we can't allow extra -- okay.

5 All right. Your time will not start until
6 I say it starts. So, please -- as I said, please
7 introduce yourself. Name your school, name
8 yourselves, and give your role at the school.

9 Thank you. You may proceed.

10 MS. BAILEY: Good afternoon. I'm Fiona
11 Bailey, and this is Emily Aversa, and we're the
12 cofounders of the proposed charter school, Desert
13 Willow.

14 This is Alicia Edwards and William
15 Knuttinen, who have been serving with us during the
16 founding process.

17 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Do you need a
18 spelling on any of those?

19 THE REPORTER: I do.

20 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Which one?

21 THE REPORTER: Mr. Knuttinen.

22 MR. KNUTTINEN: I figured. William
23 Knuttinen, K-N-U-T-T-I-N-E-N.

24 THE REPORTER: Ms. Aversa?

25 MS. AVERSA: Okay. Aversa, A-V-E-R-S-A.

1 MS. BAILEY: This past year --

2 MS. AVERSA: And William is the person
3 who's worked with us on the financial aspect. And
4 Alicia, her role has been organizational.

5 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Okay, thank you. All
6 right. Your introductions are over.

7 Katie, you may start the clock.

8 You may now start your presentation.

9 MS. BAILEY: This past year has been an
10 amazing adventure for the four of us here, as we
11 have planned, researched, shared with the community,
12 and written the charter. We were also fortunate to
13 have the help of others in the community along the
14 way.

15 Emily and I began the idea for a charter
16 school as we saw certain students' needs not being
17 met in the current public schools. When I
18 recognized that my own daughter had dyslexia, I
19 worked hard alongside her amazing teachers to
20 provide the accommodations she needed. However, in
21 order to get the specific instruction research shows
22 strengthens reading in students with dyslexia, we
23 had to work at home and with private tutors.

24 As I learned more about the
25 characteristics of dyslexia, I started seeing the

1 signs in my students, as well, and knew we needed a
2 way to address their needs more completely.

3 MS. AVERSA: I first started to think
4 about creating a charter school four years ago, when
5 I reflected upon my years in the classroom. There
6 had always been students who seemed to need various
7 things that a typically structured school can't
8 provide.

9 I knew children who needed more
10 individualized attention than what we could
11 realistically give them, students who were
12 intelligent, but disengaged and getting into
13 trouble, and students in the fourth and fifth grades
14 who were already talking about dropping out when
15 they got to high school.

16 As a professional and a member of this
17 community, I could not ignore what I was seeing in
18 good conscience. In the summer of 2013, I began to
19 research what a successful alternative for these
20 students would look like. Fiona and I united our
21 efforts and found widespread support in the
22 community. What you see in our charter is a
23 reflection of hundreds of hours of research and
24 careful planning.

25 MS. BAILEY: So when we came together, we

1 thought about the needs of the students struggling
2 to learn to read due to dyslexia and other
3 language-based disabilities.

4 Secondly, we thought of those students who
5 become disengaged due to a need for more activity
6 and movement in their school day, and those who are
7 academically and/or creatively gifted.

8 We began gathering interested people to
9 work on the charter proposal with us. Our desire to
10 create a charter school, not a private school, comes
11 from our belief in public education and the need for
12 a school where all would have an equal opportunity
13 to attend.

14 One of our first steps was creating a name
15 for our school. The desert willow tree is plentiful
16 here in Silver City; but it is also one of the
17 late-bloomers. However, with its deep roots, once
18 it takes hold, it grows tenaciously.

19 From there, we went on to develop a
20 mission statement that includes not only what is
21 best for our target population, but for all students
22 whose parents seek a different educational approach
23 for their child.

24 As you can see over here, our mission for
25 Desert Willow School is that we value each students'

1 unique learning styles, build self-awareness and a
2 sense of community, cultivate creative, flexible
3 thinking, and nurture engaged readers through a
4 multisensory approach.

5 It is with this mission in mind that the
6 curriculum, facility, school calendar, and all the
7 innovations of Desert Willow School were developed.
8 We have eight major innovations that we would like
9 to share briefly with you today.

10 The first is with the Orton-Gillingham
11 methodology. It is the most researched and
12 respected method for teaching reading to students
13 who are struggling. Our reading instruction will
14 have a strong phonemic awareness and phonics base
15 which is sequential, multisensory, and explicit,
16 along with instruction in fluency, comprehension,
17 and vocabulary.

18 Dr. Sally Shay [verbatim] and Dr. Maryanne
19 Wolf and many others have researched extensively the
20 neuroscience of the brain as it relates to reading
21 and how an Orton-Gillingham approach is what is
22 needed to assure all students learn to read.

23 At Desert Willow School, all teachers will
24 have an on- -- will have ongoing staff development
25 to fully understand and implement the multisensory

1 methodologies needed for students as they learn to
2 read.

3 At Desert Willow School, reading
4 instruction will flow through the grades, not just
5 as we teach the Common Core standards, but also in
6 the methodology chosen to -- chosen for instruction,
7 so that students don't start with one program in
8 kinder, then switch to another in first, and yet
9 another in second grade. Likewise, we will assure
10 that the instruction used in pullout by our special
11 ed teacher and our reading specialist is using
12 methods that align not only with the students'
13 specific needs, but also what is being taught in the
14 whole class.

15 It is in the extensive training and
16 continued -- and the cont- -- and the continued
17 support and continuity in curriculum that will make
18 the difference.

19 MS. AVERSA: In order to help students who
20 struggle to learn to read, to finally meet with
21 success, Desert Willow proposes to employ one and
22 two-thirds reading specialists, our second
23 innovation. These teachers would have extensive
24 training in reading instruction, including over
25 700 hours of expert supervision and a certificate in

1 academic language therapy.

2 Our local district supplies up to
3 250 students with one reading teacher; but Desert
4 Willow would have one teacher for every 72
5 students -- and I'm speaking Title I, typically --
6 besides the classroom teacher.

7 The Learning Center for Academic Success
8 has already begun to pay for local teachers to train
9 to become reading specialists and have pledged
10 financial support to Desert Willow for ongoing
11 teacher training.

12 MS. BAILEY: Our third innovation is a
13 holistic, arts-integrated curriculum. Many children
14 with dyslexia and/or those who are gifted are
15 right-brain dominant. They excel at connecting
16 ideas and seeing the big pictures. Our curriculum,
17 from Enki Education, integrates the subjects along a
18 common theme that is age-appropriate in interest
19 according to the students' developmental stage,
20 which, in turn, targets their natural abilities and
21 helps students become internally motivated,
22 something lacking in many children in society, too.

23 The Enki curriculum is named after the
24 Sumerian god of water. Water is necessary for all
25 life and growth. Water both surrounds and supports,

1 just as this holistic, arts-integrated curriculum
2 will do for students as they trust who they are as
3 learners and begin to connect to one another.

4 We have also begun to align the Enki
5 curriculum with the Common Core and New Mexico
6 standards. Our plan is for Emily and I, with the
7 support of Beth Sutton, the creator of Enki
8 Education, to have completed the alignment of the
9 reading curriculum by December 1st, math by
10 February 1st, with the other subjects to follow.

11 With our integrated curriculum, students
12 will begin to learn key concepts through a story in
13 the immersion time of their day, the whole-group
14 part of their day. They will then move into the
15 engagement portion, where their individual
16 challenges and talents are met as they explore the
17 new material through artistic exploration,
18 manipulatives and projects, both in small group and
19 independently.

20 Finally, students are ready to show
21 mastery as they perform and apply what they have --
22 what they understand.

23 Storytelling, movement, and the arts are a
24 big part of each of the three tiers of learning. As
25 stated by Merryl Goldberg, "When children learn

1 through the arts, they are engaging with ideas
2 rather than just reporting on them, thus building
3 creative, flexible thinking."

4 MS. AVERSA: Desert Willow School's
5 student-teacher ratio is designed to allow children
6 to receive more individualized attention. We have
7 two classes of kindergarten with ten students each,
8 a first grade with 20 students, taught by a teacher
9 and an assistant, and 20 students each in grades two
10 through five, where an assistant is available half
11 of the time. Teachers loop with their classroom
12 communities through first, second, and third grades,
13 and then another teacher picks them up for fourth
14 and fifth.

15 MS. BAILEY: Another innovation is our
16 extended school day. Desert Willow's day and week
17 are designed to allow for uninterrupted learning.
18 When teacher and students have a longer period of
19 time to engage with the material without being
20 interrupted by needing to switch subjects or head
21 off to art or music, children hold onto and increase
22 their natural ability to concentrate.

23 Just think of a young child you know who
24 can spend seemingly hours throwing rocks into a
25 stream or building with Legos. As teachers, we must

1 be in tune with our students as we guide their
2 natural ability to engage with the material that
3 they are learning.

4 The extended school day also assures that
5 our reading specialists will have significant blocks
6 of time with all students who need interventions.

7 MS. AVERSA: Our Friday Explorer Clubs are
8 designed to help students make classroom learning
9 experiences more relevant and to help them discover
10 where their talents and interests lie early on.
11 Students will be mentored by volunteers from the
12 community in a variety of subjects, which may
13 include science and technology, gardening,
14 archeology, weaving, pottery, and bicycle mechanics.
15 We have many people who have already stepped forward
16 saying they love this idea, many retirees,
17 especially, saying they would love to do this.

18 Friday Explorer Clubs support our mission
19 to cultivate self-awareness and a sense of
20 belonging.

21 MS. BAILEY: Our seventh innovation is
22 Friday collaboration time. Part of our plan to
23 ensure an uninterrupted flow of learning means that
24 teachers will not have blocks of time during the
25 school day for planning and collaborating Monday

1 through Thursday; so we feel that dedicating one day
2 each week to collaboration, staff development, and
3 parent meetings will increase student learning time
4 in a more child-centered way.

