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BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

PUBLIC MEETING

DAY ONE

December 12, 2013

9:00 a.m.

Mabry Hall - Jerry Apodaca Education Building

300 Don Gaspar

Santa Fe, New Mexico

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A P P E A R A N C E S

COMMISSIONERS:

- MS. CAROLYN SHEARMAN, Chair
- MR. EUGENE GANT, Vice Chair
- MR. VINCE BERGMAN, Secretary
- MR. JEFF CARR, Member
- MR. GILBERT PERALTA, Member
- MS. MILLIE POGNA, Member
- MR. JAMES CONYERS, Member
- MR. TYSON PARKER, Member

STAFF:

- MR. TONY GERLICZ, Director, Options for Parents
- MS. KELLY CALLAHAN, Director,
Charter Schools Division
- MS. ABBY LEWIS, Attorney for the PEC
- MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN, PED Liaison to the PEC

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1 THE CHAIR: I call to order this regularly
2 scheduled meeting of the New Mexico Public Education
3 Commission. Secretary Bergman, would you -- I would
4 ask you for a roll call, please.

5 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Carr.

6 COMMISSIONER CARR: Here.

7 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
8 Conyers.

9 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Here.

10 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
11 Parker.

12 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Here.

13 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
14 Peralta.

15 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Here.

16 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Pogna.

17 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Here.

18 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Gant.

19 COMMISSIONER GANT: Here.

20 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
21 Shearman.

22 THE CHAIR: Here.

23 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

24 Bergman is present.

25 Madame Chair, you have eight members, one

1 absent, and you have a quorum.

2 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner
3 Bergman. We have a quorum. But before I continue,
4 I would ask that everyone with an electronic device
5 that makes noise, would you please turn it off or
6 down or "airplane" mode or whatever it is to -- to
7 whatever it is, so it doesn't disrupt the meeting.

8 Next item on the agenda is Pledge of
9 Allegiance by Commissioner Pogna, and Salute to the
10 New Mexico Flag, Commissioner Carr.

11 (Pledge of Allegiance and Salute
12 to the New Mexico Flag.)

13 THE CHAIR: Next is Statement of
14 Aspiration. Commissioner Peralta.

15 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Good morning,
16 Madame Chair, members of the Board. Allow me to
17 start by saying that educators are special. They're
18 special because they care for others and aim to help
19 students grow to their fullest potential. They are
20 dedicated and hard-working, along with having an
21 interest in making a substantial difference in the
22 future of children. I make this shout-out about
23 educators, because today we are honoring a couple of
24 educators, along with a great school and an
25 outstanding student, and all the great things that

1 they bring to education.

2 So, I will finally say that it is very
3 important -- I feel that it is very important that
4 we take every opportunity to speak to the positives
5 in our schools. There are a lot of good things
6 happening in New Mexico education. Thank you.

7 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner
8 Peralta. Next, we'd like to welcome our new
9 Commissioner, Tyson Parker. We've already seen him
10 at work. He was here yesterday, and we had a fairly
11 marathon session until 6:00 last night, so, I feel
12 like he has some idea of what he's getting into.

13 Commissioner Parker is from Corrales --

14 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Yes, ma'am.

15 THE CHAIR: -- is an architect and
16 represents District 4. So we welcome you very much
17 and look forward to working with you.

18 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Thank you,
19 Madame Chair, and thank you, Commissioners. Thank
20 you so far for your warm welcome. For your
21 clarification, I'm a designer, not a true architect,
22 so --

23 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Appreciate that.

24 Next item on the agenda is Approval of the
25 Agenda. Does anyone have any additions,

1 corrections, changes to bring forth at this time?

2 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Madame Chair?

3 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Parker.

4 COMMISSIONER PARKER: I'd just like to say
5 I'll be abstaining from voting, because I was not at
6 the meeting for these minutes.

7 THE CHAIR: Did you hear that, Madame
8 Reporter?

9 (A discussion was held off the record.)

10 THE CHAIR: Thank you for that. Any
11 further discussion on the agenda?

12 COMMISSIONER CARR: So moved.

13 COMMISSIONER GANT: Second.

14 THE CHAIR: It has been moved and seconded
15 to approve the agenda, as presented. All those in
16 favor, please say "Aye."

17 (Commissioners so indicate.)

18 THE CHAIR: Any opposed, same sign? The
19 agenda is approved.

20 By the way, before we move forward, I
21 would note that Commissioner Toulouse has let us
22 know that she will probably not be here today due to
23 illness.

24 Next item on the agenda is Approval of the
25 Minutes for the November 1st meeting. Any

1 discussion or corrections to those minutes?

2 Commissioner Parker?

3 COMMISSIONER PARKER: I'm sorry. I think
4 I was jumping the gun. It was approval of the
5 minutes that I would like to abstain from.

6 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. Any
7 corrections? Discussion?

8 Abby, would you speak to this abstaining
9 on these issues? Would you just make a statement
10 now?

11 MS. LEWIS: Commissioner Parker spoke with
12 me yesterday and said that there were several issues
13 on the agenda that, because he's a new Commissioner,
14 he didn't feel it was appropriate for him to vote
15 on, as well as a couple of conflicts of interest.
16 So, you'll hear him abstaining throughout the day,
17 and he'll just verbalize for everyone why it is that
18 he's abstaining.

19 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you for that
20 explanation. The Chair would entertain a motion on
21 the minutes for the November 1st meeting.

22 COMMISSIONER CARR: So moved.

23 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Second.

24 THE CHAIR: I hear a motion and a second
25 to approve the minutes as presented. All those in

1 favor, please say "Aye."

2 (Commissioners so indicate.)

3 THE CHAIR: Any opposed? Motion carries.

4 The minutes are approved.

5 Next item on the agenda is Recognition of
6 New Mexico Charter School Coalition. Bruce, I
7 mispronounc- -- I misstated that -- New Mexico
8 Coalition of Charter School Winners.

9 Mr. Hegwer, I would ask you to come
10 forward to the table, please, and we will recognize
11 the winners.

12 MR. HEGWER: Good morning, Madame Chair,
13 members of the Commission. Thank you very much for
14 allowing me to be here and to present these award
15 winners to you. Are you able to hear? Is this
16 okay?

17 (A discussion was held off the record.)

18 Each year the Coalition solicits
19 nominations from our membership for awards that
20 exemplify the highest quality of what charter
21 schools have to offer in New Mexico. It's my
22 pleasure to present to you this year's New Mexico
23 Coalition for Charter Schools' outstanding
24 award-winners.

25 The Charter School of the Year this year

1 is Albuquerque Sign Language Academy. The
2 Albuquerque Sign Language Academy is one of the most
3 innovative charter schools in the state, as the
4 state's only elementary Supplemental Accountability
5 Measures school, serving a 60-percent special-ed
6 population. The ASLA is breaking new ground in the
7 worlds of deaf ed and special ed.

8 Noteworthy accomplishments include ASLA is
9 the first and only State-certified American Sign
10 Language-English bilingual school in the nation,
11 serving deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing children
12 through a dual-language program. The ASLA is
13 working with the New Mexico Public Education
14 Bilingual Division in order to develop a
15 State-recognized bilingual teacher certification
16 program certification, and American Sign Language.

17 In collaboration with the PED Assessment
18 Division, the Albuquerque Sign Language Academy is
19 creating an alternative assessment to be used in the
20 place of the Standards-Based Assessment for those 2
21 percent of special-ed students who are not fairly
22 measured by traditional standardized tests.

23 During the recent bus tour of New Mexico
24 by the U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, the
25 ASLA was recently visited by a representative.

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1 It's my pleasure to introduce to you
2 Mr. Rafe Martinez, who is the principal and director
3 of Albuquerque Sign Language Academy.

4 (Applause.)

5 THE CHAIR: It is our pleasure to present
6 you with this certificate in recognition of your
7 work. I remember when we first approved this
8 school.

9 MR. MARTINEZ: Yes, yes. Thank you very
10 much. Thank you.

11 THE CHAIR: If you would, I'm sure the
12 Commissioners would like to shake your hand.

13 MR. HEGWER: Can I get a picture of you
14 all? Thank you.

15 This year's Student of the Year award goes
16 to Cheyenne Chavez. Cheyenne could not be with us
17 today. Hopefully, she's in school studying. She's
18 an outstanding young lady. She has a very high GPA.
19 She's involved in a lot of school activities and
20 does a lot of volunteer work. So Cheyenne Chavez is
21 our award-winner for this year.

22 Our Teacher of the Year is Katy Franz from
23 Roots and Wings Community School. Katy is an
24 exemplary elementary classroom teacher and SpEd
25 teacher, and has been for over 20 years. She is

1 dedicated to quality education and to the success of
2 every one of her students.

3 She instills in her students pride of self
4 and a love of learning. She continuously utilizes
5 testing data, technology, and her own professional
6 skills in the classroom to hone and improve her
7 lessons. She is well-versed in Expeditionary
8 Learning and utilizes it to her students' advantage.

9 She manages to get full parent
10 participation in classroom work, as well as with her
11 outdoor fieldwork. She works tirelessly after
12 school without pay to tutor students in need and
13 communicates daily with all of her parents.

14 Ms. Franz not only exceeds New Mexico PED
15 Department standards for being a true Master
16 Teacher, but she also exhibits a love and concern
17 for her students that goes far beyond her classroom.
18 It is my pleasure to introduce to you Katy Franz,
19 Teacher of the Year.

20 (Applause.)

21 THE CHAIR: It is my pleasure to shake
22 your hand.

23 MS. FRANZ: Thank you.

24 THE CHAIR: Congratulations.

25 MR. HEGWER: The Coalition's Principal of

1 the Year is JoAnn Myers from Mission Achievement and
2 Success Charter School.

3 JoAnn founded Mission Achievement and
4 Success Charter School and had a vision for
5 providing equal access to a high-quality education
6 for all students in Albuquerque. She approaches
7 education with a no-excuses attitude and provides
8 every opportunity for students to learn, no matter
9 the cost.

10 Myers recognizes that teachers are the key
11 to student achievement. She invests in teacher
12 professional development and ensures that a learning
13 environment is created for teachers that is focused
14 on high expectations.

15 As an educational leader, JoAnn Myers is a
16 facilitator, trainer/mentor, motivator, life-long
17 learner, innovator, provider, teacher, mother, wife,
18 and friend. JoAnn is her staff's confidante,
19 enthusiastic critic, and inspiration.

20 It is my pleasure to introduce our
21 Principal of the Year, JoAnn Myers.

22 (Applause).

23 MR. HEGWER: And, Madame Chair, members of
24 the Commission, I do have one more word -- group --
25 I would like to recognize. They're not here today.

1 But it's the Governing Council of the Year. This
2 was a new award for us to recognize outstanding
3 Board members from our charter schools. And this
4 year's award went to the New America
5 School-Las Cruces, as our Board of the Year.
6 They're an outstanding board. They have tremendous
7 passion for the students in their school, as all of
8 our charter schools do. But they go above and
9 beyond, I believe. And they're very much involved
10 with bringing the community into -- into their
11 school.

12 So they were our award-winner for the
13 Board of the Year this year.

14 So, thank you very much, and I appreciate
15 the opportunity to be here with you today.

16 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Hegwer. We
17 very much appreciate you bringing forward those
18 awards. And, certainly, we congratulate all the
19 winners. This is what education is all about, high
20 quality, dedicated people. That's what we're
21 dedicated to; we know you are as well. And we again
22 congratulate the winners.

23 If I might take a moment of personal
24 privilege, while we're recognizing outstanding
25 people, we have one of our Charter School Division

1 staff who will be leaving us at the end of the -- of
2 the month. And we're so sorry to lose Kelly.

3 Kelly Callahan has been outstanding, an
4 outstanding member of the Division and the staff,
5 and we appreciate her work so much. We know she's
6 going back into education, where she directly
7 touches the lives of students. And that's where she
8 wants to be and where she is probably the more
9 outstanding, if that's possible.

10 But the Commission wanted to thank her for
11 all of her work, all of her help, and to recognize
12 how much we appreciate her and will miss her. So,
13 Kelly, we have a certificate for you.

14 (Applause.)

15 THE CHAIR: All right. Moving forward to
16 Item No. 5, which is Report from the Secretary. She
17 cannot be here today. So, we will move on to Item
18 No. 6, which is report from the Deputy Secretary.
19 And Deputy Secretary Aguilar let me know that he
20 could not be here today, but he will be here in the
21 morning.

22 He is at the LESC meeting testifying, but
23 can be here in the morning. So, I told him whenever
24 he could get here in the morning, we could finish up
25 what item we were on, and then we would go on to his

1 report.

2 Item No. 7 is update on Carl Perkins
3 program and on moving CTE forward. We ask Eric
4 Spencer, the Director, to come forward with that
5 report, please. Good morning.

6 MR. SPENCER: Good morning, Madame Chair,
7 members of the Commission. It's a pleasure to be
8 here with you today.

9 So, in your packet of information that was
10 provided to you, you saw a four-page report from the
11 College and Career Readiness Bureau specific to the
12 Perkins implementation. There's a few items to
13 highlight there, as first, I think we have major
14 success in the Bureau that we were able to relocate
15 from the Federal Building to this building directly
16 across the hall.

17 And I know that, during the last PEC
18 meeting that you all had, there were a lot of boxes
19 in the hall and inventory and cabinets and things of
20 that sort. And I must admit those were part of my
21 Bureau's assets. And, so, if we created any kind of
22 cluster of items out there that were in your way, we
23 do apologize. But we're very happy to be in the
24 building.

25 And the reason I call that a very

1 significant success is back in 2006, the Bureau was
2 required to move out of this building into the
3 Federal Building as a federal program that had the
4 ability to pay rent, and we had the administrative
5 dollars to do so at the time. Unfortunately, it was
6 at the cost of two positions at the time that have
7 gone vacant since. So, coming back into the
8 building, it means we no longer have to pay that
9 rent, and we can move forward with filling at least
10 one of those positions that we're working with HR on
11 at this point in time to be able to provide the
12 support and service to the field of Career Technical
13 Education and those receiving Perkins.

14 So, in your packet of information, I've
15 given you a directory of staff that are in our
16 Bureau and some telephone numbers there, so that you
17 know who we are and how to get ahold of us if you
18 have any questions. But feel free to make your way
19 across the hall into the College and Career
20 Readiness Bureau. We'd like to show you our space,
21 if you're interested in looking at that. It's
22 pretty tight quarters, but we're happy to have it.

23 So, moving forward with regard to the
24 funding. In our last PEC meeting, I had indicated
25 to you all that we had received a planning award

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1 from the fed back on July 1, and it was equal to the
2 amount that we expected that we would be receiving,
3 pursuant to the application that we submitted to the
4 federal government earlier in the spring.

5 We did have a reduction, overall, however,
6 in the federal award. And part of that is that
7 federal awards are based -- for Perkins, that is --
8 are based on census information of youth and schools
9 and percentages of poverty, et cetera. And, of
10 course, those fluctuations that exist across other
11 states would have an impact on New Mexico's award.

12 New Mexico is now receiving the award
13 amount that it once received in 1998. And I believe
14 that New Mexico would have been at risk of receiving
15 less dollars than that had it not been for the Safe
16 Harbor clause in the federal act. And, so,
17 New Mexico is now receiving equal to the 1998
18 appropriation from the fed.

19 Looking at the reauthorization of Perkins,
20 there seems to be a lot of positive, I guess,
21 collaboration occurring on The Hill in Washington
22 between the parties and also the two houses. And I
23 know that this issue of Safe Harbor is certainly on
24 the conversation block with regard to the
25 reauthorization. So, that's something that I'll

1 keep you all informed of and let you know how that
2 dialogue is moving forward and disseminate that
3 information to you.

4 But there is a proposal by some states
5 that the "hold harmless" provision hurts other
6 states that have not yet hit their 1998 level of
7 funding. So in order to keep New Mexico at its 1998
8 level of funding, that means that there's another
9 state out there that hasn't yet hit their threshold
10 that are having to give up more dollars of their
11 appropriation to support states like ours that are
12 already at the threshold amount.

13 And so some of those states are advocating
14 potentially removing the provision of "hold
15 harmless" in the law. And, so, we're not really
16 sure how that is going to play out if there isn't
17 going to be a change in the funding formula. But,
18 as I said, I'll keep you informed as those
19 conversations move forward.

20 Talking to the association for the state
21 directors of Career Technical Education in
22 Washington, and also our attorney in Washington,
23 D.C., Michael Brustein, it doesn't seem likely that
24 we're going to see a reauthorization of Perkins for
25 at least two, potentially, even three years.

1 Conversation is that they've got to appropriate and
2 reauthorize for Elementary Secondary Education Act,
3 the Workforce Investment Act, et cetera, before they
4 even get to Perkins. And we know that, on a federal
5 level, they're several years behind in reauthorizing
6 those Acts.

7 So, we see that Perkins is probably going
8 to be following after that, probably two to three
9 years out.

10 Moving forward with regard to the work
11 that we are doing with the appropriations that we
12 have and the staff that we have on deck, I gave you
13 a report of two pieces of significant work that
14 we're beginning to embark on. And one of those is
15 an assessment of Career Technical Education programs
16 across the state and taking a look at what's
17 happening in secondary schools and post-secondary
18 schools to determine whether we have an adequate
19 alignment, not just from secondary to
20 post-secondary, but also into workforce development
21 and the workforce system.

22 Perkins is an education program. But one
23 of the targets that we aim for is making sure that
24 students are ready to work in jobs that are
25 available for them upon the completion of their

1 program of study. So, we want to make sure that, as
2 we are approving programs of study for secondary and
3 post-secondary school partnerships, that there is
4 going to be an alignment to a labor market of high
5 wage, high demand, and high growth in that
6 occupational area of a program of study that we
7 would be approving.

8 We're also looking at bringing together
9 16 focus groups, one focus group around each one of
10 the career clusters, to specifically take a look at
11 the coursework that is being offered across the
12 state of New Mexico.

13 I've provided a link to our STARS manual,
14 which is the directory of courses of Career
15 Technical Education courses that school districts
16 are offering across the state.

17 And we want to ensure that we have an
18 alignment to a career pathway to meet the
19 requirement of Perkins and the basic research around
20 meaningful programs of study in Career Technical
21 Education.

22 And in the first crosswalk that we've
23 conducted in our Bureau over the summer, as we align
24 our coursework over to, let's say, the 79 career
25 pathways at a national level, there seems to be a

1 disconnect between some of our programs and the
2 national 79 pathways. So, for example an automotive
3 program doesn't seem to be present.

4 We offer automotive programs in the State
5 of New Mexico. But automotive -- let's say auto
6 body repair, for example, as a program of study
7 wouldn't be one of the 79 programs of study under
8 the 16 Career Cluster Initiative. So, these focus
9 groups are going to be discussing some of these
10 policy recommendations to the Bureau to determine
11 whether we expand beyond those 79. And who knows?
12 We might have 92 programs of study that we offer in
13 the state of New Mexico and provide support for.

14 So, we want to make sure that we have a
15 thorough needs assessment of the Career Technical
16 Education programs as we move forward, ensuring that
17 we're creating the opportunities that align to
18 occupations for students.

19 Madame Chair, members of the Commission,
20 that concludes my report, but I do stand for
21 questions.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. Are
23 there questions? Commissioner Gant?

24 COMMISSIONER GANT: Good morning,
25 Madame Chair, members.

1 First of all, is there something we and
2 the public, the teachers, the principals, who
3 benefit from -- from Perkins can get to start
4 working our legislators up in Washington, D.C., to
5 make sure we have the -- we maintain as we are? Can
6 we -- should we start now? Is there a list of
7 specific legislators we need to talk to?

8 MR. SPENCER: I know the recommendation
9 is -- from the National Association of Career
10 Technical Education, is to make sure that we're
11 communicating with our Representatives and Senators
12 of our state that work on behalf of New Mexico in
13 Washington, and let them know about the successes
14 that the program has been able to achieve, make them
15 aware of the challenges that we have in ensuring
16 that we align to that labor market and job growth
17 for kids, et cetera.

18 And, so, if there's any reach-out that you
19 all, as a Commission, have to those individuals, it
20 would be appropriate, from the Commission's
21 perspective, to be able to reach out to them and
22 have the conversations about what's meaningful for
23 the State of New Mexico.

24 It's interesting that I had a meeting with
25 an individual from IBM, who is a Board member on

1 Innovate Educate. And this particular individual
2 had indicated that he was working in Washington
3 around the reauthorization of Perkins, and that they
4 were pretty excited about creating opportunities for
5 kids.

6 And, so, as I asked him to explain what
7 those opportunities would be and how, in fact, the
8 legislation would come about, and how that would be
9 revealed, you know, he had also started talking
10 about, well, you know, some states really don't
11 have, let's say, for example, a need to maintain a
12 dollar-for-dollar match between state funding and
13 federal funding. Some states are having
14 conversations around the fact that maintenance of
15 effort seems to be an issue in those states.

16 And, so, as I'm working on behalf of the
17 PEC and the Agency with regard to ensuring that we
18 maintain a level of funding that's appropriate to
19 implement Career Technical programs for your
20 students, the conversation, for example, that I've
21 shared with him was that the New Mexico Legislature
22 doesn't take a position and appropriate dollars
23 specific to support Career Technical Education in
24 the State of New Mexico, and that's done through the
25 State Equalization Guarantee, but it's not

1 noncategorical; it's not earmarked.

2 And, so, as a result, many of the schools
3 do receive a basic level of support for Career
4 Technical Education. But where the advancement and
5 the innovation comes from is essentially from the
6 Perkins set-aside. And, so, to eliminate, for
7 example, a dollar-for-dollar state match on the
8 administrative set-aside of our grant would hinder
9 that innovation, because we wouldn't have that
10 additional set-aside for which we can tap into and
11 conduct the work on behalf of schools.

12 And, so, it's those types of dialogues, I
13 think, that are starting to open up.

14 And just another point is that many states
15 have been -- and constituents across the state, even
16 in ours, a lot of teachers are asking, because
17 they've heard that maybe in President Obama's
18 position around Career Technical Education, he has
19 an interest in making the grant competitive for
20 schools. And a lot of schools are really concerned
21 about that.

22 Based on the conversations I'm having with
23 our connections to D.C., it looks like Congress
24 isn't really in favor of making Perkins a
25 competitive grant, in like manner as Race to the

1 Top. And, so, those are certainly points of
2 conversation that still need to occur.

3 Madame Chair, Commissioner Gant, I'll keep
4 you informed of that and give you the pieces of
5 information, so that you have the talking points, if
6 you will, necessary in order to take that forward.

7 COMMISSIONER GANT: Thank you.

8 Madame Chair, for the audience who may or may not --
9 most of them probably know. But just to make sure
10 we're clear. The PEC is responsible overall for the
11 authorization of the State of New Mexico for the
12 Carl Perkins. And that's why Eric is providing the
13 briefing. Three or four times a year, we get the
14 briefing.

15 Secondly, I would recommend that we, as
16 the individual Commissioners -- and we know many of
17 the legislators -- we start pushing on our local
18 legislators to start pushing on the ones in
19 Washington, D.C. We cannot afford to lose Carl
20 Perkins. This grant, this money, saves many of our
21 kids from being on the street or even being in jail.
22 So, we've got to stand up and push up and make sure
23 we have what we have left of the Carl -- 1998 level?

24 MR. SPENCER: We're at the 1998 funding
25 threshold, yes.

1 COMMISSIONER GANT: And, so, the cost to
2 schools has not stopped rising. Anyway, that's my
3 speech on this. Anyway, push on this, because if we
4 lose this, we're going to lose kids, okay?

5 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Carr.

6 COMMISSIONER CARR: I can never let go an
7 opportunity like Commissioner Gant to, you know
8 reiterate how important it is to keep this program
9 and to keep it fully funded. It's been proven very
10 effective, especially in New Mexico. We're one of
11 the most effective states in giving those funds out
12 and actually getting results from it. It's also
13 extremely important. It's one of the -- it's one of
14 the best programs for Native Americans. Native
15 American students have proven to stay in school
16 because there's some part of the Perkins grant
17 that's funding some program like culinary arts or
18 something like that that's keeping them in school,
19 and it's proven to improve their test scores and
20 their grades in school.

21 And it's good for, you know, mainly
22 disadvantaged children, I would say, but everybody,
23 and we all benefit from it. I -- it's really
24 important that we do what Commissioner Gant says and
25 lobby for support of this grant. Thank you.

1 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner.
2 Other comments? Seeing none, thank you,
3 Mr. Spencer. We look forward to seeing you again
4 soon.

5 MR. SPENCER: Thank you. I appreciate it.

6 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Item 8 on the
7 agenda is Action on Renewals for Current Schools and
8 Charter -- State-Chartered Charter Schools.

9 I would ask our attorney, Abby Lewis, for
10 a little bit of information before we actually get
11 started on this item.

12 MS. LEWIS: I just wanted to remind the
13 Commissioners that the written decisions will be
14 based on the record -- on the transcript that we're
15 getting. So, if you could please be as specific as
16 possible when we're going through these, that will
17 really help in the drafting. Thank you.

18 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Ms. Lewis. And now
19 I'll ask Director Tony Gerlicz to take over and lead
20 us through this process. And please notice, before
21 we get started that there are timed issues here.

22 Kelly, could we ask that you be our timer?

23 MS. CALLAHAN: I will do that, Madame
24 Chair.

25 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, members of the

1 Commission, and the audience, we have in front of us
2 today 13 schools that have come before the
3 Commission for renewal of their charters. Twelve of
4 them are existing State-chartered schools, and one
5 of them is migrating from a locally
6 district-chartered -- Las Cruces -- to the State.

7 This process of renewal actually began
8 last spring when we conducted training sessions for
9 the schools that are in front of you now that were
10 in their fourth year of existence then. And we
11 explained to them the process of fulfilling the
12 application requirements, what to look for, how to
13 do it, and how to present themselves.

14 In the fall of this year, each liaison to
15 the school, in teams of two, visited the schools for
16 a two-day site visit; day one, devoted to getting to
17 know the school well through interviews with
18 parents, students, teachers, governing body members,
19 support staff, whoever at the school; and day two
20 really focused on compliance issues, academic
21 analysis, following up on questions raised during
22 day one. It was a thorough review on our part.

23 The schools set the agendas themselves for
24 the day-one visits. And the Charter School Division
25 then took this data back to the office and combined

1 it with the prior four years' worth of academic and
2 governance information to make our recommendations.

3 In doing so, we kept an eye out on the
4 amended Charter School Act, which is coming up after
5 renewal. But we're primarily basing our
6 recommendations on the four years of past data,
7 four-plus years of past data in academic arenas,
8 governance arenas, and financial arenas.

9 The liaisons, the charter school liaisons
10 then presented their case to our entire staff, and
11 the entire staff made these recommendations. In all
12 13 of these cases, the recommendation was unanimous
13 from the Charter School Division to the Public
14 Education Commission.

15 And should -- as we begin and analyze each
16 individual school, if the Commissioners have any
17 questions specifically about our process, I will ask
18 the liaisons to fill in any of the blanks that I
19 have left out, since our liaisons work very closely
20 with our schools and know our schools very well.

21 So, that is the process that was applied
22 to all of them. And we'll begin with the first one
23 on the list, the Taos Academy. So Traci, and
24 whoever you like, if you can come forward?

25 THE CHAIR: And I would remind the

1 applicant -- pardon me -- not the applicants, the
2 school representatives -- that you have ten minutes.
3 Please introduce yourselves, and if your name has a
4 unique spelling, please spell that for our court
5 reporter, please.

6 MR. GERLICZ: And while Traci is passing
7 out some information to the Commission, I will say
8 that the Charter School Division is very
9 enthusiastic about recommending renewal for the Taos
10 Academy. This is a school that has pioneered
11 blended learning in the Taos area. Their results
12 speak for themselves. Their three-year average
13 is -- is very good, consistently at a "B" level.
14 They are guided extremely well with efficient
15 leadership and an excellent governing council.

16 All of the results that we have looked at,
17 financially, organizationally, and academically, for
18 the Taos Academy speak loudly for their renewal,
19 which we enthusiastically recommend. Just the day
20 before yesterday, I attended a meeting here in Mabry
21 Hall. It was an exit meeting for all of the state
22 charters, their business managers, and their audit
23 committee findings. Those are not yet public.

24 However, Taos Academy was one of the
25 schools that had zero findings, which is, quite

1 frankly, unheard of. It doesn't happen, not only to
2 charter schools, but to hardly any organization,
3 especially a not-for-profit organization. So, that
4 speaks consistently with what we have found in the
5 school in other arenas, as well.

6 Thank you, Madame Chair, members of the
7 Commission. And I'll turn it over to Traci.

8 THE CHAIR: Whenever you're ready, please.

9 MS. FILISS: Do I push this? Good
10 morning, Madame Chair, members of the Public
11 Education Commission. My name is Traci Filiss, and
12 I am the Director and Cofounder of Taos Academy.

13 MS. MOULTON: Good morning, Madame Chair
14 and members of the Commission. I am Karin Moulton.
15 I am a Cofounder and Community Coordinator at Taos
16 Academy.

17 MS. FILISS: We are here today requesting
18 the PEC to grant Taos Academy another five-year
19 charter. We will show you how this innovative,
20 successful school has made a difference to the
21 students of Taos County.

22 For our presentation, you have been given
23 a handout that mirrors the Taos Academy "bragging
24 board," to our right, so that you can follow along.

25 To begin, the Taos Academy Mission

1 Statement drives all that we do. The three
2 components of our mission, leadership, academic
3 achievement, and social responsibility, are woven
4 together to make up the blended model of education
5 Taos Academy has successfully developed and
6 implemented.

7 Through the use of digital core curriculum
8 and enriching programming, students at Taos Academy
9 gain skills needed to succeed in the 21st century.

10 MS. MOULTON: One of the components of our
11 mission statement is leadership. Our equation
12 there, "College Link + STEM Institute = Career
13 Pathways," really is -- best reflects this component
14 of leadership. The College Link is our early
15 college/high school program. Juniors and seniors
16 must have a minimum of a 2.5 GPA to participate in
17 university classes, earning both high school and
18 college credit toward graduation.

19 This chart, which is included in your
20 handouts, shows that students in the first year
21 gained 153 credits. And the chart indicates
22 continuous improvement, so that by the last year,
23 there were 741 credits earned by our students. And
24 that is the equivalent of \$55,575 in college fees,
25 which doesn't include books or materials, just

1 simply a college fee.

2 So, we're really saving our families quite
3 a bit of money with this program.

4 Our STEM Institute offers career-related
5 careers to both middle and high-school students.
6 The courses are taught by professionals in the
7 community in the areas of science, technology,
8 engineering, math, and the arts. Our high school
9 students gain dual credit in this program as well.

10 Both the College Link and the STEM
11 Institute, along with our academic achievement,
12 forms our career pathways.

13 The career pathways give a plan for each
14 student for post-secondary -- what they're going to
15 do for post-secondary work, either college or the
16 workplace, after graduation.

17 MS. FILISS: The second component is
18 academic achievement. Taos Academy staff and
19 students hold a high bar for achievement. Our
20 Common Core-aligned digital curriculum allows for
21 individualized instruction to meet student needs,
22 empowering the student to take ownership of their
23 learning, while still receiving 100 percent of the
24 content.

25 As we have implemented this innovative

1 learning style, students have shown continued
2 improvement in their academic performance. In these
3 charts, comparing SBA -- Standards-Based
4 Assessment -- target scores represented in blue to
5 average yearly MAP scores -- Measured Academic
6 Progress scores -- represented in red, over a
7 three-year period, you see Taos Academy students
8 have consistently improved in reading, language
9 usage, and math, greatly exceeding the SBA targets,
10 as represented in both our high school and our
11 middle school.

12 And as you can see on the charts, if you
13 look in the third year, how we have improved from
14 the first, second, and third, the change in the blue
15 and the red is really what I'm talking about, that
16 growth in those areas.

17 Our data shows that the longer a student
18 remains at Taos Academy, the greater gains we see in
19 academic achievement.

20 While continuing to improve academically,
21 Taos Academy also has shown growth in diversity in
22 population. As you can see in this chart, the
23 growth in diversity, our Hispanic population doubled
24 in one year from year 2011-'12 to 2012-'13. Our
25 efforts in reaching out to our community have proven

1 successful, not only in our diversity, but, also,
2 with relations in our community.

3 MS. MOULTON: Okay. That leads us to our
4 third component of our mission statement, Social
5 Responsibility. Each student is required to
6 participate in a community service project.

7 Students are empowered by these projects. They set
8 goals. They work collaboratively. They challenge
9 themselves to step outside of their comfort zones.

10 These community service projects also
11 create strong partners in our Taos community. Our
12 students worked with professionals at the Taos
13 Center for the Arts to produce a community musical
14 theater performance that was open to everyone in
15 Taos.

16 Farm to Table. Taos Community Economic
17 Development Corporation and the Town of Taos support
18 our agricultural program, where the students grow
19 food in our solar-powered greenhouse. And there is
20 a farm adjacent to our school where the students
21 visit regularly and grow more produce on the farm.

22 They completed an entrepreneurial project
23 in which they took the produce from our gardens and
24 made salsa in the commercial kitchens in the TCEDC
25 commercial kitchen. And the proceeds from the sales

1 of their salsa is helping to fund our culinary arts
2 program.

3 Currently, Taos Academy students are
4 designing an art exhibit for the Harwood Museum in
5 Taos that invites all Taos Academy students in
6 middle school and high school to participate.

7 These community projects, our students'
8 academic achievements, and our career pathways all
9 align to 21st Century skills. The 21st Century
10 skills are things like problem-solving and
11 communication and global awareness. And it is the
12 reason why we consider ourselves a 21st Century
13 learning community, because everything that we do
14 aligns to those 21st Century skills.

15 The success of each of the components of
16 our mission statement -- leadership, Academic
17 Achievement, Social Responsibility -- has resulted
18 in a final grade of "A" on our School Grade Report
19 Card from the New Mexico Department of Education for
20 2013. We appreciate the opportunity we've been
21 given to create this innovative and creative school
22 and successful school, and we respectfully request
23 your approval in supporting the future development
24 of Taos Academy by granting us another five-year
25 charter, please.

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1 And thank you very much for your time.

2 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much for your
3 presentation.

4 Next item is Public Comment. Is there
5 anyone in the audience who would care to comment?
6 The Taos Academy.

7 Seeing none, we will move on to No. 4, PEC
8 questions.

9 Commissioners, if you have -- would the
10 founders just go ahead and stay at the table,
11 please? That way, if Commissioners have questions
12 for you -- Commissioners, if you have questions of
13 the applicants or of CSD, now is the time.

14 Commissioner Bergman?

15 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Thank you,
16 Madame Chair. Mine is just more a matter of
17 curiosity. I noted in your application, you're
18 using a blended approach between online and
19 face-to-face. What's the balance? I didn't see
20 that figure in there. Is it 50/50?

21 MS. FILISS: Very good question. So, all
22 of our core content is online. So, math, science,
23 language arts, social studies, all online. And,
24 then, all of the other classes that we teach,
25 enrichment classes, all of our STEM classes, those

1 are all face-to-face.

2 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Thank you. Thank
3 you, Madame Chair.

4 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Gant.

5 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, members,
6 this is more questions based -- I realize facility
7 is not an important -- is not part of this review at
8 this time.

9 But my question deals with maybe
10 financially, down the road, the impacts your
11 facilities have. I notice the growth. You average
12 around 20 students a year, and your cap is 200. And
13 I notice there is, I guess, some discussion on
14 additional facilities, or moving, or -- something
15 like that? You're in modules now, that you've
16 worked with PSFA on?

17 Can you explain what you plan to do in the
18 future? Do you plan to come to us for increasing
19 cap? Please tell us.