5 You can see in our proposed calendar --
6 you can see in our proposed calendar how, for the
7 most part, we align with the Silver Schools with
8 some differences, due to our unique Fridays. For
9 example, students will still have Explorer Clubs
10 during parent-teacher conference days, and teachers
11 will have Federal holidays off in January and
12 February.

13 Fridays will be carefully planned by the
14 administrator and lead teachers to be sure that the
15 needed training, curriculum, collaboration, and
16 student support meetings are being held with the
17 necessary teachers present.

18 A possible Friday might be that the
19 kinder, first, and second grade teachers, along with
20 the reading specialists, meet in the morning for one
21 or two student support meetings, and then continue
22 training on implementing multisensory
23 Orton-Gillingham methods in their teaching.

24 In the afternoon, those teachers would
25 support the volunteers and the students in the

1 Explorer Clubs, while the third-, fourth-, and
2 fifth-grade teachers then come together for student
3 support meetings, and then possibly creating
4 materials for what is needed next in their
5 curriculum as they conference with our Enki
6 curriculum coaches.

7 MS. AVERSA: Finally, we propose
8 innovations in family enrichment. Our goal is to
9 support parents to view themselves as integral
10 agents in their children's education, something that
11 they don't always feel welcome to do.

12 Enrichment activities are events that
13 support the strength of the child's home community
14 in a fun way. They would include learning
15 expositions when students show their parents what
16 they're learning and explain that, seasonal
17 festivals, plays, and informational gatherings.

18 Many people ask where Desert Willow School
19 will be located. Since we have not been able to
20 identify a suitable building, we have been in
21 conversation with both the Montessori School, which
22 has offered the use of several of its acres and some
23 unused classrooms, and with the City, which also has
24 available acreage on Cooper and La Capilla.

25 MS. BAILEY: In either of these

1 properties, we would place portable classrooms to
2 create a village feel around a center courtyard for
3 community meetings. The cost of the infrastructure
4 for the portables is a big factor in which site we
5 choose. The advantage of selecting the Montessori
6 land is we would need one fewer portable classroom,
7 because we would use one of their rooms for our
8 library and assembly hall. We would also have
9 access to their kitchen for lunch and breakfast
10 service.

11 We are also currently in conversation with
12 the City about how much of the infrastructure cost
13 they would be able to cover in -- if we locate at
14 Cooper and La Capilla.

15 Start-up costs. We understand that the
16 financial costs during the planning year will be
17 great, and federal or State start-up money may be
18 limited or not available. We understand that it is
19 our responsibility, as the governing council, to
20 raise this money.

21 We have several successful grant writers
22 who have created a list of over 20 funding sources
23 and are ready to submit a number of grants, once we
24 are approved. We have talked with the New Mexico
25 Financial Authority, who have worked with charter

1 schools in the past, and we will be talking with
2 them in more depth, in conjunction with the Learning
3 Center for Dyslexia and Academic Success, a
4 501(c)(3), whom we have partnered with in helping to
5 start the charter school.

6 In conjunction with the Learning Center,
7 we raised over \$16,000 in one day, due in large part
8 to the excitement and outpouring of support for our
9 endeavor to start a charter school with our specific
10 mission. This support comes from parents and
11 community members aligning.

12 The Learning Center has already paid for
13 teacher training in an Orton-Gillingham reading
14 intervention program. The Learning Center also
15 provided scholarships to six of the 20 teachers who
16 took the introductory course on the Enki curriculum
17 and philosophy. These 20 teachers paid out of
18 pocket and dedicated a weekend to begin the Enki
19 training with no job guarantee.

20 A fourth way in which we will be raising
21 money for start-up costs is through community
22 fundraising. You can see all the support behind us.
23 We have a strong number of people volunteering to
24 host different events, the first of which will be
25 held September 19th at The Commons.

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1 Thank you.

2 MS. AVERSA: I'd also like to add that
3 what you see is just a fraction of the people who
4 have expressed an interest to us. Many of the
5 parents of elementary children are at work and wish
6 they could have been here. So they're there.

7 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you. Now, I
8 have not heard the chimer sound. How much time do
9 they have left?

10 MS. POULOS: Approximately three minutes.

11 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Do you wish to use
12 your final three minutes? Say something? Anything
13 you want to add?

14 MS. BAILEY: Well, like I said --

15 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: You were certainly
16 very concise and very direct.

17 MS. BAILEY: Like I said, the eight
18 innovations we went over today are just -- are just
19 a few of them. Another one that -- in case she
20 doesn't have a chance to talk during the -- the
21 community input, is we will be offering Spanish as a
22 foreign language through -- through some unique
23 approaches, starting in kinder.

24 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Is that it?

25 MS. BAILEY: I think we've said all we

1 need.

2 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Before we move on to
3 the next section of the presentation, thank you for
4 that very excellent presentation.

5 (Applause.)

6 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: I really enjoy doing
7 these kind of things. And if it doesn't come
8 through, sometimes when I'm enjoying something too
9 much, my mind gets ahead of itself a little bit.

10 I would like to ask everyone to please
11 mute or turn off their cell phones or put them on
12 vibrate or something, or, if you have another
13 electric device, to make sure it doesn't interrupt
14 our proceedings, also.

15 I definitely would like to thank the Grant
16 County Commissioners for making this excellent
17 facility available to us today. We have actually
18 had a hearing or two this year that would not have
19 hosted this crowd. So we're very grateful to the
20 Grant County Commissioners for being here today and
21 for them letting us use their space.

22 The next portion, then, on this session
23 today, hearing today, is the local school district.
24 If there is someone from the Silver City School
25 District here that wishes to speak on this

1 application, please come forward.

2 That -- I believe -- yeah, you will have
3 ten minutes to speak.

4 Is there anyone here from the Silver City
5 Schools?

6 Yes, sir. Please come forward.

7 MR. STREIB: Thank you.

8 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Now, check that mic.
9 It wasn't on earlier, when he was trying to test it.

10 MR. STREIB: I don't believe it's on now.

11 MS. EDWARDS: From the red light, push the
12 white button.

13 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Please identify
14 yourself and state your title, and then I'll start
15 your clock. You have ten minutes.

16 MR. STREIB: Thank you very much. My name
17 is Lou Streib. I'm Superintendent of Schools for
18 Silver. And I don't intend to take anywhere near
19 the ten minutes.

20 I wish for you to know that we will be
21 submitting our comments by electronic means within
22 the next three days. I would ask, though, as you
23 listen to the proposal today that you look at the
24 statistics and data to make sure that they're
25 accurate and that they are verifiable and that they

1 don't commingle with the other district, Cobre, in
2 our county.

3 That's all I have. Thank you very much.

4 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you, sir, for
5 your presentation.

6 Okay. We're now to the public comment
7 section. We're just moving right along here. I
8 need the list, please.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: May I ask a
10 question of you, a procedural question?

11 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: No. I don't have an
12 attorney here; so I don't believe you can.

13 I have 18 names here that marked an "X."
14 I'm assuming that mean- -- a check. It was said
15 check "X" if you intend to speak. So I have
16 18 names.

17 So like I say, we have 20 minutes. So I
18 think it's going to have to be limited, unless you
19 form a group, designate a few speakers.

20 I will just go down the list, and we'll
21 begin, then, with just -- you'll have -- I'll just
22 keep it easy. I'll keep it at one minute. You
23 can't say a lot in one minute; but with that many
24 speakers, that's what we have to do.

25 I'll start with the first name here. I

1 believe it's Joan Garcia. If I mispronounce your
2 name, please bear with me. You have one minute.

3 MS. GARCIA: I'm Joan Garcia. I'm a
4 retired educational administrator and teacher. I've
5 been involved with education for 26 years. I
6 realize I only have a minute, so I will keep it
7 short.

8 I just want to applaud this governing
9 council for coming forth with this plan for Desert
10 Willow. It's something that this county really
11 needs. And I want to say of the cofounders, Emily
12 and Fiona, I have supervised and worked with them,
13 Ms. Aversa for eight years, and Ms. Bailey for seven
14 years, and I know they both have the skills and
15 expertise to see this project through to fruition.

16 It is my hope that this charter school
17 will come to be part of Grant County's educational
18 community.

19 Thank you.

20 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you. The next
21 name is Patricia Cano.

22 MS. CANO: Thank you. I'm Patricia Cano,
23 Professor Emeritus of Western New Mexico University.
24 As a retired educator and professor of Spanish, I
25 would like to express my support for Desert Willow

1 School.

2 I believe that parents in Silver City need
3 a -- need choices. And also, I am very happy with
4 the opportunities that this school will provide for
5 retirees to be involved in the education of the
6 children. And I'm also very happy with the training
7 and the curriculum and the methodology that's going
8 to be used, because the children who are gifted, and
9 also those who have learning difficulties, will
10 benefit from this.

11 Thank you very much.

12 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you. The next
13 name is Chala Werber.

14 MS. WERBER: Hi. I'm Chala Werber, and
15 I'm a parent of a seven-year-old here in
16 Silver City. And I just wanted to speak, because I
17 really feel like our community is such a diverse
18 community that really embrace alternatives of all
19 sorts. And we have the example of our charter
20 school, Aldo Leopold, which only starts at sixth
21 grade, and they've just been so successful, and it's
22 something that has been really great to see in our
23 community that the kids had that opportunity.