20 MS. FILISS: Madame Chair,
21 Commissioner Gant, nice question. Thank you. Yes,
22 our enrollment continues to increase, as we had said
23 in the original charter. We also have a
24 substantial, and have had every year, a substantial
25 waiting list. Presently, we have approximately

1 30 students waiting to come into Taos Academy.

2 To occupy a building we have purchased and
3 is -- we should be getting a CO here in January, we
4 have worked with PSFA through that whole process,
5 starting last April. We did an RFP and -- to expand
6 our campus, so that we had more room for students
7 coming in, and all of the programming.

8 It's really a programming issue for us,
9 because we have all of our STEM programming and the
10 Career Pathways programming that we need extra space
11 for.

12 So, twofold. Yes, we've been working with
13 PSFA to expand our facilities. Yes, we are
14 expanding in student population, and yes, we will be
15 requesting an increase in our cap.

16 COMMISSIONER GANT: The reason I ask these
17 type questions is I have seen -- we have seen the
18 charter schools get in financial problems, some of
19 it due to facilities. And I notice on a report we
20 have from PSFA -- Ms. Casias is sitting behind you
21 back there -- that you don't have -- maybe I'm wrong
22 in reading this. I'm blind, I guess. For Taos, you
23 don't have a weighted index for NMCI. Did you ask
24 that, Ms. Casias?

25 MS. CASIAS: Yeah. Mr. Gant,

1 Madame Chair, I omitted their weighted NMCI score,
2 and I tried to generate it this morning, because I
3 notice that's one I had omitted. I couldn't get the
4 machine up; I had a crash. So, I can provide that
5 to you, hopefully, by the end of the day.

6 I did phone into the office and ask Chris
7 Aguilar if he could generate it, and he's working
8 back and forth with VFA --

9 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, I don't
10 see the impacts right now. But it would be nice to
11 have that. But, later on down the road, if they do
12 decide to go for cap increase and want to move and
13 all that, that will be important information. And I
14 just don't want them to get behind the power curve.
15 Because when they come over to the PSCOC, that's
16 going to be a lot -- I assume you might come to
17 PSCOC for some capital support; I don't know. Have
18 you discussed that with PSFA yet?

19 MS. FILISS: No. No, sir.

20 COMMISSIONER GANT: As a State charter
21 school, you do have that right, now that you're
22 being renewed.

23 MS. FILISS: Yes, sir, that's correct.
24 And, hopefully, at one point, we'll go down that
25 road.

1 COMMISSIONER GANT: And my last question,
2 Ms. -- Madame Chair, is that you are aware, I
3 assume, of the State statute about being in a public
4 building by 2015?

5 MS. MOULTON: We're currently in
6 negotiations with our current landlord, and we'll be
7 in a lease to purchase by the end of the school
8 year.

9 COMMISSIONER GANT: Thank you, Madame
10 Chair.

11 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Commissioner Carr.

12 COMMISSIONER CARR: Thank you,
13 Madame Chair. I don't have any question, but I do
14 have some comments.

15 I consider -- this is a school that
16 I've -- this school and Moreno Valley High School
17 are ones that I -- charter schools that I'm most
18 familiar with. And I toured this facility. I
19 probably actually know most of the people who work
20 there, including the director.

21 And I -- as I said, this is truly an
22 innovative school. And I am not a fan of -- of
23 using computers only, at all. I don't think they
24 work. But in a blended situation, they can and do
25 work. You've proven that.

1 I think most good schools do that.

2 I would like to also point out that the
3 founders are -- were exemplary educators before they
4 founded this school. I think that makes a big
5 difference. Their experience in the classroom, you
6 know, has enabled them to create a very successful
7 program.

8 And another thing I would like to point
9 out is much of what they teach is not tested.
10 However, it seems to have a very positive effect
11 on -- on their test scores. Interesting. And the
12 data supports that programs like what they're doing
13 help support the core areas that are actually
14 tested.

15 We don't test on community service and
16 citizenship. Growing food? I don't think that's on
17 any test anywhere. How great that is.

18 You know, I grew up in a farm community,
19 and I -- you know, I knew that firsthand. But our
20 kids in town don't know anything about that. And
21 it's really good for them to know all of this, and I
22 think it excites them. It makes them want to be
23 there, and it makes them want -- motivates them to
24 do well, I'm sure, on their computer work, you know,
25 that they do.

1 So, I wanted to point that out.

2 Another thing I would like to point out,
3 this is a truly local school. It's not backed by a
4 huge corporation somewhere. It's founded by local
5 educators who saw a need and filled it. You know,
6 when they first came in, you know, Taos School
7 District was like, "Oh, no."

8 And I don't look at them as competitors.
9 I look at them as adding something to what the
10 community needs, something that the other -- you
11 know, that Taos High School, something that Taos
12 High School doesn't have.

13 I've had students -- and this is an
14 anecdotal story. I've had students come from their
15 school. They didn't leave because they weren't
16 getting a good education. They left for social
17 reasons, you know, or sports, or something like
18 that. They -- and the students that I had transfer
19 back to Taos High School that I've had personally,
20 you know, they didn't lose anything academically
21 from being over there.

22 Just an anecdotal story. I don't know,
23 you know. But, obviously, their data supports that
24 most of their students are doing quite well.

25 I also would like to say that I really --

1 being -- maybe half technical school, I really
2 enjoyed your presentation, your non-technical
3 presentation. And we don't -- you know, something
4 that -- the kinds of things that I have my students
5 do from time to time, where they're doing some
6 little hands-on thing, it reminds me of the -- I
7 don't know if you even have social studies fairs
8 anymore, or science fairs. And they used to -- they
9 still do things like that.

10 So, I really appreciate your work. I
11 think you're a fine school, and I will obviously
12 vote to continue your contract.

13 MS. MOULTON: Thank you.

14 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner.
15 Other comments? Questions?

16 I have a couple of questions, more for
17 clarification than anything.

18 You said your core courses are 100-percent
19 online?

20 MS. FILISS: Madame Chair, that is
21 correct, with support. I have to maybe explain that
22 a little bit to you.

23 So, we have what are called "enrichment
24 classes" that are supportive of those online
25 classes. So, for example, a student is taking

1 Algebra 1. We have an enrichment class for
2 Algebra 1 that they spend two hours each day they're
3 with us in live instruction in Algebra 1 in concepts
4 that are universally difficult for students.

5 So, the instruction is aligned to things
6 that maybe the entire group may struggle with. And
7 then they go back into their coursework and work
8 through those on an individualized level. And, so,
9 that's how that works. Is that helpful?

10 THE CHAIR: It is, because my concept, my
11 understanding of blended is some face-to-face
12 instruction, some online instruction. So, when you
13 said it's 100-percent online, I'm questioning the
14 "blended." But I thank you for that explanation.
15 So, it's really not totally 100-percent online.
16 It's perhaps primarily online, but supported by
17 face-to-face.

18 MS. FILISS: That's correct. I suppose
19 the "100 percent" means that the student completes
20 100 percent of the coursework online. So, from
21 Lesson 1 to Lesson 36, they all complete all
22 36 lessons. They get support during -- during --
23 while they're finishing those lessons. But they all
24 finish 1 to 36, 100-percent online. And then they
25 get support -- we also have tutors in the labs, as

1 well, to help them individually. So...

2 THE CHAIR: And, so, they're actually
3 doing this work at school? Online?

4 MS. FILISS: That's true. Some of it at
5 school; some it at home; some of it at midnight,
6 when they're not at school. It depends on the
7 student. It can be individualized.

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you. One other
9 question: Your enrollment cap is 200. Your current
10 enrollment is 171, and you have a waiting list. So
11 you have 29 vacancies, but a waiting list. And your
12 waiting list is talked about on Page 57.

13 First of all, I'd like to know how you --
14 how do you define your waiting list? Is it those
15 students who applied this year and were not able to
16 be accommodated? Or is it a rolling total? Help me
17 out here.

18 MS. FILISS: Madame Chair, both. Yes and
19 yes. It's a rolling. It's left over from the
20 lottery that we had back in March and a rolling
21 waiting list.

22 So, actually, right now, our enrollment is
23 at 182 for the 40th day for this year. So, one of
24 our issues was that we -- again, the programming and
25 the space utilization, we've had to hold back a bit

1 on our enrollment, just -- we didn't want to grow
2 too fast, for the exact reason that
3 Commissioner Gant was talking about, just being very
4 careful with our resources.

5 And, so, we held back on our enrollment in
6 August to the -- to 180 -- we had 182 the 40th day.
7 As soon as I get that CO, we can go to our full 200,
8 and we will do so if people are, of course, willing
9 to come in in the middle of the year. We don't want
10 to pull anybody out of any school. But if they've
11 been on our waiting list for a while, you know,
12 they'll come on in, of course.

13 THE CHAIR: Thank you. My last question
14 concerns your goals on Page 22, under Item -- Part
15 A, Item No. 2, "Mission-Specific and Student
16 Academic Performance."

17 You have listed four goals, and they're --
18 I appreciate your goals. They're ambitious.
19 They're -- they meet all the S.M.A.R.T. standards
20 that we set. But I didn't see anywhere in the
21 application where it talked about attaining those
22 goals or reaching those goals. Perhaps I just
23 missed it.

24 MS. FILISS: Could you tell me the page
25 number again?

1 THE CHAIR: Page 22. It pops up 22 on my
2 screen. Your page number is actually down in the
3 lower right-hand corner, says "Part A, Page 9."

4 MS. FILISS: I'm going to need a little
5 help. I'm sorry. Tell me what goals, actually,
6 you're asking for. There are focus areas, and then
7 there are goals under each focus area. Can you --

8 THE CHAIR: Right at this moment, I'm
9 looking at Focus Area No. 1. And you have four
10 goals. I think my question is more of an overall
11 question, because I didn't see -- you set out your
12 goals so well in here. But I didn't see anyplace
13 that reported on your accomplishment of those goals.

14 So, I'm asking you just to tell me, did
15 you reach fulfillment of those goals? Most of those
16 goals? Some of them?

17 MS. FILISS: All of those goals have been
18 represented in the application, yes, ma'am. And did
19 we reach them 100 percent? No. There's -- and
20 there is some explanations of kind of some things
21 that -- you know, we came close, real close, but
22 maybe not 100 percent. Like you said, we are very
23 ambitious. We --

24 THE CHAIR: Yes, they are very ambitious.

25 MS. FILISS: 100 percent of anything --

1 yeah, of course, we're going to be working with the
2 CSD in January to maybe not quite go to 100 percent.
3 We were very excited about getting our school
4 started five years ago, and --

5 THE CHAIR: Right.

6 MS. FILISS: However, we have -- you know,
7 all of our goals were tracked all five years. We
8 have data on all those goals, all those focus areas.
9 And the majority of them were met; more than the
10 majority. You know, 95 percent of them were met,
11 not only met, but exceeded what we had thought. The
12 100-percent ones were tough.

13 THE CHAIR: I'm sure they were. But
14 that's what I wanted to hear, that you do track
15 them, you do pay attention to them, and you do
16 intend to accomplish them.

17 MS. FILISS: Yes.

18 THE CHAIR: All right. That's all my
19 questions.

20 Questions from anyone else? Seeing no
21 questions, the Chair would entertain a motion
22 concerning Taos Academy's renewal.

23 Commissioner Carr?

24 COMMISSIONER CARR: I'd like to make the
25 motion. But I'm not sure which -- should I read the

1 recommendation here on the -- we don't have --

2 MS. LEWIS: It's just a --

3 COMMISSIONER CARR: Just to recommend to
4 approve or disapprove?

5 MS. LEWIS: I wouldn't read the
6 recommendation of CSD. So, I would put the motion
7 in your own words, either to approve, deny, or
8 approve with conditions, and set out the conditions
9 you'd like in the motion.

10 COMMISSIONER CARR: Okay. So,
11 Madame Chair, I would like to make a motion that we
12 approve the renewal of the Taos Academy contract for
13 another five years.

14 THE CHAIR: As presented?

15 COMMISSIONER CARR: As presented.

16 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Second.

17 THE CHAIR: I'm sorry. Who seconded?
18 Commissioner Peralta?

19 We have a motion by Commissioner Carr,
20 second by Commissioner Peralta, to approve the
21 renewal application of Taos Academy. Is there any
22 discussion?

23 Secretary Bergman, roll-call vote, please.

24 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Carr.

25 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
2 Conyers.
3 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Yes.
4 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
5 Parker.
6 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Yes.
7 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
8 Peralta.
9 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.
10 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Pogna.
11 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.
12 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Gant.
13 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes.
14 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
15 Shearman.
16 THE CHAIR: Yes.
17 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
18 Bergman votes "yes." Madame Chair, by an
19 eight-to-zero vote, the application of Taos Academy
20 is approved.
21 (Applause.)
22 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Thank you. Let me
23 make that official. The vote is unanimous to
24 approve the renewal of Taos Academy.
25 Congratulations.

1 Kelly, do you have some paperwork for
2 them?

3 We would ask School of Dreams, Los Lunas,
4 to come forward, please. Good morning.

5 Director Gerlicz, whenever you're ready.

6 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, members of the
7 Commission, the School of Dreams Academy, known as
8 SODA, located in Los Lunas, is here today to request
9 a renewal of five years.

10 This school did not go -- set off on an
11 immediately smooth trajectory. They had a bumpy
12 beginning. They well acknowledge their bumpy
13 beginning; we have seen their bumpy beginning.

14 Significant change occurred with a change
15 of leadership in the school. Mr. Mike Ogas, who is
16 in front of you, has done an outstanding job in
17 turning the school on a very, very positive
18 trajectory.

19 The School of Dreams Academy exhibits a
20 fine combination of arts and sciences. They have a
21 robotics program, as well as a dance program, for
22 example. And their robotics team is invited to
23 compete in the MIT competition, which I'm sure you
24 will hear a little more about, we referenced in our
25 application.

1 In addition to that, they are moving to a
2 brand new facility in the coming years, which will
3 elevate their game even further.

4 What we were particularly pleased to see
5 in the Charter School Division was that the
6 leadership is well-organized, efficient, and that
7 includes their governing body, as well. Their
8 growth in their Q1 students and Q3 students was
9 exemplary.

10 And for those reasons, as others as
11 delineated in the application, it is the Charter
12 Schools' [verbatim] recommendation for a renewal of
13 this charter for a full five years, without
14 condition. Thank you, Madame Chair.

15 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Gerlicz.
16 Gentlemen, if you would introduce yourselves,
17 please. Spell your name, if it's unique, and you
18 have ten minutes for your presentation, please.

19 MR. OGAS: Thank you. My name is Michael
20 Ogas, O-G-A-S. I am the Founder and Principal of
21 the School of Dreams Academy.

22 MR. GRIEGO: My name is Kenneth Griego. I
23 am the President of the Advisory Council. It's
24 Griego, G-R-I-E-G-O.

25 MR. OGAS: Madame Chair, members of the

1 Commission, Public Education Department staff,
2 particularly Mr. Gerlicz and Ms. Callahan, and the
3 Charter School Division staff, I have with me today
4 Mr. Kenneth Griego. He is the president of our
5 governing council.

6 On behalf of School of Dreams Governing
7 Council, Founders, Teresa Ogas and Kathy Chavez, our
8 administration, staff, students, and parents, we
9 wish to thank the PEC for your leadership and
10 commitment as charter authorizer. We know it's
11 hard, and we know that you do this on your own time.

12 Five years ago, you authorized the first
13 ever charter school in Valencia County, School of
14 Dreams Academy. When my wife, Teresa, and I founded
15 SODA, it was our intention, originally, and
16 continues to be, to give this school as a gift to
17 our community of Valencia County. Our goal was to
18 create a viable public educational option for
19 parents and for students, an educational choice
20 centered on discipline and respect, with a focus on
21 the arts, technology, character education, service
22 learning, and strong parental and community
23 involvement.

24 As we came -- as we come before you today,
25 we, at SODA, are pleased with our progress to date.

1 We also realize that we have a lot of work to do,
2 and we continue to do that.

3 Three years ago, with the help of a very
4 dedicated and qualified staff, we began the
5 accreditation process and achieved international
6 accreditation through the Advanced Ed program,
7 formerly known as NCA. Through that process, we
8 adopted a continuous improvement model that holds
9 well for our school today, and it serves us and the
10 community very well.

11 Equally as important, we have made
12 determined efforts to provided our students with
13 world class opportunities. SODA offers, and
14 continues to develop, an outstanding visual and
15 performing arts program. We have the only guitar
16 program in Valencia County, taught by an Emmy
17 award-winning instructor. In three years, we have
18 had nine All State guitarists. Last spring, our
19 dance program competed in a four-state competition
20 against very prestigious, private dance studios from
21 the area. SODA won first place in virtually every
22 event. This year, three of our dancers have been
23 invited to perform with the Russian Ballet at
24 Popejoy Hall.

25 We offer a strong visual arts program and

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1 will be offering Advanced Placement credit this
2 coming year along those lines.

3 Our digital arts and video film-making
4 program is fostering a partnership with the
5 Albuquerque Studios to enhance that experience for
6 our students as well.

7 We also purposed, about four years ago, to
8 develop out a STEM program. We started a robotics
9 program at that time. And during that first year,
10 we took several seventh through ninth-grade students
11 down to Las Cruces to a statewide Botball
12 tournament, competing against schools around the
13 state that had been doing this for ten to twelve
14 years.

15 Our students made quite an impression by
16 winning the entire state championship in their
17 first-ever competition. Since then, SODA students
18 have qualified for, and won competitions in,
19 California, Hawaii, Oklahoma, Arizona, Texas, and
20 New Mexico. We have received grants and
21 recognitions from NASA, JCPenney, Intel, Wal-Mart,
22 New Mexico State University, New Mexico Tech, and
23 support from a number of private individuals.

24 SODA has been recognized nationally, and
25 at the state level, for our high number of young

1 women who participate in STEM programs. Last year,
2 one of young ladies was one 35 female students
3 selected around the country as a winner, and
4 recognized by the National Council for Women in
5 Technology. That same year, New Mexico gave out
6 12 awards, state-level awards, NCWIT awards. SODA
7 won eight of them.

8 Another of our young ladies was invited to
9 speak at the European Conference on Robotics and
10 Engineering in Vienna, Austria. She represented us,
11 and New Mexico, very well.

12 Recently, our robotics team was selected
13 as one of 15 high school teams in the entire country
14 by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's
15 prestigious Lemelson InvenTeam program. Our
16 students will be showcasing their invention at a
17 weeklong conference this coming June at MIT.

18 SODA students are involved in the National
19 Super-Computing Challenge. We are the only high
20 school in New Mexico to be awarded a super-computer,
21 along with New Mexico Tech University.

22 SODA has the best parent involvement I, in
23 my 35-years plus, have ever been involved in.
24 Parents have the opportunities to participate in a
25 number of different areas, including Fall Festival,

1 fun days, field trips, and working concessions at
2 Isotopes games during the summer. Maybe you've seen
3 us there.

4 At SODA, parents are welcome to come
5 anytime. You don't need an appointment. If they
6 want to come in and talk to us, they just walk right
7 in. They can come in and have a cup of coffee; they
8 can go to school with their kids. They're welcome
9 there. It's not uncommon for us on a daily basis to
10 have parents bringing their students in to come
11 visit our school. If they come, and if you come, we
12 will give you a student-led tour of our facility, so
13 that you could hear their perspective. And if you
14 have questions, we in the administration will answer
15 that for you.

16 Academic achievement is, and will continue
17 to be, a focal point of -- that we're steadily
18 trying to improve. We evidence this by our school
19 moving from an "F" grade to an "A" grade in the
20 better part of two years. We purposed ourselves to
21 do that, and we will continue to do well in the
22 academic areas.

23 Last year, we made the commitment to pay
24 for every high school student to take the ACT exam
25 once a year until they graduate. Not only is this a

1 data point for us, but it gives them experience in
2 something that they'll be able to take with them the
3 rest of their lives.

4 Our SODA model of blending the arts and
5 technology works, and it's a natural fit for us. I
6 think it also does very well in our academic
7 achievement.

8 One of our focal points is to continue to
9 enhance our ability to differentiate instruction
10 based on student individual needs and move them
11 forward through the educational curriculum. Every
12 student has an individual learning portfolio, which
13 is kept current through our daily advisory period.

14 SODA offers a very strong dual-credit
15 program. It will not be uncommon, beginning this
16 year, that many of our students, when they graduate
17 from high school, have associate's degrees and
18 30-plus college hours.

19 We have had a steady enrollment growth
20 over the last four years, and currently, we have 374
21 students and a waiting list.

22 SODA has created a foundation, and we are
23 in the process of acquiring property and building a
24 school facility from the ground up, in my
25 understanding, maybe one of the first in New Mexico

1 to accomplish this.

2 School of Dreams Academy thanks you for
3 your consideration for an additional five years. We
4 would be honored if you would do that.

5 Mr. Griego and I are grateful for the
6 opportunity to be here today. And with that, we
7 stand for any questions that the Commission might
8 have.

9 THE CHAIR: Thank you, gentlemen. Do we
10 have public comments on this school?

11 Seeing none, then we will move to PEC
12 questions. Commissioners? Commissioner Bergman.

13 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Thank you,
14 Madame Chair. I have a number of things. Most of
15 it is mostly comments.

16 I wanted to highlight one thing that I
17 found, in your Opportunity to Learn section of your
18 State Report Card. And it is primarily because this
19 Commission, in the past, has, on a number of
20 occasions, debated the pros and cons of 100-percent
21 virtual, online teaching for students. And you
22 noted in there that originally, your model was to be
23 a virtual online format, and that you discovered
24 that that necessarily wasn't going to be best for
25 your students.

1 And what you said was, "We have since
2 blended this curriculum with direct teaching and
3 hands-on projects that will foster a greater
4 facilitation of learning."

5 And I guess I like that, because that
6 happens to be my opinion of what it needs to be,
7 that I am pretty much opposed to 100-percent
8 virtual -- I think face-to-face teacher instruction
9 really helps the students. And that's my personal
10 opinion. I'm speaking for myself. But I salute you
11 for doing that.

12 MR. OGAS: If I could just comment to
13 that, it works for us. We saw what needed to
14 happen. We have extremely highly qualified teachers
15 in all of our core areas. They work in conjunction
16 in a blended way, probably about a 50/50 model in
17 terms of utilizing the online content as basically a
18 glorified textbook.

19 There's a lot of content in there, but
20 it's the teachers that make a difference. And we
21 have very, very good teachers.

22 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Thank you for
23 sharing that. You already alluded to this next
24 thing. I was going to congratulate you on the fact
25 that you are paying for 100 percent of your

1 students' ACT tests, because we all know there are
2 families throughout this state where even a
3 relatively minor expense like the ACT might be a
4 financial burden. So, I salute you for that. I
5 wish more schools were doing that.

6 And then, on the very next page, you're
7 one of the few schools that's taking advantage of
8 the ASVAB, as -- you're using it to also help
9 further evaluate your students. And that may be
10 playing a positive role in the results, and I wanted
11 to salute you for that, too.

12 MR. OGAS: Mr. Bergman, Madame Chair,
13 we're also aggressively seeking the opportunity to
14 offer the PSAT and to become a college testing
15 center.

16 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: As this Commission
17 knows, I'm a firm believer, the more the merrier.
18 The more you can provide for your students, the
19 easier it becomes to get the academic results that
20 everyone in this state wants, whether they're
21 parents, Commissioners, teachers, administrators,
22 whatever. So, I thank you for that. I'll let it go
23 for now. Thank you.

24 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner.
25 Other questions? Commissioner Gant.

1 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, members,
2 Mr. Ogas, just some comments. I know, as the
3 Commissioners know, my thing is budget, facilities,
4 and stuff like that. And we have some experts on
5 curriculum and that. We all have our thing.

6 And one of my concerns is that it doesn't
7 affect the approval or disapproval of this
8 application. But down the road -- right now, you're
9 paying \$400-and-some thousand a year for a lease,
10 and you're taking, out of your pocket, \$223,000. So
11 that's got to affect your programs.

12 I realize you state that you need more
13 facilities for some of your classes,
14 pre-engineering, et cetera, et cetera.

15 But with the new facility -- when are you
16 going to start that new facility?

17 MR. OGAS: Madame Chair,
18 Commissioner Gant, we have been in the process of
19 negotiating on that. And it could be as early as
20 January that we actually start the facility.

21 I agree with you. The notion of paying
22 rent when you need to be looking at more viable
23 options for basically turning that into something
24 that could be owned is something that we've been
25 working on for the best part of three years already,

1 on how to conceptualize that. That was the reason
2 that we've gone down this road of forming a
3 foundation, basically looking at the amount of money
4 we're currently paying, and seeing how we could turn
5 that into a facility through a lease-to-own
6 situation.

7 We have been in contact with the PSFA.
8 They're aware of what we're doing. Our goal is to
9 make the best use of taxpayer money in terms of
10 getting into a facility that would, you know, meet
11 the State requirement, but at the same time, get
12 away from just simply paying rent to a private
13 entity.

14 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair,
15 Mr. Ogas, you still have to do your FMP and your Ed
16 Specs and all of that. So, saying you're going to
17 start maybe in the spring is very ambitious, I
18 believe.

19 MR. OGAS: We have a contractor and people
20 working on our Facility Master Plan already. We've
21 requested -- and I haven't seen the awards -- of --
22 a grant from the PSCOC to try to help us out with
23 that. But, regardless, we're moving forward with
24 that.

25 COMMISSIONER GANT: I think we just did

1 that the other day.

2 MR. OGAS: Okay.

3 COMMISSIONER GANT: So -- but another
4 point I need to make on this, it will be -- yours
5 will be a public building after you've paid it off.
6 But you know you're going to have to assume all
7 overhead, because lease assistance no longer exists
8 once you own that; is that correct?

9 MR. OGAS: Yes, sir, we're aware of that.

10 COMMISSIONER GANT: And you know it's
11 probably going to be more than \$223,000 a year?

12 MR. OGAS: (Indicates.)

13 COMMISSIONER GANT: Okay. If you're
14 prepared for that, all right. Thank you.

15 THE CHAIR: Other questions? Comments?

16 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: If everyone else is
17 done?

18 THE CHAIR: I'll just have a couple.

19 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: I'll go last.

20 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. A couple of
21 questions, gentlemen.

22 I notice your enrollment cap is 525, your
23 current enrollment is 311. So, you have over 200,
24 I'm going to say, empty seats. I also heard you
25 mention you have a waiting list.

1 How do you have a waiting list when you
2 have that many openings?

3 MR. OGAS: We are -- Madame Chair,
4 currently, we are -- our cap is higher than what our
5 current facility will allow for. And our current
6 enrollment is 374, based upon our 80-day count
7 today. We do have -- and we're pretty much maxed
8 out in terms of the facility.

9 We came for an enrollment increase a
10 couple of years ago, just to anticipate growth.
11 And, then, we're going to systematically make sure
12 that our facility can match any growth that we
13 control from there on.

14 THE CHAIR: And your current enrollment is
15 380?

16 MR. OGAS: 374.

17 THE CHAIR: It has grown that much since
18 you did this report? Because I'm looking at your
19 report on Page 2, and it says 311.

20 MR. OGAS: Yes, ma'am. I think that
21 report was self-populated from last school year,
22 because our 40-day was around 370. And I think,
23 back in there, there's some more current numbers.

24 MR. GERLICZ: That is correct,
25 Madame Chair. That form that you are looking at was

1 populated before the 40th day count.

2 THE CHAIR: So, it was based on what?

3 MR. GERLICZ: It was based on last year's
4 enrollment, the average of last year's enrollment.

5 THE CHAIR: Oh. So we're getting some old
6 data?

7 MR. GERLICZ: All of the populations
8 change every 40th, 80th day. And we -- we give the
9 Commission -- as we have, ourselves, as; the entire
10 State has -- the most current information.

11 THE CHAIR: Okay. All right. Thank you.
12 How do you compute your waiting list?

13 MR. OGAS: The same way everybody else
14 does. We advertise in the spring. We --

15 THE CHAIR: No, I'm sorry. I didn't make
16 myself clear. Is it just the -- the students who
17 applied this year and were not able to be
18 accommodated?

19 MR. OGAS: Madame Chair, yes, ma'am. It
20 is real students. We do not have a rolling kind of
21 deal. They're actual people.

22 THE CHAIR: Okay. And my last question
23 is, on -- I believe it's my Page 13. My Page 13, on
24 the bottom, it said -- yeah, Intro Page 13, where
25 it's showing your School Report Card Snapshot, and

1 the source is School Grading Report 2011-2012? And
2 the final grade was a "D."

3 Now, I heard you talk about you're working
4 to raise that. But I didn't -- I thought -- I
5 really thought I heard you say your grade was higher
6 than that.

7 MR. OGAS: Yes, ma'am. The "D" was a
8 preliminary grade a year ago. Actually, the first
9 grade was an "F," and then it was raised to a "D."
10 But this most recent one, this last July, was an
11 "A." And it's in our report. I think it's in the
12 CSD's analysis.

13 THE CHAIR: Boy, that's a lot of jump,
14 isn't it?

15 MR. OGAS: We tried very hard.

16 THE CHAIR: I think you did, and you were
17 very successful.

18 Those are all my questions, Mr. Gerlicz.

19 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, just to put
20 that in perspective, it's an enormous jump. But the
21 three-year average, if you look at the three years
22 in which the State has instituted the report card
23 for this school, is a "C." In other words, that "D"
24 that they received earlier was actually a very high
25 "D." So the "A" just continues this upwards slope

1 that the school is on.

2 THE CHAIR: Okay, thank you. Commissioner
3 Bergman?

4 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Thank you,
5 Madame Chair. In your application package, you had
6 placed a letter that you had written to
7 Director Gerlicz talking about your new location
8 that you intend to move into next year on Huning
9 Long Road.

10 MR. OGAS: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Do you intend,
12 somewhere between now and then, to return to us with
13 a -- our usual amendment? Or, were we including
14 that in this today? I assume we wanted to do that
15 down the road; is that correct?

16 MR. GERLICZ: We're not doing that today,
17 Commissioner.

18 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: But there will be
19 an amendment at some point?

20 MR. GERLICZ: Correct.

21 COMMISSIONER CARR: And then, here, again,
22 something more -- this was -- I was just curious,
23 because, in your application, I notice that one of
24 your robotics teams went to Dallas. You highlighted
25 that. How did they do?

1 MR. OGAS: Madame Chair, Mr. Bergman, they
2 have done very well. They've been to Dallas over
3 the last three years probably at least four or five
4 times. And it's -- that happens to be called the
5 best robotics competition. And there are several
6 different kinds. There are some where the kids
7 build a robot, and they actually have to drive it
8 through a course. And this is one of those.

9 There's others, where the robots are
10 autonomous, and they're programmed to navigate a
11 course, or to see colors and lights and that kind of
12 thing. And they're involved in those.

13 The ones in Dallas have been -- the one I
14 attended, actually -- the course, you had to
15 climb -- have a robot go ten feet, deliver things
16 from down here up ten feet, and then come back down.
17 It was really interesting.

18 That year -- just as an anecdote -- the
19 night before the state competition that they did
20 win, probably about 48 hours before they had to
21 leave, the robot fell on a practice run from ten
22 feet high and just shattered to pieces. So, they
23 rebuilt the whole thing in less than 12 hours. And
24 they took it down to Las Cruces. And they were
25 doing really well down there. And then they decided

1 to -- our kids tweak things a lot. And I keep
2 telling them, "Don't tweak them."

3 And they did it again, and they were in
4 their lunch break. And they ran it up there, and
5 the thing fell again. So, they had about 20 minutes
6 to rebuild the arm. The neatest thing about this
7 thing is the kids were doing it. So, people were
8 taking pictures of our kids working in the pit,
9 doing things that you and I can't even imagine. And
10 we were up on top watching them. It's the neatest
11 thing to see. It's a lot of fun, too.

12 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: That's kind of what
13 struck me. Since I went to school, during the Age
14 of Dinosaurs, we didn't have interesting stuff like
15 that. I find myself thinking I wish I could have
16 done something like that when I was a 16-year-old
17 kid.

18 Thank you. And thank you, Madame Chair.

19 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner.
20 Other questions? Mr. Gerlicz?

21 MR. GERLICZ: Just a comment. All of this
22 takes leadership, Madame Chair, members of the
23 Commission. We congratulate Mr. Ogas for that
24 leadership that has been demonstrated in the
25 turnaround of this school in a rapid fashion.

1 THE CHAIR: Anything else? Other
2 comments? Questions?

3 Then the Chair would entertain a motion
4 concerning the School of Dreams in Los Lunas.
5 Commissioner Bergman.

6 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Madame Chair, I
7 would move that the Public Education Commission
8 approve the application of the School of Dreams
9 Academy for a full five-year term.

10 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Second.

11 THE CHAIR: Do I hear a second?
12 Commissioner Pogna.

13 Move and second to approve the application
14 of School of Dreams, as recommended, for a full
15 five-year term. Is there any discussion?

16 Hearing none, Commissioner Bergman, may we
17 have a roll-call vote, please?

18 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
19 Conyers.

20 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Yes.

21 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
22 Parker.

23 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
25 Peralta.

1 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Pogna.

3 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Carr.

5 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Gant.

7 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

9 Shearman.

10 THE CHAIR: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

12 Bergman votes "yes."

13 Madame Chair, again, by a vote of eight to
14 zero, the renewal application of the School of
15 Dreams Academy is approved.

16 THE CHAIR: Thank you. The vote is
17 unanimous to renew the application of the School of
18 Dreams for a full five years. Congratulations.

19 (Applause.)

20 THE CHAIR: Ladies and gentlemen, it's
21 10:30. Why don't we take about a ten-minute break,
22 and let's come back at 20 till 11:00 by that clock.

23 (Recess taken, 10:30 a.m. to 10:40 a.m.)

24 THE CHAIR: Ladies and gentlemen, we're
25 ready to resume, please.

1 If the representatives from Alma d'arte
2 would come forward, please? Good morning.

3 SPEAKER: Good morning.

4 THE CHAIR: If you would, please,
5 introduce yourselves. Spell your names, if they're
6 unique. You might introduce the folks who are with
7 you, please, and you have ten minutes.

8 MR. HARTSHORNE: Good morning,
9 Madame Chair, members of the Commission. I am Mark
10 Hartshorne. That's H-A-R-T-S-H-O-R-N-E. I am Chief
11 Administrative Officer and Principal at Alma d'arte
12 Charter High School in Las Cruces.

13 To my left is Mr. Gene Elliott, two Ls,
14 two Ts, founder of Alma d'arte, and also long-time
15 president of our governance council.

16 As well, behind me, Ms. Karen Lynn
17 Williams is a member of our governance council for
18 several years now, who has joined us on this long
19 journey.

20 And Angie McLaughlin is my vice principal,
21 special education coordinator, assessment
22 coordinator and doer of all things that I don't want
23 to do, okay? And that list -- she smiles, but she
24 knows what I'm telling is the truth.

25 THE CHAIR: Gentlemen, let me interrupt

1 you. I apologize. CSD is supposed to go first, and
2 then your presentation.

3 MR. HARTSHORNE: I'm sorry. Yes, ma'am.

4 THE CHAIR: If you would not mind, I'll
5 ask Director Gerlicz to make CSD's presentation,
6 please?

7 MR. HARTSHORNE: Not at all.

8 MR. GERLICZ: Members of the Commission,
9 representatives from Alma d'arte, welcome. The
10 school presents a number of interesting things that
11 I'd like to highlight to the Commission.

12 Number one, first and foremost, the school
13 continues to be on an upward trajectory and has been
14 for a number of years. It's a slow, steady incline
15 that shows no signs of abating, but shows all signs
16 of continuing forward.

17 Second, another interesting piece in this
18 story is how the school has evolved out of a
19 nonprofit organization offering programs, and an
20 after-school program, that moved into a charter
21 school, carrying with it some of the nonprofit
22 highlights, such as a culinary arts program.

23 In the nonprofit, before the existence of
24 the school, they had a kitchen. The school came in
25 and incorporated that into a culinary arts program,

1 which is one of the four art forms available to
2 students at Alma d'arte, which stands for the "Soul
3 of Art."

4 Another interesting thing, if we look at
5 the data represented at the school, the school is
6 doing an outstanding job with their Q1 and Q3
7 students, their bottom quartile, especially. And
8 that hasn't always been the case. But with the
9 leadership that has come into the school and has put
10 additional focus on the Q1, they're doing very, very
11 well with the growth of that population, which is a
12 challenge for most schools.

13 Another interesting thing that relates to
14 Alma, but relates to a number of schools in our
15 charter network, is that you may remember that they
16 received a "C" on their graduation grade in their
17 report card; yet, they have consistently over
18 90-percent graduation rate. And that is a source of
19 frustration for not only Alma d'arte, but all
20 schools in that situation. How can those schools
21 get 92, 95, and even 97-percent graduation rate, and
22 receive a "C" grade?

23 It is something that we have talked about
24 with the Assessment and Accountability Office. They
25 are developing additional measures to sustain high

1 graduation growth. That comes out as a result of
2 that analysis being based on growth. Well, it's
3 hard to grow when you're already at that high a
4 value, so I find that an interesting thing as well.

5 Finally, the lesson that Alma d'arte
6 teaches us and the entire educational world is the
7 terribly important power of arts, coordinated with
8 standards, coordinated with a strong school culture
9 and a sense of community that has provided an
10 opportunity for all of the students at Alma d'arte
11 to succeed, as warrant- -- as shown by all of the
12 data that we have looked at.

13 On the organizational side of things, the
14 school is governed well. Mr. Elliott has been with
15 the school, provided the consistency from the
16 governing body side of things. We do have some
17 comments that we have passed along to the school
18 about how the governing body could increase their
19 functionality. And all of those comments have been
20 taken well into consideration as the school moves
21 forward.

22 Finally, another interesting piece of this
23 story is that we have, as the head of the school,
24 someone who has been in traditional public
25 education, leading a 5- -- 4A, 5A high school,

1 Las Cruces High School, for many years, then
2 founding a rather large, multi-thousand-student
3 school in Colorado, public school, and returning to
4 run what we say is a typical size for a charter
5 school, 200 students, plus or minus. And that is an
6 interesting story. He's done an outstanding job.

7 The school continues to go on an upward
8 trajectory. For all of those reasons, it's the
9 Charter Schools' [verbatim] recommendation that
10 this school be recommended for a full five years
11 without condition.

12 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Gerlicz. Now,
13 gentlemen, if you would, please?

14 MR. HARTSHORNE: Thank you very much, and
15 thank you to Tony. And, if I might, I would simply
16 like to echo the statements and the remarks about
17 the Charter School Division and Mr. Gerlicz and
18 Ms. Callahan. Their excellence and their
19 professionalism is of the highest order. And I
20 really feel like Alma d'arte would not be where we
21 are today without their guidance and their support
22 and their assistance.

23 So, I really do want to express my
24 appreciation to you folk, and Kelly, certainly.
25 Best wishes in your future endeavors. Again, the

1 pleasure of working with professionals such as we
2 have in the Charter School Division enables success
3 in all of our charter schools, and, certainly, at
4 Alma d'arte.

5 It is a pleasure this morning to briefly
6 review with you some highlights of our past
7 four-and-a-half years in our existing charter.

8 I want to present the revision of our
9 mission statement. You may remember I was here with
10 you, seemingly -- it seems like yesterday -- to
11 bring that request for a revised mission statement
12 to you. Gene and I identified several years ago
13 that we really needed to revise that mission
14 statement, because we wanted one that was couched in
15 terms of student achievement: What do our students
16 look like when they graduate when they have gone
17 through our program?

18 So, we engaged in a very inclusive process
19 with all constituents and stakeholders in our Alma
20 community to create the existing mission statement,
21 "Graduate artist scholars prepared to succeed."
22 That was so key for us, because it enabled every
23 aspect of our program to be tied together around a
24 very definitive statement of what our students will
25 know and be able to do as an outcome of their

1 participation in our program.

2 So, that -- that's number one on our list
3 in terms of the most important things that we've
4 done in the current charter term.

5 We've also engaged in a substantial vision
6 retreat. Our vision is to be the preeminent arts
7 school in the Southwest. And we have had a very
8 good process, and, again, very inclusive, of all
9 aspects of our community around achieving that
10 vision.

11 We've evolved many structural and
12 systematic aspects of our school pursuant to the
13 achievement of that mission statement. And I'd like
14 to bring some of those to your attention this
15 morning, as well.

16 First of all, we -- over the course of
17 time, we took a look at all of our resources, human
18 time, physical plant, and we really noticed that the
19 way we were using time was not pursuant to the
20 accomplishment of that mission statement.

21 We went through a process of evolving from
22 a compressed block schedule to a seven-period,
23 yearlong schedule. We had to do it. Anytime a high
24 school with that kind of systemic change occurs,
25 it's not done easily. And there was a lot of

1 discussion, shall we say, around that.

2 What happened in that change was, for a
3 one-credit class, we now have 145 contact hours
4 rather than 120. And that, right there, is hugely
5 significant in terms of being able to teach a
6 complete curriculum, being able to reteach when
7 necessary, having the time for kids to assimilate
8 information along the way.

9 And the other aspect of going to a
10 yearlong schedule of that kind, was it much more
11 effectively enabled the use of short-cycle
12 assessment data to guide our instruction. That
13 systemic change, which took place two years ago, was
14 not an easy thing to do. It had a lot of
15 discussion, again, staff, council, parents,
16 students.

17 We did it; the outcome is clear. And,
18 again, there's a huge amount of evidence to show
19 that that was a very significant aspect of our
20 evolution in the last charter term.

21 We've also created a very sound system of
22 assessment protocols. We do SBA, our EOCs --
23 end-of-course -- exams, our short-cycle assessments.
24 We do those extremely well and with great detail and
25 with great precision. That generates data available

1 to us so that, again, we can use that information to
2 know where our kids are at, what they know, where
3 they need to go back, start over again, that kind of
4 thing. We do assessment right.

5 I want to credit Angie McLaughlin for a
6 large part of that. She's not getting paid enough
7 to do what she does on that side. That was an
8 important part of our evolution. Four years ago, we
9 hardly did it. I'll be honest with you. You'll see
10 in our application, we struggled to get our
11 short-cycle assessment done, much less use the data
12 in instruction. So, for us to have those kind of
13 protocols, again, has been very, very significant
14 for us.

15 In terms of staffing, four years ago, of
16 course, with a substantial budget cut, we were able
17 to continue school, not only with no reduction of
18 instructional staff, but we've actually increased
19 our instructional staff to three full-time math
20 teachers. We've added an additional almost half of
21 an FTE in visual arts. We have a full-time music
22 teacher that we never had before. And that has
23 enabled the implementation of additional arts
24 programs, including piano and guitar. South of
25 Albuquerque, there are very, very few guitar

1 programs in high school. And on the southern end of
2 the state, there's only two. One's at Gadsden High
3 School, and one is at Alma d'arte.

4 That was a good recruiting tool, too,
5 believe me. When kids heard we were doing guitar,
6 there were a lot more kids, on top of the kids that
7 were already interested in coming.

8 MS. CALLAHAN: Five minutes.

9 MR. HARTSHORNE: So, our structure of
10 school in terms of our recruiting and tracking kids
11 is vastly enhanced.

12 I believe you've already heard about we
13 are partnering with the Las Cruces Public Schools to
14 have a relationship with them regarding the
15 building, and that we are on board with the Cruces
16 Schools in a bond issue election that, if successful
17 in February, would create an additional \$4 million
18 for refurbishment and upgrade of the campus. That's
19 a big deal for us, as well.

20 So, these kinds of systemic and structural
21 changes, outcomes, we've gone from a preliminary "D"
22 to a "C" to a "B" grade. And we were within
23 striking range of being an "A" this last time.

24 As Tony has indicated, our Q1s and Q3s
25 have all demonstrated growth. We have a 92 to

1 96-percent graduation rate. Our latest attendance
2 rate for the fall was 94 percent. Our surveys from
3 our students and parents, quality of ed and on other
4 things, we do show a strong support for our program.

5 We have college graduates at the Rhode
6 Island School of Design, the University of Chicago,
7 South Carolina. We also had 13 students last year
8 that earned EXCEL scholarships or better, first time
9 that ever happened. We have a National Merit
10 Commended Scholar; first time that ever happened.
11 We've increased the student cap from 157 to 192.

12 All of this has been accomplished while
13 our students continue to engage in very deep and
14 broad community arts participation and performance,
15 again, as detailed in our application, and I'm sure
16 that you saw that.

17 So, we're real proud of what we have
18 accomplished in the last few years. We're real
19 proud of it. We're also not satisfied. We have no
20 intention of sitting on our laurels and saying,
21 "Okay, we're good enough now, and everything is
22 fine." We definitely have higher aspirations than
23 what we've accomplished already. Hopefully, with an
24 affirmation here this morning of continuing the
25 charter, we will proceed to become the preeminent

1 arts institution in the Southwest and meet our
2 mission of "graduating artist scholars prepared to
3 succeed."

4 So, we thank you for your consideration.
5 Again, it's not done by one person, certainly.
6 These folks, a lot more people are involved. But,
7 again, appreciate an opportunity to present this
8 morning, and, obviously, stand for questions.

9 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Questions from --
10 no, sorry. I've forgotten the procedure already.

11 We have public comment now. Is there
12 anyone in the audience who would like to comment on
13 this school?

14 Seeing none, now, we will move to
15 Commissioners' questions and comments.
16 Commissioners? Commissioner Pogna.

17 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Madame Chair, I
18 missed the total enrollment. What is your total
19 enrollment?

20 MR. HARTSHORNE: As of today, Ms. Pogna,
21 it's 192. We are looking forward to this
22 opportunity -- 190 really maxes out the physical
23 space that we have in the existing building.

24 In the upcoming partnership with the
25 Las Cruces Public Schools, I think we're going to be

1 able to get a larger portion of the Court Youth
2 Center, the Court Junior High complex. And we may
3 be able to bring the enrollment up to 200, 220.
4 Right now, we're sitting at 192 as of today.

5 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Pogna, is that
6 it?

7 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes, ma'am.

8 THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you.
9 Commissioner Carr?

10 COMMISSIONER CARR: Madame Chair, I would
11 be interested in -- well, here's the question: If
12 you could, would you go back to a block schedule?

13 MR. HARTSHORNE: Well, sir, if you're
14 asking me, the principal, I would say absolutely
15 not.

16 COMMISSIONER CARR: Oh, okay.

17 MR. HARTSHORNE: I was principal at
18 Las Cruces High School in the mid and late '90s,
19 when that district chose to go that way. At the
20 time, of course, we did not have the assessment
21 protocols and expectations that we do now.
22 Some of my staff might answer that
23 question in the affirmative. But, simply put, the
24 structure that we had that only had 120 contact
25 hours for a one-credit class was killing the

1 academic program. There simply was not enough
2 contact time.

3 And, of course, when that rolls over from
4 one year to the next, you've got a lot of problems.
5 And there is no way -- I mean, contact time is
6 contact time. You go from 120 to 145 hours, our
7 academic performance, I think, is absolutely fueled
8 by that additional contact time and the length of
9 time that kids can learn. We still have -- in our
10 structure, we have block-length periods.

11 COMMISSIONER CARR: Oh.

12 MR. HARTSHORNE: We do seven classes on
13 Monday that are 52 minutes in length. Then every
14 other day, throughout the rest of the week, we are
15 in block-length periods, with even periods one day
16 and odd periods the next. We then put our advisory
17 structure within that.

18 And, actually, in my experience, it's
19 exactly the schedule that we -- we, the staff, at
20 Fossil Ridge High School in Fort Collins, which I
21 opened six -- ten years ago -- long time ago -- we
22 were facing the same kind of decisions. How can we
23 have the block periods that very adept teachers
24 like, particularly in the arts, and how can we
25 incorporate that, with sufficient seat time, with an

1 advisory structure?

2 And, so, when I put the issue out in the
3 front of the staff, "Guys, we don't have enough time
4 to do what we need to do. How do you want to try to
5 fix that?" It's one of the examples that I could
6 bring forward to them. And, you know, anytime you
7 make that change, that's a tough change at a high
8 school. But it's worked, and people like it. And,
9 again, we still do have the block-length periods for
10 that kind of hands-on, project-type learning that we
11 do a lot of. But the impact, I think, has been
12 clear in our outcomes.

13 COMMISSIONER CARR: I think it support- --
14 I think the data supports, again, a blended -- a
15 blending of the block and the shorter schedules.
16 It -- you know, unfortunately, we can't always do
17 that. And that's ideal, because some students need
18 a shorter time period; some subjects are fine with
19 that shorterer time period. But you're talking
20 about doing a lab; you're talking about arts, that
21 type of thing. And it's nice if you can do that
22 combination.

23 Just a quick comment is that so far this
24 morning, all three of our schools are engaging in a
25 lot of activity that's away from the core. And I

1 think that that shows -- you know, I -- you have a
2 different student body -- I understand that -- as
3 far as testing is concerned. But all of that -- all
4 those areas, keep kids in school, keep them
5 motivated. And the studies show, of course, that if
6 a kid's motivated just by one class, they will do
7 well in all of their other classes. And it will
8 obviously keep them in school till they graduate,
9 which is something that you have done.

10 MR. HARTSHORNE: Well, yes, sir. And, I
11 mean, I couldn't agree more. And it's just -- you
12 know, the secret of success at Alma d'arte, folks,
13 the relationship that we have with kids and the
14 experiences that they have in the arts, and the
15 outcome, is absolutely 90-plus percent graduation
16 rates. And, guys, we don't get people -- we get
17 some elite kids. We've gotten more elite-type kids,
18 if you will, recently, because there's a recognition
19 in the community now that our academic program is
20 equal to the arts. And it didn't used to be that
21 way.

22 So we are getting a little bit of a
23 different kind of kid, if you will. We get a lot
24 more gifted, special-ed kids than we ever did. But
25 a microcosm of kids that bring all kinds of

1 different challenges. Not that gifted kids don't
2 bring challenges. They do, okay? But, again, the
3 relationship that we have with kids and their
4 experiences in the arts is fueling the outcomes that
5 we're getting.

6 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Commissioner Gant.

7 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, members,
8 Mr. Hartshorne, Mark.

9 THE CHAIR: Parker.

10 COMMISSIONER GANT: Huh? Hartshorne. And
11 Mr. Elliott. We all go back, the three of us, some
12 distance. And you've put up with me, thankfully,
13 all these years. And I've got to tell the
14 Commission that when this school was first chartered
15 many years ago, I was on the School Board, and I
16 said, "No."

17 Mr. Elliott probably remembers me saying
18 "No," and he's sitting there saying, "Why would he
19 do that to me?"

20 But I think, over time -- and I will say
21 it this way, Gene. Until you hired Mark, I think my
22 vote was justified.

23 MR. ELLIOTT: I agree.

24 COMMISSIONER GANT: And, then, when you
25 hired Mark, then I would have voted for the charter

1 school from the get-go, not because of Mark, but
2 because of the program you all had laid out when he
3 came on board.

4 And I have seen the changes in this
5 school. I have watched the changes in this school.
6 And, yes, they are climbing, and they've got a long
7 way to go.

8 Mark and I go -- he was -- he took care of
9 my three kids through high school. Good or bad, he
10 took care of them. And I am thankful.

11 MR. HARTSHORNE: Well, that works two
12 ways, Gene. Gene and I go back 20-plus years. And
13 I don't know. I can share any kind of stories with
14 you, you want to.

15 COMMISSIONER GANT: No, no, no.

16 MR. HARTSHORNE: He can. It's not all me
17 in that school, to be sure, all right? It does take
18 a team. And we have a terrific team. Our council,
19 as Tony has indicated, they're quality people. I'm
20 very fortunate in the staff that I have. We have
21 great kids. We've got great families. And, yeah,
22 we work together, and it works.

23 COMMISSIONER GANT: And on another note,
24 Madame Chair, Mark alluded to the fact that they're
25 going to team now with LCPS. Las Cruces Public

1 Schools has owned that facility forever. I mean,
2 that was originally a public -- a junior high in
3 Cruces. And they almost tore it down. But now,
4 it's going to go back -- there was an arrangement --
5 we won't go into that. But now, it's going to be
6 solely between Alma d'arte and J. Paul Taylor
7 Academy, that they will manage it.

8 And I think it's going to be a success.
9 This is going to be one of those successes that
10 everybody looks for between the public schools and
11 the charter schools. And I'm thankful that the
12 right people are in the right schools and district
13 to make it happen. And it will happen well.

14 But I've got to say that I will vote for
15 this school. And when it was coming down the road,
16 I thought, I'm not worried about this school
17 anymore, because I know it's going to be successful.
18 Thank you, Mark.

19 MR. HARTSHORNE: Thank you.

20 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Commissioners,
21 other questions? Let me just ask one, before I
22 forget it, Commissioner Bergman.

23 Gentlemen, you said -- and
24 Commissioner Gant just talked about it -- you're
25 going to partner with the Las Cruces Public Schools,

1 move into a public school facility, after it's
2 remodeled, I assume. Okay.

3 Is that going to save you any money that's
4 now being spent out of your operational budget to
5 pay for rent or lease?

6 MR. HARTSHORNE: The relationship around
7 that building -- see, we're already in the
8 building -- has been tangled. And it took me
9 three-and-a-half years to even figure out what the
10 relationship was while I was trying to run the
11 school, too. The change is really that we will be
12 partnering directly with the Las Cruces Public
13 Schools with no one in the middle.

14 The Court Youth Center is not in the
15 middle of the Mesilla Valley Youth Foundation; the
16 City is not in the middle anymore. So, they have
17 actually reached out to us and the J. Paul Taylor
18 Charter School to create a charter complex on the
19 block of Alameda and Court Avenue in Las Cruces.

20 I think the most significant statement
21 would be from one of the LCPS Board members, Bonnie
22 Votaw, who said, "We want to partner with successful
23 charter schools that we know are doing things
24 right."

25 So, it actually was LCPS coming to us

1 with, "Let's get back that direct supervision and
2 control of the building. We want to extend the
3 invitation to you guys and J. Paul to come in and be
4 part of a charter complex, so our charter school
5 operations are centered in one geographical place in
6 town, and assist in the creation of that
7 relationship."

8 And, so, as Gene has indicated, that's a
9 pretty rare thing, when you have State-chartered
10 schools that are in a partnership with the local
11 district of this nature, and really going forward
12 for that purpose, and where the local district has
13 actually made their bond issue election. Part of
14 that would go to the refurbishment and the upgrade
15 of our charter complex so that Alma and J. Paul
16 Taylor have an even better place to conduct
17 operations.

18 So, it's a very unique and a very positive
19 move forward.

20 THE CHAIR: Absolutely. It sounds
21 wonderful. But the second part of my question is,
22 are you currently paying lease funds that have to
23 come out of our operational funds?

24 MR. HARTSHORNE: Yes. Not that it has to
25 come out of our operational. Currently, the lease

1 assistance payments go to the Mesilla Valley Youth
2 Foundation, as the Court Youth Center, that has had
3 a long relationship with the Las Cruces Public
4 schools, through the City of Las Cruces, to, in
5 essence, operate their after-school arts program in
6 the facility.

7 So, the last two years we have been making
8 lease assistance payments to the Mesilla Valley
9 Youth Foundation, who's in titular control of
10 building, though they no longer will be. But we
11 have not had to pay any additional operational
12 expense. So, it really has been a flow-through
13 through our accounts into theirs. But that
14 relationship is changing. And the lease assistance
15 payments will go through Alma to the Las Cruces
16 Public Schools now.

17 And the negotiations around who's in
18 charge of the -- and responsible for the upkeep of
19 the building, and the landscaping and the technology
20 access and so forth is ongoing with the Las Cruces
21 Public Schools. But the relationship is absolutely
22 a boon for us with LCPS. Again, existing-wise, we
23 don't pay any additional operation money, other than
24 the lease assistance payments.

25 But the support we're going to get from

1 LCPS and the relationship with them and them being
2 in control of the building is exactly a boon to our
3 program.

4 THE CHAIR: That's great to hear. Thank
5 you very much. Commissioner Bergman?

6 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Thank you,
7 Madame Chair. First, kind of an observation. I
8 notice you have a sentence in your application --
9 and I'll read it here -- "Consideration is being
10 given to subsidizing the ACT participation to each
11 Alma student."

12 And you may have heard my comments to the
13 previous applicant that, in this day and time, even
14 if it's minor, any help we can give to our parents
15 to help their kids move ahead. So, I hope you're
16 going to give that serious consideration, because I
17 happen to personally believe in that.

18 Further, I wanted to read this, because
19 you asked a question of yourselves, obviously, in
20 your application that I suspect every school in this
21 state is probably asking themselves, and should be
22 asking themselves. And you stated, "We are yet
23 faced with the question, how can we move more of our
24 students from the nearing proficient rating into the
25 proficient, and how can we best assist our students

1 who still struggle with reading skills and
2 comprehension?"

3 And that is an absolute. It -- I'm glad
4 to hear you're asking that, yourself -- and I don't
5 need a 30-minute answer -- are you having any
6 success answering your question?

7 MR. HARTSHORNE: That goes to our real
8 effective formation of our assessment processes,
9 because when we have the data on kids, we can design
10 individually for them what they need around what
11 they've shown us they know and what they don't know.
12 So that's, in essence, how we're answering that
13 question.

14 We have to make sure our assessment
15 process, particularly the short-cycle stuff, is
16 correct, so that we know, and then we can design
17 those kind of things pursuant to individual kid
18 needs. And, again, I think the outcomes on the
19 school report card clearly indicate we're doing
20 that.

21 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Thank you. Thank
22 you, Madame Chair.

23 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Commissioner Gant.

24 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, just to
25 clarify one thing, and to thank Mr. Elliott --

1 Gene -- and the Foundation. They're one of the few
2 in the state who -- where the lease assistance go,
3 do not require more out of the operational funds for
4 the leases. They're one of the very few. And I've
5 got the reports to show it.

6 We're spending over \$19 million on leases.
7 And six of that -- \$6-plus million is coming out of
8 operational dollars, out of the funds, the SEG
9 money. And to the Foundation, I thank you for doing
10 that, holding the line on that, because that was
11 very important to the school.

12 MR. HARTSHORNE: Thank you.

13 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Parker?

14 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Madame Chair, I just
15 wanted to acknowledge and say that I greatly
16 appreciate the fact that you guys voiced your
17 opinion, in that you seem to value that art has with
18 the kids and in the educational system. And I wish
19 that -- and this goes for all the schools -- that
20 there's other schools coming out here that have that
21 same feeling, if we can just get this movement
22 happening throughout the school systems, because, I
23 mean, art really does save lives.

24 MR. HARTSHORNE: Yes, sir. Thank you.

25 THE CHAIR: Other comments or questions,

1 Commissioners?

2 Seeing none, the Chair would entertain a
3 motion. Commissioner Gant.

4 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, off the
5 top of my head, I move that we grant a five-year
6 extension to the charter for Alma d'arte,
7 Las Cruces, New Mexico.

8 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Second.

9 THE CHAIR: Do I hear a second?

10 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Second.

11 THE CHAIR: Motion by Commissioner Gant,
12 second by Commissioner Peralta, to approve the
13 renewal application of Alma d'arte Charter School in
14 Las Cruces. Is there any discussion?

15 Seeing none, Commissioner Bergman, may we
16 have a roll-call vote, please?

17 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
18 Parker.

19 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Yes.

20 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
21 Peralta.

22 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.

23 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Pogna.

24 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Carr.

1 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

3 Conyers.

4 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Gant.

6 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

8 Shearman.

9 THE CHAIR: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

11 Bergman votes "yes." Madame Chair, that is an

12 eight-to-zero vote in favor of the motion.

13 THE CHAIR: Thank you. By a unanimous
14 vote, the renewal application of Alma d'arte School
15 is approved. Congratulations.

16 (Applause.)

17 THE CHAIR: Will the representatives from
18 the Dolores Huerta School come forward, please?

19 COMMISSIONER CARR: It's No. 12 in the
20 book.

21 MR. GERLICZ: We're ready. We should
22 follow the agenda.

23 THE CHAIR: But you're okay with that?

24 MR. GERLICZ: Yes.

25 THE CHAIR: Good morning. It's still

1 morning? Yes, thank you.

2 We will ask the CSD to go first with their
3 recommendation, and then we'll come to you, please.
4 Director Gerlicz.

5 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, members of the
6 Commission, representatives of La Academia Dolores
7 Huerta, welcome. This is the school that I referred
8 to earlier that is chartered as a district charter
9 school in Las Cruces, who is migrating to the State
10 for their application for their second charter
11 contract.

12 The story of this school is an interesting
13 one, as well. It is a bilingual school, bilingual
14 middle school, that has a very unique structure that
15 I have not seen before, nor have many folks seen
16 before in education: One week in Spanish, where
17 everything is in Spanish, math, science, cafeteria,
18 morning instructions, everything is in Spanish, a
19 completely bilingual staff in that regard. The next
20 week, English, math, science, history,
21 announcements, instructions, lunch, everything. And
22 that way it goes, throughout the entire year, which
23 we think is highly unique.

24 The results of that academic program are
25 good. They are above average. They are

1 consistently at the "B" level in all aspects for
2 Dolores Huerta.

3 Also, what is very interesting is that
4 it's common for charter schools chartered by local
5 districts to have a less than amiable relationship
6 with their districts. That is not the case with
7 Dolores Huerta. They are not migrating to the state
8 because of a contentious relationship with the
9 district. On the contrary, during our site visit,
10 we made it part of our interview process to
11 interview the District. Assistant Superintendent
12 Steven Sanchez came and extolled the praises of
13 Dolores Huerta.

14 They had a wonderful working relationship.
15 They filled a need in Las Cruces, which, prior, did
16 not exist; and that is, a fully bilingual middle
17 school. Las Cruces Public Schools saw that need,
18 recommended approval, and have maintained a
19 wonderful relationship. In fact, Dr. Sanchez told
20 me that if they had applied to the District, they
21 would welcome them warmly back into the District.

22 Octavio Casillas has led the school very,
23 very capably. Rare among leaders, he is an educator
24 and is also a lawyer, which we will try hard not to
25 hold against him.

1 The -- that -- the other comment that we
2 would make in the site visit that CSD made to
3 Dolores Huerta, rarely have we seen the, number one,
4 amount of parents that came out to our meeting,
5 which overwhelmed the room in which we were in; and
6 the level of enthusiasm that all of those parents,
7 the majority of which were primary Spanish
8 speakers -- we held the meeting in both English and
9 Spanish -- and extolled their love and desire for
10 the school, which was very, very heart-warming.

11 We have a number of suggestions for the
12 school that we have sent to the school, particularly
13 to help their governing board increase its
14 functionality, to help their counseling program in a
15 number of areas that we saw that needed some
16 improvement. None of those improvements rose to the
17 level of concern that would hold us back from
18 recommending this school for a full five-year
19 renewal, which is the Charter School Division's
20 recommendation.

21 Thank you, Madame Chair.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Director.
23 Representatives of the school, if you would please
24 introduce yourselves, and spell your name, if it's
25 unique, for the court reporter. And we would ask

1 that you would have ten minutes for your
2 presentation.

3 MR. CASILLAS: Thank you, Madame Chair.
4 Good morning, Madame Chair, Commissioners, Charter
5 School Division, and everyone, the public. Octavio
6 Casillas. I'm the director of La Academia.
7 Octavio, O-C-T-A-V-I-O; Casillas, C-A-S-I-L-L-A-S.

8 To my right is Mr. Robert delPlain, who is
9 our former governing council president. And to my
10 left is Bertha Silva, who is our current governing
11 council president.

12 On behalf of our students, parents, and
13 staff, we thank you for all the work and leadership
14 PEC provides. We also thank the Charter School
15 Division for all their support and guidance you have
16 provided since we met. Mr. Tony Gerlicz has been
17 very, very supportive, as well as Mr. Ron
18 Christopherson, our liaison. Thank you, guys, very
19 much.

20 And we also thank LCPS for the support
21 they have provided us for the past ten years. The
22 truth is they have been very, very supportive. And
23 without all the support they have provided,
24 La Academia could not be as prosperous as we have
25 been.

1 We are here today to respectfully request
2 the PEC grant us permission to move from the
3 district to be chartered with the State, and that
4 you guys grant us five years so that we can continue
5 to provide our community with the exceptional
6 academic program that we do provide.

7 We have been in existence for ten years.
8 And I'd just like to share with you guys our vision
9 and our mission.

10 Our vision is to be amongst the highest
11 performing schools, not just in the state, but in
12 the country. We have a high number of ELL students,
13 and we want to continue to provide them with the
14 excellent educational program that helps us, and
15 helps them, excel, not only, like I said, in the
16 state, but the country.

17 We want to be the best that we can be.
18 Our vision is to promote multiculturalism and
19 bilingualism. We do this through a very unique arts
20 program as well. Our school focuses on Ballet
21 Folklorico con Punto Norteño, and mariachi music.
22 Also, in the visual arts, we have two exceptional
23 arts teachers, and the performing arts teachers.

24 Every year, we have an annual performance
25 that takes place at Oñate High School. I would like

1 to invite everybody to see our performance that will
2 take place February 1st of this year. It's such an
3 exceptional program that the performance center sits
4 about, I believe, 600 people. And every year, we
5 sell out within two weeks of tickets going on sale.

6 So, if you guys would like to attend,
7 please let me know so that I can make tickets
8 available to every single one of you. We would love
9 to have you there to see our kids perform.

10 Our mission, also -- we nurture diverse
11 cultural awareness and appreciation. Although our
12 languages are Spanish and English, we don't only
13 attract Spanish and English speakers, because we try
14 to attract other students. We have many
15 African-American students. And I'm now working with
16 the University to try to get other cultures, as
17 well, in the school, so that we have a true
18 multicultural curriculum and student body.

19 We recognize our students' gifts and
20 skills, and we help them develop those skills by
21 giving them a very rigorous curriculum and
22 supporting them as they go through this curriculum.
23 We provide an educational program that prepares
24 students for high school and for higher education,
25 but not only to survive in high school and survive

1 in higher ed, but actually to be leaders within
2 their high schools and within the higher education,
3 so they don't go and become struggling students, so
4 that they actually go and provided leadership.

5 We promote nonviolence by emulating the
6 principles and spirits of such leaders as Martin
7 Luther King, Cesar Chavez, and Dolores Huerta. And
8 that has been so successful in our school that in
9 the last ten years of our existence, we don't have a
10 school fight. We don't have bullying -- well, we
11 may have a little bit of it, but it doesn't get to
12 it the office; it's at a minimal level. We take
13 pride in that, because I know, in the whole country,
14 there has been trouble with cyber-bullying and
15 bullying at school.

16 We do not have those problems in our
17 school. It's a special place. Kids are comfortable
18 to be there. We attract kids from all walks of
19 life. And as you walk through the school and talk
20 to the kids, it is a wonderful place where you can
21 be yourself. Nobody picks on you for it, and
22 actually, you feel like you're part of the group,
23 even though you're very different from everybody
24 else.

25 We encourage and assist our parents to

1 maximize their involvement with our school so that
2 they can provide their kids with -- their children
3 with the support they need, so that they can be
4 exceptional students.

5 To fulfill our vision and our mission
6 goals, we provide our teachers with as much
7 professional development that we can. We actually
8 have been contracting this year with Ms. Vangie
9 Rodriguez, who's sitting behind us. She's going --
10 she's been providing some professional development.
11 We have also hired other professional development
12 specialists to help us move forward, as we continue
13 to strive to be the highest performing charter
14 school in the country.

15 Our dual language 50/50 program model is
16 very, very unique, as Mr. Gerlicz explained, one
17 week in English, one week in Spanish. And what's
18 real neat about it is we have English monolingual
19 speakers coming into our school fearing Spanish, and
20 actually not appreciating Spanish. And within two
21 or three weeks of being in our school, they love the
22 fact that they're learning a new language, and
23 they're being supported to be able to perform
24 academically in the new language.

25 So, it's a very unique program. It's very

1 challenging. But the students are able to perform
2 academically in both languages, regardless of which
3 language they are the most strong in.

4 Our rigorous academic curriculum offers
5 the students the opportunity to prepare themselves
6 for high school and beyond, like I've said. And it
7 also gives the teachers the opportunity to develop
8 and continue to enhance the curriculum.

9 The -- to enhance our curriculum, what we
10 started this last school year was we started
11 Saturday school in January. We had such a
12 successful program in Saturday school, and it was so
13 great that we have continued Saturday school. And
14 instead of starting it in January, we started
15 Saturday school, this last year, since the beginning
16 of the school year.

17 Additionally, we had a summer school
18 program in which we brought incoming sixth-graders
19 to the school for a three-week program for summer
20 school. And the way we chose our sixth-graders was
21 we got the report cards and the discovery results
22 from their previous school, and we found the lowest
23 performing students, and we brought them in for a
24 three-week program.

25 It allowed the teachers to get to know the

1 kids ahead of time and to actually give us time to
2 tailor the program that we're going to have for
3 them, so that we can target areas of deficiency and
4 of concern.

5 And we also have an after-school program
6 that takes place four times a week. The only day it
7 doesn't take place is on Tuesday, because teachers
8 have to have a meeting so that we can look at the
9 data and see how we're doing and tailor the program
10 so the kids continue to excel.

11 By emulating the principles of
12 nonviolence, we create a very special place for our
13 kids, like I've mentioned before. And we continue
14 to excel and continue to provide kids with that
15 leadership. That's why we -- when the school name
16 was changed from "La Academia de Idiomas y Cultura"
17 to "La Academia Dolores Huerta," we chose a local
18 female, because our women needed leadership, and we
19 felt that was very important.

20 We continue to provide our women at our
21 school with not only having them involved in the
22 arts, but also having them involved in SEMA, so they
23 can become leaders in math and engineering and
24 science and not be a field that's dominated mostly
25 by males.

1 Parental involvement. We have an
2 excellent parental involvement program, or many
3 programs. We have a family wellness program which
4 teaches parents how to become involved with their
5 kids and how to have conversations at the dinner
6 table to encourage family unity and family support.

7 We have been working very close with
8 ENLACE. Actually, this year ENLACE piloted a new
9 program at our school that geared -- it brought
10 parents in. It gave us opportunity to get eleven
11 parents into the school. They were taught computer
12 skills and Internet browsing skills. And the
13 parents who completed the program, which all eleven
14 of them did, got the opportunity to receive a free
15 computer. The only thing they had to pay for it was
16 for shipping and handling.

17 That is an exceptional program, because
18 when parents understand what the kids are doing on
19 the computer and how they can block inappropriate
20 content, because our kids are very creative.
21 Additionally, I've hired two educational assistants.
22 One of the educational assistants is providing
23 assistance in math. The other one is providing
24 assistance in every other class we may need her in.

25 Additionally there's a volunteer, who has

1 now -- we've started a class -- well, we began
2 organizing a class that's going to begin in January.
3 And in this class, parents are going to be learning
4 the same math skills and strategies that the kids
5 are learning at our school, so that they can support
6 their children at home with math homework.

7 And, basically, that's it. I don't want
8 to take more than the ten minutes. We're open for
9 any questions that you guys may have. Thank you.