24 And at a time when, in standard public
25 schools, the arts and music are really, you know,

1 being limited because of -- you guys, I'm sure,
2 know -- it is just such a great opportunity for us,
3 as a community, and I think such a great fit for
4 Silver City to have a school that's whole curriculum
5 is based on arts and movement. I just think it's a
6 really, really perfect fit for us and just a
7 wonderful opportunity for us to have this as an
8 option for parents who are interested in an
9 education like this for their kids.

10 And I have seen what it --

11 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Time.

12 MS. WERBER: Oops.

13 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you.

14 Next name on the list is Michelle
15 Castillo.

16 MS. CASTILLO: My name is Michelle
17 Castillo. I'm a parent of a seven-year-old in town,
18 also. I just am here to testify on the experience
19 that we had with Ms. Fiona Bailey. My daughter was
20 a disengaged late-bloomer, and -- sorry; I'm very
21 passionate about -- Mrs. Bailey did help her grow
22 tenaciously, as she said, in the multisensory
23 approach of instruction with reading.

24 And I couldn't be more proud of my
25 seven-year-old now, today, because she's just facing

1 work fiercely and just reading. We can't stop her
2 from reading. It's great.

3 I'm just here to testify on the belief of
4 the Enki syst- -- instructional system, and the
5 passion behind Fiona Bailey in this methodology.

6 That's all. Thank you.

7 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you so much.
8 You don't have to apologize about being passionate.
9 I wish more parents in this country were passionate
10 about their children's education.

11 Becky Nell Young.

12 MS. YOUNG: Yeah, double name. I am Becky
13 Nell Young. I started teaching in 1974. I'm a
14 parent of gifted kids, and I'm a diagnosed dyslexic.

15 I think this program is fabulous. I wish
16 I could have done it with my children. I wish
17 somebody had done it for me years ago. But now, one
18 of the things I'm most excited about is the Friday
19 Explorers Club. This will give me a chance to help
20 other children beyond mine.

21 I'm retired; I'm a schoolteacher; I'm a
22 story teller. The chance for adults to work with
23 children and help support their education -- we know
24 that children who feel supported by their community
25 and by the adults around them succeed more often

1 than children who don't. The more adults in their
2 life that are working with them and lifting them up
3 and supporting them, the better chance these
4 children have to grow their wings and fly.

5 This is something we can do. This is
6 something this community -- sorry. Bye. I'm
7 passionate, too.

8 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Bye. Is it "Doug
9 Sitowski"?

10 MR. SITOWSKI: Thank you. My background
11 is a graduate of the School of Performing Arts in
12 New York City, which was made into a movie. And
13 I'm -- hold a BFA from Chouinard Art Institute and
14 an MFA from Walt Disney's California Institute of
15 the Arts in Valencia.

16 I'd like to read some names to you
17 quickly.

18 Robert DeNiro, Dom DeLuise, Billy Dee
19 Williams, Hal Linden, Al Pacino, Wesley Snipes,
20 Susan Strasberg, Vanessa Williams, Charles
21 VanDoren, Eartha Kitt, Shari Lewis, Liza Minelli,
22 Freddie Prinze, and Nat Adderley, Jr.

23 And I humbly add my own name to that
24 august list. We all attended the same charter
25 school in New York City founded by Mayor Fiorello

1 LaGuardia. And I think that a town like this really
2 needs a school like this. We're an art community in
3 southern New Mexico, and it would be a great thing
4 for this town and art community.

5 Thank you.

6 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you so much.
7 The next name on the list. Lou Streib?

8 MR. STREIB: I have spoken already.

9 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Oh.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He spoke already.

11 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: That's the
12 Superintendent. I didn't make a connection. Thank
13 you.

14 Becky Traeger.

15 MS. TRAEGER: I am Becky Traeger. I have
16 three children in the Silver City School District
17 now. My youngest just started kindergarten today.

18 I am also here to show support for this
19 charter school and just for the option of choice, in
20 general, for people here in Silver City.

21 My oldest son is nine and is thriving now;
22 but when he started here in kindergarten, we had
23 just moved from another school district. His IEP
24 was canceled because he was deemed too smart. He
25 could not eat lunch for the first month of school,

1 because it was too noisy.

2 There are lots of kids like this, whether
3 they have a diagnosis or not, that are not -- maybe
4 their school needs are being met, but not their
5 social needs. And I know that Fiona Bailey and
6 Emily Aversa can make those needs be met.

7 And also Fiona Bailey, his first-grade
8 teacher. That's when I learned what to do to help
9 him.

10 Thank you.

11 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you so much.

12 The next name on the list is Nils Eng.

13 MR. ENG: Good afternoon. My name is Nils
14 Eng. I'm a proud public school graduate of
15 Silver -- Silver Schools. I was also a public
16 school teacher in the State of New Mexico for
17 13 years, eight of them here.

18 I'm now the director of the Calvary
19 Christian Academy here in town, and I'm here to say
20 that I think school choice is a wonderful thing for
21 this community. And I think Fiona and Emily will do
22 a wonderful job in serving a population that often
23 falls through the cracks. And I think it would be a
24 real blessing to the town.

25 Thank you.

1 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you. Dawn
2 Byrum.

3 MS. BYRUM: Hi. My name is Dawn Byrum.
4 I'm a retired teacher. I taught special ed, art,
5 and regular elementary. I'm also the mother of a
6 son who was one of those round pegs that don't fit
7 in the square holes. He had a lot of trouble in
8 school. He was overstimulated by a lot of things.
9 He had a lot of problems with other students teasing
10 him, and he would get in trouble because he would
11 strike back.

12 We eventually -- when he was going into
13 middle school, we put him in a private school, which
14 was exactly what he needed. It was much smaller.
15 He got more attention and more respect from the
16 people around him.

17 And now he's -- he is a thriving luthier
18 in Seattle. He went to school to learn to repair
19 and build musical instruments, and he's an
20 upstanding citizen, and very peaceful.

21 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Time. Thank you.

22 The next name on the list is Andrea
23 Warner.

24 MS. WARNER: Hello. I am a parent of two
25 children in the area, and one of them is a pub- --

1 is in a local -- our local, small, rural public
2 school. And she is thriving there and loves it.

3 And when I put my small and
4 rambunctious -- my seven-year-old, who he's seven
5 now -- and I put him into school, I quickly realized
6 that the way the classroom was set up for him was
7 going to -- was going to be very difficult for him
8 to sit, and I saw his learning -- his level of
9 learning being stifled, not due to anything that the
10 teachers were doing. I saw them -- they were
11 working hard and loved their students in the
12 classroom.

13 What I see in education right now is the
14 top-down policy that is coming with the testing is
15 making it very difficult for the districts and the
16 teachers.

17 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you. And I do
18 recognize this next name, because he has appeared
19 before us on a number of occasions, but for his
20 school. Eric Ahner.

21 MR. AHNER: My name is Eric Ahner.
22 Members of the Commission, thank you again for an
23 opportunity to speak with you. This is currently my
24 23rd year as an educator, my seventh year as
25 director of Aldo Leopold Charter School.

1 Sixteen of my years in education were
2 serving students with learning disabilities. The
3 cost of enrollment in my previous school was well
4 over \$50,000 per year. This begs the question: Do
5 low and middle income families not deserve better
6 opportunities for their children?

7 Dyslexia has only recently received its
8 own classification in New Mexico, qualifying a
9 student for special education services. Within the
10 scope of students with dyslexia, many still don't
11 meet the qualifications necessary to be granted an
12 Individualized Education Plan.

13 There are other disengaged students in
14 similar circumstances that Desert Willow School
15 intends to serve. In too many circumstances, these
16 non-qualifying individual -- individuals commonly
17 struggle until they fall so far behind that they
18 either eventually qualify for services, or they give
19 up with school.

20 Desert Willow's eight identified methods
21 of educating their students will provide them this
22 opportunity. Thank you.

23 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you. Jay
24 Hemphill.

25 MS. HEMPHILL: My husband had to leave; so

1 he -- I am the mother of four children. And my
2 eight-year-old had the good fortune of having both
3 Fiona and Emily as teachers. And he couldn't have
4 been more blessed to have had such amazing teachers.
5 And he is an atypical learner. He needs a lot of
6 movement. He struggles to keep up with grade-level
7 peers and has had challenges learning to read.

8 And I would love, as a parent, to have
9 additional options in the community that are
10 affordable and accessible to people of all economic
11 incomes.

12 So I just -- I hope that the school is
13 able to get established, and I know these teachers
14 will be amazing.

15 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you so much.

16 And this is one that you will have to bear
17 with me. Margarita Wulftange.

18 DR. WULFTANGE: You did it perfectly.

19 Hello. My name is Dr. Margarita Wulftange. I'm
20 from Western New Mexico University, and I'm here in
21 support of the Desert Willow Charter School.

22 I have worked with Fiona Bailey. She was
23 a supervisor for one of my student teachers; so I
24 have seen her in action.

25 I am currently working with both of them

1 in terms of their continued professional development
2 as their professor at Western New Mexico University;
3 so I know that they are dedicated professionals,
4 very interested in making sure that they are
5 prepared for all children.

6 The one thing I would like to mention is
7 that they are very dedicated to making sure all
8 students in our local community become more
9 proficient in Spanish, in addition to English. And
10 I think this is a great opportunity, because it does
11 not limit children with anything that -- they are
12 very additive in their approach. They think that
13 adding is better.

14 So I want to say thank you for that. And
15 then, also, that the arts integration part of it is
16 just another way that they are making sure children
17 are blessed.

18 Thank you.

19 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: All right. Thank
20 you.

21 Next name is Francis Browne.

22 Oh, okay.

23 MS. BROWNE: Hello. Thanks for this
24 chance. I'm Frances Browne. I speak mainly as a
25 parent and, obviously, a grandparent, too. But

1 although I have been a teacher for many years --
2 most of those years not at the elementary level --
3 but I have seen firsthand what happens to a kid
4 who -- who has not felt that they really belong.

5 "I don't fit here, they don't understand
6 me," or, "I can't do it the way they want," who goes
7 to an environment where that kid can be who she or
8 he is, can try new things, things that might even be
9 impossible.

10 And I have seen what happens when not only
11 the teachers, but the other kids, realize that they
12 are all supporting each other, that the other kids
13 really like them, really want them in -- to be
14 there.

15 And I have seen that happen. And it has
16 been wonderful. I think this kind of school will
17 give children that kind of opportunity. So I hope
18 it's going to happen.

19 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Time. Thank you so
20 much.

21 Next name is Mattie Eagle.

22 MS. EAGLE: Thank you. I'm Mattie Eagle.
23 I am currently Board President of Guadalupe
24 Montessori School. I've lived in Silver City for
25 twelve years.

1 And over the last five years or so, I've
2 seen the worsening reputation of Silver Public
3 Schools. I've also seen many of the teachers with
4 the best reputations here leaving the classroom.
5 Two of them are seated right in front of you.

6 I have chosen Guadalupe Montessori School
7 for my bright elementary student, child of mine.
8 And he is thriving there. He loves going to school
9 every day.

10 I would like this opportunity for all
11 children in Grant County. One of my best friends
12 from college knows a lot about Enki Education, and
13 she believes that it's the best educational method
14 available.

15 And in addition, I just want to mention
16 that Guadalupe Montessori School has indeed agreed
17 to look at the possibility of leasing our property
18 to this charter school.

19 Thank you very much.

20 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you. Next name
21 on the list is Tom Hester.

22 MR. HESTER: My name is Tom Hester. I'm a
23 retiree. I have no children in the public schools;
24 but I have a real interest in education. And in my
25 experience as a volunteer teacher of ESL here in

1 Silver City, I've met lots of the parents who shared
2 with me the wishes that they -- they had for their
3 children. And unfortunately, they couldn't quite
4 make reality out of those wishes.

5 And I'm really excited about the
6 possibilities that Desert Willow brings to this
7 community. We -- we are a community of retirees and
8 volunteers. And I think that it's going to open up
9 real possibilities and excitement in education for
10 this -- for this town.

11 Thank you very much.

12 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you. Jesse
13 Franklin-Owens.

14 MR. FRANKLIN-OWENS: Hello.

15 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Hi.

16 MR. FRANKLIN-OWENS: I was an educator in
17 the community for 27 years, and private school for
18 Montessori. I started the elementary.

19 I saw the headline the other day. It said
20 Silver Schools were concerned about a new school
21 opening, and there was concern about the financial
22 burdens that may accompany this.

23 The headline could have said, "New
24 Opportunities Open for Students in the Silver School
25 District."

1 I believe that any negativity about the
2 school may mostly evolve around finances. And I
3 would suggest that our first concern for children
4 should not be about finances, but should be about
5 the children themselves and how do we best serve
6 them.

7 (Applause.)

8 I have a variety of students that came to
9 me over the years, and generally, they were either
10 struggling, or they were bored; they were on
11 extremes. And we need to give them as many possible
12 opportunities as we can.

13 If we're focused on the children, we're
14 going to say, "This is a good thing," and we'll
15 encourage this.

16 Thank you.

17 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you. Now, I am
18 going to have a problem with this next one. Most of
19 you in this audience wouldn't be familiar with this.
20 But when I went to school, a long, long time ago,
21 the report card still had penmanship on it. And
22 every year, I was one of them that got the
23 penmanship note.

24 And I'm not saying this one's
25 penmanship -- but I think it's "Mary" -- and I

1 honestly can't --

2 MS. RISELY: It's Mary Burton Risely. And
3 I knew I followed Jesse, so I just got right up.

4 I am a former educator. I taught the
5 first Title I kindergarten in the state. And I also
6 was the teacher and then co-director of a parent
7 cooperative preschool in Santa Fe.

8 I've been volunteering for six years at
9 the Cliff Gila Valley Public School here, which is
10 the only A-rated school in our system. And I have
11 known Emily Aversa for 13 years, and I cannot speak
12 more highly of her. She's a person of integrity and
13 intuition and compassion and great intelligence, and
14 I know she'll do a great job in this school.

15 She loaned me the video about Enki
16 Education, and I just endorse this school
17 wholeheartedly and look forward to working there.

18 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you so much.
19 There are no other X's on the sheet. But by my
20 count, with 17 people speaking and one minute, I
21 will certainly allow three more that did not sign up
22 one minute each, if you wish to speak. I want you
23 to have your full 20 minutes.

24 I see one hand, two hands --

25 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: There's another

1 one.

2 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Okay. Please, I have
3 to write your name down on the list. So please tell
4 me your name.

5 MR. JOHNSON: Certainly. It's Kyle,
6 K-Y-L-E, Johnson.

7 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Yes, sir. You have
8 one minute.

9 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. I'll be brief.
10 I completely support Emily and Fiona in their
11 efforts. And, of course, you can see the level of
12 support that's here, the excitement in the room and
13 the optimism for our children's futures under the
14 conditions they would provide.

15 Thank you.

16 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you so much.
17 Next hand that was up? Please come
18 forward. Identify your name so I can write it down.

19 MS. SOLICK: Thank you. I'm Dorothy
20 Solick.

21 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Dorothy?

22 MS. SOLICK: Solick, S-O-L-I-C-K. I'm a
23 retired Army nurse and educator of young adults,
24 specifically in the underserved Navajo Reservations.

25 I came to Silver City three years ago and

1 am the co-parent of a 17-year-old who has struggled
2 with behavioral issues and mental health issues, but
3 has academically succeeded in the school systems,
4 only through the dedication of the wonderful
5 teachers and -- and his parents.

6 What I'm asking is for this committee to
7 appreciate the damage and broken mental health
8 system in this city, in this state, in this nation.
9 And we rely on teachers and their dedications to do
10 the early evaluations that will assist these
11 children to get the assistance and the diagnosis and
12 the special ed that they need before they are so
13 overwhelmed and leave school.

14 We must reach these children quicker.
15 They're very salvageable.

16 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you so much.
17 There was one hand over here somewhere.

18 MR. LUNDY: My name is George Lundy. It's
19 at the top your list there. I'm the founder and
20 current chairman of the Board of Directors for the
21 Learning Center for Dyslexia and Academic Success.

22 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Sir, I did
23 announce --

24 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: No, not here.

25 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Another place. Okay.

1 I misunderstood. Go ahead, Mr. Lundy. Start over.
2 You still have one minute.

3 MR. LUNDY: I'm George.

4 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Okay.

5 MR. LUNDY: The mission of The Learning
6 Center for Dyslexia is to provide resources and
7 community information to enable children with
8 dyslexia to achieve academic and life success.

9 I've worked with Emily and the other
10 founding board members -- Fiona -- for the last
11 year, in trying to -- this is one of our
12 organization's emphasis areas.

13 Why do we exist? Why does The Learning
14 Center exist? Why did this Desert Willow School
15 come to be?

16 My response to this question, when I ask
17 that, is nature abhors a vacuum. And there was a
18 vacuum in terms of children in this community who
19 fall between the cracks.

20 So The Learning Center came to be. We
21 have dedicated monies to teachers' training and to
22 scholarships.

23 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Time. Thank you.

24 And now that my mind had a moment to
25 process, I do remember your name from the

1 application. So thank you. I think you were
2 mentioned in there.

3 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Well, I'll share.

4 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Just a second. Yeah,
5 I want to look at something. Okay.

6 We now move into the portion of the
7 community input hearing where the members of the
8 Commission, three members here today, will ask
9 questions in areas that they would like to have a
10 little insight into, in addition to what we have
11 before us right now.

12 And we're going to use the system that you
13 guys kind of used. We'll be going back and forth.
14 I want to be sure all three of us get a chance to
15 ask our questions and say something.

16 So I'm going to get the ball rolling, and
17 I'm going to start right up at the front.

18 Let's talk about being innovative and
19 unique, because when I -- as I read the application,
20 I kept thinking, as I saw this and saw that,
21 Aldo Leopold kept jumping into my head. And so I
22 know there's got to be -- I know there's some
23 similarities with that in your application.

24 You also gave us, just briefly a little
25 bit, your eight innovations. So I wanted to give

1 you just a brief opportunity here. What is
2 different -- other than the dyslexia. I get that,
3 too. But what's going to set you apart from
4 Aldo Leopold, so that you're not just duplicating
5 what they're doing now?

6 MS. BAILEY: From Aldo? First off, Aldo
7 starts at sixth grade, and we would be K through 5.

8 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: So a totally
9 different --

10 MS. BAILEY: So it's a totally different
11 age group. And we, Emily and I, very early on, you
12 know, talked about, "Well, how do we want to define
13 ourselves?"

14 And one of the first things we said is,
15 "Well, we don't want to just be seen as Aldo, Jr.,
16 because we're the elementary charter school." No
17 offense to -- to what they do. My daughter is going
18 there now.

19 But we want to make sure that we're seen
20 as something unique for students. We always wanted
21 to make sure that we weren't seen as the free
22 Montessori school, because there are some aspects of
23 the Montessori innovations in what we do.

24 So we will be there for kinder through
25 fifth. And I think that what really sets us apart

1 is our very strong focus on students' need for a
2 strong reading program, a consistent reading program
3 throughout the years; but, then, as we're working on
4 that portion of their brain in a very -- like I
5 said, a very sequential, multisensory way, that
6 we're also helping them develop their other skills,
7 that right-brainedness of them.