10 THE CHAIR: Thank you for your
11 presentation. Is there any community input?

12 Seeing none, let's move on to
13 Commissioners' questions or comments.

14 Commissioner Bergman.

15 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Mine's more in the
16 nature -- thank you, Madame Chair. Mine is more in
17 the nature of a concern I have. I noted in several
18 different places in your application that you're
19 contemplating a move to another location. And you
20 indicate each time that you're going to submit your
21 amendment to the Las Cruces Public Schools.

22 That move will probably not occur until
23 after -- if your application is approved, if you
24 were under PEC oversight, then I'm a little
25 concerned with the Las Cruces Public Schools telling

1 this school -- Director Gerlicz?

2 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, Commissioner
3 Bergman, this is a question that we have had with
4 Dolores Huerta. And they have approached the
5 Las Cruces Public Schools for an amendment to move
6 into their new building. That amendment was
7 approved by Las Cruces Public Schools already.

8 The -- there's a subsequent amendment to
9 increase their enrollment cap. And the
10 Superintendent of Las Cruces denied that, on the
11 basis of, they need to come to the PEC for that
12 amendment, and that amendment will come in the
13 January meeting.

14 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Thank you,
15 Director Gerlicz. I guess I have nothing else to
16 say. That's a fait accompli. Thank you.

17 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner
18 Bergman. I have a question, and I don't see anyone
19 else right at the moment.

20 What is your current enrollment?

21 MR. CASILLAS: Our current enrollment is
22 150.

23 THE CHAIR: 150. And your enrollment cap
24 is 300.

25 MR. CASILLAS: No, ma'am. Our enrollment

1 cap is 200.

2 THE CHAIR: Let me see where I got that.
3 I'm looking on -- I'm looking on Page -- Intro,
4 Page 10, where -- Charter School Pre-Populated Data,
5 gives the address of the school, and so forth.

6 MR. CASILLAS: That is a mistake I made
7 myself in the application -- and I actually have
8 discussed this with Mr. Gerlicz -- that it was
9 actually 200. I was told in the past that it was
10 300. But when it was brought up later on, I went
11 through our original charter, and I found that it
12 was actually 200. And that's when I started moving
13 on requesting the Las Cruces Public Schools for an
14 amendment to go to 300.

15 THE CHAIR: Okay. Then may I just ask, if
16 you have an enrollment of 150, are you one of the
17 schools that's moving into this new facility that
18 Las Cruces Public Schools is providing?

19 MR. CASILLAS: No, ma'am. We are actually
20 seeking our own facility. We have 150, and we can't
21 increase enrollment there because the facility does
22 not allow for more students.

23 THE CHAIR: Can I just ask why you're not
24 taking advantage of the facility offered by the
25 public schools?

1 MR. CASILLAS: Yes, ma'am, definitely.
2 The -- when we were given the opportunity, we met
3 with Herb Torres and Karen Robles from Las Cruces
4 Public Schools, and we discussed this in detail.
5 When we took it up to the parents, the parents from
6 the school decided they did not want their
7 sixth-graders -- specifically, the parents with the
8 sixth-grade students, they didn't want their
9 sixth-graders so close to high-school students.
10 That was one of the issues they had.

11 The other issues that we had with moving
12 to the new building, which we were very grateful to
13 LCPS -- and I have expressed that to the
14 Superintendent more than once -- the other reason
15 they didn't -- the parents didn't want to move, and
16 the other reason we chose not to move, is because
17 also, we would be sharing the cafeteria, the
18 basketball court, and common grounds with the
19 high-school kids. And it just worried us about what
20 our kids, our sixth-graders, seventh-graders, and
21 eighth-graders would be learning from eleventh- and
22 twelfth-graders, especially.

23 And it would create a very difficult
24 program for us to be -- there are times when you
25 just have a teachable moment, that you want to

1 have -- if we have a visitor, we want to be able to
2 use the cafeteria to have a presentation of some
3 sort. If we would have stayed with Alma d'arte and
4 we would have gone with the Center, we wouldn't have
5 had access to the cafeteria or the auditorium at any
6 time that we would need it.

7 They were going to put J. Paul Taylor on
8 the north side of the block, which would also take
9 the whole field where our kids would be playing
10 soccer, football, baseball, whatever they would do.
11 And, so, it didn't give our kids an opportunity to
12 run during lunch and get tired, so that when they
13 went to the class, they would sit down and listen
14 and work.

15 And, so, we were very grateful and
16 appreciative with LCPS. The parents chose that they
17 didn't want their kids to be around the high-school
18 kids. We took that into consideration. And the
19 more we looked at the program, the more we decided
20 that we couldn't do that.

21 At one of the meetings, I asked Mr. Torres
22 if the option for Las Cruces Public Schools to work
23 with us in acquiring a facility for our school was
24 open to other facilities. He said he didn't know.
25 I tried to get an answer for that, and I just wasn't

1 able to.

2 So, we had a governing council meeting,
3 where, listening to the parents, we decided -- or
4 the parents pretty much decided that they didn't
5 want their kids around high school. That's the
6 biggest reason why we didn't go with it.

7 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

8 Currently, how much of your operational
9 budget is used to provide for your facility? How
10 much goes for rent or lease payment?

11 MR. CASILLAS: We get about \$96,000 from
12 the lease assistance. And from the operation, we
13 take about \$17,000 to \$20,000 to pay for our lease.

14 THE CHAIR: And in the new facility that
15 you're looking at, what would that amount probably
16 increase to out of your operational budget?

17 MR. CASILLAS: At this point, we don't
18 know. It's undetermined. I didn't want to invest
19 any money in looking for a facility without knowing
20 that we were going to be renewed for five years.
21 So, I haven't invested too much time, in the best
22 interests of saving the public's money.

23 So, we're negotiating with the Learning
24 Spaces. Paul Gascoigne is the guy that I've been
25 working with. Right now, we're looking at about

1 between a \$200,000 and \$220,000 lease purchase
2 payment per year. So, if we went with that amount
3 and we increased our enrollment to at least 200,
4 which is what we would be at, we would be paying
5 \$100,000 out of operation the first year, if we
6 stayed at \$200,000 to make the lease payments.

7 THE CHAIR: Okay, thank you. Please tell
8 me about your truancy issues at your school.

9 MR. CASILLAS: We don't really have
10 truancy issues. We have some kids who like to come
11 in late and some that like to leave early. But it's
12 very, very few. On a regular day, we may have maybe
13 seven, eight students absent. And we are very
14 strict about bringing doctors' notes and all that.
15 So, that keep -- we have had 100 -- from 98- to
16 100-percent tendency in the past, and that's what we
17 like to keep it.

18 THE CHAIR: I just notice in your school
19 report card, under "Bonus Points," you were given .3
20 points -- which is not much -- but .3 points for --
21 and it says, "School received points for improvement
22 in habitual truancy rates."

23 MR. CASILLAS: This is my second year at
24 La Academia. So, in the past, they had had some
25 truancy problems; not serious problems, but the kids

1 who would be absent for unjustified reasons. So, I
2 believe those scores, or that number, reflects more
3 the past than the current year -- or last year.

4 So, we've been working on that. But it's
5 not any -- it's not really a serious problem. It's,
6 just, we have -- like everything else, we have work
7 to do. But it's not anything that we can't fix, and
8 it's not anything that I'm gravely worried about.

9 THE CHAIR: Okay, thank you. Commissioner
10 Gant.

11 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, members,
12 I'm going to go back, like I said earlier, to one of
13 the other schools. I have financial concerns with
14 facilities for schools -- for charter schools. And
15 what -- as I understand, in talking to Dr. Sanchez,
16 Associate Superintendent of LCPS, what the Board
17 passed Tuesday night was granting you permission to
18 go find options to move into, not to move, because
19 you don't have a facility to move into.

20 Also -- let me continue, please. Also,
21 you are currently on the Facility Master Plan for
22 Las Cruces Public School District. If you are
23 granted the extension or a renewal of your charter,
24 you will have to develop your own, at your own
25 expense, an FMP, Facility Master Plan, and Ed Specs.

1 And that means you have to have those done before
2 you can request financial assistance through the
3 lease purchase program to pay off your loan that
4 you're going to take to move into that building.

5 So, we're talking next summer, next fall,
6 before you can probably -- if you have somebody
7 working on an FMP right now, you're probably paying
8 for it. And sometimes, they're not cheap. The Ed
9 Specs, you need to get done.

10 But I'm questioning -- what I'm
11 questioning is down the road. As you expressed
12 earlier to another school, the one from Los Lunas,
13 is that once you pay off that loan for the lease
14 purchase, you are fully responsible for all
15 expenses. And that can amount to -- and I know that
16 building you're considering. It was an old
17 furniture store, a church, whatever it was before
18 that, it's just a big, open space inside.

19 And what concerns me is -- and I
20 understand what the parents are saying. But I also
21 look at J. Paul Taylor, who has young students, and
22 their willingness to move over there. And that's a
23 very good charter school, also.

24 But I'm looking at what you're giving up.
25 You're giving up a park across the street that's

1 available to you. I've seen the drawings of the
2 plans that were provided for me to look at for PSFA.
3 And they say J. Paul Taylor is actually going on the
4 west side of the campus, and the north side is still
5 open. That's what I've seen, okay?

6 But later on down the road, you'll have
7 all the expenses. And you could have been in a
8 quiet neighborhood. Solano is one of the busiest
9 streets in town. You're on the busiest street in
10 town, Main Street, and you want to move to another
11 busy street. Please explain why. There's got to be
12 other buildings in Cruces that you might be able to
13 get into.

14 MR. CASILLAS: We -- when we worked on the
15 amendment, I met with Dr. Sanchez and Superintendent
16 Rounds on Tuesday morning. And the reason we worded
17 the amendment so that it didn't specify an address
18 for us to move into is because we were looking at
19 other facilities. We are still searching.

20 The 1405 South Solano is where I was
21 looking at, is a possibility, but it's not a
22 definite place. I do agree with you,
23 Commissioner Gant, that going from one busy street
24 to another busy street is not a wise decision.

25 But one of the reasons we have been

1 looking at that building is I want to move our
2 school as close to the University as possible. I --
3 the University is the place where our kids are going
4 to go when they leave high school. So, with us
5 working at the University and being close to them,
6 we can take our kids to the University frequently.
7 We can have a lot of work with the University.

8 As a matter of fact, last month, we had
9 the chemistry and biochemistry department come and
10 do a presentation at the school. And that's the
11 type of relationships that I need with the
12 University and working with the nursing program, so
13 when they do their orals, they can do them at the
14 school and our kids can witness the orals.

15 I'm also working with the astronomy
16 department so they can come and do presentations at
17 the school. I started a mentorship program last
18 year that invites juniors from the high school and
19 seniors from the high school, as well as university
20 students, to come and mentor our kids, because the
21 more exposure our kids have to university staff,
22 students, personnel, the more likely it is that our
23 students will end up at the university.

24 So, it's a very difficult situation. You
25 give up some benefits, and you take up other

1 benefits. Leaving -- not going with LCPS with their
2 plan was a difficult decision for us. But, like we
3 said, it's -- I said, it was based mostly on
4 parents. And, also we would still be pretty far
5 from the University.

6 The new facility that we've been looking
7 at has a large field, where our kids -- where we can
8 maybe plant some grass, and our kids can have a
9 place to run and play at. It's got some very small
10 streets in the back, so that we don't have to use
11 Solano as an entrance to the school, so that we
12 don't disrupt the traffic. We can actually put it
13 in the back.

14 There are ideas; there are things we can
15 do with that facility, with that land that will lend
16 itself to meet the needs of La Academia Dolores
17 Huerta. And the amendment was proposed that we
18 don't move to the facility, but we are allowed to
19 move, so I can continue searching for other
20 facilities. So, if you guys know of other vacant
21 places in Las Cruces, you're more than welcome to
22 jump in and help me, because that's what we're
23 looking for is support from you and the CSD as we
24 move forward, so that we can continue to provide our
25 kids with an excellent program.

1 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, you're
2 No. 52 right now for your facility on the PSCOC
3 list. In my experience -- I do sit on the PSCOC.
4 In my experience, we'll never get that far this
5 year. And my experience is that when you move into
6 whatever facility you move into, and you renovate
7 it, you have a -- I'm not sure what the minimum
8 New Mexico Construction Index will be for your --
9 that facility you looked at, because they went out
10 and looked at it. PSFA went out and looked at it.

11 But once you renovate that building, then
12 you won't be in the top 60; you'll be way down
13 there. And you won't -- you'll have a roof that
14 goes bad; that's a flat roof, very expensive flat
15 roof. And anything else that comes along in
16 maintenance and utilities and all that, the person
17 you're borrowing the money from will not be paying
18 for those capital improvements or capital needs.

19 So, I real- -- that's my real concern,
20 because I've seen charter schools get in trouble
21 financially because of buildings. And I'd have --
22 this is not part of the vote. But I'm just laying
23 this out here, because I would hate to have you come
24 back to the PEC in a couple of years and say,
25 "Help."

1 I, really -- financially, what does it do
2 to the students? What do you have to take away from
3 programs that they need to finance a building? Like
4 you said, you want to put in grass and all that in
5 that big dirt lot that sits out there. That is a
6 very -- dirt lot. But at the LCPS location, that
7 would be there for you. So --

8 MR. CASILLAS: I agree with you,
9 Commissioner Gant, and I believe your concerns are
10 legitimate. It's the same concerns that we've had.
11 That's why we're not set only on this building. We
12 are looking for other avenues, other buildings.

13 The whole thing about hopefully planting
14 grass -- I've contacted the College of Agriculture
15 at the University, and we have been asking them for
16 grass seeds and for them to help us actually create
17 an irrigation system, so that it would be cheap and
18 something that would be friendly to the earth.

19 I've also met with the engineering
20 department. They have a new program where they're
21 looking -- they're taking public buildings and
22 they're making them 100-percent self-sufficient
23 through solar power. I've been looking at --
24 speaking with them.

25 So, hopefully, if we do get a building, we

1 won't fall into financial difficulties. I'm trying
2 to do everything I can. I can't guarantee anything.
3 But it does remain a fact, the building that we're
4 in now does not serve justice to our students. They
5 deserve a lot more than that.

6 We have an exceptional educational
7 program. We just need a better building. Once we
8 get into a better building, we can move forward.
9 So, I share the same concerns that you have,
10 Commissioner Gant. And like I said, any advice you
11 guys can provide, any guidance, we would gladly take
12 it, and work with you guys as we move forward.

13 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Other comments?
14 Questions, Commissioners?

15 Seeing none, the Chair would entertain a
16 motion. Commissioner Bergman?

17 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Madame Chair, I
18 would move that the Public Education Commission
19 approve the renewal application of La Academia
20 Dolores Huerta for a five-year term.

21 THE CHAIR: Do I hear a second?

22 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Second.

23 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Pogna?

24 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Uh-huh.

25 THE CHAIR: Motion by Commissioner

1 Bergman, second by Commissioner Pogna, to approve
2 the application of Dolores Huerta Charter School for
3 a five-year term, renewal term. Is there any
4 discussion?

5 Secretary Bergman, may we have a roll-call
6 vote, please?

7 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
8 Peralta.

9 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Pogna.

11 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Carr.

13 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
15 Conyers.

16 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Yes.

17 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
18 Parker.

19 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Yes.

20 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Gant.

21 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
23 Shearman.

24 THE CHAIR: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

1 Bergman votes "yes." Madame Chair, that is an
2 eight-to-zero vote.

3 THE CHAIR: Thank you. By unanimous vote,
4 the application of Dolores Huerta School is
5 approved.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. CASILLAS: Thank you. Thank you very
8 much.

9 THE CHAIR: Commissioners, it is now
10 approximately a quarter till 12:00. I would
11 recommend that we take our lunch break now and come
12 back and get started with the next school on the
13 list, which is Cien Aguas. Is that acceptable?

14 How long would we like to take? Thirty
15 minutes? Forty-five?

16 COMMISSIONER CARR: Forty-five.

17 THE CHAIR: Forty-five? Then let's come
18 back at 12:30. Thank you. We are in recess.

19 (A recess was taken at 11:45 p.m., and
20 reconvened at 12:30 p.m., as follows:)

21 THE CHAIR: Ladies and gentlemen, by the
22 clock on the wall, it's 12:30 and time for us to get
23 started.

24 I would ask the representatives for
25 Cien Aguas to come forward, please, to the table.

1 Mr. Gerlicz, may we have your report, please?

2 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, members of the
3 Commission, and Cien Aguas, bienvenidos.

4 Cien Aguas is -- the story of Cien Aguas
5 is also an interesting one. It is a bilingual
6 school in Albuquerque, currently housed in two
7 locations, unfortunately, elementary and middle
8 school. That is soon to be rectified, as they move
9 into a new structure.

10 The Charter School Division is
11 recommending renewal for a five-year term for Cien
12 Aguas, but with some conditions. And the conditions
13 emanate from our analysis of some things that Cien
14 Aguas needs to do in order to warrant that five-year
15 renewal.

16 For example, throughout Cien Aguas'
17 literature, they are borrowing heavily from the
18 International Baccalaureate curriculum. It's on
19 their website. They cite the International
20 Baccalaureate curriculum in their materials. Yet
21 they're not an International Baccalaureate school.
22 They're not sanctioned by the International
23 Baccalaureate agency or organization, nationally nor
24 internationally. And that's an issue. They need to
25 clear that up.

1 The school's response to that analysis was
2 very fine, very professional. They completely
3 agreed. But that is one of the conditions that we
4 will ask of Cien Aguas in their renewal process
5 going forward.

6 The other issue that we will focus
7 attention on for Cien Aguas is their focus on their
8 Q1 students. As a bilingual school in English and
9 Spanish providing a graduated -- first, it's 90/10
10 in one language; then it's 80/20 next grade; 70/30,
11 next grade; until they're 50/50, eventually, which
12 is a standard bilingual approach. They are licensed
13 and certified by our bilingual office here at the
14 PED, and all of that is fine and good.

15 But their Q1 population, their ELL
16 population, has been shown to not progress as
17 rapidly as their other population. That's an area
18 of focus for the school. That was the area of our
19 data analysis, and in the school report card, that
20 was the most lacking. And, again, the school
21 recognizes that, fully agrees, are on board with
22 that.

23 Those are the two conditions that the
24 Charter School Division would recommend, as outlined
25 in our PEC packet. And I'll read them as such, that

1 Cien Aguas International must clearly redefine the
2 international focus of their mission and ensure that
3 they are not misrepresenting their school as an
4 International Baccalaureate-certified program, or as
5 a school that plans to become IB-certified; or, the
6 alternative, they could go ahead and be IB-certified
7 and go through that process if they want.

8 If they agree to that condition, and if
9 the Commission agrees to that condition, then that
10 could be treated as an amendment to their charter,
11 so that that aspect of it is very clear.

12 That was a concern to the Charter School
13 Division, that that not be misrepresented. Parents
14 do not sign up to send their students to an IB
15 school when it's really not, et cetera, et cetera.
16 So, that's the one condition that we would request.

17 And, also, in the renewal process and in
18 the contract negotiation process, we will focus our
19 attention on their Q1 students and listen and see
20 what the school proposes to increase their Q1
21 population scores.

22 Thank you, Madame Chair.

23 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Gerlicz.

24 Welcome. Please introduce yourselves.

25 Spell your name, if it's unique. And you will have

1 ten minutes for your presentation.

2 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. My name is
3 Michael Rodriguez, R-O-D-R-I-G-U-E-Z. To my right
4 is our assistant principal, Robert Gallegos,
5 G-A-L-L-E-G-O-S. To my left, we have our curriculum
6 coordinator and founder of Cien Aguas, Eva Thaddeus,
7 T-H-A-D-D-E-U-S.

8 Behind me to my left here, we have our
9 governing council chair, Lisa Meyer, M-E-Y-E-R; and
10 our business manager, Patrick Kelly.

11 THE CHAIR: Begin whenever you're ready.

12 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you very much. Good
13 afternoon, Madame Chair, members of the Commission.
14 On behalf of the Cien Aguas students, parents,
15 staff, governing council and community, I would like
16 to thank the Commission for this opportunity and
17 thank the Charter School Division staff for their
18 support, professionalism, and guidance through this
19 process. Also, I want to recognize and thank
20 Commissioner Pogna for attending part of our site
21 visit with the Charter School Division, as well.

22 We appreciate the format of this renewal
23 process and the lens that it provides through which
24 we were able to celebrate the successes over our
25 first five years, and also be able to take a

1 critical look at areas that we must focus on moving
2 forward for the next five years.

3 With that said, the leadership of Cien
4 Aguas is in full agreement with the Charter School
5 Division's analysis and final recommendation
6 regarding our renewal as presented, with conditions.

7 Cien Aguas International School is a
8 dual-language, K-through-8 school, with an
9 international environmental focus. The
10 instructional program deliberately and skillfully
11 integrates students who differ in language, culture,
12 and income in order to promote high achievement for
13 all.

14 Cien Aguas seeks to develop confident,
15 curious, and compassionate young people who are
16 bilingual, bi-literate, committed to a sustainable
17 society, and have the academic and interpersonal
18 skills necessary to succeed in their further
19 education and in the world.

20 On April 1 in 2009, my first day at Cien
21 Aguas, as their first director -- and only director
22 at this point -- I was given a start-up budget and
23 keys to the facility. From that point on, like my
24 staff, I have never worked so hard in my life, but
25 also never felt such a sense of accomplishment and

1 pride for what it is that I'm doing.

2 The caliber of staff that we've assembled
3 and the culture that has evolved from our school has
4 truly developed to a tight-knit school community
5 that goes far beyond the Southeast Heights, where
6 we're located in Albuquerque. It spans and brings
7 together many people and cultures from across the
8 Albuquerque Metro Area for a common purpose. And
9 this is truly what makes Cien Aguas a very unique
10 and special place to be.

11 Cien Aguas opened its doors in 2009 with
12 106 students, as I mentioned, located in the
13 Southeast Heights of Albuquerque, which is stated in
14 our charter as our focus area. We utilize the
15 thematic approach to teaching and meeting the
16 requirements of the Common Core through such things
17 as our weekly grade-level collaborations with our
18 instructional coach, biweekly professional
19 development time set aside specifically with our
20 instructional coach on the -- on the -- on the
21 instructional practices that we use at Cien Aguas.
22 We have developed a very cohesive staff and focus on
23 our mission.

24 Over the years, we've steadily grown to
25 where our enrollment -- from 106 in '09 to

1 311 students, which we have currently, enrolled in
2 grades K through 8. Because of the lower than
3 expected attrition that was expected in our initial
4 charter, we came before the PEC a few years ago to
5 increase our cap from 330 students to 424 students,
6 which allowed us to have two classes per grade
7 level, from kindergarten through eighth grade, which
8 we will be going into over the next four years.

9 Currently, our first group of Cien Aguas
10 students that have been educated solely by Cien
11 Aguas are in fourth grade. So, we strategically
12 planned out our growth over the next -- you know,
13 for the next five years, to have that growth and our
14 cap be reached in four years, for now.

15 As the Charter School Division noted, and
16 is evident by our annual Quality of Ed survey, Cien
17 Aguas has a high rate of parent satisfaction.
18 Because of this, we not only have kept students in
19 our school, we've developed a school community that
20 comes together and stands for what it believes in.
21 From contacting legislators to help acquire capital
22 funds, to planning meaningful events for staff and
23 students the parents and community as well, are very
24 dedicated to the success of our school and
25 fulfilling our mission.

1 All meetings and communication are done in
2 English and Spanish, including board meetings for
3 people who need that.

4 The Cien Aguas Green School Project is a
5 501(c)(3) that was put into place in order to help
6 our school reach its goal of eventually building a
7 zero-energy campus. Environmental sustainability is
8 one of the key points of our school, one of the
9 things that we teach, and Zero-Energy Campus is a
10 big feat, especially with issues relating to do
11 adequate facilities and for us being tied to the
12 Southeast Heights of Albuquerque.

13 So, with the help of the Green School
14 Project, we have, over the last four years, looked
15 at a number of facilities, a number of options, and,
16 you know, are glad that we're now ready to move into
17 something that is going to be beneficial for us.

18 In September, I came before the Commission
19 requesting approval to move into a facility that
20 would meet our needs as a growing school, while also
21 bringing together the elementary and middle school
22 students and staffs back together under one roof.
23 Since separating the groups temporarily a couple of
24 years ago, we've had to creatively plan and manage
25 our staff and resources on two campuses, which are

1 separated by about two miles.

2 So, really, bringing those two groups back
3 together is going to be essential in us being able
4 to plan vertically and really make our program and
5 our school community what it is that we really truly
6 want it to look like.

7 Academic achievement is important, and
8 serving the Q1 students and the growing number of
9 ELL students within our school is definitely going
10 to be on a focus for us, something that is very
11 important for what Cien Aguas believes in. One of
12 the things we're into in our original charter is
13 serving the underserved ELL students of the
14 Southeast Heights. We've done many things to
15 encourage, recruit, in the sense of advertising, you
16 know, providing the school lunch program,
17 transportation, all these different things, a
18 sliding scale for our after-school program, to try
19 and encourage those families to really be part of
20 our school.

21 In 2009, we started with 18 ELL students,
22 and today, Cien Aguas has 76 ELL students enrolled
23 in our school. So, we know that that's -- brings
24 with it some more complications and more planning
25 and things that we'll have to do on our end. But

1 it's a challenge that we are definitely up for,
2 something that we really, truly believe in.

3 So, with that said, we thank you for your
4 consideration and would love nothing more than to
5 continue serving the students of the Albuquerque
6 Metro Area in a focused, dedicated, and cohesive
7 public school setting for another five years.

8 Thank you.

9 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much for those
10 comments. Do we have anyone in the audience that
11 would like to comment?

12 Seeing none, let's move on to Commissioner
13 comments and questions. Commissioners, do you have
14 comments or questions? Commissioner Peralta.

15 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes. Can you speak
16 to us about possibly the factors that maybe you have
17 identified as to why your Q1 population of students
18 have not made the gains that you may have expected?
19 And have you had any dialogue about maybe some
20 possible strategies or interventions to correct the
21 situation?

22 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Madame Chair, Commissioner
23 Peralta, one of the things we've instituted this
24 school year is data folders, kindergarten through
25 eighth grade. We're making sure that teachers not

1 only have access to the information, but that their
2 utilizing it in a very systematic way to create
3 their groupings, you know, to provide specific
4 targeted instruction to our Q1 students, to our ELL
5 students, our special-ed students in regular
6 classes, and make sure that people understand that.
7 So, along with that, we have a data committee who is
8 dedicated to helping train staff in the most
9 effective way of rolling that out.

10 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Thank you.

11 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Pogna.

12 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Madame Chairman, I
13 just want to make a comment. I did go to their
14 school for their visitation and review on November
15 the 4th. And I was very impressed. The courtesy
16 extended to me by Mr. Rodriguez was wonderful. He
17 offered me lunch.

18 THE CHAIR: Millie --

19 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Can you hear me?

20 THE CHAIR: -- I think talking about the
21 site visit -- I'm getting information from Abby --
22 that we probably should not go there.

23 MS. LEWIS: We shouldn't discuss the site
24 visit at this juncture.

25 COMMISSIONER POGNA: I can't talk about

1 it?

2 MS. LEWIS: Correct. That would be my
3 legal advice. It's up to you if you want to take it
4 or not.

5 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Okay.

6 THE CHAIR: Sorry about that. Thank you.
7 Commissioner Bergman, did you have your
8 hand up?

9 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Sure, unless
10 somebody else wants to go.

11 Thank you, Madame Chair. I'm going to
12 read one of your responses that you made to the CSD
13 analysis, because I thought it was telling, and I
14 was happy to see it.

15 And in that -- one of your responses, you
16 said, "As with any effective school or organization,
17 we realize that there are still many areas that can
18 be improved. As the conditions for renewal specify,
19 we must take immediate action to clarify and clearly
20 redefine the critical components of our mission and
21 goal."

22 And I heartily agree with that, of course.
23 And I'm glad that you have that kind of mindset.
24 And I was going to note that the CSD has suggested
25 some conditions as a part of your renewal, and one

1 of those conditions was specifically for the lowest
2 performing quartile. And you would be definitely
3 required to do an academic -- a really nice,
4 rigorous academic goal for that area.

5 But I did not want to state that that does
6 not -- should not be taken to limit you. I believe
7 there are other academic areas in your school that
8 also, right now, probably could benefit from having
9 some really strong goals to give you the motivation
10 and the encouragement.

11 And I guess I'm stating that because I go
12 to most of the contract -- the performance contract
13 negotiations. And I'm going to be looking. So, I
14 wanted to encourage you, between now and whenever
15 that date comes up, to work with your CSD liaison
16 and craft those kind of goals that will motivate
17 you, not only in this one particular area, but in
18 the areas that -- the other areas that you've
19 identified that probably could stand some of the
20 improvement you're referring to there. Do you have
21 any comment to that?

22 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Madame Chair, Commissioner
23 Bergman, we couldn't agree more. We definitely want
24 to make sure that the things that we're committing
25 to are, you know, an extreme focus for us, and that

1 we are giving justice to what it is that our
2 families are expecting from us.

3 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Outstanding. I'll
4 look forward to seeing where we're going to work in
5 those areas, and what we can do to work in that kind
6 of thing. Thank you, Madame Chair.

7 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Commissioner Gant.

8 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, members,
9 first of all, what is your cap, student cap?

10 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Madame Chair,
11 Commissioner Gant, our cap is 424. We came before
12 the PEC a couple of years ago to increase it from
13 330.

14 COMMISSIONER GANT: I'm reading 330,
15 still, your cap, in this document.

16 THE CHAIR: Let's see if we can get a
17 clarification from Mr. Gerlicz, because it does say
18 300 on this report that we're looking at.

19 COMMISSIONER GANT: Anyway, moving on, if
20 I may, Madame Chair, one -- the concern that I have,
21 again, is financial, as you've probably heard me
22 speak before. And I'm looking at your audit
23 reports: Consistently not compliant in several --
24 many areas, repeated noncompliant in several areas.

25 And I've said this in other meetings

1 before to other charter schools, that your budget --
2 and this one is based on 300-and-some students --
3 you know, is not a billion dollars, not \$500 million
4 or -- you know. So, I really don't understand why
5 you have all these noncompliances and recurring
6 noncompliances for the same thing over the years.

7 And my second part of that is your Board
8 of Finance. What are they doing to ensure that you
9 do what you're supposed to do with your finances?

10 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Madame Chair, I'm going to
11 have our business manager speak to that question.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Madame Chair,
13 Commissioner Gant, Commissioners, thank you for the
14 question. The noncompliance repeat findings, I've
15 analyzed them. We've looked at them as an audit
16 committee, as a finance committee, as a board.
17 We've had some trouble with the separate school
18 sites, having administrative staff separated, trying
19 to maintain segregation of duties.

20 And a couple of those findings are, you
21 know, our deposits not being deposited within
22 24 hours, you know. With limited -- of
23 administrative staff at one site, it's hard to -- if
24 one person's out within that segregation of duties,
25 it can be difficult to stay within our policies and

1 procedures and comply with the requirement to
2 deposit within 24 hours.

3 We take every audit finding seriously. We
4 look at them as a way to improve. We've -- since
5 the first year, we've decreased findings -- since
6 our first operational year, we've decreased findings
7 every year. I look forward to being under one roof
8 to be able to have the administrative staff to be
9 able to process financial policies correctly and
10 comply with what either state law or our own
11 policies have.

12 We've -- you know, we continue -- we've
13 continued to work on our policies and, you know,
14 tried to address the needs that there are, and I
15 think we do our best to do that. Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, what I'm
17 hearing -- I hear a lot of -- I've got to say
18 that -- excuses, a reason or a rationale for why it
19 happened. But I'm not hearing a solution.

20 SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you,
21 Commissioner Gant, Madame Chair. We -- each year,
22 we -- when we get the audit findings, we do create a
23 corrective action plan designed to hold individuals
24 responsible, who was the main person responsible for
25 that finding, what are the steps we can take to

1 remedy that, and updates on where we are in that
2 corrective action plan.

3 There's always a case of human error in
4 some of those, whether it's, you know, the deposits
5 or a PO being signed by the wrong person, that kind
6 of thing. But, you know, we have those audit
7 corrective action plans that are given to our board,
8 approved at a council meeting, and appropriate
9 personnel have been made aware of the different
10 issues and how to remedy the situations.

11 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, members,
12 I don't know how we do this. And maybe Ms. Lewis
13 could help us. I note that you don't have the audit
14 yet for 12/13. So, I would suggest that we need to
15 see that audit report as soon as it comes out to see
16 if there's any more of the noncompliant -- what do
17 you think, Madame Chair?

18 THE CHAIR: I'll defer to Ms. Lewis.

19 MS. LEWIS: Are you asking if you can
20 create a condition? I believe we can figure out the
21 wording of a condition, if you would like to vote to
22 approve the school, conditional upon whatever it is
23 that you want to see in that audit report, or have
24 resolved after you see that audit report.

25 COMMISSIONER GANT: Thank you.

1 Madame Chair, thank you. I just think this is, to
2 me, a big deterrent. And I don't think we need to
3 go any further down the road with financial matters
4 sticking out like this. It shouldn't be happening,
5 in my view; right?

6 Of course, it's -- the rest of the
7 Commission has to vote on it. But that's my take on
8 this. It just kind of bothers me to have all
9 these -- these sitting out here time after time, the
10 same thing. And over -- what? -- a four-year --
11 yeah, a four-year period. So, thank you,
12 Madame Chair.

13 THE CHAIR: Other comments or questions
14 from Commissioners?

15 COMMISSIONER CARR: Madame Chair.

16 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Carr.

17 COMMISSIONER CARR: I echo
18 Commissioner Gant's concerns in regards to these
19 findings as well. I -- and, then, also, the
20 concerns in regards to whether or not you're
21 misrepresenting the IB program, which is a very
22 stringent program to get into and have your school
23 approved for. AP is, too. But the IB is even more
24 so. And I think that's important.

25 And then relating all these things to the

1 children, you know, I -- I'm a teacher, and I get
2 excuses all the time. And the last one I got was,
3 "My cat peed on the composition book," and -- which
4 is probably, no doubt, true, you know.

5 Nonetheless, the paper was still due, you
6 know. And the -- I -- you know, it's -- we are
7 under a situation right now where we -- you know,
8 the Governor and the Secretary Designate doesn't
9 want to hear excuses about performance. And lots of
10 people don't want -- and like I say, we just want
11 you to get things -- get things done.

12 And we have to set an example for our
13 students, which is what I always try to do. Yes,
14 we're all human, and we all make mistakes. But it's
15 important that we set a good example, that we are
16 performing in an extraordinary way. If we expect
17 that out of our students, I should expect even more
18 out of myself, because I certainly can't expect my
19 students to do well if I'm not performing well.

20 And I certainly can't expect them to
21 follow my example, because they will do as we do.
22 They will not do what we say. And I think that's --
23 that's important. And that's all, Madame Chair.
24 Thank you.

25 THE CHAIR: Commissioners, any other

1 questions or comments?

2 Let me just ask Director Gerlicz if he was
3 able to come up with a definitive enrollment cap.

4 MR. GERLICZ: We're still working on it.

5 MS. STOFOSIK: The database is taking a
6 long time.

7 MR. GERLICZ: We're still trying to get on
8 the database.

9 THE CHAIR: Still trying? Okay.

10 Commissioner Gant brought up the audit
11 results. And I just have one question about that.
12 I notice in 2012, you only had two audit findings,
13 and that's good. One -- they were both minor;
14 that's good. But a conflict of interest is a
15 finding that's really -- grabs my attention.
16 Certainly, without naming names or anything like
17 that, could you tell me the nature, or what this was
18 all about?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Madame Chair, thank
20 you. Commissioners, the conflict of interest
21 finding that we received was due to a board member
22 that works for a -- the Dual Language Ed of
23 New Mexico, which is the primary professional
24 development group for the curriculum that the school
25 has.

1 She -- she was on the board because we
2 felt it was important to have a person with the
3 curriculum expertise. The conflict was disclosed
4 initially at a Board meeting. And we have since,
5 with the auditors, worked out a way to remedy the
6 finding. She receives no commission, no kind of
7 compensation based on her being on the Board and
8 working for that company.

9 The auditors have -- I have worked with
10 the auditors to kind of figure out what they needed
11 as proof that there's no conflict there. And that
12 has since been remedied.

13 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Let me just throw
14 this out, because it seems, to my mind, a good thing
15 for us to consider. The conditions that are here
16 that have been suggested by CSD, I certainly can
17 agree to.

18 One of the things, though, in this
19 application that does concern me is that this
20 school's final grade for 2011-2012 was a "D." Their
21 school growth, internal to that report, is an "F."
22 Growth of the lowest performing, Q1, is an "F."

23 I am concerned about those things, in
24 addition to the items that CSD has brought to us,
25 and I'd like to throw out for consideration that

1 instead of a five-year renewal term, that we
2 consider a three-year renewal term, so that CSD can
3 work extremely closely with this school and get
4 these items remedied, get this school back on track
5 in a more timely manner.

6 I would like to hear your thoughts on a
7 three-year versus a five-year term for this renewal.

8 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, members of the
9 Commission, not on that issue. But we have accessed
10 the database, and we have found the amendment that
11 says that the cap is 424.

12 THE CHAIR: Four twenty- --

13 MS. STOFOSIK: Four.

14 THE CHAIR: Four twenty-four. And the
15 actual enrollment is --

16 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Madame Chair, we're at
17 311.

18 THE CHAIR: Then, let me just ask my
19 standard question. That's almost 100 difference.
20 Why are you not at your capacity. When you asked to
21 increase it, what has prevented you from reaching
22 that?

23 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Madame Chair, at the time,
24 we were anticipating the fact that we do need to
25 move into another facility, bring our students back

1 together. The other issue is that we are growing
2 from the bottom up. When we first opened up in
3 2009, we had two kindergarten classrooms and one --
4 or combo classes at the others. We've since grown
5 from the bottom. Those kindergarteners are now in
6 fourth grade, and over the next four years, as we
7 add another class per grade level, we will meet that
8 gap.

9 THE CHAIR: And you are moving to a new
10 facility; is that correct?

11 MR. RODRIGUEZ: (Indicates.)

12 THE CHAIR: Okay. And has that already
13 been approved?

14 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Madame Chair, we are
15 moving as of -- when we get back from winter break
16 in January. And that came before the Commission in
17 September, for that approval.

18 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Thank you.
19 Commissioner Gant.

20 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, members,
21 Ms. Casias, have they done everything they need to
22 do through the PSFA system to -- for the move?

23 MS. CASIAS: Mr. Gant, Madame Chair, the
24 Charter did contact us. And we have received the
25 construction drawings, 100-percent construction

1 drawings, reviewed them for E-Occupancy and
2 adequacy. And they received a score of 9.91, which
3 a low number is better. So, yes, sir, they have
4 done what they needed to do in regard to a facility.

5 COMMISSIONER GANT: Thank you.

6 Madame Chair, after reading some of this,
7 as you have read some of this, I think your
8 recommendation for a three-year, I could go along
9 with.

10 THE CHAIR: Any comments from anyone else?

11 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Madame Chair, I
12 would concur with that, as well.

13 THE CHAIR: A three-year? Thank you.
14 Anyone else have thoughts?

15 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Should we ask them
16 if they concur, or is that --

17 THE CHAIR: No.

18 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Okay. Okay.

19 THE CHAIR: The one question I would ask
20 you all, on the conditions, you have a choice there,
21 I believe, as to which one you go for. I'm not
22 asking you to commit to anything. But I just wonder
23 if you had an opportunity to give it some thought
24 and which one you're sort of leaning towards,
25 perhaps?

1 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Madame Chair, at our last
2 governing council meeting, it was something decided
3 by our community, that we would be discussing this
4 issue, in particular. It's something we've been
5 talking about with our attorney, as well. We are in
6 the process of making that determination as soon as
7 possible. But we are leaning in the direction of
8 possibly not going IB. Particularly, you know,
9 there's -- as Commissioner Carr mentioned, it's very
10 rigorous in terms of the requirements. There's a
11 financial commitment that you make in terms of
12 annual fees, professional development.

13 With the population that we are growing at
14 Cien Aguas, we do have a lot of needs, as is evident
15 through our Q1 students, which we want to make sure
16 that we are taking care of, and not utilizing monies
17 we could be using for that on fees for program.

18 One other point of clarification: Last
19 school year, we did raise our grade from a "D" the
20 previous year to a "C."

21 THE CHAIR: Oh, okay. That's not here.
22 Or at least I don't see it. Mr. Gerlicz?

23 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, members of the
24 Commission, Cien Aguas is on an upward slope. It's
25 a slow upward slope, but they have improved over

1 time. Their three-year average is a "C." And that
2 is an increase from '11 and '12, which is why the
3 Charter School Division did not contemplate a
4 three-year renewal, but a five-year with these
5 conditions.

6 THE CHAIR: Thank you for that. Are there
7 other comments, questions from Commissioners?

8 Commissioners, before we move to a motion
9 on this school, I would just direct your attention.
10 The conditions that are proposed by CSD are on a
11 page here that's not numbered. But it's on the
12 reverse side of where Cien Aguas' text is listed.
13 We would need to include those conditions as part of
14 the motion, if we're going to approve this school.

15 If we are going to approve this school for
16 three years rather than the five, that needs to be
17 part of the motion as well. All right?

18 Any further discussion? The Chair would
19 entertain a motion. Commissioner Gant.

20 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, I move
21 that Cien Aguas International School's renewal
22 application be approved by the New Mexico Public
23 Education Commission for a period of a three-year
24 term, with the following conditions:

25 Cien Aguas International School must

1 clearly redefine the international focus of their
2 mission and ensure that they are not misrepresenting
3 their school as an International Baccalaureate
4 certified program, or as a school that plans to
5 become an International Baccalaureate certified; or,
6 alternatively, the school can present evidence to
7 the PEC that it has determined that it will seek
8 International Baccalaureate certification through
9 the International Baccalaureate-Certified program,
10 and Cien Aguas International School must ensure that
11 their vision and mission are not violating the
12 copyright laws. And International Baccalaureate --
13 what? -- International Baccalaureate, and present
14 evidence of compliance of these terms to the Public
15 Education Commission. [Verbatim.]

16 This has to -- these conditions must be
17 met within 90 days of the date from which the PEC's
18 written approval -- PEC's written approval of
19 renewal.

20 Additionally, Cien Aguas International
21 School shall present an academic performance
22 indicator for each year of the new charter, which
23 lists specific targets for achievement for the
24 lowest quartile of students based on academic
25 performance data that meets or exceeds PED targets

1 for growth for this quartile of students. The
2 indicators must be one that the PEC can agree to
3 through the negotiation process of the contracting.

4 Ms. Lewis, do we have maybe a condition
5 for the audit yet?

6 MS. LEWIS: No. But you want a condition
7 for the audit?

8 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes.

9 MS. LEWIS: I think we should talk about
10 it so that I am wording it correctly. So, if you'll
11 give me a little more information on what you want
12 to see once you receive the audit --

13 COMMISSIONER GANT: What I'm looking for,
14 Ms. Lewis, is a condition that says they will
15 present the current year's audit to us as soon as it
16 is presented -- as soon as it is released by the
17 auditors.

18 MS. LEWIS: So, you just want to see --
19 the condition is for you to be able to see it?

20 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes, as soon as
21 possible.

22 MS. LEWIS: I think that's sufficient.

23 COMMISSIONER GANT: Additionally, Cien
24 Aguas International School will present to the
25 Public Education Commission, through the Charter

1 School Division, the completed audit for School Year
2 2012-2013, as soon as it is released.

3 Thank you, Madame Chair.

4 THE CHAIR: Is that sufficient?

5 MS. LEWIS: (Indicates.)

6 THE CHAIR: You heard the motion. Do we
7 have a second?

8 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Second.

9 THE CHAIR: Motion by Commissioner Gant,
10 second by Commissioner Bergman, to approve Cien
11 Aguas for a period of three years, including the
12 stated conditions. Is there any discussion?

13 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Madame Chair?

14 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Peralta.

15 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: If I may, may I go
16 back and see -- and check -- I'm not fully sure that
17 in the Conditions 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, that Mr. Gant
18 may have made notice of the 90-day requirement? Was
19 that in there? I may have missed that.

20 MS. LEWIS: He put it at the end, instead
21 of --

22 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: He did? Okay.

23 Thank you.

24 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Any other comments
25 or questions? Discussion?

1 Seeing none, Commissioner Bergman,
2 roll-call vote, please?

3 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Pogna.
4 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.
5 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Carr.
6 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.
7 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
8 Conyers.
9 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Yes.
10 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
11 Parker.
12 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Yes.
13 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
14 Peralta.
15 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.
16 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Gant.
17 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes.
18 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
19 Shearman.
20 THE CHAIR: Yes.
21 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
22 Bergman votes "yes." Madame Chair, that is an
23 eight-to-zero vote.
24 THE CHAIR: Thank you. The vote is
25 unanimous to approve the application of Cien Aguas

1 Charter School for a renewal period of three years,
2 with the conditions as stated. Congratulations.

3 (Applause.)

4 THE CHAIR: We would ask the
5 representatives from Cesar Chavez Community School
6 to come to the table, please. Good afternoon.

7 SPEAKER: Hello.

8 THE CHAIR: Mr. Director, whenever you're
9 ready.

10 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, members of the
11 Commission, representatives from Cesar Chavez,
12 welcome Bienvenidos.

13 Cesar Chavez also has a unique and, in
14 many ways, an inspirational story to tell to the
15 educational world. It is a SAM school, S-A-M, which
16 stands for Supplemental Accountability Measures.
17 And I encourage the Commissioners to ask questions
18 about what that means.

19 Kelly Callahan was on the committee that
20 helped establish the SAM process. And the
21 Cesar Chavez school, because of its mission and the
22 population that it serves, qualifies as a SAM
23 school.

24 The part about the inspirational story
25 comes from the fact that this is a school that's

1 dedicated to reengaging kids that traditional public
2 schools have traditionally failed. And they are
3 reengaging them, and they are reengaging them in
4 high numbers.

5 What's interesting about the report card,
6 if you'll notice, is that for the population that
7 Cesar Chavez, as do other charter schools serve,
8 they tend to do poorly on the current standing,
9 which is the annual snapshot of skills that are done
10 in March. Regardless of where students have come
11 from or how long they've been at the school, that's
12 a snapshot of the school for a population that is --
13 at Cesar Chavez, that population of students
14 historically will not do well.

15 But if you look at the growth data that
16 Cesar Chavez is presenting, that's the part that's
17 inspirational. These kids are growing. Both their
18 lowest performing students and their Q3 performing
19 students -- which, quite frankly, in this school,
20 hard to tell the difference between what is the
21 bottom 25 and what's the rest -- they're all of that
22 caliber. And growth is happening.

23 The school is very well run. The
24 liaisons, Kelly Callahan and Karen Ehlert, report a
25 very efficient operation, excellent leadership, both

1 at the school site, as well as at the board level.

2 For all of those reasons, the Charter
3 School Division recommends a five-year renewal
4 without conditions.

5 Thank you, Madame Chair.

6 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Hello, again.
7 Please introduce yourselves. Spell your name, if
8 necessary. And you have ten minutes for your
9 presentation.

10 MR. SHAPIRO: Hi, I'm Dan Shapiro. I'm
11 the governing council president. I thought I'd say
12 something, a word, since I don't think a governing
13 council president has said anything here, probably
14 ever. Maybe not.

15 We -- we think we had a very, very --
16 that's right. I should introduce -- this is Caryl
17 Thomas, who misspells her first name, C-A-R-Y-L.
18 And, then, we have our business manager, Debra
19 Albrycht. And sitting in the audience is the -- is
20 the Foundation chair, if there are detailed
21 questions about the financing of the school and the
22 building.

23 We think we had a very thorough, very
24 accurate, very professional assessment. We agree
25 with what it -- with the results. We're happy with

1 them; we rely on them.

2 And it seems to me that you will have your
3 questions, and you have to endure a ten-minute
4 presentation to get to the questions you want to
5 have. So, we're willing to let you ask your
6 questions right now, and she will answer them.

7 Thank you.

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you. I just have one
9 question that I have to ask first. Mr. Shapiro, are
10 you a New Mexico native?

11 MR. SHAPIRO: Well, I came here in 1974.
12 But I'm from the Bronx, and a lawyer, to boot.

13 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER GANT: You're still a
15 tourist.

16 THE CHAIR: Commissioners, do you still
17 have questions? Commissioner Bergman. Oh. Did I
18 skip the public? I was so busy asking my own
19 question.

20 Do we have comments from the public?
21 Seeing none, now, Commissioners, do you have
22 questions? Commissioner Parker.

23 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Madame Chair,
24 Commissioners, before I get into -- or before we get
25 into questions, I just want to say, from my personal

1 standpoint, I think you should be commended because
2 of the target audience that you're serving in the
3 school and the fact that you're getting children who
4 were otherwise not engaged in the school
5 environment, getting them engaged and showing
6 improvement. I just think you should be commended
7 for that before we get started with the questions.

8 MS. THOMAS: Thank you very much.

9 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Other questions?
10 Commissioner Carr.

11 COMMISSIONER CARR: I have probably an
12 inappropriate question for this setting. But, so, I
13 love the name -- I'm a history teacher. So
14 Cesar Chavez; right?

15 MS. THOMAS: Uh-huh.

16 COMMISSIONER CARR: So, are your teachers
17 unionized?

18 MS. THOMAS: Madame Chair and
19 Commissioner Carr, they are not.

20 MR. SHAPIRO: But we do have fruit.

21 COMMISSIONER CARR: I don't know if Cesar
22 Chavez would like it, but that's fine.

23 MR. GERLICZ: Based on the conditions
24 under which those teachers work, I'd be thrilled.

25 COMMISSIONER CARR: Very true. That's it.

1 THE CHAIR: Other questions or comments?
2 Commissioner Bergman?

3 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: I just wanted to
4 note that I'm looking at your 2011-2012 report from
5 PED, and then I'm looking at your current grade
6 report. And the difference was phenomenal.

7 MS. THOMAS: Yes, it was.

8 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: I'm curious. How
9 did you achieve that in one year?

10 MS. THOMAS: Madame Chair and Commissioner
11 Bergman, I think it was a combination of factors.
12 I'm going to be honest and say I think that the
13 grading system has been tweaked and is more accurate
14 now. And, in fact, our school, the "B" grade, the
15 grade that we have for this year, is really a more
16 accurate grade for previous years, too.

17 However, we are a school of continual
18 improvement, continuous improvement. And we are
19 constantly looking at what is working for our
20 students and what is not, and we are taking steps to
21 improve.

22 And we really focused on our math, in the
23 intervening year. And I think that we really opened
24 up our math program in some really creative ways for
25 our students that they had never experienced before

1 in their previous classrooms, and it's having some
2 pretty dramatic results.

3 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Yeah. I'm glad to
4 hear you say that, because it was such a dramatic
5 gain that you're really going to work, I suspect,
6 extra hard to sustain it in the future. And that's
7 going to require a great deal of effort on your
8 part. And I know you're committed to that, because
9 you're committed to your students.

10 And -- but I just kind of wanted to
11 comment on that. We don't normally see those kind
12 of one-year gains on these report cards. And that
13 really caught my eye.

14 MS. THOMAS: Well, Commissioner Bergman,
15 we were pretty thrilled, I must say. Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Thank you,
17 Madame Chair.

18 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Other questions,
19 Commissioners? Just a curiosity on my part. I know
20 that you're working with students who have not been
21 successful otherwise. Tell me about your -- I don't
22 know, really, if it would be dropout rate?

23 MS. THOMAS: Mobility.

24 THE CHAIR: Specifically, I'm asking
25 dropout, but I'm also asking, is your school one of

1 those where students may come and then leave, and
2 return and then leave and come back, all in the same
3 year? Do you have much of that going on in your
4 school?

5 MS. THOMAS: Madame Chair, we do have a
6 fairly high mobility rate. And what we see is that
7 the nature of the students that we serve have often
8 come to us having already attended multiple high
9 schools. And, so, they have sort of an instability
10 around staying -- their stick-to-itiveness, so to
11 speak. And so what we generally often find -- we
12 don't have numbers on it, although we should collect
13 them -- is that there is a strong pattern of
14 students, actually, who come to our school -- of
15 some students who come to our school and stay for a
16 period of time, leave, come back.

17 And they may do that even a couple of
18 times. But if they come back, say, a third time,
19 the majority of them, it then begins to click for
20 them. And we then have great success with students
21 who may have that revolving door mentality. But
22 they -- they have to -- you know, they have magical
23 thinking. They think that if they just register at
24 a school, they don't have to come; they don't have
25 to do the work. They're registered, so they're,

1 like, attending school.

2 And, so, like, it takes us a while to
3 break through that. But we work really hard with
4 it, and we have real success with that.

5 THE CHAIR: And as far as a true dropout
6 rate -- I'm not trying to pin you down on any
7 specific thing. I'm just curious as to how many
8 students you truly do -- that do not come back.

9 MS. THOMAS: We looked at our mobility
10 rate two years ago, and we were actually surprised
11 to find 80 percent -- 80 percent of our students
12 stay with us or come back to us. So, it's really
13 pretty good in the larger picture.

14 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. Anyone else
15 with questions? Seeing none, the Chair would
16 entertain a motion.

17 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Madame Chair?

18 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Peralta.

19 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: I would like to
20 make a motion that the Public Education Commission
21 approve the reapplication of a five-year term for
22 Cesar Chavez Community School.

23 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner. Do
24 we have a second?

25 COMMISSIONER CARR: Second.

1 THE CHAIR: Motion by Commissioner
2 Peralta, seconded by Commissioner Carr, to approve
3 the Cesar Chavez School for a period of a five-year
4 renewal.
5 Is there any discussion?
6 Secretary Bergman, may we have a roll-call
7 vote, please?
8 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Carr.
9 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.
10 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
11 Conyers.
12 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Yes.
13 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
14 Parker.
15 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Yes.
16 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
17 Peralta.
18 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.
19 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Pogna.
20 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.
21 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Gant.
22 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes.
23 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
24 Shearman.
25 THE CHAIR: Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
2 Bergman votes "yes."

3 Madame Chair, that is another
4 eight-to-zero vote in favor of the motion.

5 THE CHAIR: Thank you. By a unanimous
6 decision, the Cesar Chavez School -- Community
7 School -- is approved for a five-year term.
8 Congratulations.

9 MS. THOMAS: Madame Chair, members of the
10 Commission, thank you very much. Thank you.

11 THE CHAIR: We'd like to invite the
12 representatives from the Gilbert L. Sena School to
13 come forward, please. Good afternoon.

14 SPEAKER: Good afternoon.

15 THE CHAIR: Mr. Gerlicz, whenever you're
16 ready?

17 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, members of the
18 Commission, welcome. The story of the Gilbert L.
19 Sena is also a very positive one, in the sense that
20 they are achieving wonderful results with an
21 impacted population. An impacted population, again,
22 a population that historically has not done well in
23 traditional public schools.

24 Their growth is on a slow, upward slant.
25 They've received a "B" score in this year's report

1 card. But more importantly than the "B" score,
2 because when the CSD does its analysis, it goes far
3 beyond just the final grade to really look at the
4 data of the subgroups and see what's happening at
5 the school, again, we see that even though many of
6 the students at Gilbert Sena are low achievers when
7 they come into the school, they show great growth in
8 their Q1 and Q3 populations.

9 This is an attribute of good leadership,
10 both at the school site and at the board level.
11 It's been strong. It hasn't always been consistent,
12 in the sense that the current leadership has been at
13 the school for less than the term of the charter.
14 The school had some rocky starts in the beginning.
15 But with this leadership, it has been smoothed out.
16 And since then, the school is on a very positive and
17 consistent upward slope.

18 It is a blended learning model, again,
19 very individualized and personalized to each
20 individual's level.

21 And for all of those reasons, the Charter
22 School Division recommends a full five-year renewal
23 with no conditions. Thank you, Madame Chair.

24 THE CHAIR: Thank you. If you would
25 introduce yourselves, please, and then ten minutes

1 for your report. Thank you.

2 MS. TORRES: Madame Chair, Commissioners,
3 Charter School Division, thank you so much. My name
4 is Nadine Torres, T-O-R-R-E-S. I am the executive
5 director of Gilbert Sena Charter High School. To
6 the left of me is Stan Albright, A-L-B-R-I-G-H-T, my
7 business manager. Behind me, I have my governing
8 council president, Mary Louise Sena, and also Nancy
9 Romero, who was the prior director and support, as
10 we went through this charter renewal.

11 So, I really would like to go ahead and
12 start off with -- thank you -- with thanking the
13 Charter School Division for their support. I truly
14 will miss Kelly Callahan as much -- she is the same
15 type of systems thinker as myself, and she will be
16 poorly -- just very missed within the Department.

17 Gilbert Sena Charter High School's
18 original charter was approved in 2003. 2014 marks
19 our school's ten-year anniversary. Our school's
20 vision is to accelerate student success. Our school
21 does attract high school students that have not been
22 successful in a traditional high school setting or
23 have been in a small school setting for middle
24 school. They have an opportunity, at Sena High, to
25 reengage in a small, safe, and welcoming

1 environment.

2 Many of my students come in there two to
3 three years behind, based off of credits that they
4 need completed. The most important piece to
5 everything in our vision of accelerating student
6 success is the ability to see those kids walk across
7 that stage, after truly believing that they would
8 not be receiving a diploma. So, the ability to do
9 that is huge.

10 We do have a number of students that have
11 had issues with truancy, that our schedule provides
12 for them an opportunity to be in school. So, we
13 have all of those innovative ways to be able to
14 address our kids.

15 The Sena High family, staff, students,
16 parents, and community were very proud this past
17 year to have received a "B" on our report card,
18 moving from a "D" from last year. This was a huge
19 accomplishment for us, and we -- we believe and
20 truly understand that the reason that we received
21 this was our commitment to continuous improvement
22 efforts at Sena High School.

23 Sena High School is a national
24 demonstration school for using the Baldrige
25 framework. We have presented at national

1 conferences, and we have -- all of our success is
2 based off of that commitment to continuous
3 improvement at all levels.

4 As we move into our next charter, we will
5 align our priorities based off of requirements, as
6 well as opportunities for improvement. Our first
7 priority is, obviously, academics. We will continue
8 with our hybrid model of teaching with direct
9 instruction and computer-aided instruction, with
10 that ability to be flexible and agile to the needs
11 of our kids.

12 We have added additional math and
13 special-ed positions to help -- you know, to support
14 the students, based off of the data that's telling
15 us that we have to have those pieces, and, also, to
16 develop relationships through our advocacy program
17 to help develop students' academic and
18 social/emotional issues.

19 As noted in the performance report, Sena
20 High has known marked improvement in proficiencies
21 and growth, recently received the SBA results of the
22 students that retook the test in October.

23 90 percent of my students made increases in reading;
24 50 percent in math; and 60 percent in science. And
25 we attribute that to the additional instructional

1 time, where we can put -- we can provide students
2 interventions based off of what the data is telling
3 us they need.

4 We will continue looking at short-cycle
5 assessments as part of our measures for our new
6 charter. We'll be looking at whatever short-cycle
7 assessment the State is providing, whether it be
8 PARCC, or whether we continue with our own
9 short-cycle.

10 The second area that we want to prioritize
11 is our graduation and college and career readiness.
12 We want to make sure that we are addressing
13 graduation. You all will notice that in the grade
14 report, that is an opportunity for improvement, and
15 that is based upon the fact that our kids do come in
16 two to three years behind.

17 So, the four-year cohort data that we're
18 looking at, even though we did increase 7 percent
19 from last year, is still showing an area of
20 improvement. So, we will be looking for our own
21 goals, mission-specific goals, to make sure that we
22 have goals that take a look at how our students are
23 doing from the 40th day to the end of the year, but,
24 also, be looking at students that are accelerating
25 and getting back on track.

1 We are a career pathways high school that
2 provides opportunities for students to focus on
3 coursework that will support them in post-secondary
4 as well as in their careers. We offer work
5 certifications at our school. So, students that are
6 taking technical classes, business computer
7 applications, can actually leave with a work
8 certification in Word, Adobe, Excel, that they can
9 take with them to their work and put on a resume.

10 We also have a very strong relationship
11 with CNM. As you've seen in the performance report,
12 the percentage of students taking CNM classes on
13 campus, as well as off, has increased. And I can
14 very proudly say that this year, by the end of the
15 year, we are looking at almost half of our
16 population will have received a CNM dual credit
17 through what we are offering at our school.

18 Our last area is parent partnerships. We
19 cannot do what we are doing at Sena High without
20 those partnerships. We have seen a 240-percent
21 increase from the first year of the second charter
22 till the last year, parents participating and
23 involved in what's happening with our kids.

24 This is not an easy task. Most of our
25 parents did not have a very good educational

1 experience themselves. And they are dedicated and
2 committed to helping their kids be successful and
3 get that second chance.

4 We will continue to -- we will continue to
5 survey our parents. We have a high level of support
6 on our Quality of Ed surveys, as well as continue to
7 work on attendance records. Our kids do have some
8 truancy issues, and we are continuing to, you know,
9 address those and support them in getting those
10 attendance rates up.

11 One of the biggest pieces is making sure
12 you have an organization that is successful. The
13 success of our organization is based on the
14 continuous improvement model. Sena High is not just
15 a CI school, as we call it. We live, breathe; it's
16 just how we work. And everyone is committed, from
17 the governance council, to the teachers, to the
18 staff, everyone at our school.

19 Students understand where they are. They
20 know where they want to be, and they, themselves,
21 keep data to make sure they know where they want --
22 to do in life.

23 So I appreciate your consideration and
24 your approval for our charter for the next five
25 years. And I just want to tell you how proud I am

1 and honored to be the executive director of this
2 school. And thank you for letting me share our
3 successes.

4 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. Do we
5 have public comment on this application?

6 Seeing none, we'll move to PEC
7 Commissioners' questions and comments. Anyone have
8 questions?

9 COMMISSIONER CARR: Well, I'll go ahead,
10 All right. You raised your hand.

11 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Bergman.

12 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Now, you touched on
13 this in your remarks. But as I read your 2013
14 report card, I looked at all those really good "A's"
15 and "B's," and then I got to the graduation, where
16 it said "F," and then I went forward into the
17 application. On Page 36, you listed four years of
18 graduation data. And the lowest year was
19 92 percent. Where is the disconnect between the
20 figures you put there and an "F" grade?

21 MS. TORRES: Okay. So, the difference
22 between the figures is that when they calculate the
23 report for graduation, they base it off of a
24 four-year cohort. The four-year cohort is based off
25 of a student starting as a freshman, when they were

1 supposed to start, and finished within four years.

2 The reason there's such a disconnect is
3 because most of our kids are already coming in maybe
4 one to two years, possibly even three years, behind.
5 So our task is to help them accelerate, so that they
6 can graduate on time.

7 Now, the mission-specific goals that we've
8 set up are set up so that the 40th day of the year,
9 we look at the list of students that are seniors at
10 that point, and we base how many of those kids are
11 able to graduate in May. So, that is where the
12 difference -- and that is based off the fact that --
13 and that's how they used to do it back in the day.
14 And that's why all of the graduation -- but when
15 you're dealing with these kind of pieces, we want to
16 make sure that we can make sure that when they are
17 seniors, that we get them done by the end of that
18 year.

19 We also have the mission-specific, as well
20 as to align with our accelerated -- you know,
21 accelerate student success, as far as our bonus
22 graduates. Those students that might be 16, you
23 know, 16-and-a-half credits on the 40th, that
24 they're not seniors, but they also would be
25 graduating by May.

1 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: I'm just curious.
2 Have you discussed with PED this kind of issue,
3 or -- I don't want to touch any open nerves or
4 anything, but --

5 MR. GERLICZ: Is there aspirin?

6 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: I don't think the
7 "F" is -- the "F" is there, but I don't believe it
8 describes your school. I think it's misleading.

9 MS. TORRES: I thank you for your comment.
10 And as a continuous improvement guru of all, I think
11 it's always an area for improvement, as we look at
12 this. One of the things that, if you are a SAM
13 school, that graduation rate is calculated
14 differently, so because we're not a SAM school, we
15 go along with all of the other calculations that are
16 statewide.

17 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: I guess there's
18 still room for improvement in any system. Thank
19 you, Madame Chair. Thank you.

20 MS. TORRES: Yes. Thank you.

21 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Commissioner Carr.

22 COMMISSIONER CARR: I almost forgot my
23 question. I'll give you my comment, and maybe I'll
24 think of my question in just a second.

25 But I note -- you know, I noted that, you

1 know, your test scores dramatically improved in
2 reading, and math, went down a little bit, but still
3 better than the others. Oh, I guess -- here was my
4 question. I knew I'd think of it.

5 Are you going through an audit from your
6 grade from last year?

7 MS. TORRES: Based off of our grade from
8 last year, we did have an instructional audit.
9 Because we did not continue that grade, we increased
10 to a "B," we're still considered a priority school.
11 But we did not receive an instructional audit this
12 year.

13 However, the recommendations that were
14 given to us last year, based off of that were one of
15 the biggest pieces to the improvements that we did
16 that past year. That was -- and, obviously, it's
17 systemic across the state -- making sure you had a
18 clear system for looking at department levels,
19 making sure that we're having conversations about
20 data, you know, in a more specific -- conversations
21 about how we need to meet those kids' needs.

22 And that's where we went into Intervention
23 Fridays. And when I came to you in June and asked
24 for additional instruction time, we're using that
25 additional instructional time so that we can provide

1 those interventions. And that was something
2 specific that came back from our instructional
3 audit.

4 COMMISSIONER CARR: So, your grade now is
5 a "B"? I guess that I looked in the application,
6 and I thought it was still a "D."

7 MS. TORRES: No.

8 COMMISSIONER CARR: I must have misread
9 that.

10 MR. GERLICZ: Just dyslexic.

11 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yeah. Yeah, I am
12 dyslexic.

13 MS. TORRES: One of the things that's in
14 the application, however, is that one page that's
15 compiled, shows everything from '11/'12. Further
16 down, it goes through and explains the current
17 grades. We did make a 23-percent increase from last
18 year's overall score to this year's score, based off
19 the new reports.

20 COMMISSIONER CARR: Good. Good.

21 THE CHAIR: Any other -- Commissioner
22 Parker.

23 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Madame Chair,
24 Commissioners. Like the other school, I just want
25 to take the opportunity, speak for myself to say

1 thank you for going after the target audience that
2 you've gone after, and a pat on the back for getting
3 results from them. Obviously, if they're coming to
4 you in their situation, it hasn't been working for
5 them. And you're allowing an opportunity for them
6 to succeed, which I think is of great importance.

7 MS. TORRES: Thank you.

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Any other
9 questions, comments from Commissioners?

10 Seeing none, the Chair would entertain a
11 motion. Commissioner Bergman.

12 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Madame Chair, I
13 would move that the Public Education Commission
14 approve the renewal application of Gilbert L. Sena
15 Charter High School for a five-year term.

16 COMMISSIONER CARR: Second.

17 THE CHAIR: Motion by Commissioner
18 Bergman, second by Commissioner Carr, to approve the
19 renewal application of Gilbert L. Sena High School
20 for period of five years. Discussion,
21 Commissioners?

22 Seeing none, Mr. Secretary, may we have a
23 roll-call vote, please?

24 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
25 Conyers.

1 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
3 Parker.

4 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
6 Peralta.

7 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Pogna.

9 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Carr.

11 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Gant.

13 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
15 Shearman.

16 THE CHAIR: Yes.

17 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
18 Bergman votes "yes." Madame Chair, that motion
19 carries by an eight-to-zero vote.

20 THE CHAIR: Thank you. The vote is
21 unanimous to approve the renewal application of
22 Gilbert L. Sena. Congratulation.

23 (Applause.)

24 (A discussion was held off the record.)

25 THE CHAIR: Would the representatives of

1 the New America School-New Mexico, from Albuquerque,
2 please come forward? Welcome. Director Gerlicz,
3 whenever you're ready.

4 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, members of the
5 Commission, welcome to New America School.

6 The New America School offers us probably
7 one of our most unique school environments in our
8 charter school network, which is full of very unique
9 school environments.

10 By that, I mean it's the mission of this
11 school not only to reengage students who have not
12 been successful in traditional public schools,
13 typically, but to reengage them years later. The
14 average age at this school, we'll hear, is well
15 above 18. They have 19, 20, 21, 22-year-old
16 students. And that is common for the New America
17 School. That is their mission, to reengage older
18 students who have not graduated, as well as educate
19 newly arrived immigrant students to this country.

20 It's very, very challenging. For that,
21 they are a SAM school, Supplemental Accountability
22 Measure school, as well. And, like the other SAM
23 school that we witnessed earlier, the report card
24 grade offers an interesting window.

25 If you look at their current standing --

1 that's the snapshot of the SBA exam in March -- they
2 have received an "F" grade, as might be not
3 surprising for a population like that. So, looking
4 beyond those numbers and looking into the growth of
5 those students, we see, again, some excellent
6 results from this school. There, again, this is
7 another example of how the difference between Q1 and
8 Q3 is truly negligible. They're all unachieving
9 students.

10 However, by the State Accountability
11 System, there is a bottom quartile. But, truly, in
12 this school, it's indistinguishable from the general
13 population. That data shows that they are achieving
14 at a "B" level growth for their Q1 students, and "A"
15 growth -- it's really all the same, "A-B" -- for the
16 entire population there.

17 So, another example, for the New America
18 School, they are also on an upward slope. They have
19 improved their grade practice last year through
20 attention to those Q1 students. It is a school that
21 exercises very solid, very, very good leadership,
22 both from the school site and from the governing
23 body. It's a school in good shape, serving a very
24 unique population.

25 For all of those reasons, the Charter

1 School Division recommends a full five-year renewal
2 without conditions.

3 Thank you, Madame Chair.

4 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Gerlicz. If
5 you all would introduce yourselves, please, and make
6 your presentation. Thank you.

7 MS. MATHIS: Madame Chair, Commissioners,
8 my name is LaTricia -- L-A, capital T-R-I-C-I-A --
9 Mathis, M-A-T-H-I-S. I am the principal of the New
10 America School.

11 MR. SILVA: Madame Chair and Commission,
12 my name is Fred Silva. I am the current governing
13 president.

14 MR. RAEL: Hello, my name is Paul Rael,
15 and I am the president elect and former treasurer of
16 the New America School.

17 MS. MATHIS: Thank you all for assisting
18 us with moving forward today. Before I begin my
19 short presentation, Mr. Silva, my governing council
20 president, would like to say a few words.

21 MR. SILVA: Good afternoon. It's been a
22 pleasure to serve on the Board with -- in the
23 South Valley for the New America School. I came on
24 right after the first year, and I've been on the
25 Board since then. To see the emotion between the

1 teachers and the students, the administration, is
2 very touching. It's brought a shining light to the
3 South Valley. I have lived there most of my life.
4 And the campus, the attitude of the kids, the
5 attitude of the teachers, is just overwhelming.