8 And that's where the arts integration,
9 the-project based learning -- that's where taking a
10 story and surrounding their -- their learning with
11 that story.

12 So a lot of our students come from -- from
13 backgrounds with -- with hardships economically.
14 And research shows that when there's a hardship
15 economically, there's also a decrease in vocabulary.
16 So that rich story structure of the Enki curriculum
17 helps support that vocabulary and build the -- their
18 vocabulary along. As they're working in the arts,
19 they're integrating everything that they learn.

20 MS. AVERSA: Yeah. And I would add that
21 another thing that sets us apart is that Aldo has an
22 environmental emphasis, where the kids are going
23 out. They're doing -- they're measuring things like
24 environmental impact and so forth.

25 And Desert Willow would be more concerned,

1 I think you could say, with children exploring more
2 of an interior environment, really building that
3 classroom community.

4 And as Fiona mentioned, the students are a
5 different age. And so what we do with them is -- is
6 more appropriate for a younger child. So their
7 developmental needs dictate different approaches.

8 MS. BAILEY: Right. So our connection to
9 the community is going to look very different at an
10 elementary age than at the secondary age.

11 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Okay. It was
12 actually your Explorer program that kind of sounded
13 to me a lot similar to what they might, because you
14 are going out, as you said, in your application.
15 Someone is going to be going out. You talked about
16 field trips and things like that.

17 MS. AVERSA: I would add, I think that
18 more often, people would be coming to us than going
19 out. It's -- it's -- the exploration of children,
20 discovering their -- their interests and their
21 talents; so...

22 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: And the next thing --
23 I'm sure you're aware of that -- but you are
24 targeting dyslexics. And here in New Mexico, under
25 charter school law, everybody that comes -- applies,

1 you have to consider that you can't say "No" to this
2 one, "Yes" to --

3 MS. BAILEY: Right.

4 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: That's why I wanted
5 to look again and refresh my memory. You're only
6 going to have a cap of 120?

7 MS. BAILEY: Right.

8 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: You're also well
9 aware, if you exceed the 120 in applications, you go
10 to a lottery process.

11 MS. BAILEY: Right, uh-huh.

12 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: So it is at least
13 possible -- say, you got 150 applications, some of
14 these dyslexic kids won't make your lottery. And
15 you still will miss a little bit -- but I wanted to
16 combine it with the Orton-Gillingham that you stated
17 in one of your innovations.

18 Is that geared strictly to dyslexia, or is
19 it also suitable for non-dyslexics?

20 MS. AVERSA: So every reading program that
21 is recommended to teachers who are in training comes
22 with an Orton-Gillingham research backing. So what
23 we have in our schools, to some extent, includes
24 Orton-Gillingham. And I also wanted to say that
25 although we were thinking originally about various

1 populations who do fall through the cracks, what we
2 realized is what we're proposing would be really
3 wonderful for any child.

4 We realize that there would be a mixture
5 of children. Some would be developing very
6 typically, and others would need more support.
7 Charter schools have always been the crucible for
8 the exploration and testing of other ways to educate
9 children. And I think our long-term hope is that we
10 would find an approach that might be adopted in
11 other schools.

12 And also, what we're hoping is that after
13 the first five years, we would be able to grow. And
14 so I think it'll be a process of people figuring out
15 what population the school excels with.

16 And I just wanted to say again that I
17 think that what we're proposing would support any
18 child.

19 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you. It will
20 have to --

21 MS. AVERSA: Yeah, of course.

22 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: -- to be a charter
23 school.

24 Commissioner Ambruster, do you have
25 something while I thumb through my notes a little

1 bit?

2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Sure. I can --
3 never mind. Wait.

4 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: I could check.

5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: No, I forgot to
6 turn it on.

7 Could you just refresh my memory a second?
8 How many special ed teachers -- you two would be on
9 that staff?

10 MS. AVERSA: So my background is special
11 ed. I have a master's degree in special education;
12 so that's my background. We've also had help from a
13 former director of special education in our
14 community in working on our program.

15 MS. BAILEY: So -- and so what was your
16 question? Just our background in special ed?

17 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Well, I guess
18 it's twofold: One is how many special
19 ed-endorsed -- certified, whatever -- teachers will
20 be on the staff? And will you -- I thought -- I
21 understood that each, or both of you, had special ed
22 endorsements and --

23 MS. BAILEY: Emily has her special ed
24 endorsement. I am currently working towards my
25 Certified Academic Language Therapist certification,

1 which is a reading specialist; so that -- so I'm
2 working towards that right now.

3 We wrote the charter with just one special
4 ed teacher, based on this -- based on statistics
5 that we were given, and looking at the fact that we
6 would not necessarily have all of our -- our -- not
7 all of our students would meet the qualifications.

8 And to also think about it in this term,
9 when we were -- for example, my daughter didn't
10 qualify for special ed, even though her dyslexia is
11 fairly significant. And -- and -- and so kids with
12 dyslexia have ways of compensating for their
13 dyslexia. And -- and so we're looking for those
14 students who need that specialized approach, whether
15 they would qualify for special ed or not.

16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Sure. And do
17 you have a GATE-certified teacher also for your GATE
18 kids?

19 MS. AVERSA: So -- yeah. So I've just
20 begun a second master's degree, which will have a
21 concentration in gifted, the education of GATE
22 students.

23 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It's always one
24 of our -- the charter schools, all of them, it's
25 always an issue in special ed. That's why I

1 particularly asked.

2 So I want to follow up on Commissioner
3 Bergman. Also, I was a little disturbed -- but I
4 love the concept. And what I can see as a parent,
5 as well as a teacher, is that people say, "Wow, this
6 is, like, a guaranteed method"; because I will say,
7 in my own opinion -- and that's only mine -- that
8 most of the ways students learn to read is amazing
9 that they ever learn to read. But that's just my
10 personal thing. And then some kids, you know, can
11 watch Sesame Street and learn to read.

12 So, you know, you have the entire
13 spectrum.

14 So I like the Orton-Gillingham. I know
15 about that and all. It's usually -- and they're
16 small groups. It's not a large-group kind of a
17 deal.

18 MS. BAILEY: Right, right.

19 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: But knowing that
20 as a parent, if I can have a child who can go on a
21 proven method, of which most of the reading programs
22 aren't so proven; they're just written -- I would,
23 as a -- just having a regular kid, want to come to
24 your school.

25 And so that would make me think that you

1 might get a different population than your goal is
2 to get and to help. And I understand the helping.
3 That's totally clear, and you made a very good
4 point, and there's no issue with it.

5 But what are you going to do when you
6 don't get so many potential dyslexic children on --
7 with learning disabilities who have IEPs? How are
8 you going to --

9 MS. AVERSA: So I'll turn this over to
10 Fiona in a moment. But I will just add that, just
11 naturally, in any population of children, one in
12 five can have -- can be on the spectrum for
13 dyslexia. It's an incredibly common neurological
14 difference. And typically, special education
15 assessments are geared to pick up the children with
16 the most severe issues.

17 So I guess the first thing I would say is
18 that in any population of children, there will be up
19 to 20 percent who struggle.

20 MS. BAILEY: And the Enki curriculum that
21 we're adopting is not written specifically for any
22 specialized population. It's written for all
23 children. And so that rich storytelling is -- is
24 such an important part of the reading curriculum,
25 because it's from that storytelling that the kids

1 then jump off into -- into their reading, which
2 we'll do in small groups.

3 It also is -- is the part where they begin
4 to do their own writing. And so they'll still have
5 a lot of -- of guided reading in our -- in our
6 curriculum, and guided reading being that wherever
7 that -- that child is at is where we'll be -- be
8 directing their reading.

9 But -- and we'll have writer's workshop,
10 where they get to write and create their own
11 stories.

12 But the difference in -- is that along
13 with that will be that rich arts integration. And
14 so -- and that rich vocabulary development through
15 the storytelling and through the movement that goes
16 along with the storytelling.

17 So we -- we just are very confident that
18 the curriculum is really designed for all students.

19 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And I don't know
20 the answer to this; so let me ask you this:

21 I understand Orton-Gillingham and, you
22 know, have done that for years. But it's really to
23 teach reading to a certain level. I mean, it's not
24 like an eighth-grade-level type of thing; right?

25 So do they go out of that, and it's just

1 something else, if they've either mastered it, which
2 some kids will, like, in a year, and just get it and
3 take off reading? And then you do something else?
4 Is that what you're planning?

5 MS. BAILEY: Yeah. So students will --
6 the Orton-Gillingham approach means you'll use
7 multisensory. You'll teach explicitly, and in a
8 sequential manner.

9 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Right.

10 MS. BAILEY: So -- so you're right.
11 Different students will need the multisensory to
12 different levels. Students will need the
13 explicitness in different -- to different degrees.
14 There's also a component of most Orton-Gillingham
15 methodologies that have a very Socratic method to
16 the teaching, as well, to help the children realize
17 that they do have that information, so that you're
18 not just sticking with the explicit, but help on
19 helping them break out from themselves their
20 understanding of what they need to read.

21 But most Orton-Gillingham programs go all
22 the way through all of your prefixes, your Greek,
23 your Latin, all of your language basis.

24 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Right.

25 MS. BAILEY: And so it is just a very

1 enriched part of your reading.

2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: What I'm saying
3 is -- how should I say this?

4 MS. BAILEY: So will students need
5 Orton-Gillingham all the way through fifth grade?

6 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: That's one
7 question.

8 MS. BAILEY: No, they won't all -- right.
9 They won't all need the strict Orton-Gillingham.
10 Right. And remember --

11 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Wait. Stop.
12 You have to --

13 (Reporter requests clarification.)

14 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. And
15 that's what I was asking. I think that you might
16 get students, number one, who already can read; and,
17 number two, with this approach, particularly gifted
18 students will pick it up really, really quickly --

19 MS. BAILEY: Correct.

20 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: -- even if
21 they're kindergarteners and are not currently
22 reading. And thirdly, some students will just say,
23 "Got it." The light bulb went on, and they won't
24 really need Orton-Gillingham.

25 MS. BAILEY: So Orton-Gillingham is a

1 methodology. And the Enki is the curriculum; right?
2 And so the degree to which they need the
3 Orton-Gillingham methodology will be determined by
4 the classroom and reading specialists. And then the
5 Enki curriculum is where they do their reading.

6 MS. AVERSA: So Fiona and I each have
7 seven years of training, at our former school, in
8 guided reading. And Enki includes guided reading,
9 which means you're meeting the child wherever that
10 child is.

11 So if you have a kindergartener coming in
12 who's reading, and they don't need such an explicit
13 approach, we wouldn't waste that child's time. We
14 would have that child reading and questioning and
15 having them work at their ability level. And what I
16 think Fiona was saying was that that's where the
17 Enki program comes in.

18 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. And --
19 and I'm really liking the things that you wrote and,
20 certainly, your goals. But I have some questions
21 about this lottery.

22 So I will just -- let me just say it
23 straight out. When you talk about increasing your
24 enrollment to the 120, if it's not already there,
25 before the 40-day count or the 60-, 80-day counts,

1 whatever that was --

2 MS. BAILEY: Uh-huh.

3 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: -- that sounds
4 like gaming the system, because that's how you get
5 funding. And I believe you have to take students no
6 matter when they apply. If you -- if your -- if
7 your cap is 120, and you -- and three children leave
8 because they move to another state or whatever, then
9 I think you're obligated to take three more in.

10 MS. BAILEY: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So I don't think
12 you can choose those.

13 MS. BAILEY: Well, we -- we used the
14 lottery system as written in some other charter
15 applications. We looked at a number of different
16 charter applications and how they wrote their
17 section. And I think we did get some misinformation
18 there.

19 MS. AVERSA: We would certainly be
20 dedicated to following the letter of the law.

21 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So you might
22 need to change this a little.

23 MS. AVERSA: Yes, yes.

24 MS. BAILEY: We already see some changes
25 that need to be made.

1 MS. AVERSA: The example we looked at --
2 yeah.

3 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. I just
4 wanted to make that clear, so that you weren't --

5 MS. BAILEY: Yeah, uh-huh.

6 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Commissioner
7 Toulouse, I'll get to you in just a second. But
8 since you mentioned the lottery, I've jumped forward
9 to the lottery part of your application.

10 I'm not sure of her question, or your
11 answer, fully. I wanted to state this, because
12 you -- I'm reading from the Charter Division's
13 preliminary analysis you have a copy of.

14 In the "Lottery" section it states that
15 your response does not comply with State statute.
16 And that's the review team's comment.

17 MS. BAILEY: Right.

18 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: And they went on to
19 say that, "The applicant has made several statements
20 that indicate the proposed school will violate State
21 statutes in relation to their enrollment and lottery
22 practices."

23 Then they went on to say, "In relation to
24 lottery enrollment preferences, the applicant
25 proposes to provide a preference to children of DWS

1 employees and children on the waiting list."

2 And then they went on to say, "In relation
3 to continuing enrollment and sibling preferences,
4 the applicants state that students must meet the
5 State's minimum academic and behavioral requirements
6 in order to be accepted for each succeeding
7 following year."

8 This also appears to allow the school to
9 disenroll students who do not appear proficient on
10 State assessments. And that is not allowed.

11 MS. BAILEY: And that was -- that was --
12 we apologize. That was not our intent at all. And,
13 again, it was -- it was in conferring with some
14 other charter -- already approved charters that we
15 made that mistake.

16 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: I just wanted to be
17 sure --

18 MS. BAILEY: Yes.

19 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: -- we had your
20 assurances in those areas.

21 Commissioner Toulouse, did you have
22 something?

23 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Mr. Chair, the
24 other two of you covered most of the things. But I
25 do want to go a little farther in to your

1 concentration on dyslexia.

2 I mean, personally, I am very involved,
3 because I have a severely dyslexic grandson who has
4 an IEP for it. But I also have a cousin who is
5 autistic, and he's high-functioning, and he's in a
6 charter school.

7 But I don't see -- those children often
8 need very different kinds of environment than the
9 dyslexic. And I see you have done all kinds of
10 work, because you are familiar with dyslexics.

11 But because you have to take any child,
12 I'm just using the autism as an example. This is
13 something that you're likely to come up against.
14 And I don't see any real looking at how you're going
15 to handle these children who have things other than
16 your dyslexia to deal with.

17 And some of these also have -- you know,
18 are intellectually behind in ways, and others of
19 them are not, just like with the dyslexics. They
20 can be your gifted children. A gifted child can
21 have an IEP that has nothing to do with their gifted
22 status.

23 And I just -- I don't see that. But
24 otherwise, I do want to tell you, I think you've put
25 a tremendous amount of work. I think you know what

1 you're doing. And I -- this was much easier to read
2 than some of them, from the standpoint of knowing
3 what you intended.

4 But as I say, I just -- since they took
5 most of the other stuff -- because I had a problem
6 on the lottery and all, too -- I wanted to know, how
7 are you going to handle these kids with other
8 problems?

9 MS. AVERSA: Yeah. So as a public school,
10 Desert Willow would happily accept any child. The
11 special education teacher that the school employs
12 will have, by necessity, training in working with
13 children with a multiple -- with multiple
14 exceptionalities.

15 One of the things that I really like,
16 reading with the eyes of a special education teacher
17 with 15 years of experience, about Enki is that it's
18 a -- it's a curriculum, but not just a curriculum.
19 It's a philosophy in which children will meet with
20 the -- it can adjust itself very well just to a
21 diverse number of needs --

22 So, for example, one of the schools that
23 uses Enki is in Albuquerque there in -- it's
24 Mountain Mahogany. I had a long conversation with
25 the founder of that school, who was telling me that

1 if -- you know, for a student who, let's say, has
2 autism -- and not even necessarily high-functioning
3 autism -- because of the teacher's training in Enki,
4 that teacher will know to work with the assistant;
5 because there's an assistant for each class, at
6 least half-time. And they will have a plan for what
7 to do to help the child use sensory -- neurosensory
8 integration for grounding.

9 So every day starts with different
10 activities -- if you know Brain Gym, that type of
11 activity -- to ground a child in their body and to
12 help them be physically prepared for learning.

13 And that's just one example. So I -- so,
14 again, it would, first of all, be a joint effort
15 between the special education teacher, with the
16 background knowledge and the training, and the
17 classroom teacher, to work together to provide
18 whatever it is that that child needs to be
19 successful.

20 MS. BAILEY: There's a -- I mean, speaking
21 about children with autism, there is a whole section
22 on sensory integration and movement and how
23 important that is. And, of course, not all children
24 with autism need the same level of sensory input,
25 the same level of -- of movement, amount of

1 movement.

2 And so that would have to be carefully,
3 you know, formulat- -- programmed for each
4 individual child, and, again, as Emily said, between
5 the classroom teacher, the instructional assistants
6 and the special ed teacher.

7 But the -- the part that I really want to
8 emphasize here is that -- that the school day and
9 school -- and -- and -- is designed so that the
10 student isn't jumping from place -- place to place
11 throughout -- throughout the day. And I think that
12 is a real benefit to a lot of our special needs
13 kids.

14 Another -- another part is in our -- we
15 have a high number of -- of adults per student
16 population so that individual needs can be met.

17 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Thank you. I
18 was -- and I was using autism as an example, because
19 it's one I'm familiar with. With -- and I know that
20 with smaller children, it's often harder, because
21 they get disturbed more easily, noise levels and
22 activity and too many people going too many
23 different directions.

24 And I'm not quite sure how your classrooms
25 will work out, or your exploring groups, with that.

1 But you'd have to work that out. And I was just
2 wanting to make sure that there was consideration
3 for other than dyslexic.

4 MS. BAILEY: Right. It is definitely a
5 part of the Enki training, the whole understanding
6 of where a child is at. The course we took this
7 summer was called "Rousing Intuition," and it's
8 rousing intuition within the teacher to be in tune
9 with each individual child's needs and what they're
10 communicating with us, whether they can speak it or
11 not. And the whole -- large foundation of the Enki
12 philosophy is in that knowing where each child is
13 at. And so we will have extensive training that --

14 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: My understanding,
15 from your presentation, is that will work well with
16 English Language Learners, as well.

17 MS. BAILEY: Yeah. Thank you.

18 MS. AVERSA: Yeah. And just one more
19 thing that I've remembered, now that Fiona's
20 mentioned the training we were at. And the
21 interesting and, I think, very valuable thing about
22 the Enki curriculum, what it has in common with
23 Waldorf and Montessori is that children are --
24 they're met at their what's called "developmental
25 thread."

1 So, for example, a seven-year-old -- some
2 of us have mentioned seven-year-olds -- has an
3 innate curiosity that's merged, and also a
4 certain -- well, sometimes level of playfulness.
5 And so the different stories that that child hears
6 in the classroom meet them at a level that they
7 gravitate to.

8 A five-year-old has left home and is in
9 school perhaps for the first time. And so they have
10 a security issue. So whether or not a child has
11 special needs, depending on their age, we will be
12 meeting a certain deep kind of core need that they
13 have.