6 Every month at our meeting, we have
7 students of the month, and, usually, about ten
8 students are honored. And when they're honored, the
9 teachers show emotion, the parents -- and some of
10 the parents are in the school, also. So, it's a
11 mixed, diversified group of kids that have left
12 school, dropped out of school, and are back in and
13 getting their diplomas. And I feel very proud to be
14 on that board.

15 MS. MATHIS: We do have a unique model, as
16 Mr. Gerlicz did mention. So, when we started
17 looking at that, I wanted to start with that we had
18 just recently had a change in our mission statement.
19 One of the reasons we added the term "academically
20 underserved" to our mission statement, in addition
21 to immigrant students and ELL, more than 50 percent
22 of our students come in below a fifth-grade level in
23 math and reading. But they're not necessarily
24 immigrants or English Language Learner students.

25 On a more student-centered note, last

1 year, one of my students said, "Miss, this mission
2 statement, where do I fit into it," because the
3 students were writing their own mission statements
4 for their future. And the student had a -- a good
5 point. So, the mission statement has been recently
6 changed to reflect that.

7 We have 64 percent of our students with
8 interrupted education. They have left school,
9 multiple schools. They have come back. They have
10 been asked to leave schools. They're coming to us
11 from a lot of different backgrounds. Sometimes
12 they've been out of school for two, ten, twenty
13 years.

14 Thirty-nine percent of our students, as of
15 today, are over the age of 18. Last year, our
16 graduating class ranged from 17-year-old students to
17 our oldest graduate was 53, receiving a high school
18 diploma. It is something to see those students walk
19 the stage with their children and their
20 grandchildren in the audience. And, as one said, "I
21 will do this so that my son and my grandson see it
22 is important."

23 So, it is -- it is our privilege to serve
24 those students, as well as our more traditional
25 students.

1 We have moved in our report card from an
2 "F" to a high "C" standing. We're pretty proud of
3 that. And while we did receive an "F" on our
4 current standing, based on the March snapshot, I
5 would like to point out that we went from 1.4 to an
6 8.4 in that category.

7 Again, as Mr. Gerlicz had pointed out,
8 that is due to our students in our Quartile 1 and
9 Quartile 3. Our students in those areas are showing
10 multiple-year growth; not just one, but two years'
11 growth. And the longer those students stay with us,
12 the more years they show improvement in reading and
13 in math.

14 Sorry. Pausing for a moment here.

15 Our students are required to keep -- our
16 staff, our students, myself -- we're all just data
17 fiends. We keep a lot of data. There's data on the
18 walls of my office. Our teachers have data on their
19 walls. They have data binders. Every student has
20 an advisory class, and every student in every
21 advisory class has a data binder on their progress.

22 They have their test scores in there,
23 their MAP scores, their attendance rates, their
24 progress reports. It's all in there, and they have
25 to set goals for themselves. So, our students are

1 very educated, as well, on their own progress. And
2 while it may be hard sometimes for them to say, "I'm
3 on a second-grade level," we then work with them,
4 and they show tremendous gains. And there's a lot
5 of pride there for those students.

6 We have kind of an unusual schedule. Our
7 school runs from 8:00 in the morning till 10:00 at
8 night. We have continuous classes for 15 periods a
9 day. That is so that we have our more traditional
10 students in the morning. From 8:00 to 9:00, we have
11 our true freshmen only, so that we have a chance to
12 build a bond and really support those new
13 high-school students. Around 3:00, our true
14 freshmen go home, and then we have a small bridge
15 period, and by 5:00, most of our students are over
16 21. And that's when our evening classes do come
17 into play. And they are there until 10:00 at night?

18 Some of them come directly from work.
19 It's very inspiring to see them in those classes
20 working hard.

21 We have a four-day week schedule. But on
22 Fridays, we do use the time for mandatory tutoring,
23 support. And for students who feel they need extra
24 time working with teachers, I have certified
25 teachers on staff eight hours a day on Friday to

1 ensure that their needs are met.

2 If our students need independent study, we
3 give them independent study, and the teachers work
4 with them individually. We really work hard to make
5 sure that our individual students' needs are met
6 where they're at.

7 Even after our students graduate from us,
8 we have students who come back. They still use our
9 computer labs. They still ask our teachers for
10 advice. They still come to me and say, "Hey, could
11 you help me fill out this scholarship application?"
12 We are always more than happy to assist those
13 students.

14 We have a lot of parent support. We have
15 a twice yearly next-step plan meeting to go over
16 student grades, goals for the students, their
17 testing results. We have more than 86-percent
18 parent involvement rate in those meetings. They do
19 come in for them.

20 This year, we have really implemented a
21 lot of college and career readiness. Our students
22 have taken the ASVAB. They are taking the PSAT.
23 And we have more students who have taken the ACT
24 this year than the past four years combined. We are
25 trying to add in more college and career for our

1 students.

2 We have 57 students who are working and
3 receiving credit for that through our programs. We
4 have worked with the City of Albuquerque on the
5 Running Start for Careers program, where they take
6 dual-credit classes and -- directly into the field a
7 student is interested in. And those careers do hire
8 from those classes. I have worked with H&R Block
9 for seasonal work for our students. And we have
10 worked with other companies and entities in the past
11 to help our students transition.

12 I know my time is running out. So, I
13 guess I should wrap up and say we're really proud.
14 We have huge gains in our low quartile, a lot of
15 growth, a lot of growth for our low-performing,
16 high-performing students. But, again, all of our
17 students show that growth.

18 Thank you for your consideration in
19 regards to New America School-New Mexico's request
20 for a five-year renewal, so that we may continue to
21 serve all of our students in the South Valley.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. We have
23 time for public comments. Is there anyone in the
24 public who would like to comment on this school?

25 Comments from -- questions from anyone?

1 Commissioner Bergman?

2 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Since you are a
3 dual, you've got the regular part of your school,
4 and you've got the adult portion. I did not see a
5 breakdown on how many are in the adult portion and
6 how many are in the traditional school. You said
7 something like 5 percent of your students are above
8 18. So, is that breakdown, about a third and
9 two-thirds?

10 MS. MATHIS: Yes, that is our traditional
11 breakdown.

12 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: And I noticed, at
13 one point in your application, I noted that since
14 2010, you had helped 113 students graduate that
15 probably would not have graduated otherwise. And I
16 certainly find that noteworthy.

17 And you specifically mentioned the ASVAB.
18 And I'm always pleased to see schools taking
19 advantage of extra assessments like that that can
20 help them assess and help their students assess
21 maybe what they want to do with their lives. So, I
22 take note of that, also.

23 Thank you. Thank you, Madame Chair. If
24 you'd like to comment on that, that's fine, too.

25 MS. MATHIS: Thank you. And I agree, our

1 students need to be looking at their own data, so
2 that they know themselves and can set their own
3 goals. It makes them feel involved in the system,
4 rather than presented with a system.

5 THE CHAIR: Other comments or questions?
6 Commissioner Conyers?

7 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Madame Chair, just
8 to satisfy my own curiosity, I'm curious what
9 immigrant groups you have represented in your
10 school.

11 MS. MATHIS: We have immigrants from
12 Mexico. We've had them from South America, Cuba,
13 India. And we have had one recent immigrant from
14 the Dominican Republic.

15 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Okay. Thank you.

16 MS. MATHIS: Primarily, Commissioner, they
17 are from Mexico.

18 THE CHAIR: Other questions? Commissioner
19 Parker.

20 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Madame Chair,
21 Commissioners. Again, thank you, for the audience.
22 You should be commended for that. My question,
23 though, do you have -- more curiosity, I guess --
24 instances where you have parents and their children
25 attending the school at the same time?

1 MS. MATHIS: Yes, Commissioner. We have
2 instances where we have both parents and multiple
3 students attending the high school.

4 COMMISSIONER PARKER: That's wonderful.

5 MS. MATHIS: Commissioner, may I?

6 THE CHAIR: Must be rather interesting.

7 MS. MATHIS: Commissioner, it is
8 interesting when they walk the stage simultaneously.

9 THE CHAIR: Other questions or comments
10 from Commissioners?

11 Seeing none, the Chair would entertain a
12 motion.

13 MR. GERLICZ: Commissioner Parker.

14 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Madame Chair,
15 Commissioners, if I can do this correctly, I'd like
16 to make a motion that we approve the five-year
17 request, as stated by the Charter School Division,
18 for the New America School.

19 THE CHAIR: Do we have a second?

20 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Second.

21 THE CHAIR: Motion by Commissioner Parker,
22 second by Commissioner Peralta, to approve the
23 renewal application of New America School-New Mexico
24 for a five-year period. Is there any discussion?

25 Commissioner Bergman, may we have a

1 roll-call vote, please?

2 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

3 Parker.

4 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

6 Peralta.

7 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Pogna.

9 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Carr.

11 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

13 Conyers.

14 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Gant.

16 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes.

17 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

18 Shearman.

19 THE CHAIR: Yes.

20 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

21 Bergman votes "yes."

22 Again, Madame Chairman, by an

23 eight-to-zero vote, that motion carries.

24 THE CHAIR: Thank you. The vote is

25 unanimous to approve the renewal application for

1 New America School-New Mexico for a five-year
2 period. Congratulations.

3 Commissioners, I would recommend we take a
4 ten-minute break right now. Come back at five
5 after, please.

6 (Recess taken, 1:55 p.m. to 2:10 p.m.)

7 THE CHAIR: Ladies and gentlemen, let's go
8 ahead and get started.

9 Will the representatives from Creative
10 Education Preparatory Institute please come forward?
11 Good afternoon.

12 SPEAKER: Good afternoon, Madame Chair.

13 THE CHAIR: Mr. Gerlicz, when you're
14 ready.

15 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, members of the
16 Commission, and representatives of CEPI, which
17 stands for the Creative Education Preparatory
18 Charter No. 1, welcome. And it says "No. 1" because
19 that is really a sister school to Gilbert L. Sena
20 School. Way back when, prior to -- maybe many of
21 the Commissioners will remember that the schools
22 were joined and then separated by fiat of the Public
23 Education Department. And CEPI is now its own
24 entity, and has been for a while.

25 Like Gilbert Sena, although distinct, it

1 offers a very personalized education and a blended
2 learning model that offers the opportunity for its
3 students to deliver education and receive education
4 at all times, at all hours, including a dual
5 enrollment program with the Central New Mexico
6 College.

7 We will recommend a five-year renewal for
8 CEPI, based on its continued upward slope, its
9 continued trajectory of good scores. Its three-year
10 average is a "C." And that takes into consideration
11 that this year's grade is a "B."

12 Again, moving beyond the ultimate grade,
13 their growth in certain categories of students is
14 outstanding. The Q1 growth and the Q3 growth shows
15 very, very marked progress, again, in that blended
16 learning environment.

17 There is a couple of areas that we would
18 caution CEPI to improve on that we think will take
19 care of itself in the renewal and negotiation
20 process. One is that there is confusion about their
21 use of MAP data, MAP being the Measurement of
22 Academic Progress -- that's their short-cycle
23 assessment -- and the translation from growth of MAP
24 to what does that mean in an annual year growth.

25 If a student -- MAP has a measurement

1 called a RIT score, R-I-T. Growth and nongrowth can
2 be measured by RIT scores. But what the Commission
3 is interested in, and what everybody is interested
4 in, what does that mean on an annual grade-level
5 growth? Does this amount of RIT scores mean a half
6 a year, a full year and that sort of thing? And the
7 school, in our view, needs to improve in
8 demonstrating how that MAP score translates into
9 annual year growth.

10 That, we feel, can easily be handled in
11 our negotiation process and in the performance
12 indicators that we will work with.

13 Clarifying what they mean by a cohort,
14 whether it's the same students that test in the fall
15 that then again test in the spring, or students that
16 are with CEPI for a period of three years or more,
17 is that their cohort? All of that, again, we don't
18 think that that is a major issue, but does need to
19 be cleared up as we go forward in the negotiation
20 process.

21 So, for those reasons, Madame Chair, the
22 Charter School Division recommends a full five-year
23 renewal for CEPI without conditions.

24 Thank you, Madame Chair.

25 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Again, good

1 afternoon. Please introduce yourselves, and we are
2 anxious to hear your comments.

3 MR. ARTHUR: Thank you, Madame Chair. My
4 name is Jeff Arthur, as in "King Arthur." This is
5 the president of our governing council, Pam Romero.

6 THE CHAIR: Could I ask you to press down
7 the lever on the mic, please? Thank you.

8 MR. ARTHUR: CEPI would like to take this
9 opportunity to say we are pleased to be in front of
10 you, because for ten years, come this June, no one
11 from the PED or the State has ever been in our
12 building. We have operated without face-to-face
13 talking with anybody for ten years.

14 We have e-mailed; we have had
15 conversations with people. But this is way before
16 446. So, we are glad to be here, that we can see
17 somebody face-to-face and get some help if we're
18 erring in any particular place. We would like to
19 thank the CSD for all of their help that they've
20 given us while we try to navigate through this
21 process.

22 When CEPI 1 and CEPI 2 came about, there
23 should have been, in the future, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,
24 9, 10, maybe, based upon the model that we were
25 going. However, that did not work out. So, we are

1 the only "CEPI 1" still there.

2 We mirror Gilbert Sena in a lot of ways;
3 and one of those ways, that we have worked within
4 the Taylor Ranch area of Albuquerque, and that is
5 our local community, and we have dealt with those
6 people for ten years.

7 We have had many, many families from
8 Taylor Ranch come through our school, and those same
9 families and their siblings, brothers and sisters,
10 through our system. And most brothers and sisters,
11 whether they're one or two years behind each other,
12 graduate from CEPI also.

13 As we go down the line, we provide a safe
14 environment for all of our students. And a lot of
15 our students come from areas that are not what you
16 would call the upper-middle-class or middle-class
17 areas. So they come to us with a variety of
18 problems.

19 One of the major problems they come to us
20 with is they have been in traditional high schools,
21 one, two, or three years. They've earned between 12
22 or 15 or 22 F's, and they come to us as an H-2 or an
23 H-3. Very seldom do we take an H-4, unless they
24 have had 18 credits earned when they get to our
25 school.

1 We go along with this family -- and when
2 you get selected to come to CEPI, one of the things
3 that the parents have to agree to is they will come
4 and sit with me, the principal, the adviser, the
5 student's adviser, the student, twice a semester,
6 and we will talk about every facet concerning that
7 child, whether it's their education, their
8 behavior -- whatever is going on, we will deal with
9 it at that particular time. And the parents agree
10 to come to these meetings. And we have between an
11 88 and 92 percent -- parents always show up four
12 times a year.

13 Every two weeks, our teachers take their
14 advisees, and they call, e-mail, or make contact
15 with the parents to update them on what's happening
16 in the last two weeks. Therefore, there's none of
17 that, "My kid's getting an F, and school's over, and
18 why didn't I know about it?"

19 So, we try and be proactive with the
20 parents to get involvement. And we see that a lot
21 of our 2011-2012 "D" grade has gone away, because we
22 implemented some of these programs, where we involve
23 the parents and keep the parents up-to-date.

24 Well, like Gilbert Sena, when we come to
25 that graduation rates thing, we've got a "D." But

1 when we calculate that through the State formula, I
2 understand that's a "D" because of that freshman
3 cohort thing. But when they come to us, they come
4 to us already behind, H-2s, H-3s. So, during the
5 2009-2010, on the 40th day, we calculate who our
6 H-4s are. And we graduated 92 percent of our kids
7 that year.

8 The next year, we graduated 81. The next
9 year, we graduated 96. The next year, we graduated
10 82, for a four-year average of approximately
11 88-and-a-half percent. So, when we do it with the
12 students we actually have coming into our doors,
13 that's the way we get our numbers.

14 Our students are in a blended learning
15 environment. And I like to think that we have
16 flipped the traditional education system, where
17 there's a teacher in front of the classroom -- we
18 don't have teachers in front of the classrooms most
19 of the time. The kids are on computers, learning.

20 We do have teachers for those students
21 that are falling behind in, say, algebra or math or
22 reading. We have a reading lab; we have a math lab.
23 And when you get to a point where you're having
24 trouble with a particular concept or a notion or a
25 theory, then we will pull you out in small groups of

1 five to seven students and put you in front of a
2 teacher and make sure that everybody's able to go on
3 to the next level as we go down the road.

4 Our growth rate is phenomenal, from what I
5 can see. We used to have an "F" in current
6 standing; we have a "C." Student growth in the
7 highest, we had a "D"; now, we're an "A." Student
8 lowest, we were a "B"; now, we're an "A."
9 Opportunity to learn, we were a "B"; now, we're an
10 "A." College readiness and career readiness, we
11 were a "C"; now, we're an "A."

12 And we attribute to those some of the
13 things that we do with our staff. We do the
14 ACCUPLACER in our building. We have the ability,
15 because we send all of our faculty to CNM so that
16 they can be certified and be proctors of that test.
17 So, we've cut the fuel, and we've cut the time away
18 from the school by doing that test at our building.

19 We do the ASVAB. We pay for the books for
20 our kids to go to dual credit. When they go, the
21 parents -- "Mr. Arthur, I'd love for my student to
22 go to CNM, but can't, because the book for the class
23 is \$105."

24 In our budget, we've accounted for that
25 problem and allowed our kids to go to CNM to get the

1 dual credit, and we'll pay for their book. We also
2 do the ASVAB test and that kind of stuff.

3 So, we do as many things as we possibly
4 can. Every budget decision we make is based on the
5 premise of, is this going to help the student. If
6 we can't answer that question in the positive, then
7 we go a different direction.

8 We've had kids that work for ABC
9 Construction. That's an off-campus -- it's every
10 Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, all afternoon. They
11 go through that system. They get all their
12 certifications for OSHA and HIPAA and FLIPPA [ph]
13 and all of those things. And they come out of
14 there, and the second semester, they're actually
15 working on a work-site, where they get real work
16 experience in whatever field they have chosen:
17 plumbing, heating, auto mechanics, painting,
18 whatever it may be.

19 We've also had kids at the national level
20 for super-computing. We've got robotics going.
21 We've got SkillsUSA going. We've had kids earn gold
22 and silver and bronze in SkillsUSA. So, all of our
23 kids are involved in something at some time besides
24 sitting behind a computer. And as far as we're
25 concerned, that's what education is about, a total

1 experience of what you can do to learn to help you
2 be successful in life.

3 Finally, I'd like to state that in our
4 academics, we are truly 13-to-1. We have a 13-to-1
5 ratio. And for the last five years, that ratio was
6 13-to-1, 13-to-1, 17-to-1, because we got an influx
7 of kids, and then back down to 13-to-1. So, we try
8 and keep it in small groups, as we can do that.

9 So, Commissioners, we appreciate this
10 opportunity, and we hope that we can get our
11 approval for our third five years of working at
12 CEPI. Thank you very much.

13 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Thank you for that
14 presentation.

15 Do we have public comments concerning that
16 application?

17 Seeing none, we'll move to Commissioners'
18 questions and comments. Commissioners, do you have
19 questions?

20 COMMISSIONER GANT: I do.

21 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Gant.

22 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, members,
23 during your presentation, you were talking about
24 H-2, H-3, H-4 students. Maybe I heard it wrong, but
25 you said you don't take H-4 students.

1 MR. ARTHUR: I may have mis- -- been
2 unclear, sir. But we take H-4 if they have a chance
3 of providing -- or getting their graduation. So, if
4 they come to us with 16, 16-and-a-half credits, yes,
5 sir, we do. But somebody that comes -- tries to get
6 into our school that's been in school four years,
7 and they've got 3 or 4, we try and send them to
8 another opportunity, so that they can be successful
9 at their age level.

10 COMMISSIONER GANT: I didn't know that
11 charter schools had the capability of turning down
12 any student.

13 MR. ARTHUR: Sir, I don't have that
14 opportunity. But I do have a strong belief that,
15 when you talk to the parents and discuss what their
16 options are for their children and what's best for
17 their students, we talk and tell them that maybe
18 CEPI is not the appropriate place to be, because if
19 you come to me at 19, you're going to be 23 or 24
20 when you get out. And most parents respond to that.

21 And I'm not saying, absolutely, that we
22 have turned down somebody in that situation. But
23 once you talk to the parents, the parents understand
24 that there are other opportunities for their
25 children, and maybe they didn't help them along

1 their educational path when they should have, and
2 maybe the kid just wasn't interested, for whatever
3 reason.

4 THE CHAIR: Is that it?

5 COMMISSIONER GANT: Uh-huh.

6 THE CHAIR: Anybody else? Any other
7 questions or comments? Commissioner Bergman.

8 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Just a general
9 comment. Here, again, I was pleased to hear you say
10 you're using the ASVAB, also. Because I always
11 appreciate people who have taken an extra step. And
12 I also would commend you on making it easier for
13 your students to do the dual-credit option. I find
14 that commendable, also. Thank you. Thank you,
15 Madame Chair.

16 THE CHAIR: Other questions or comments?

17 Let me just clarify in my mind, please.
18 Talking about your graduation rates, you are talking
19 about a student who comes into your school as a
20 senior and graduates at the end of that year. And
21 that's how you compute your graduation rate?

22 MR. ARTHUR: Ma'am, when they come in,
23 whether they're an H-1, H-2, -3 or -4, if they come
24 in and they're in the school on the 40th day, and
25 then they accumulate their credits for that year,

1 yes, ma'am, they can graduate.

2 THE CHAIR: In one year's time?

3 MR. ARTHUR: If that's all the credits
4 they need. If they need more, they may need to go
5 to summer school or come back the next year. So,
6 those students, no matter how you calculate it, hurt
7 our graduation rate.

8 THE CHAIR: Okay. For your four-year
9 cohort that the report is based on, give me an idea
10 of what your four-year cohort graduation rate is of
11 those that start ninth grade together and actually
12 graduate four years later. Could you give me an
13 idea of what that rate would be in your school?

14 MR. ARTHUR: Yes, ma'am. Right off the
15 top of my head, right at 72 percent. And a lot of
16 reasons -- or the same reasons that are out there:
17 family problems, they move out-of-state, they come
18 back into our system; those kind of things. But
19 it's generally right at 72 percent.

20 THE CHAIR: That's pretty high, really.

21 MR. ARTHUR: It's just barely right where
22 the State is, if I believe.

23 THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you. Other
24 questions or comments from Commissioners?

25 Seeing none, the Chair would entertain a

1 motion. Commissioner Bergman.

2 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Madame Chair, I
3 would move that the Public Education Commission
4 approve the renewal application of the Creative
5 Educational Preparatory Institute No. 1 for the
6 five-year term.

7 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Second.

8 THE CHAIR: We have a motion by
9 Commissioner Bergman, second by Commissioner Pogna,
10 to approve the renewal application of Creative
11 Education Preparatory Institute for a five year
12 term.

13 Any discussion? Commissioner Gant, may I
14 we have a roll-call vote, please?

15 COMMISSIONER GANT: No.

16 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: If Mr. Gant would
17 like to conduct it, he may.

18 COMMISSIONER GANT: Mr. Bergman would like
19 to do it.

20 THE CHAIR: It's been a long day.
21 Commissioner Bergman, may we have a roll-call vote?

22 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Thank you,
23 Madame Chair. Commissioner Peralta.

24 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Pogna.

1 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Carr.

3 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
5 Conyers.

6 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
8 Parker.

9 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Gant.

11 COMMISSIONER GANT: No.

12 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
13 Shearman.

14 THE CHAIR: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
16 Bergman votes "yes." Madame Chair, by a
17 seven-to-one vote, the motion carries.

18 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.
19 Seven-to-one vote, the renewal application for
20 Creative Education Preparatory Institute is approved
21 for a five-year term. Congratulations.

22 MR. ARTHUR: Thank you very much,
23 Madame Chair.

24 (Applause.)

25 THE CHAIR: Will the representatives for

1 the Ralph J. Bunche School please come forward?

2 Director Gerlicz, whenever you're ready.

3 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, members of the
4 Commission. Representatives of Ralph J. Bunche,
5 welcome.

6 A little background on the school. The
7 Ralph J. Bunche applied for renewal of its first
8 charter -- for its second charter in 2010 to the
9 PEC. The school was not recommended for renewal at
10 that time. And that ruling was overturned by the
11 Secretary and gave the school three years of a
12 charter renewal process.

13 Since 2010, the Charter School Division
14 has analyzed the three years of data presented by
15 the school and by the PED, Department -- Department
16 of Assessment and Accountability. And we have found
17 that Ralph J. Bunche sadly has not progressed
18 sufficiently in the academic realm to warrant our
19 recommendation for renewal of its charter.

20 In 2010 and '11, it received a "D" score
21 in the first round of reporting. And in '11-'12, it
22 also received a "D" score. And in the most recent
23 grading cycle, it received an "F" score.

24 And, again, as always, looking beyond just
25 the simple grade, we look into the subgroup

1 categories, and the other categories of the report
2 card, to tell the story of the school.

3 And the story of the school is actually an
4 interesting one. It's got a very unique mission
5 that is to raise the specter and the ethos of
6 Ralph J. Bunche, who was the first African-American
7 to receive a Nobel Prize. But academically, we feel
8 that the school has fallen far short of minimal
9 educational standards.

10 In the current report card, which is the
11 third year of its charter, not only the current
12 standing of "F" is there, along with school
13 growth -- and that is understandable in a population
14 that comes to the school highly underachieving. And
15 there are many, many students at Ralph J. Bunche
16 that fit that category, like so many of our charter
17 schools have had, as well.

18 The difference here is that we have not
19 seen the growth in either their Q1 students or their
20 Q3 students over the course of time.

21 Going deeper into that, still, the growth
22 of the Q3 students, which is the other 75 percent,
23 shows virtually no growth. They have .33 scaled
24 score points out of a total of 20. That -- that
25 places Ralph J. Bunche 46 -- 45th out of 46 like

1 schools in that category. That means that, of the
2 46 schools around the state that have similar
3 demographics as that school, that Ralph J. Bunche is
4 45 out of 46 in that category.

5 In the growth of its lowest performing
6 students, the school did much better. It received
7 9.5 scaled points out of 20. It still received an
8 "F" grade, but it increased its ranking, 18th out of
9 46 in Q1, again, of like-minded schools.

10 The Charter School Division found a
11 dedicated faculty. Organizationally, we found a
12 very competent board. They survived what was, by
13 all circumstances, a difficult year last year. They
14 had some incidences occur which resulted in a very
15 vocal minority of parents that caused a great deal
16 of turmoil within the school. And the board, in our
17 opinion, handled it very well and very
18 professionally.

19 Financially, the Charter School Division
20 has no issues with the Ralph J. Bunche Academy. But
21 based on the three years of academic performance,
22 that is the -- the -- the area that causes the
23 Charter School Division the most concern. And that
24 is the area and the basis upon which we recommend
25 non-renewal of this charter.

1 Thank you, Madame Chair.

2 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Gerlicz. Good
3 afternoon. If you all would introduce yourselves,
4 please, and give us your presentation, please.

5 MS. WILSON: Good afternoon. I am Penne
6 Wilson. That's P-E-N-N-E, W-I-L-S-O-N. And I am
7 the principal of Ralph J. Bunche. This is Rick
8 Rios.

9 MR. RIOS: My name is Rick Rios, R-I-O-S.
10 I represent numerous charter schools as an
11 educational consultant.

12 MS. BACA: My name Yleana Baca,
13 Y-L-E-A-N-A. I am the reading specialist and the
14 instructional coach at Ralph J. Bunche.

15 MS. WILSON: Good afternoon, Madame Chair,
16 and members of this Commission.

17 At Ralph J. Bunche, we would like to
18 present the following information for your
19 consideration.

20 We have provided NWEA, or MAP, data to
21 demonstrate that we are indeed meeting the goals
22 that we are approved by this Commission for Ralph J.
23 Bunche Academy, based on its population.

24 The first goal was that 45 percent of the
25 students will meet grade-level standards by May

1 2013, as measured by the NWEA, or short-cycle
2 assessments. It's important to note here that the
3 MAP data does provide a RIT score which is
4 translatable into yearly growth. And Mr. Rios has
5 been responsible for analysis of that data, which we
6 did present to you.

7 The data demonstrates that RJBA is making
8 significant progress towards meeting this goal. The
9 NWEA 2012-2013 data for all grades -- and, again, we
10 are not measuring just those students that are
11 tested on the SBA, which is third through eighth
12 grade; we are testing kindergarten through eighth
13 grade -- 44.4 percent of the students are at
14 grade-level standards for reading, and 48.7 percent
15 of the students are at grade-level standards for
16 math.

17 The next goal was that the average
18 academic growth for all students would be one year
19 by May 2013, again, as measured by the NWEA
20 short-cycle assessment. The Ralph J. Bunche Academy
21 student average, yearly reading growth for all
22 grades, was 1.67 grades. So, our students are
23 making more than a year-and-a-half gain in reading.

24 The student average for math was
25 1.35 years. So, our students made an average gain

1 of a year and a third last year in math.

2 The next goal is that 75 percent of
3 students who exit eighth grade will be
4 high-school-ready by May 2013. The eighth-graders
5 did demonstrate a significant improvement in their
6 reading scores, with an average growth of 1.67
7 years; and seven of nine students, or 77.7 percent,
8 demonstrated reading capacity at sixth-grade level
9 or above at the end of the year, which is the
10 measure of high-school readiness.

11 In math, the eighth-graders demonstrated
12 an average growth of 1.35; and five of nine, or
13 55.5 percent, were high-school-ready for math.

14 The last goal was that the average daily
15 attendance rate will be 95 percent by May 2013. And
16 we did make significant progress towards that goal.
17 Our average last year was 94.9-percent daily
18 attendance.

19 So, it is our belief that we have
20 demonstrated that we did meet the short-cycle goals
21 that we set for ourselves.

22 It's important to note that in a
23 three-year cycle, we only have two years of data,
24 because the year that we are currently in is the
25 third year of this contract.

1 It's important to note, also, that, again,
2 we tested all students, K through 8, so that the
3 "N," or that number that we submitted to you, would
4 represent all of the students at Ralph J. Bunche who
5 were present at the fall and the end of the year,
6 because in order to show growth, you have to have a
7 beginning and an end. And those beginning and
8 endpoints were September, at the very start of the
9 school year, and April, at the end of the school
10 year.

11 The other difference in the NWEA data is
12 that it's going to be a little bit longer. Instead
13 of in March, those end results are going to come in
14 April, which gives the students a little more time
15 to demonstrate growth.

16 So, we would also like to let you know
17 that we have implemented many programs to make a
18 difference for our students; we are very cognizant
19 of who they are. And we also have a process of
20 continuous improvement. And, so, we have always
21 looked at where our kids are and where they are
22 functioning and what the problems are.

23 So, some of the improvements that we've
24 made in Ralph J. Bunche over the course of these two
25 years is that we have added seventh and eighth

1 grade. So, we have completed the commitment that we
2 made to have a K-8 school.

3 We have implemented the Reads to Lead
4 grant, which just came into being this year. And as
5 a results of that, there's my reading specialist
6 sitting next to us, who is working hard with
7 teachers and students to improve not only what
8 happens with the students in terms of teacher
9 preparation, but working side-by-side with students.

10 We also were only one of two
11 State-authorized charters to implement the K3 Plus
12 program last summer. Because that was the first
13 year of that program, we will not know the results
14 of that endeavor until the end of the school year,
15 so that we can take a look at what K3 Plus has
16 actually meant to Ralph J. Bunche.

17 We have also -- I'm sorry -- implemented
18 Friday staff development training. We have extended
19 that to Saturdays, where we are training our
20 student -- our teachers, more importantly, into
21 another element of our program, which is the
22 Afrocentric elements in our program. Our teachers
23 have committed to Saturday training, also.

24 Another very important component this year
25 is the WAVE Reading Health program. We are the

1 pilot program for WAVE Reading Health, which
2 addresses cognitive skill weaknesses for our
3 children, directly addresses the skill weaknesses
4 that they come to school with. Again, we started
5 this year. We are the first school in the state of
6 New Mexico to take a look at -- specifically, at our
7 students, recognize their weaknesses and address
8 them directly. We will not have any midterm results
9 until January so we can see what the effects of this
10 program are.

11 We have established project-based learning
12 development teams that include not only our teachers
13 but, also, members from the ALOT program, which is
14 from Africana Studies from the University of
15 New Mexico. We are training not only teachers and
16 administrators; we have also trained the members who
17 are coming to us from ALOT to ensure that, as we
18 developed Common Core State standards, project-based
19 learning, we are also including the Afrocentric
20 elements.

21 We have a Common Core State adoptions
22 team, so we are not just training the trainers; we
23 are training every teacher in our school to make
24 sure that the Common Core Standards are adopted
25 appropriately.

1 We have a fine arts development and Friday
2 program for the students to learn how to use
3 everything that they're learning during the week and
4 to apply it to different situations.

5 We have a play-works program that provides
6 our children with opportunities for physical
7 exercise during the day, and so that they have time
8 to process mentally, as well as leadership
9 opportunities and service-learning opportunities.

10 And, then, finally, we have a new program
11 for our families called SOAR, which provides monthly
12 opportunities for parents to learn how to help their
13 children effectively.

14 Ralph J. Bunche is an innovator. We are
15 not satisfied with our grade. We are not satisfied
16 with where our children are. And we are doing
17 everything that we can. We have had two years, not
18 three, to demonstrate our growth. We have new
19 programs in place. We are anxious, no matter what,
20 to see what a difference they make for our students.

21 And as everyone has ever noted who walked
22 into our school, our children are learning; our
23 children are happy; and our children are dedicated
24 to our school.

25 We have a grandmother who drops her

1 student off in the morning, goes to the nearby
2 senior citizen center and waits for him every day,
3 because that's how much this school means to her and
4 to her child.

5 We are very proud that we are not
6 satisfied, that we are working hard, that we are
7 taking every opportunity from the community, from
8 the University, from everyone around us, to help
9 improve our students' learning. We are not
10 satisfied, and we have not rested.

11 So, we would like an opportunity to see
12 all of the things that we have implemented over the
13 last two years come to fruition, and we ask for your
14 consideration. Thank you very much.

15 THE CHAIR: Thank you. We appreciate
16 that.

17 Let me apologize to the audience. I
18 skipped over the Public Comment section. Is there
19 anyone here who chooses to comment on this
20 application? Just one person? Okay. If you would
21 come to the table, please? We do have a ten-minute
22 limit. Please introduce yourself and spell your
23 name.

24 MS. RAHMAN: Yes. I am Ann Sarah Rahman,
25 and former project manager --

1 THE CHAIR: I'm sorry. I can't hear you.

2 MS. RAHMAN: Ann Sarah Rahman. I'm just
3 coming from allergy tests, so -- it's Ann Sarah
4 Rahman, and former project manager for the Corps of
5 Engineers, former interim principal and teacher, as
6 well.

7 And I'm here -- I don't currently have any
8 children, bloodline children, so to speak, in the
9 school. But as part of the Village, I have a lot of
10 children there. And I just recently found out about
11 the crisis, so to speak. And as a community
12 partner, activist, would like to see the charter
13 extended at least a year.

14 I've contacted other people in the
15 community who were not aware. And we are committed
16 to doing whatever is possible to make the school
17 work, thrive, and -- from former teachers, from
18 judges -- one I was hoping would be here, which was
19 Judge Jewell. And we're just committed and would
20 like for you all to take -- really consider that the
21 charter be extended.

22 And we recognize the shortcomings, and
23 we're committed to getting over the hump and letting
24 you see the improvement. Because there is a
25 committed community out there, now that we are

1 aware, we've been made aware. And sometimes that's
2 what it takes is, you know, a crisis, so to speak,
3 to get everybody in gear.

4 Once it was threatened to be closed, you
5 just find people getting on the bandwagon and
6 saying, "We do not want this to happen."

7 So, I am asking, on behalf of community
8 people who -- to extend it. So, that's all I have
9 to say right now.

10 THE CHAIR: Thank you for your comments.
11 Anyone else?

12 All right. Thank you very much.

13 We are now to PEC Commissioners' questions
14 and comments. Do we have questions and comments?
15 Concerns?

16 Let me -- let me begin, because I do have
17 a concern. I'm looking at your cohort data from the
18 NWEA test. And I just picked a page at random.
19 This is sixth-grade cohort math data. It's on
20 Page 8. And it says, "The sixth-grade cohort, four
21 students. Zero of four students demonstrated
22 grade-level growth."

23 Is that all the students you have in your
24 fourth grade?

25 MS. WILSON: In the fourth grade?

1 MR. RIOS: Sixth grade?

2 THE CHAIR: Pardon me. Sixth grade.

3 MS. WILSON: Those would be -- I'm sorry.

4 Those would be the students who started at the
5 beginning of the year and finished at the end of the
6 year. We did have more students come in. But we
7 didn't give you data on these kids, because a cohort
8 means a starting and an ending. So, those are the
9 kids that were physically present in September for
10 the test, and at the end.

11 We do have a combination middle-school
12 program. This year, we have a 5/6 classroom and a
13 7/8 classroom. So, it's not a traditional school.
14 Those students are in a blended program, a
15 combination of online learning, computer learning,
16 and supported learning in the classroom.

17 So -- that 6, 7, and 8 last year, when
18 that data was relevant, there were 37 students. And
19 Ms. Baca was the teacher in that classroom last year
20 and can speak to them.

21 THE CHAIR: Let me just ask you, what is
22 your current enrollment?

23 MS. WILSON: Our current enrollment, as of
24 the 40th day, it was 77.

25 THE CHAIR: And your enrollment cap is

1 270?

2 MS. WILSON: That is our enrollment cap,
3 yes, ma'am.

4 THE CHAIR: So, I'm looking at that number
5 of four students who tested, both beginning and
6 ending test. Do you have a -- a high mobility rate
7 or a dropout rate? Or what is it?

8 MS. WILSON: We generally do not have a
9 high mobility rate during the year of students
10 leaving, but we do have a lot of students who will
11 come in during the year, traditionally. As we all
12 are aware, we did have a very difficult year last
13 year because of the negativity that surrounded us
14 that we have overcome, and we are back, stable. But
15 we are rebuilding at this time. And we have now,
16 currently, new students coming in for the semester.

17 But we did take -- we took a hit. And
18 Ms. Baca would like to address some of this, too.

19 MS. BACA: Ms. Chairman, on that Page 8,
20 is that the cohort that says "spring to spring" on
21 the report?

22 MR. GERLICZ: Fall to spring.

23 MS. BACA: Is it fall to spring of that
24 same year?

25 MR. GERLICZ: Yeah.

1 MS. BACA: Okay. It was fall to spring
2 for the course of two years. So, the issue with
3 some of them not being in a cohort was, first of
4 all, because of the blended situation. And,
5 secondly, that was over a period of two years -- of
6 the one year that we did have a high mobility rate.

7 So, the students that improved will show
8 in the MAP rating that we did over the average of
9 one year, the course of the one year's growth for
10 the projected rate. But that MAP report shows the
11 high mobility over the course of the two years. And
12 they did not reenroll the second year, or they
13 dropped before the spring of the 2013 testing.

14 MS. WILSON: And the other issue is, we
15 will have students leave us from fifth grade to
16 sixth grade, because they will want some of the
17 programs that are available that the larger middle
18 schools, like band and orchestra, that we don't
19 have. So, traditionally, we will lose kids from
20 fifth to sixth.

21 So, again, that's two years of data for
22 those kids who chose to stay with us from fifth
23 through sixth.

24 THE CHAIR: Just a personal comment. It
25 would seem, with such small numbers testing, that

1 you may not have really adequate or good data going
2 forward.

3 MS. WILSON: Again, what we did was, that
4 data is the combination of all of the kids in the
5 school, to give us that "N." Because, even if you
6 look at the SBA data, there will be the same
7 concerns about the "N," because, as we know from
8 stats, basic statistics you need an "N" of 400 to
9 have really reliable data. And we don't have a
10 school that size.

11 We have been up to 110 students and have
12 tested as many as 70. But no matter what, that that
13 "N" is not reliable in terms of statistics, no
14 matter which set of statistics you're looking at.

15 But the growth data that we gave you was
16 all of the students, K through 8. It was not grade
17 level by grade level; it was all of them combined.

18 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. I'm looking
19 at your audit report summary. And, for instance,
20 year one, '09-2010, there were ten findings,
21 according to your report here. And then you say,
22 "All information included in Appendix A." I don't
23 have an Appendix A.

24 MS. WILSON: I'm sorry, but that data was
25 sent. But we had -- last year, we had three

1 findings. This year, we have one. We have
2 significantly improved in our financial situation
3 and in our data. But every year, it's gone down.
4 And, again, this year, we had only one.

5 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. I believe
6 those are all my questions. Other questions or
7 concerns? Mr. Gerlicz?

8 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, just a point.
9 I did notice that the Chair of the Ralph J. Bunche
10 Board has walked in. Just for point of information.

11 THE CHAIR: Good afternoon.

12 MR. CHIEMELEO: Good afternoon, ma'am. I
13 appreciate you --

14 THE CHAIR: Would you please introduce
15 yourself?

16 MR. CHIEMELEO: My name is Kanayo
17 Chiemeleo. I am clergy, and I am the chair of the
18 board. "Kanayo" is spelled K-A-N-A-Y-O.
19 "Chiemeleo" is C-H-I-E-M-E-L-E-O.

20 THE CHAIR: Other comments? Other
21 questions? Commissioner Bergman?

22 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: You know, I just --
23 I think I kind of wanted to note that in the
24 academic area, particularly, you say you're taking
25 steps to improve. And, yet, three years ago the

1 Secretary gave you an additional three years. And
2 one of the primary reasons, at that time, was the --
3 was academic performance.

4 And I look at the grade reports for the
5 three years that the CSD laid out for us here, and I
6 see no improvement. And you have cited -- I think,
7 unless I misunderstood you -- a mobility rate as a
8 part of your problem. But I see that CSD noted, in
9 their comments -- and I'll just read them into the
10 record here -- "According to the data in the PED
11 files, Ralph J. Bunche mobility rate of 11.3 percent
12 is about average for the State of New Mexico."

13 So, apparently, other schools deal with
14 these kind of issues, too. What would you like --
15 would you care to comment on that?

16 MS. WILSON: Each and every year, we have
17 had students that we have raised academically. And
18 because we have raised them academically, and they
19 are now proven performers, they have gone to Sandia
20 Prep on scholarship; they have gone back into their
21 home-school environments because their parents are
22 driving them every day, and they have become
23 successful back in their home schools, and we have
24 replaced them with students who are low.

25 So, when we look at our students -- but,

1 again, we are not satisfied, and that's why we have
2 done all of the things that we are doing to improve
3 their performance. Because our students are coming
4 significantly, three -- even when they come into
5 kindergarten, they're coming with nothing. They
6 have no letters, no sounds, no colors, no nothing.

7 And, so, that's why we have really taken a
8 look at everything that we're doing and why it's not
9 making a difference. Because their teachers are
10 trained. We are doing staff development. We are
11 following the guidelines. Our instructional audit
12 from last year showed no significant weaknesses in
13 the program.

14 So, our question is the same as your
15 question. If we're doing everything that we should
16 be doing, why aren't they progressing? That's why
17 we've taken on the cognitive skills and the WAVE
18 Reading Health, because for our particular group of
19 children, it wasn't enough. It's not been enough.

20 Every -- we've done everything that you've
21 asked us to do. We have dedicated, hard-working
22 staff. So, why didn't it make a difference? We
23 were as confused as you are.

24 So, that's why we said, "It's not enough,"
25 and that's why we took on the programs that we've

1 taken on.

2 Again, we're one of only two
3 State-authorized charters that applied for the
4 K3 Plus program and extended their school year, one
5 of only two. And we're not the only ones out there
6 not making progress. But we recognize it. We're
7 not happy; we're not satisfied. But we keep
8 reaching, and we take every opportunity that you
9 afford us, or anyone else affords us, to make the
10 lives of our children better and to increase their
11 academic standing.

12 Those children, each and every one of
13 us -- each and every one of them -- is important to
14 us, and you saw that when you were there, how
15 important those children are to us and how not
16 satisfied we are, and how willing we are to go to
17 whatever lengths it takes to make their education
18 better for them.

19 COMMISSIONER CARR: Thank you for your
20 comments. Thank you, Madame Chair.

21 THE CHAIR: Commissioners? Other
22 comments? Commissioner Parker.

23 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Madame Chair,
24 Commissioners, one thing I wanted to point out is it
25 seems like your school is offering a unique

1 experience in Albuquerque that -- speaking for
2 myself, growing up there. This Afrocentric focus is
3 not very common in Albuquerque. It's -- I think we
4 all understand that.

5 So, on a positive note there, I think you
6 guys are offering something for these kids that
7 they're not getting elsewhere. However, offsetting
8 that is that concern that everyone has about the
9 performance that the kids are having on their -- my
10 question is, you've stated all these programs that
11 you've started implementing at the school. You were
12 given a three-year extension two years ago; is that
13 correct?

14 MS. WILSON: So, this is our third year.

15 COMMISSIONER PARKER: When did you start
16 implementing these programs?

17 MS. WILSON: We have been phasing them in
18 as they have become available; Reads -- to K3 Plus
19 is a new program from the state. The previous year
20 was a pilot year. We did not find out about it soon
21 enough to apply the first year, but we made it a
22 target for this summer, so we extended our school
23 year. Reads to Lead is also a new program which is
24 affording me additional funding to give my teachers
25 an ongoing reading mentor and coach, which is also

1 new funding that's just recently become available.

2 The WAVE Reading Health, Dr. Paul Shirley
3 and his organization have given the school over
4 \$50,000 worth of testing. Every child in our school
5 has received the Gibson test to take a look at their
6 cognitive skills. And not only did they test the
7 children, they are supplying the volunteers to work
8 in the school four days a week, with every child, to
9 therapy improve those cognitive test scores.

10 Again, a lot of this has become available
11 over the course of the last two years. And we
12 really just had two years. We're in the third year.
13 So, we have not had an opportunity yet to see what
14 an impact everything that we're doing is going to
15 make for the children.

16 So, again, even with that short term, we
17 are -- we've taken on everything that is available.
18 We have gone to the -- to the State training that
19 was offered for Common Core. Last year, in the
20 summer, there were only about a handful of people at
21 the Solution Tree training that was offered through
22 PED, from the central section of the state.

23 The trainer, who is nationally known,
24 Martha Kaufeldt, said, "Bring anybody you want." I
25 brought teachers; I brought people from UNM and

1 trained a significant number of people to help build
2 stronger projects, based on the Common Core, and to
3 get as many people trained as possible.

4 So, we take every opportunity that's
5 afforded to us to make things better. And we do
6 have a very unique experience for our children.
7 It's evident in who they are and how they talk about
8 themselves and their lives and their situation.
9 They're positive; they're working hard; and they
10 love where they are. They love being at school.
11 They are there every day with bright shiny faces.

12 And they're working hard. Everybody's
13 working hard. But we're not just trying to work
14 harder; we're trying to work better and to increase
15 those opportunities. So, when you give us those
16 opportunities, when the community gives us those
17 opportunities, we are taking them. And we are doing
18 everything that we can to improve, because, like I
19 said, those kids are everything to us.

20 And each and every one of them -- I know
21 every one of them. I know their strengths and
22 weaknesses. They are nurtured. They are -- and we
23 are not -- and we are pushing and pushing and
24 pushing, because we understand how important their
25 education is to them, and we are doing everything we

1 can to ensure that they get the opportunities that
2 they deserve.

3 THE CHAIR: Other comments? Questions?
4 Commissioner Conyers.

5 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: I had a question,
6 just as a clarification. I noted today, we've
7 approved three-year and five years. I thought I
8 heard Ms. Wilson asking for one year. Is that an
9 option that we have, or --

10 THE CHAIR: They're talk- -- the
11 communication I received from a member of the
12 community suggested that we suspend this school for
13 one year and give them an opportunity to regroup and
14 then come back.

15 I'm not that familiar with suspension. I
16 really don't know how that's done or -- because, in
17 essence, you're closing the school, is my
18 assumption. But I -- Director Gerlicz, would you
19 have any information on a suspension, what that
20 does?

21 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, members of the
22 Commission, we can certainly go to the statutes and
23 see what the statute says. I am not aware of
24 suspending a charter and then reengaging with it
25 later on. I'd have to check the statutes. I'm

1 unaware of that.

2 THE CHAIR: The first thing that occurred
3 to me when I read that was a suspended school, I
4 would not think, would be getting any funding. So,
5 it would be really difficult to do much as a school
6 with no funding. That's just my assumption.

7 MS. WILSON: Madame Chair, we would ask --
8 we would not ask for a suspension, but we would ask
9 for an opportunity to finish the school year and
10 come back and show you what we've done and show you
11 the difference that it's made, everything that we've
12 done. So, we would ask for a short extension, not a
13 suspension, on behalf of the school.

14 THE CHAIR: Other comments or questions?
15 Let me give you my heartfelt opinion on this. I
16 thought, when this application came up two years
17 ago, three years ago, I thought the school was so
18 badly damaged that it probably could not mend, and I
19 voted not to approve the renewal.

20 The Secretary, for her own reasons,
21 decided to give you all three more years. I don't
22 see anything has improved. I don't see that kids
23 are really doing better in this school than they
24 were doing before.

25 Another thing that concerns me greatly is

1 the enrollment. Last year, the enrollment was 104.
2 You're down to 77 this year. I think parents are
3 making their opinions known by leaving -- by pulling
4 their children out of the school. I think you get
5 to a point in enrollment where it's just not working
6 anymore.

7 I think, in my personal heart of hearts,
8 this school would be better off to close and then
9 let the folks who are really dedicated to this idea
10 form a new school, leave all the old baggage behind
11 and go forward with a whole new idea and a new
12 concept, and not be trying to fix problems
13 constantly, but come up with a whole new,
14 bright-futured idea. That's my personal opinion,
15 for what it's worth.

16 Commissioners, are there other comments or
17 concerns? Questions? The Chair would entertain a
18 motion. Are we ready, Ms. Lewis?

19 MS. LEWIS: I'd, ideally, like just a
20 couple more minutes.

21 THE CHAIR: Let's take a couple more
22 minutes' recess so that our attorney may help us
23 with some wording here.

24 We're going to take a ten-minute recess,
25 and we'll be right back.

1 MR. CHIEMELEO: Madame Chair, just
2 before -- I just wanted to make a comment for why --
3 before you recess. I just want to make a special
4 appeal. Because there are so many dynamics that
5 might not be highlighted here, or in the course of
6 your interaction with documents related to Ralph J.
7 Bunche Academy.

8 My education and my experience, work
9 experience, has spanned three continents. And I
10 have been in education. And I have a passion for
11 what we are doing at Ralph J. Bunche academically.
12 My two children, ten and eight, are part of that
13 school. I had to move them in September because of
14 the demise of their mom, and I had to take her to
15 Africa to bury her. So, I was away for six weeks.
16 So, I withdrew my kids.

17 Some of these things may not be adequately
18 captured. But I want to tell you that my kids are
19 thriving there. And I want to tell you that a lot
20 of noise has been going around about Ralph J. Bunche
21 Academy. And we've been working hard, not
22 necessarily to fix the things that are not working
23 but to be able to see exactly what is working and
24 what we should do to make it work.

25 A few in the community -- well, in this

1 century -- treating us as "House Negroes" and things
2 like that, will tell you what quality of bickerings
3 are around.

4 So, I want to appeal to you, as you
5 deliberate, just know that, yes, the scores may not
6 be up, but a thriving environment is daily created
7 in that place. And if there has to be some changes
8 in leadership, we want those changes to take place
9 without disrupting the school. And we don't want
10 personal things to be the motive for those changes.

11 That's where we are at. We are a bunch of
12 professionals and people of integrity on the board.
13 And, honestly, Ralph J. Bunche Academy is doable.
14 [ph] Thank you.

15 THE CHAIR: Thank you for those comments.
16 Let's take about a ten-minute recess, please. We'll
17 be back at 15 after.

18 (Recess taken, 3:05 p.m. to 3:25 p.m.)

19 THE CHAIR: We are back in session. The
20 Chair has asked for a motion concerning the Ralph J.
21 Bunche Academy.

22 Commissioners? Commissioner Gant.

23 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, members,
24 I move the Ralph J. Bunche Charter School be denied
25 an additional five-year term for the following

1 reasons:

2 Pursuant to New Mexico -- to NMSA
3 22-8B-12(L)(2), this school has failed to meet or
4 make substantial progress towards achievement of the
5 Department's minimum educational standards for
6 student performance standards identified in the --
7 in the charter contract, as evidenced by:

8 1. A school grade of "F" in the current
9 standing, student growth -- as well as student
10 growth of both highest performance -- highest
11 performing and lowest performing students, for an
12 overall school grade of "F." This is down from "D"
13 for 2012.

14 Failure to meet Standards-Based
15 Assessments, as required by law.

16 In addition, the school, pursuant to NMSA
17 22-8B-12(L)(3), failed to meet generally accepted
18 standards for fiscal management evidenced by
19 multiple PED audit findings.

20 In addition, the renewal application is
21 incomplete and that it did not supply the Appendix A
22 referenced in part A, Page 15, of the renewal
23 application. This appendix was to address the audit
24 findings and any changes made to fiscal management
25 practices as a result of audit findings.

1 THE CHAIR: Commissioners, you've heard
2 the motion. Do we have a second?

3 COMMISSIONER CARR: Second.

4 THE CHAIR: Motion by Commissioner Gant,
5 second by Commissioner Carr, to deny the renewal
6 application of Ralph J. Bunche Academy.

7 Is there any discussion, Commissioners?
8 Before we vote, Commissioners, I would remind you
9 that a "yes" vote is to deny the school; a "no" vote
10 is contrary to the motion and would not deny the
11 school.

12 Are we ready to vote? Commissioner
13 Bergman, roll-call, please.

14 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Carr.

15 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
17 Conyers.

18 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: No.

19 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
20 Parker.

21 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
23 Peralta.

24 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Pogna.

1 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Gant.

3 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
5 Shearman.

6 THE CHAIR: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

8 Bergman votes "yes." Madame Chair, by a
9 seven-to-one vote, the motion to deny has carried.

10 THE CHAIR: Thank you. The vote is
11 seven-to-one to deny the renewal application of the
12 Ralph J. Bunche Academy. Thank you for coming to us
13 today.

14 Would the representatives of the
15 New Mexico School for the Arts please come forward?
16 Welcome.

17 Mr. Gerlicz, whenever you're ready.

18 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, members of the
19 Commission, representatives of the New Mexico School
20 for the Arts, welcome. For and on behalf of your
21 new Commissioner, Parker, I want to explain to you,
22 Commissioner, especially, that the New Mexico School
23 for the Arts is a highly unique school and one of
24 our flagship schools in our constellation of charter
25 schools.

1 It was set by special New Mexico statute
2 to be a very innovative public-private partnership
3 that allows a School for the Arts to occur, as well
4 as an institute attached to the School for the Arts
5 that would be an educational arm of the institute,
6 and that would have students from across the State
7 of New Mexico room and board at the school and be
8 part of the program, and that the funds necessary to
9 board those students would be raised privately.

10 It's a highly unique situation, highly
11 innovative situation. And I -- all of the data that
12 we have analyzed and consistently found in our site
13 visits, consistently found in the data, supports the
14 notion that this school has reached its potential
15 and continues to demonstrate that this unique
16 partnership is working at a very high level.

17 The three-year average, since the report
18 cards have come out, for the New Mexico School for
19 the Arts has been consistently an "A." If there is
20 any dark cloud, it's hardly a dark cloud, and one
21 that I referenced to earlier in another charter
22 school, in that the lowest mark was perhaps in
23 school growth and in graduation rates. Because its
24 graduation rate is so high, there's no room for
25 growth. Therefore, there's no growth; therefore, a

1 low grade.

2 Certainly not the fault of the school, and
3 something that the Assessment and Accountability
4 Office is actively working to institute additional
5 measures that would reward schools such as this one
6 for maintaining a high level of excellence in their
7 graduation rate and in their academics. No school
8 should be -- at all suffer because they are not
9 growing sufficiently when they are operating at a
10 high level. And such is the case with the
11 New Mexico School for the Arts.

12 There is much to be said and to applaud
13 about this school. But suffice to say that, for all
14 these reasons, the Charter School Division
15 enthusiastically recommends a full five-year renewal
16 for the New Mexico School for the Arts. Thank you,
17 Madame Chair.

18 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Are there public
19 comments on this application?

20 Seeing none, we'll move on to Commissioner
21 comments and questions. Commissioner Gant?

22 COMMISSIONER GANT: They haven't spoken.

23 MS. MONTROYA: Just a few minutes. We'll
24 be just a few minutes.

25 MR. GERLICZ: All in favor, "Aye."

1 THE CHAIR: I think we need a -- I don't
2 know -- whatever. I apologize. Please introduce
3 yourselves, and let us hear from you.

4 SPEAKER: Okay, good. Madame Chair,
5 members of the Commission, my name is Cindy Montoya
6 and I am the principal of the New Mexico School for
7 the Arts. Sitting to my right is Catherine
8 Oppenheimer, O-P-P-E-N-H-E-I-M-E-R. Catherine is
9 the chair of our governing council. Seated to my
10 left is Riis Gonzales, the director of the Art
11 Institute. And behind me is Christina Yamashiro,
12 our business manager.

13 I'd like to thank the Charter School
14 Division, the Options for Parents, for all of their
15 support during the renewal process. And we
16 especially would like to thank Karen Ehlert, our
17 educational administrator assigned to the New Mexico
18 School for the Arts. She has been there from day
19 one, and she has always helped us. And without her,
20 we would not enjoy the success.

21 As many of you know, we were created in
22 2008 under special legislation. We are the only --
23 State chartered -- residential public high school.
24 We opened our doors in 2010. And the school
25 provides a full academic curriculum, combined with a

1 full mastery arts program in music, dance, theater
2 and visual arts. And this program is available to
3 students, regardless of academic standing or income
4 level.

5 State funding supports the academic
6 program. And the Art Institute, in combination with
7 the State funding, supports the arts -- the arts
8 program.

9 The Art Institute alone supports the
10 residential and outreach programs.

11 New Mexico School for the Arts is led by a
12 governing council of seven members and an art
13 institute board with 20 members. The mission is to
14 give talented youth the tools to succeed by
15 providing them with a rigorous arts mastery and
16 academic education. This model provides us the
17 opportunity to engage students through the arts and
18 then build a bridge to academic success.

19 We are so proud to report to you today, as
20 Mr. Gerlicz said, we received a second "A" grade
21 from New Mexico Public Education Department. Within
22 three years of opening, we are exceeding State
23 benchmarks for the percentage of students proficient
24 in math and reading.

25 I want to point out to you, it's not

1 obvious, because the indicator for school growth
2 shows a "D." We were at the 93rd percentile in
3 reading, and we cannot gain points in that area;
4 additionally, in math, while we did receive a lot on
5 many points due to growth. So, all of our growth
6 points were in math and none recognized for reading.
7 And as Mr. Gerlicz said, that's being addressed
8 through the State.

9 We are committed to helping our students
10 move into colleges, university, technical programs
11 and careers. More than 25 nationally recognized
12 higher education schools, such as American
13 University, Barnard, Carnegie Mellon, Skidmore,
14 Oberlin, and the Chicago Institute of Arts visited
15 the New Mexico School for the Arts in 2013.
16 Approximately 3.2 million dollars in scholarship
17 from those colleges and universities were awarded to
18 our students last year, alone.

19 On the artistic programming, we're proud
20 to report that we are also doing exceptionally well.
21 A dance student has been accepted into the LINES
22 apprenticeship program. We were given the rights to
23 perform Balanchine's Serenade. Balanchine is the
24 director of the New York City Ballet. This is
25 rarely granted to high schools, and, indeed, is a

1 great honor.

2 Two years in a row, our theater students
3 earned the highest awards in the Eastern New Mexico
4 University Theater Festival. NMSA enjoys the
5 tribute of honors: Choir of the Year at All State.
6 95 percent of our music students were accepted into
7 the instrumental or vocal All State's program this
8 year. One of our students received national
9 recognition. She won the gold medal in the
10 Scholastics Art and Writing contest. Her
11 award-winning photograph was on exhibit in New York
12 City. She was invited to attend a ceremony at
13 Carnegie Hall last May.

14 And just to give you some context, this is
15 the same award that Andy Warhol won in his youth.

16 Another student won first place in the
17 Aviation Art contest sponsored by the State of New
18 Mexico. So our art programs are being recognized
19 nationally and locally.

20 NMSA students obtain admission through a
21 blind audition or portfolio process. And this
22 provides students the opportunity to show their
23 talent and aptitude for a particular art. And it
24 means that formal study of the arts is not needed to
25 gain entrance to our school.

1 We have students in all departments who
2 have not had formal lessons, prior to attending
3 NMSA.

4 We don't know anything about their
5 personal background, their academic background,
6 until a student accepts an invitation to attend.

7 Our student body represents 37 New Mexico
8 communities. 44 percent of our students are
9 socioeconomically disadvantaged, as reported on the
10 Title I income survey, which qualifies us to be a
11 Title I school-wide school.

12 We are committed to creating a culture of
13 respect. To accomplish our goals, NMSA seeks the
14 most qualified and passionate academic and artistic
15 staff. The chairs and instructors are working
16 professionals. And our academic teachers are just
17 as passionate about physics and humanities as our
18 art teachers are about dance and theater.

19 Students are held to high academic
20 standards, and we offer honors courses in English,
21 math, science, and humanities. Students can choose
22 to study AP Music Theory and AP Studio Arts. We
23 also realize that our students have a wide range of
24 academic skills, and we did not want to be a "Wait
25 to Fail" model. So, we wanted to get ahead of that

1 curve. And we developed a ninth-grade academy,
2 mandatory. All students need to learn those skills
3 to make them successful, not only in school, but in
4 life.

5 We have a senior seminar designed to help
6 students transition to college or careers. By the
7 way, not all of our students pursue the arts, but
8 many of them do minor in the arts.

9 We have a Sunrise Club established for
10 those students who are unable to complete
11 assignments. Highly qualified teachers oversee that
12 program. We have Super Saturdays during finals
13 week. It's a busy time of year, difficult to
14 manage, so we're there for them so that they don't
15 fail a final.

16 We replaced the math and science
17 curriculum, even though we just bought those
18 materials, in order to align with the Common Core.
19 We've hired an instructional assistant to support
20 teachers using Title I funds in ninth-grade math
21 classes. We hired Dr. Mary McLeod as a .25
22 assistant principal, with all of her attention going
23 to instruction and student achievement.

24 Like the other school said, we monitor
25 student data closely, as well, to designate

1 interventions.

2 We offer dual-credit classes at our site,
3 because our students don't have the resources to
4 travel to colleges.

5 We have a very engaged parent community.

6 In an effort to ensure all voices were
7 heard during this renewal process, we conducted
8 focus group meetings for staff, parents, governing
9 council, and students, to make sure that we're
10 really meeting our mission from their point of view,
11 as well as our point of view and the data.

12 We do have one minor request moving
13 forward, and that's a refinement to our language and
14 our mission statement. You can find the change on
15 Page 10 of your report. And I can read that for
16 you.

17 Our mission will stay the same. We just
18 had a cumbersome, long mission statement. We want
19 one that's simpler and one that we can all memorize.

20 "New Mexico School for the Arts provides
21 access to a rigorous mastery arts and academic high
22 school education for youth with passion and aptitude
23 in the arts leading to post-secondary learning,
24 careers in the arts, and lives that contribute to
25 society."

1 Madame Chair and members of the
2 Commission, we are here today to request renewal of
3 our charter. And at this time, we will stand for
4 any questions.

5 THE CHAIR: Are there public comments
6 regarding this application?

7 Seeing none, now, we will move to
8 Commissioners' questions and comments.

9 And may I just -- before we move away from
10 it, may I clarify? On Page 10 of your application,
11 it says, "Current School Mission." Now, that's what
12 you're wanting to change to?

13 MS. MONTOYA: That's the -- let's see --
14 yes. If we're looking at the same Page 10, it says,
15 "NMSA intends to refine the language of the mission,
16 as stated below"?

17 THE CHAIR: It says, "Current Mission --
18 "Current School Mission." And it's right above
19 "Current Enrollment and Demographic Information" on
20 Page 10, Intro Page 10.

21 MS. MONTOYA: Maybe -- I think our page
22 numbers are not the same. Okay. Under "School
23 Overview"? Is that what you're looking at?

24 THE CHAIR: Let's do this. The kind of
25 day I've been having --

1 COMMISSIONER PARKER: You're looking at
2 the synopsis. She's looking at your original --

3 MS. MONTOYA: Oh, got it. Okay. Right,
4 that's the original.

5 THE CHAIR: It didn't sound like what you
6 read.

7 MS. MONTOYA: That's the original, and
8 this is -- and I'll give this to you. This is the
9 proposed revision.

10 THE CHAIR: And it is on Page 101 of this
11 application?

12 MS. MONTOYA: Page 10 of the synopsis.

13 THE CHAIR: Page 101?

14 MS. MONTOYA: I don't have a Page 101, so
15 I don't know.

16 SPEAKER: Madame Chair, I think that's the
17 original application. That is the synopsis that
18 we're looking at.

19 THE CHAIR: Do we have the synopsis?

20 MR. GERLICZ: If that word "synopsis"
21 means what I'm looking at here, it's the same thing
22 that we sent to --

23 MS. CALLAHAN: Are you talking about the
24 analysis or synopsis?

25 MS. MONTOYA: It's the analysis.

1 MS. CALLAHAN: The analysis that we did
2 that you then responded to?

3 MS. MONTOYA: Yes.

4 THE CHAIR: Do we have it? You have it,
5 because I can't -- I just want to be sure that we
6 have it in writing.

7 MR. GERLICZ: Yeah, it's here.

8 THE CHAIR: I just want to make sure
9 everybody has it. Does everybody have this, page
10 101 of the analysis, which contains the new mission
11 statement?

12 MR. GONZALES: Madame Chair, it's Page 10
13 of the analysis, Page 10 of the analysis.

14 THE CHAIR: I can't even read. I
15 apologize. It is 10. There is a mark right after
16 that "10." All right. Page 10.

17 Does everybody have that, because -- if we
18 vote to renew this charter, then we are also voting
19 to approve their new mission statement. So, I just
20 want us all to be aware of that.

21 Okay. Now, is that clarified? Let's move
22 on to further questions. Commissioner Gant --
23 Bergman. I think we need a recess. Commissioner
24 Bergman.

25 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Well, I was just

1 going to suggest on what we were just discussing
2 that, if we're approving it today as a part of this
3 renewal, then it will be incumbent upon CSD to be
4 sure it gets into the new wording in the contract
5 that you pre-populate. That's all I was going to
6 say about that. It has to get in there somehow. It
7 has to be in there.

8 MR. GERLICZ: Commissioner Bergman, the
9 matter is not whether we agree to approve it today
10 or we have to require a separate amendment. We
11 don't care. So, either way, it will be in the new
12 contract.

13 THE CHAIR: What is your pleasure on that,
14 Commissioners? Would you rather have it presented
15 to us separately, or include it today?

16 COMMISSIONER CARR: Let's include it
17 today.

18 THE CHAIR: Today? All right.

19 Then, further questions or comments.
20 Commissioner Gant.

21 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, members,
22 as you've probably said and heard me talk before
23 about facilities and the impacts -- that doesn't
24 have an impact on this current application. But I
25 have a report from PSFA here. And your New Mexico

1 minimum Construction Index is, like,
2 92-point-something, which is -- this about one of
3 the highest in the state, frankly.

4 MR. GONZALES: Right.

5 COMMISSIONER GANT: So, my question is
6 what's your plans -- that building -- I've never
7 seen the building, so I can't address it. That
8 building must be really in bad shape. So, talk to
9 us about the facility, what you plan to do,
10 et cetera. Because I see money -- like I told
11 people before, facilities -- facilities tend to
12 drive charter schools into the deficit -- or worse.
13 Please explain what you plan to do with this
14 facility.

15 MR. GONZALES: Madame Chair and
16 Commissioner, again, thank you for that question.
17 You know, we've been looking -- we've looked at 18
18 different sites to build a facility, a permanent
19 home for the school. It's going to be 90,000 to
20 110,000 square feet. We need dance studios, visual
21 arts studios, music practice rooms, theater room --
22 and, so, the really unique thing about this school,
23 I think, is that we have an amazing private
24 partnership.

25 And, so far, we've raise \$7 million for

1 the permanent home, and we're going to continue
2 raising funds for it. But we're, right now, in the
3 process of searching. We have entered into
4 conversations with the State, the City, Santa Fe
5 Public Schools, to try to find a site that works for
6 the school. So, hopefully, within this year, we're
7 hoping that we will secure a site and be able to
8 move forward on that.

9 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, members,
10 are you saying you'd find one that you could
11 renovate, or build?

12 MR. GONZALES: Either, Madame Chair and
13 Commissioner. We're looking at both. We're
14 look- -- to build from the ground up, it's going to
15 cost between \$20 million and \$25 million. So, we
16 are looking at a couple of sites that we potentially
17 could renovate.

18 COMMISSIONER GANT: Okay. And, as I read
19 this report from the PSFA, your FMP and Ed Spec --
20 well, I'll say FMP, Facility Master Plan -- is in
21 draft?

22 MR. GONZALES: Madame Chair and
23 Commissioner, no, that's been approved. It was
24 approved in August, by the governing council. And
25 shortly after that, we sent it over to PSFA.

1 COMMISSIONER GANT: Well, Madame Chair,
2 it's one thing to have the governing council approve
3 it; it's another thing for PSFA to approve it. Have
4 you got a document that says PSFA has totally
5 reviewed the document and approved it?

6 MR. GONZALES: Madame Chair and
7 Commissioner, you make a good point. I will check
8 on that.

9 COMMISSIONER GANT: Because this is --
10 this is the hump you all have to get over.

11 MR. GONZALES: Yes, sir.

12 COMMISSIONER GANT: And, of course, your
13 educational specifications go right along with the
14 FMP. Have you even started those yet?

15 MS. MONTOYA: We have had communication
16 from them -- I don't have it with me -- which I am
17 happy to present to the Commission, or to the
18 Charter School Division, that they review it; there
19 was approval. They asked a few questions. We
20 returned that document. I just don't have it with
21 me right now. And I don't remember the details of
22 it. But we have been in conversation with them.
23 They have received it.

24 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair --
25 Ms. Martica -- Ms. Casias, who just left -- she had

1 to leave -- stated to me that there was additional
2 information they had not received yet. So, that's
3 what -- and she tried to contact the person that's
4 handling it, and he could not -- he did not have it.
5 And, of course, the Ed Spec is another hump before
6 you can ever put a spade in the ground.

7 MS. MONTOYA: So, I will contact
8 Mr. Galbreath, our former business manager. He was
9 leading that project for us. I am familiar with
10 that process, having gone through school redesigns
11 in other districts. So, I will follow up with him.

12 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, my only
13 last comment is, are you building this to own it, or
14 are you going to have a foundation that owns it, or
15 lease/purchase, or what have you got planned?