14 And Beth Sutton, who created Enki, has
15 said that if you were to go into a classroom where
16 Enki is being used, you wouldn't see children --
17 they wouldn't stick out to you, you know, for lack
18 of a better word, so much, because they'd be being
19 met at a level that they need to for their age.

20 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Yeah. I'm
21 through. It's just -- you know, I've found out that
22 I was dyslexic at a low level as a kid; but because
23 they didn't diagnose it back then, it's only now
24 that I understand why I never have been able to
25 figure out left and right. And I still, when I'm

1 busy, I invert B's and P's and D's and things like
2 that, even at the age of 70.

3 But yet I taught myself to read by the
4 time I was three. But I find that -- you know,
5 maybe it was better they didn't have the diagnosis
6 of dyslexia then.

7 But now, at least I have an excuse for
8 when I keep saying, "Go that way."

9 "Well, left or right?"

10 "I don't know. That way."

11 I know that there is a whole spectrum of
12 that, too. Now we can go here.

13 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Yeah. I'm chomping
14 at the bit here.

15 Katie, how much time is left? I thought I
16 heard a chime; but I must have --

17 MS. POULOS: Eleven minutes.

18 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: How much?

19 MS. POULOS: About 12 minutes.

20 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: That much? Twelve
21 minutes? I thought we were at the line. So we both
22 have -- okay.

23 I want to talk about your academic
24 performance indicators for a second, because I talk
25 about those all the time. Mr. Ahner can testify to

1 that.

2 One, I salute you for the way you
3 presented them, because you followed our prompt, and
4 you followed our suggested format. And it's always
5 surprising to me that when an applicant reads the
6 instructions, then they choose to go off in their
7 own direction.

8 We don't just randomly come up with these
9 things. There's a reason why we put out formats and
10 ask people -- because it demonstrates to us that you
11 understand what you're going to have to do in the
12 area of academic performance.

13 And as one of the speakers noted, she
14 talked about the testing. Now, we're not going to
15 debate testing today, the pros and cons. But until
16 somebody invents a better system, we have to test
17 the kids so we know whether they're moving forward
18 or not.

19 If we're going to test the kids, then we
20 have to have academic performance indicators.

21 Well, I salute you for that.

22 What I wanted to explore, you -- you set
23 up two cohorts. That's fine. We do that all the
24 time. One of your cohorts is ones that are at their
25 academic levels, and the second one was for the ones

1 that are behind.

2 And I salute you for that, because that's
3 where schools really should be concentrating. I
4 mean, everybody's got to get the good -- but if the
5 kids are behind, you've got to figure a way to catch
6 them up somehow. And it's much easier said than
7 done, obviously.

8 So I like the fact that in your math
9 assessment and your two cohorts, on the second
10 cohort, for the ones that were behind, you proposed
11 a 1.4 growth level each year. I salute you for
12 that, because PED's annual requirement for all
13 students in this state is they operate with the
14 assumption that every student in this state advances
15 one full year every year.

16 In other words, you start the fourth
17 grade. At the end of the fourth grade, you're ready
18 to go to the fifth grade. So schools that say, "I
19 just want them to advance one year," that's not a
20 challenging goal to me. That's just meeting what
21 the Public Education Department considers to be
22 normal, or whatever you -- I salute for you that.

23 That will be a challenge. How do you
24 think you're going to get them to do that 1.4 years?

25 MS. AVERSA: So we have several different

1 ideas. First of all, if a student has a special --
2 they have one of the 13 exceptionalities, they will
3 have a special education teacher who will work with
4 a classroom teacher to create a plan for that.

5 I think that -- well, you know, you can
6 make a plan; but then how do you carry it out? So I
7 think we have several things.

8 First of all, we have smaller class sizes.
9 And in looking back on my experience, I always, you
10 know, thought, well, you know, you need to have a
11 better student-teacher ratio, fewer students to a
12 teacher. So I think that's one thing.

13 We also have quite a few retired teachers
14 in our community. And so I think it's quite
15 possible that we might have some volunteers to put
16 in extra time with students.

17 And also, we have proposed some different
18 educational opportunities to help parents understand
19 more about how to effectively help their children at
20 home. I think it has to be very much a group effort
21 when you have a child who is in need of coming along
22 a little bit further.

23 So if you have, say, someone who's had an
24 outward physical injury -- sometimes you hear about,
25 say, a surfer who was injured by a shark -- I know

1 that sounds a little farfetched for this
2 explanation. But that person knows that they --
3 they need to put in extra time and effort to
4 perform, as somebody who didn't have that
5 difference.

6 And so I think that working together as a
7 team with the teacher, special education teacher, if
8 there is an exceptionality, the assistant, the
9 parents, community volunteers, I think that is very
10 much about people coming together to support a
11 child. And I think we have the people power to be
12 really creative in how to put in what each person
13 needs.

14 MS. BAILEY: And another part is in our
15 curriculum. There, again, we get back to that
16 multisensory nature. We talked about it more so in
17 our reading, because it's become more novel to have
18 multisensory in reading than it has in math. But as
19 a classroom teacher, because of the amount of --
20 because of the demands on our time, we get away from
21 using manipulatives.

22 And so the Enki curriculum sends us right
23 back to kids have to be able to manipulate objects
24 in order to understand math. And in some ways, the
25 Enki curriculum looks like it takes a slower

1 approach to math; but that's because it's laying
2 that strong foundation in understanding of number
3 sense. But at the same time, there are other areas
4 where it goes much -- comes along much more quickly.

5 In first grade, already they're introduced
6 to the differences between not just addition and
7 subtraction, but multiplication and division, as
8 well. And there's a whole -- as with every major
9 concept in the Enki curriculum, there's a story to
10 go along with that.

11 And so the kids learn the story of the --
12 the different operations. There's "Mini Minus," and
13 they have little characters. And so they learn the
14 story first, and then they always have that story to
15 connect back to as they're looking at math problems
16 and -- and the way to think about math.

17 So it's laying that strong foundation at
18 the start that's going to see that growth.

19 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you. I
20 sometimes ask a question when I already know the
21 answer. And I know you know the answer, but I want
22 you to say it. So you've answered my question.

23 I want to give Commissioner Ambruster a
24 chance for her -- I actually have one or two points,
25 if you could leave me one or two points.

1 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: You can give
2 yourself more.

3 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: You always give
4 yourself more; it doesn't matter.

5 Yes, I have a couple of really quick ones
6 here.

7 So in -- somewhere in my background, I
8 thought DIBELS was a diagnostic test; but I know now
9 we use it for testing. But for fourth- and
10 fifth-graders? I thought it was a K-1-2 kind of
11 thing. I didn't see a reading measure.

12 I saw the math, for MAPs, NWEA. And I got
13 that one; that's fine. And I only saw -- and maybe
14 it's only I -- who only saw the DIBELS. And I
15 didn't understand -- and you certain- -- I'm sure
16 you will correct me -- but I didn't think that went
17 past, like, second grade or something.

18 MS. AVERSA: Yeah. So DIBELS does. It
19 goes all the way through elementary school. It may
20 go to eighth grade. Because I wasn't researching
21 middle school, I'm not quite sure about that. But I
22 do know it definitely goes through elementary. I
23 was actually surprised to learn that myself, because
24 we do often associate it with younger children.

25 Originally, we were thinking about using

1 DIBELS as a measure for K-1-2, and DRA, the measure
2 for 3-4-5.

3 But then I had some conversations with the
4 people who create DIBELS, and they assured me that
5 yes, there are many schools who are using it. One
6 of the advantages to us using DIBELS is that it is
7 always being reviewed and updated, and in a
8 regularized sort of fashion, with actual populations
9 of children.

10 Another financial benefit to us is that
11 it's free of charge.

12 And furthermore, it comes with a data
13 system, which they only charge a dollar per student,
14 per year, for a school to use that data system.

15 So I thought, you know, between the
16 rigorous aspect of DIBELS, the fact that it goes all
17 the way through, and then the financial piece, it
18 seemed like a very good measure to use.

19 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Oh.

20 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. The next
21 one -- because we are running out of time here --
22 is -- so on Fridays, the students have this
23 enrichment -- I forgot what you call it. But
24 anyway, that. And the teachers are having work and
25 gathering.

1 When do teachers -- maybe they don't even
2 have this here, ever, in any of the schools. But do
3 they have a prep time?

4 MS. AVERSA: That's an excellent question.
5 So would you like to talk about the volunteer
6 aspects?

7 MS. BAILEY: So the Explorer Clubs will
8 have a mighty force of volunteers. And so how we
9 envision Fridays going is that half the teachers
10 will be working with students in Explorer Clubs, and
11 half the teachers will have their collaboration
12 time.

13 Part of that collaboration time will be
14 prep time; right? And so it depends on what's
15 needed each week.

16 And that's part of the reason that we
17 wanted initially to be K-5. I know a lot of charter
18 schools will say, "We're going to start what K-1-2,
19 then add -- add grades per year.

20 We wanted to start with all the grade
21 levels there for a couple of reasons: One is the
22 cost of training. And so a lot of our Fridays in
23 time, initially, will be spent with our -- the Enki
24 instructors, who will be part of our staff
25 development. And even though it won't be personal

1 prep time, it's going to be exactly what the
2 teachers need, as they work and learn and -- and
3 enhance their -- their curriculum with the Enki
4 training.

5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: This is not
6 about your school. But so do Silver City elementary
7 teachers and -- you know, and the public schools, do
8 they have a prep period?

9 MS. AVERSA: Elementary schoolteachers
10 typically have one prep a day while their children
11 are out at art or PE or music.

12 Another thing is, during the charter
13 writing process, we were trying to find an answer as
14 to whether we could have retired teachers or people
15 with substitute licenses, people who have been all
16 cleared as far as security goes and who have the
17 background to be in charge of the students in the
18 various Explorer Clubs, so that the teachers could
19 have half a day of prep time on Fridays.

20 MS. BAILEY: And half a day of
21 collaboration.

22 MS. AVERSA: And half a day of
23 collaboration. And we're still looking for that.

24 (Timer sounds.)

25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Sorry. But you

1 can go on.

2 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: In fact, I will go
3 on, because we are the ones, after all, charged with
4 the actual heavy burden of saying "Yes" or "No" to
5 every applicant, and making some happy and some
6 unhappy.

7 So I -- you had three minutes left that
8 you didn't use. I'm going to use your three minutes
9 here very briefly.

10 MS. BAILEY: All right.

11 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: I just did want to
12 note that, as you were well aware, that their
13 preliminary analysis, CSD had raised questions about
14 some of what you said in your ELL section. And they
15 specifically said that some of what you put forth
16 wasn't in alignment with the BE -- BMEB Technical
17 Assistance Manual. So I know you will address that
18 concern.

19 There was -- there were some limitations
20 to how your governing body was going to monitor your
21 school and everything. I wanted to note that.

22 And I had a question about your "Community
23 Care Crews." Sounds like a great program. But if
24 they're going out and working on people's property,
25 will your school insurance cover the liability in

1 those kind of situa- -- because I know schools
2 everywhere make field trips. But there must be
3 insurance and coverage. But I wanted to make sure
4 that you're aware of that.

5 MS. BAILEY: Right. And the Community
6 Care Clubs are an example of something that might
7 happen. I think initially, it will start -- the
8 community will be the school property itself. And
9 then -- then as we grow and become more solid in
10 what we're doing, explore heading out into a greater
11 community.

12 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Okay. I just wanted
13 to kind of make that point.

14 MS. BAILEY: Yeah. Thank you.

15 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: I just wanted to --
16 did you have anything?

17 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I just wanted --

18 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Yeah. I've got --
19 let me do this first, because I -- it's right at the
20 back. It was right at the back. I really wanted to
21 explore this.

22 I'm sorry. I can be brief.

23 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: Go ahead. I'm
24 just going to sit here.

25 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: You made two

1 statements that kind of threw me for a curve. Way
2 back here, under the selection process for your
3 board members, at two different places, you state,
4 "Discussed whether, for political reasons, these
5 candidates should be added to the pool."

6 I have never had anybody say that before.
7 Political reasons are not really one of the
8 qualification listed for board members, or anyone
9 else.

10 I can say, quite truthfully, that
11 politically, Commissioner Toulouse and I are a
12 fairly wide spectrum; and yet we work very well on
13 this Commission together.

14 So what was your thinking there?

15 MS. AVERSA: What page is that?

16 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Page 104.

17 MS. EDWARDS: Because we would not
18 knowingly put anything like that in writing.

19 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: I don't have the page
20 that preceded it. I'm just pulling out the pages
21 where I'm going to ask -- think about asking a
22 question. The copy I have here says Page 104 at the
23 bottom.

24 It may have been talking about your head
25 administrator candidate. It doesn't say at the top.

1 MS. EDWARDS: this is the process by which
2 the head administrator would be selected.

3 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: For political
4 reasons?

5 MS. EDWARDS: So I'm looking.

6 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Would you like to
7 look at my page? They're actually red, because your
8 words appeared out in red. It said -- what you said
9 was, "Some local candidates may not be in the final
10 pool." And then you said that, "discussed whether
11 for political reasons."

12 MS. EDWARDS: So this is what I would say
13 about that. This is a process that was created by
14 and is credited to Fred Nolan, the Superintendent of
15 the Foley, Minnesota Public Schools. It's called "A
16 Game Plan to Hire Principals."

17 And in -- thanks to your bringing this
18 forward, we would take that out. Absolutely, yeah.

19 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Maybe just a very
20 brief comment in your -- if you're going to send us
21 some more comments, please do that.

22 Now, yeah, what those folks do up north
23 and back east, I --

24 MS. EDWARDS: That's a not quite accurate
25 proofreading.

1 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: That's fine. You
2 guys have covered it. We'll --

3 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: I don't want to --

4 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: No. My -- this is
5 a statement for the future, should you be approved,
6 because you did not request transportation.

7 But you do say, in the future, you may
8 want to explore that with the local community.
9 Well, you have to first go to PED. And everyone all
10 over the state is getting very, very annoyed with
11 charter school transportation within their local
12 school districts. And the Legislature is looking to
13 do away with that.

14 But it is a part of the charter
15 negotiation. We negotiate it. And it would be a
16 change which you've directed.

17 But I would want you to think about it
18 might be better to think about wanting to do it at
19 the beginning, if you should be approved, than later
20 on and it being harder.

21 And if you don't -- and that -- I don't
22 know how compact you consider your district, because
23 the way most of the charter schools work, in areas
24 that children close to another school district often
25 will go across the school district line to get into

1 a charter school where there are services that they
2 may not be getting in the schools over on the other
3 side of the district.

4 For instance, especially in Albuquerque,
5 some of the charter schools there have been coming
6 in from Sandoval County, Santa Fe County,
7 Cibola County, Valencia County, Torrance County, you
8 know. And that's where the transportation gets
9 iffy, because you plan -- you need to plan for
10 within your school district, because they're not
11 going to let you do out -- so this is for the
12 future.

13 But just in seeing -- because you said
14 that, "In the future, we may come back for a charter
15 amendment," I think that needs to be something well
16 thought out as you go, whether you will ever want it
17 or don't.

18 The other thing is you might want to talk
19 to your local representatives and senators, if you
20 decide to go that route, before you do, so that they
21 won't be in the group that are deciding to vote
22 totally against it; because I firmly believe charter
23 schools, within the boundaries of the district in
24 which they are, those kids have the same rights to
25 transportation, because many of them come from

1 families who cannot necessarily afford or work a
2 schedule that cannot get them there, and they should
3 not be denied that education.

4 And it is a decision. And, again, I think
5 you may be a little more compact than some for where
6 you plan to draw from. But think it through.

7 MS. BAILEY: Thank you.

8 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: And, finally, I
9 believe -- and it's relatively minor -- way in here
10 in the back, where you talk about facilities -- and
11 that is hard to talk about when you're not in school
12 yet, when you have no money and haven't been
13 approved and all that.

14 But you put forth -- you talked about
15 having the portables and arranging them in a circle.
16 And you, specifically, for Building 1, 2, and 5,
17 which are classroom buildings, you showed they had
18 bathrooms. On the administration building and a
19 classroom building, you didn't mention a bathroom.

20 Now, I know you adults can probably be in
21 a room without a bathroom. Is that an oversight
22 or --

23 MS. BAILEY: I think so.

24 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: You really need
25 portables with bathrooms in them.

1 MS. BAILEY: Yeah.

2 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: All right.

3 MS. BAILEY: I think that was just an
4 oversight.

5 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: All right. All
6 right. Thank you very much. I wanted to make
7 that -- it is -- these -- actually, these things are
8 absolutely important, and I wanted to explore every
9 issue with you guys.

10 MS. BAILEY: Thank you so much.

11 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: All right. This is
12 the closing, then. All right. I will read this to
13 you. And we're -- yeah, I need to hold up this,
14 Okay.

15 Any member of the public, including the
16 applicants, may submit written input following this
17 hearing. Written comments can be sent to the
18 Commission via the PED website, mailed, or
19 hand-delivered.

20 I can tell you if you mail it, it's
21 probably not getting to Santa Fe before the
22 three-day deadline. So think about alternative
23 delivery.

24 The details and the addresses on this
25 agenda form -- there's two paragraphs here on the

1 bottom. There's a name there of the PED employee
2 with her e-mail address. That's where you would
3 send it to. And it reminds you about the deadline.

4 And I -- and one other thing. Make sure
5 you identify the school, if you're sending comments
6 up to Santa Fe. You'd be amazed how many people
7 make comments and don't identify the school, so they
8 don't know where to put it and where to send it.
9 But please identify the school.

10 Please note that any written input must be
11 received by no later than 5:00 p.m. on the third
12 business day following the hearing on the
13 application on which you wish to comment. And
14 specifically for Desert Willow, that would be
15 Tuesday, August 25th, 2015, at 5:00 p.m.

16 And they are sticklers there for that
17 time. That's not 5:01 or 5:02; that's 5:00 p.m. So
18 you do have that time to send in additional comments
19 or anything that was said today that you might want
20 to address a little further.

21 So, Commissioners, anything else?

22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: No, it's been
23 quite -- thank for you having us. Quite nice.

24 MS. BAILEY: Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER TOULOUSE: I do want to thank

1 the audience for turning out. We do this better
2 when we're looking at people who are there
3 supporting the people who are here. So thank you
4 very much for taking your time to be here and
5 putting up with the ones of us up here, who received
6 a huge amount of pay of zero for doing this. So
7 thank you.

8 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: Thank you,
9 Commissioners.

10 (Applause.)

11 VICE CHAIR BERGMAN: We are adjourned.
12 Thank you so much, Grant County Commissioners,
13 again.

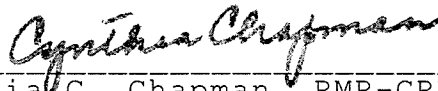
14 (Proceedings adjourned at 2:53 p.m.)
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1 BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
2 STATE OF NEW MEXICO

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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 Grant, in the matter
14 therein stated.

15 In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my
16 hand on August 28, 2015.

17
18
19 

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