16 MR. GONZALES: Madame Chair and
17 Commissioner, thank you for that question. We're
18 trying to figure that out. All options are, right
19 now, on the table. If -- with the private funding
20 that we have available and the lease purch- -- the
21 lease assistance funds that we're getting, we're
22 trying to piece this together, depending on the
23 site. So, we're working on that.

24 COMMISSIONER GANT: Thank you,
25 Madame Chair. I just didn't want to cause trouble.

1 But as I've said, some charter schools have gotten
2 in trouble with finance, because I don't -- I got
3 it. But I don't know how much you are paying over
4 your lease assistance right now. Or are you?

5 MR. GONZALES: We're paying about \$15,000
6 over -- out of operations for our current --

7 COMMISSIONER GANT: Compared to some,
8 that's pocket change. So, thank you.

9 THE CHAIR: Commissioners, other
10 questions? Commissioner Pogna.

11 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Madame Chair, I may
12 have missed hearing. What is your total enrollment?

13 MS. MONTOYA: Commissioner, our total
14 enrollment is 201 students.

15 COMMISSIONER POGNA: How many?

16 MS. MONTOYA: 201.

17 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Thank you.

18 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Bergman.

19 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Thank you,
20 Madame Chair. In your remarks, you mentioned your
21 ninth-grade academy. I put a little star by it when
22 you mentioned it in your application.

23 I know it's a new program. But are you
24 getting any indications of how that's going to work
25 for you?

1 MS. MONTOYA: We did. In our very first
2 year, which was last year, at the end of our first
3 semester, we had no students failing ninth grade in
4 any area. That motivated us to keep going, and
5 we're having additional success this year.

6 Our students, they're start- -- they're
7 ratcheting it up a little. They're starting to
8 understand what it means to be a high-school
9 student, what it means to show up all day, every
10 day, pay attention, do the work.

11 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: And, then, I also
12 noted, later on, when you talked about your SAT,
13 slash, ACT prep, you had this in here, that
14 "Students unable to pay for this class receive
15 scholarship support from the parent association."

16 I've remarked in this area several times
17 today, and I'll do it again. I commend you for
18 that, because that is a problem for some parents.
19 Students should not be denied that because they
20 don't have the financial means to have access to
21 that. So, I commend you for that.

22 And because of your unique nature as a
23 school -- you do, as you know, have students from
24 all over the state -- you have been here before when
25 you've done your annual report. And I have lamented

1 then, and probably will still lament -- I'm from
2 Roswell. You are very underrepresented from the
3 southern part of the state. And I don't know how
4 you can recruit more students. But I sure wish
5 there was a way that you guys could figure out --
6 because I know the distances involved are what's
7 keeping those kids -- I know you have the boarding
8 aspect, and maybe the parents in the southern part
9 of the state aren't hearing about that.

10 I know you have scholarships in that area,
11 too. So, maybe -- I would love to see you do some
12 more recruiting in our part of the state. Would you
13 care to address that?

14 MR. GONZALES: Madame Chair and
15 Commissioner, thank you for that. We're working
16 hard to get out there. We just received a \$10,000
17 grant to specifically recruit in the Roswell-Artesia
18 area. It just came in two weeks ago. So, we'll be
19 out there.

20 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: The Chairman is
21 from Artesia, so, we're very glad to hear that. So,
22 again, as a part of your unique nature, I referenced
23 you do make an annual report to us. And I had a
24 request in that area, because I'm taking that as
25 your own comment in your reply to the CSD. It was

1 at the very end. You say that your governing
2 council and school leadership "are leading focus
3 group sessions for students, staff, and parents, in
4 order to gather stakeholder feedback in an effort to
5 understand what is working well, what needs to be
6 improved, and how and what needs to be eliminated.
7 We want and need to hear from our community." And I
8 certainly second that.

9 And then you say, "Stakeholder involvement
10 and ongoing feedback is a critical factor in the
11 success of NMSA." I agree with that.

12 My only request was, do you intend to
13 include -- keep us informed of what you're hearing
14 from your families? I know it may not be a part of
15 your statutory requirement. But I, at least, for
16 one, would like to hear what you're hearing back.

17 MS. MONTOYA: Commissioner, we would be
18 happy to include those reports in our June
19 presentation to the Public Education Commission.

20 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Again, I would
21 appreciate it. Thank you, Madame Chair.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Commissioner
23 Parker.

24 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Madame Chair,
25 Commissioners, I just had a quick question.

1 What's the breakdown, as far as you've got
2 it separated, with performing arts versus visual
3 arts. I'm just curious what the -- like, dance?
4 Music?

5 MS. MONTOYA: I don't have those exact
6 numbers. But I can tell you that the visual arts
7 department has about over 60 students, being our
8 largest. And the dance students, dance department,
9 has the smallest number in the 30s. And then music
10 and theater are in the 50s.

11 COMMISSIONER PARKER: (Indicates.)

12 THE CHAIR: Other questions,
13 Commissioners? Let me just ask a couple for my own
14 personal information.

15 I know that, for students, and
16 particularly the younger students, living away from
17 home must be tough. So, my question is, in a year,
18 how many students would you have drop out of the
19 school, overall, total, just bird's-eye view?

20 MS. MONTOYA: Are you talking specifically
21 because of the residential program? Is that the
22 question?

23 THE CHAIR: I understand, because of the
24 residential program, probably a lot of children from
25 Roswell or Artesia would have a hard time being away

1 from home, particularly the younger ones. I'd just
2 like an idea of how many students start the year and
3 how many end the year. How many do you --

4 MS. MONTROYA: This year, we started with
5 206, and we're at 201. We've learned over time. In
6 our first year, we had, I think, four or five
7 students who did not like either the residential
8 program or leaving their home school, and they left
9 within the first semester.

10 We have improved our communication to
11 families about what it's like. And, so, each year,
12 we have -- it's been reduced each year. But we do
13 have students who arrive and realize that they do
14 not want to study, intensively, their art form. So,
15 we help those students. They stay with us as long
16 as they can. We do not want to exit them at any
17 point. We don't want them to lose credits to
18 graduation, until we can make a plan.

19 And, on occasion, students remain for the
20 academic -- they attend the arts, but the academic
21 is their focus.

22 THE CHAIR: I see. Okay. And your
23 enrollment cap is 300, and you're currently at 201.
24 What is limiting you from reaching that 300
25 students? Is it the capacity of your facility?

1 MS. MONTOYA: It's the capacity of our
2 facilities. We bus students to another location for
3 the dance program. We -- the Art Institute has
4 moved off campus to their own building. At
5 different times of the year, we're in four locations
6 for our programming.

7 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. Any other
8 questions, comments, Commissioners? Seeing none,
9 the Chair would entertain a motion. Commissioner
10 Peralta.

11 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: I would like to
12 make a motion that the Public Education Commission
13 approve the renewal application for the New Mexico
14 School for the Arts for a five-year term.

15 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Do I hear a
16 second?

17 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Second.

18 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Bergman. We have
19 a motion by Commissioner Peralta, seconded by
20 Commissioner Bergman, to approve the application of
21 New Mexico School of the Arts for a five-year
22 renewal. Any discussion? Hearing none,
23 Commissioner Bergman, may we have a roll-call vote,
24 please?

25 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

1 Conyers.

2 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

4 Parker.

5 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

7 Peralta.

8 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Pogna.

10 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Carr.

12 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Gant.

14 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

16 Shearman.

17 THE CHAIR: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner

19 Bergman votes "yes."

20 Madame Chair, by an eight-to-zero vote,
21 that motion carries.

22 THE CHAIR: The motion is unanimous to
23 approve the application for the renewal of the
24 New Mexico School for the Arts. Thank you.

25 MS. MONTOYA: Thank you.

1 THE CHAIR: Commissioners, shall we move
2 forward, or do we need a break?

3 Will the representatives of La Resolana
4 Leadership Academy please come to the table?

5 Welcome.

6 Mr. Gerlicz, whenever you're ready.

7 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, members of the
8 Commission, representatives from La Resolana,
9 welcome.

10 The Charter School Division is going to
11 recommend renewal for La Resolana, but not for the
12 full five-year term, and for the following reasons:

13 The -- the -- again, as we've said
14 continuously today, we look behind the final grade
15 of "F" to see what is really going on at the school.
16 And, really, in the latest report card of
17 La Resolana, that "F" is extremely close to a low
18 "D." It is a drop from what the school did last
19 year, which was a "C," a significant drop, which
20 was, in everyone's opinion, due to the performance
21 of the low quartile group of students, Q1.

22 The three-year average for the school
23 remains a "D," and primarily brought down by the
24 fact of the "F" this year.

25 During the site visit that CSD conducted

1 to La Resolana, we saw some very good things going
2 on. The staff and the leadership was unified in the
3 use of data. In fact, there was a unique example of
4 that, that we have not seen in other schools, called
5 a "data wall." It was an initiative of the
6 leadership and staff to use a data wall that had a
7 number of attributes in it: The short-cycle
8 assessments, the reading scores. They had three
9 different reading assessments: San Diego Quick,
10 MAP, and WRAT, another reading assessment.

11 It was clear to the Charter School
12 Division that there was an intent and purpose to use
13 data to improve the performance of students,
14 particularly in the Q1 area.

15 There was confusion, as we have seen in
16 other schools, on the MAP data, the Measurement of
17 Academic Progress data. And the school has
18 presented evidence of growth utilizing the MAP
19 assessments.

20 La Resolana has done a better job than
21 other schools of translating that MAP data into
22 annual year targets. That's really the one thing
23 that needs to happen in order to be able to analyze
24 whether the MAP RIT scores can be translated into
25 recognizable form. And La Resolana has done that

1 better than other schools.

2 You can see in the report card that they
3 received a "B" in the highest performing students.
4 In fact, if you take those two, the "B" and the "F,"
5 and look even further into the statistics, you can
6 see some -- another piece of what we considered
7 interesting data; that is, that even though they
8 scored an "F" in the lowest performing students, it
9 was actually a very high "F," so that it placed them
10 third out of 30 schools. And those 30 schools are
11 like-minded schools that now, the State has the
12 ability to compare a school with like-minded schools
13 around the state and do a comparative analysis.

14 And they are third out of 30 for the
15 lowest performing, even though they scored low in
16 that category. It's an indication that that is a
17 group of students that's very difficult to meet, and
18 La Resolana, again, is third out of 30 in there.

19 As you can see in the packet that we have
20 sent to the PEC, we recommend that Resolana
21 Leadership Academy be renewed for three years, and
22 be placed on a corrective action plan that includes
23 the following conditions:

24 1. That the school undergo an
25 instructional audit under the guidance of the

1 Priority Schools Bureau. And, actually, that's now
2 under the guidance of the Charter School Division,
3 who is handling instructional audits for the
4 State-chartered schools. These will incorporate the
5 standard turnaround principles that happen in an
6 instructional audit. And that's already scheduled
7 for January.

8 The corrective action plan will reflect
9 additional sections that the school will take to
10 improve the student outcomes for its lowest
11 performing students, and that will translate into
12 the performance framework indicators in the
13 negotiation.

14 We will also -- or, we ask La Resolana to
15 present a plan for clearly translating the use of
16 MAP, those RIT scores, into what that means in terms
17 of partial-year, half-year, full-year growth, and
18 that that become part of the negotiated performance
19 indicators.

20 MAP is a good assessment. It is a good
21 short-cycle assessment. The translation of the data
22 is where many schools get messed up, and that, we
23 will resolve in the negotiation processing.

24 We ask, also, as a condition that
25 La Resolana will ensure that the governing council

1 take an active and engaged role in ensuring the
2 academic performance of the school, and that the
3 governing body monitor the status of those goals
4 accordingly, and that we work closely with the
5 governing body to do that, and state their goals in
6 S.M.A.R.T. format.

7 Lastly, the Charter School Division will
8 engage in in-depth annual visits to La Resolana to
9 both monitor and as support to the school.

10 And for that reason, the Charter School
11 Division recommends renewal for a three-year term,
12 with those conditions.

13 Thank you, Madame Chair.

14 THE CHAIR: Thank you. If you all would
15 please introduce yourselves, and we'd like to hear
16 your comments.

17 MS. J. MONTOYA: Yes. Good afternoon,
18 Commissioners. My name is Justina Montoya. I'm the
19 principal at La Resolana Leadership Academy. I've
20 been the principal since June 2006.

21 I want to thank the Charter School
22 Division for -- well, let me let the rest of my team
23 introduce themselves. Sorry. And my governing
24 council president and another governing council
25 member had planned to be at our meeting, but they

1 were believing that it was going to -- we were going
2 to be on tomorrow. So, they're planning to attend
3 tomorrow. So, I apologize for their absence today.

4 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

5 MR. RIOS: Madame Commissioner, my name is
6 Rick Rios, R-I-O-S. I'm an educational consultant
7 with La Resolana.

8 MS. E. MONTOYA: Good afternoon. I'm
9 Eileen Montoya, and I'm a former teacher at -- for
10 La Resolana, and now an education consultant for the
11 school.

12 MS. J. MONTOYA: Madame Commissioner and
13 fellow Commissioners, I would like to thank the
14 Charter School Division for their input and their
15 work into our renewal. Tony and Kelly, thank you so
16 much for visiting our school and for taking a look
17 at the good things that are going on in our school.

18 As you know, we've been here before. We
19 were placed on a three-year renewal the last time
20 around. And since that time, we've done a lot of
21 work to really try to go more in-depth in
22 understanding the population of students that we
23 serve.

24 You know, the -- we serve an at-risk
25 population of students. We have challenges with our

1 students. But we also have very high expectation.
2 And we, certainly, as a school staff, have a
3 philosophy that they have all the potential and
4 capability in the world of reaching their goals and
5 dreams.

6 One of the strengths of our school is that
7 I have a very high majority cooperation with
8 parents, support from parents, because they -- I
9 understand, through my communication, my
10 conversations with them, that while many of them may
11 not have made the best educational choices for
12 themselves, they have hopes and dreams for their
13 children to get a good education, so that they can
14 have a better quality of life.

15 And that is what makes my relationship
16 with them strong. Because, whether it is a -- an
17 issue where there needs to be consequences dealt, I
18 will have parent support, because I do share those
19 goals and dreams.

20 When I was -- when we were selecting the
21 people to meet the different groups to meet with the
22 CSD team when they came out to visit, I tried to
23 pick a group of parents who not were -- who were not
24 only going to say positive things about the schools,
25 but I wanted them to -- I wanted to pick a group

1 that I had also had to have conversations with, deal
2 consequences out, maybe have students suspended
3 from, so that they could really share their
4 experience, their school experience, with the CSD
5 team, and be honest and forthcoming about the
6 support they really felt and the relationship that
7 they really felt they had with our school.

8 So, while the challenges are many, we have
9 worked hard to develop a learning -- a leadership
10 learning lab. We started putting it together, not
11 this school year, but the school year before,
12 putting pieces of it together to try to address the
13 deficiencies that our students have in reading and
14 math.

15 So, with putting those components together
16 in that lab and addressing the deficiencies that our
17 kids have, we -- we decided, as a staff, that we
18 wanted to hire a teacher this year to put that lab
19 into full implementation. And I'm happy to report
20 that, with that lab, where they spend time improving
21 their skills in reading and writing and math, that
22 with the -- the midyear testing, which is going on
23 right now -- we'll be finished by next week, with
24 our lowest performing students -- we're seeing 30-
25 and 40-point gains in their reading scores right

1 now.

2 We're in the process of doing math. But
3 that focused, targeted instruction in the leadership
4 lab has really helped our kids to start building
5 their skills.

6 Because we are a sixth-, seventh-, and
7 eighth-grade middle school, our students come to us
8 two to five years behind in their skills. We didn't
9 make them that way; that's how they enrolled with
10 us. That's why we feel, in our school, that it's
11 our responsibility to these kids who are at high
12 risk for failure in school, who really are potential
13 dropouts, to get them involved in their own
14 education, to get them to value what a good
15 education could do for them in their lives.

16 And, so, with that, we have strong
17 mentorship in our school from our teachers. Our
18 teachers build strong relationships with our kids.
19 We provide a safe and nurturing environment for them
20 to come to so that they can feel safe in their
21 learning, and we can provide that consistency in
22 their educational program.

23 We also have systems in place to ensure we
24 have effective teaching and learning going on in the
25 classroom. We have an individual learning plan for

1 every student in our school. So, when a student
2 enrolls at our school, the first thing that we do is
3 take all the data that we can get together, whether
4 if they come from another school, the NMSBA data,
5 the short-cycle assessment data, and we put a
6 picture together for parents and have an individual
7 learning plan conference for them, so that they can
8 understand truly where the skill level of their
9 students are.

10 And with that, the parents build -- put
11 together goals, develop goals for their students
12 with the teacher. And, then, that's followed up in
13 the spring with the spring parent conference.

14 We have about 98-percent participation
15 rate in our parent-teacher conferences, because it's
16 my belief that the very least amount of involvement
17 that a parent needs to have in their children's life
18 is to understand where they are academically at
19 school with their skills.

20 I have Rick and Eileen with me here today,
21 because when we came through this process the last
22 time, we wanted to go back and take a look at our
23 systems and strengthen those systems, so, that, as
24 we move forward with the goals that the Commission
25 approved last year -- and we actually met all of the

1 requirements that the Secretary gave us in her
2 approval when we came forth last time.

3 So, we started those improvements, the
4 2011-'12 school year. And then Rick and Eileen came
5 on board. They are -- I do contract with them to
6 help with professional development; Eileen helps
7 with that. And that's all based on the needs of the
8 students and how that translates to making teachers
9 more effective in the classroom.

10 Rick is the person that helps us with the
11 data, because we are a small school. I don't have
12 the funds to hire an administrative team. So, they
13 work with us on an as-needed basis to ensure that we
14 are moving in a forward direction.

15 With this information, I want to say that
16 I was really happy that when the CSD team came to
17 visit, that everyone who participated in the visit,
18 from the students, to the staff, to parents that
19 came in, to our governing council members, we all
20 had one message. And that is that we are -- that we
21 are a good school, that we provide a safe and
22 nurturing learning environment for our students,
23 that we do care about them, and we care about their
24 achievement in school, their academic performance,
25 because we know what it takes to get through high

1 school.

2 And our kids come to us very
3 under-prepared, but it's a challenge that we're more
4 than willing to work with. And we are very hopeful
5 and optimistic that, given a three-year renewal with
6 a corrective action plan to really take a deeper
7 look than what we've done already into our
8 instructional program and the services that we
9 provide, that we will continue to try our very best
10 to become a better school.

11 So, with that, I'd like to thank you today
12 for your consideration of granting us a three-year
13 approval for renewal for La Resolana Leadership
14 Academy. Thank you very much for your time today.

15 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. Is there
16 anyone in the audience who would care to comment on
17 this application?

18 Seeing none, we're down to PEC
19 Commissioners' questions and comments. Commissioner
20 Bergman?

21 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: As you all know, I
22 serve with a reluctant group. They always want me
23 to go first, and then they'll jump in later.

24 I accept, as you noted throughout your
25 application and in your responses to the CSD's

1 analysis, that you're getting a disproportionate
2 number -- about half your kids are way behind when
3 they get to you, two to five years, as you've noted.
4 And, so, yeah, that makes your chore difficult. But
5 we have already seen, just today, a number of
6 schools that have student bodies very similar to
7 yours. So, I know it can be done.

8 MS. J. MONTOYA: Yes, sir, we certainly
9 believe it can be done. While two-thirds of our
10 kids come to us behind in their reading and math
11 skills, we do work really hard with them to try to
12 get them to improve academically. So, we believe
13 wholeheartedly that they can achieve and be
14 successful at school.

15 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Absolutely. And I
16 noted in your response to their analysis, at the
17 end, you were talking about their conditions that
18 they would wish to impose. And it looked to me,
19 from your responses to that, you were confused on
20 some of the conditions. Have you already worked
21 with the CSD to alleviate your confusion?

22 MS. MONTOYA: Well, we weren't confused so
23 much about the conditions as the process for them.
24 And I have already talked with Tony, and I've
25 already looked at some of the documents involved in

1 the instructional audit, and, also, in the
2 turnaround principles, which I was already familiar
3 with through my doctoral program at UNM.

4 So, we are ready to move forward.

5 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: And I would
6 encourage you, as I have done with a couple of
7 previous ones, too, that even though these
8 conditions are here, should we go forward and come
9 to a negotiation session over a performance
10 contract, I would encourage you -- because this is
11 my favorite theme -- that you not limit yourself to
12 the goals that the CSD has recommended. I would
13 love, if I'm present at that session, to see you
14 maybe identify a few other areas that definitely
15 need at least a goal from you that will motivate you
16 and encourage you and encourage your staff and
17 encourage your students to try and reach out and
18 grab that improvement.

19 So, I just wanted to say that. That's
20 just a comment, not a question. If you'd like to
21 respond to it, please feel free to do that.

22 MS. J. MONTOYA: I certainly do appreciate
23 that comment, Commissioner, and we wholeheartedly
24 will move in that direction. Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Thank you so much.

1 Thank you, Madame Chair.

2 THE CHAIR: Other comments or questions?

3 Let me ask a couple of mine. Your current
4 enrollment cap is 150?

5 MS. J. MONTOYA: Yes, ma'am.

6 THE CHAIR: What is your current
7 enrollment?

8 MS. J. MONTOYA: Our current enrollment is
9 74 students.

10 THE CHAIR: So you're up a little from
11 last year.

12 MS. J. MONTOYA: Yes, yes.

13 THE CHAIR: Give me an idea of your
14 enrollment for the last three years.

15 MS. J. MONTOYA: Last year, it was 74. It
16 started out as 75. We did lose one to APS last
17 year. We were at 71; and the year, before 66. But
18 we are making small gains in enrollment. But part
19 of the problem that I believe is hampering us from
20 attracting more kids to our school is the fact that
21 we're saturated with schools in our area, including
22 two middle schools that are in the same building
23 that we are.

24 So, we've done a lot of things to recruit
25 students. You know, we go out into the community.

1 We post flyers at the community centers. We do --
2 we -- our governing council has helped us to recruit
3 students. We've done almost everything. We've had
4 signs on buses; we've had billboards. We've tried
5 everything that we can to increase our enrollment.
6 We're in the neighborhoods during the summer passing
7 out fliers.

8 We have a Bring a Friend to School Day,
9 where students bring kids that they think may be a
10 good fit for our school to visit our school. And
11 they spend the day with us and they go through
12 abbreviated classrooms and do activities with the
13 teachers and the kids, and we provide lunch for
14 them.

15 So, we have really tried to increase our
16 enrollment. We just have not been able to do it.
17 So that's my response to --

18 THE CHAIR: Thank you. My other concern
19 is -- I'm looking at your school report cards for
20 the last two years. And I know Mr. Gerlicz has
21 already touched on these. But it really, really
22 bothers me that in 2011-'12, your final grade was a
23 "C"; and in '12-'13, your final grade was an "F."
24 You're going in the wrong direction.

25 You've been renewed once under conditions.

1 I believe this body turned the renewal application
2 down, and you appealed, and the Secretary approved
3 it for three years. I don't really see any
4 improvement.

5 I understand the issue with the students
6 and location. You might want to move.

7 MS. J. MONTROYA: We are contemplating
8 that.

9 THE CHAIR: That's your business, not
10 mine. But frankly, I am reluctant to vote to
11 continue a school that's already been put on a
12 three-year renewal and was not able to make more
13 progress than this. I'm also mindful of the
14 recommendation from CSD and all the things that they
15 are willing to help you do to bring this school
16 along. So, I consider that.

17 But I would -- I'm reluctant to vote for
18 another three years. If this Commission does vote
19 for another three years, I can assure you, if this
20 situation does not improve, and I am still on the
21 Commission when you come for renewal again, I
22 guarantee, my vote would be "no."

23 This has got to improve. We have
24 children's lives here. And aside from all the other
25 wonderful things the school may offer, they've got

1 to have the academics to survive in this world.

2 So, I just -- I haven't made up my mind
3 how I'm going to vote. But if you continue, you've
4 just got to figure out a way to make this work.
5 Thank you for listening to me.

6 MS. J. MONTOYA: Madame Chair, I do
7 absolutely agree with you. We are passionate about
8 the work that we do there. And in the eight years
9 that I've been there as principal, every day, I
10 think about the academic deficiencies that our kids
11 have.

12 I have a son that's a sophomore in high
13 school. Last year, as a freshman in high school,
14 when -- going through that school year with him was
15 like having another full-time job, because that's
16 how much work he had in high school. And with -- I
17 didn't -- I haven't had a child in high school in a
18 while. And although I understood fully what the --
19 the challenges of succeeding in high school were, it
20 made me think even more deeply about how far behind
21 our kids are.

22 But part of the issue that we have is --
23 not only is -- and the one thing that I want the
24 Commission to understand -- is that I'm not here to
25 make excuses for our lack of progress. The reason

1 that our school grade went down last year from a "C"
2 to an "F" is because we lost a math teacher that we
3 had for five years in our school, who was doing a
4 tremendous job, who brought our -- who was bringing
5 our kids along.

6 And I fully believe that had she stayed on
7 throughout -- through the school year last year,
8 that we would have been at a high "C" at a very
9 minimum. But she was accepted into a master's
10 program at UNM midyear. And it was beyond -- fully
11 beyond my control to be -- to stop her from
12 enrolling in that program. So she had to be in
13 school full-time.

14 With that, we didn't -- we have not -- we
15 were not able to get a high-quality math teacher.
16 We had a long-term sub in that position, who was not
17 able to perform the way I needed her to perform,
18 and, then, that caused some problems at the end of
19 the school year.

20 This year, we hired a math teacher that
21 was recommended to me from another school. I
22 interviewed. Everything worked out, and he has
23 become a real concern, again. And, so, you know,
24 there are some steps that I'm taking in the next
25 week or so to rectify that situation.

1 So, last year, I consider a bump in the
2 road for us, because we have, from the very
3 beginning of our charter -- although our progress
4 has been small, we are moving in the right
5 direction. And I want to continue to move in the
6 right direction with the implementation of the
7 leadership lab and the focus work that we're doing
8 on those skills.

9 Right now, the whole staff is involved in
10 RTI. Everybody on staff takes two classes -- takes
11 two different days a week, we have classes where we
12 have broken kids into skill groups, and they -- each
13 one is spending an hour working just on those
14 specific skills that they're lacking to improve
15 their skills.

16 So we are seeing gains. But last year was
17 one of those bad years for us. And we're really
18 hoping to come back from it this year.

19 THE CHAIR: I hope so, too. Thank you.
20 Commissioners, other -- Commissioner Carr.

21 COMMISSIONER CARR: Just a quick comment,
22 Madame Chair. I concur with your comments, and I
23 just want to, you know, tell you that the -- to me,
24 I guess the general mission of charter schools is to
25 perform above what's happening in traditional public

1 schools. And I don't see that happening. And
2 that's a huge concern of mine.

3 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Other comments?
4 Questions?

5 Seeing none, the Chair would entertain a
6 motion. Commissioner Gant.

7 COMMISSIONER GANT: I move La Resolana
8 Leadership Academy charter be renewed for a
9 three-year term, with the following conditions:

10 The school shall undergo an instructional
11 audit under the guidance of the Priority School
12 Bureau. The instructional audit will be
13 incorporated -- will incorporate the standard
14 turnaround principles, as outlined in that process.

15 The school will submit to the Public
16 Education Commission a corrective action plan that
17 will reflect additional actions the school will take
18 to improve the students' outcome for the lowest
19 performing students. Completion of this corrective
20 action plan will become one of the negotiated
21 performance indicators for the school's 2014-2015
22 performance framework.

23 The school shall present an academic
24 performance -- will present an academic performance
25 indicator for each year of the new charter that

1 lists specific targets for achievement for the
2 lowest quartile of students, based upon academic
3 performance data, that meets or exceeds Public
4 Education Commission targets for growth for this
5 quartile of students.

6 The indicators must be ones that the
7 Public Education Commission can agree to through the
8 negotiation process of the contract.

9 The school shall submit a plan for
10 translating the use of MAP data, RIT scores, into
11 full, half-year and partial-year growth, and will
12 become one of the negotiation performance indicators
13 in the school's 2014-2015 performance framework.

14 The school shall -- the school will ensure
15 that the governing council take an active and
16 engaged role in ensuring the academic performance of
17 the school, and that the governing council monitors
18 the status of those goals, accordingly. A specific
19 governing council measure shall be stated in
20 S.M.A.R.T. goal format as part of the performance --
21 performance framework indicator.

22 Thank you.

23 The Charter School Division and/or
24 Priority School Bureau shall engage in in-depth
25 annual visits with the school to both monitor and

1 support the school in reaching the performance
2 indicators during the term of this contract.

3 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Second.

4 THE CHAIR: All right. Motion by
5 Commissioner Gant, seconded by Commissioner Bergman,
6 to approve the school for a three-year term, with
7 the conditions as stated in the motion.

8 Please notice that those conditions are
9 somewhat different from the conditions that are
10 contained in CSD's recommendation. Is there any
11 discussion? Commissioner Bergman.

12 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Yeah, you may have
13 just addressed it. But several sentences were not
14 read. That was by design?

15 THE CHAIR: That was intentional.

16 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Okay. Thank you.

17 THE CHAIR: Correct?

18 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes.

19 THE CHAIR: Any other comments?

20 Questions? Discussions?

21 All right. I would remind the
22 Commissioners that a "yes" vote is to offer the
23 school a three-year extension with conditions.

24 Commissioner Bergman, may we have a
25 roll-call vote, please?

1 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
2 Parker.
3 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Yes.
4 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
5 Peralta.
6 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: No.
7 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Pogna.
8 COMMISSIONER POGNA: Yes.
9 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Carr.
10 COMMISSIONER CARR: No.
11 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
12 Conyers.
13 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Yes.
14 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Gant.
15 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes.
16 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
17 Shearman.
18 THE CHAIR: Yes.
19 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
20 Bergman votes "yes."
21 Madame Chair, by a six-to-two vote, the
22 motion carries.
23 THE CHAIR: La Resolana Leadership Academy
24 is renewed, with conditions, as stated in the
25 motion, for a three-year term by a six-to-two vote.

1 Congratulations.

2 MS. MONTOYA: Thank you, Madame
3 Commissioner, Commissioners. We will work our very
4 hardest to improve our academic performance. Thank
5 you.

6 (Applause.)

7 THE CHAIR: Next on the list is
8 International School at Mesa Del Sol. However, I
9 understand, through communications mixed up, they
10 thought they were not supposed to be here until
11 tomorrow. So, we will continue with our agenda,
12 moving to Item No. 9, which is Update and
13 Clarification on La Promesa Amendment, by our
14 attorney, Abby Lewis.

15 Oh, I'm sorry. Mr. Gerlicz?

16 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, I'm just
17 getting word from the audience that a board member
18 has -- oh, no, that's not a board member that has
19 arrived?

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We will go ahead
21 and do it, anyway.

22 THE CHAIR: Oh, you are here.

23 MR. GERLICZ: Oh, wonderful. Please come
24 down.

25 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: It's not a

1 requirement, is it, that they have a board member
2 present?

3 THE CHAIR: Mr. Gerlicz, whenever you're
4 ready.

5 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, members of the
6 Commission, representatives of Mesa Del Sol.
7 Welcome.

8 It is the Charter School Division's
9 recommendation that the International School at Mesa
10 Del Sol, TISNM, be renewed, but not for a full
11 five-year charter, but for a three-year charter for
12 the following reasons:

13 As stated in our analysis, the school has
14 overcome some rather enormous hurdles, hurdles that
15 were not of their own making, but are part of the
16 reality of their existence; and that is, the
17 relationship with Forest City Development, Mesa Del
18 Sol, LLC, who, initially, when the charter was
19 founded, was to be an integral partner, including
20 financial partner, as well as providing support and
21 housing for the community in which Mesa Del Sol
22 exists. The timing was wonderfully placed to occur
23 in the worst recession of the 21st Century -- or the
24 20th Century -- or maybe the second worst recession
25 of the 20th Century -- and the school has had to

1 endure the pullout of that relationship in its five
2 years of existence.

3 The concern that CSD has is that, in the
4 last few years, the school has been on a downward
5 side academically, while the population has
6 increased. It's kind of a funny situation, and it's
7 an interesting story of the school.

8 The school is the first public school to
9 be certified in PYP, MYP of the International
10 Baccalaureate program. That's for Primary Years
11 Program, Middle Years Program. And that is a
12 significant -- I'm sorry. It's not yet certified
13 for MYP, but it is for Primary Years Program. And
14 that is a significant achievement.

15 That is to their credit that they were
16 able to receive that certification, increase its
17 enrollment every year, while having that supposed
18 support there not materialize, place them at the
19 Mesa Del Sol, far away from population centers.
20 Certainly, some difficult circumstances for any
21 school to attain.

22 The -- another concern that the Charter
23 School Division has that uncovered during its site
24 visits is the special-ed population. We raised the
25 concern with school leadership, who were fully on

1 board with addressing the deficiencies in how
2 special education was being handled at the school:

3 The Charter School Division referred that
4 concern to the Public Education Department's Special
5 Ed Bureau. Sad to say, they were a little tardy on
6 the uptake. We were hoping that they would have a
7 site visit themselves to the school for additional
8 information for this PEC meeting.

9 However, I did receive word that they were
10 currently at the school today, the Special Ed
11 Department, working with the folks at Mesa Del Sol
12 to improve that situation.

13 To the leadership's credit, he was aware
14 of the special education issues before our site
15 visit and did his best to hire accordingly in the
16 off-season, so that the assistant principal has a
17 doctorate in special ed, has hired a new special-ed
18 coordinator. So, there are steps along the way that
19 are an improvement that we have seen to address the
20 deficiencies of special ed.

21 And I think that that is commensurate with
22 the data that we see that shows that the school has
23 had a difficult time in the area of growing
24 academically both its Q1 and Q3 students. It has
25 had success in years past, but has encountered some

1 bumpy roads, more recently.

2 Because of the achievements that Mesa Del
3 Sol has clearly demonstrated, given all of those
4 obstacles, over 300 students at the school, already,
5 the CSD recommends renewal for a three-year charter,
6 with the following conditions:

7 That we also place the school on a
8 corrective action plan, and that the action plan
9 have the following conditions:

10 We will also require an instructional
11 audit be performed at Mesa Del Sol, similar to the
12 previous school, and that we require, as well, that
13 the Mesa Del Sol get all of its special education
14 files up to date, and they will present us with a
15 plan of how they intend to do so and when that will
16 occur, and that they will work with the PED Special
17 Education staff to make that happen. Completion of
18 this corrective action plan will be one of the
19 negotiated indicators in the upcoming contract
20 negotiation sessions.

21 No. 2: The school shall present an
22 academic performance indicator for each year of the
23 new charter, which lists specific targets for
24 achievement of the lowest quartile of students, the
25 Q1 students, based upon the academic performance

1 data that meets or exceeds PED targets.

2 So we want to see a plan from the school,
3 how it intends to address the performance of the Q1
4 students in the school.

5 No. 3: The school shall present a
6 corrective action plan to the PEC within 30 days
7 that reflects the action that the school will take
8 to improve the student outcomes for all of its
9 students within the IB.

10 4. Provide a plan and a time line for
11 receiving certification of the MYP program -- that's
12 the Middle Years Program. And there, what we're
13 asking is just to set out a course that would inform
14 the Charter School Division of its plan to reach MYP
15 certification which, again, is a very significant
16 marker, like certification for PYP, to be
17 congratulated for any school that achieves that.

18 Another concern that the PEC -- or the
19 CSD -- had, which has since been corrected, is board
20 membership. The board was out of compliance for far
21 too long a period of time, for a period of eight
22 months, where they fell below the statutorily
23 required five members. Again, the school responded
24 expeditiously, and they are now well in compliance.
25 So, we are going to make that a condition, that that

1 board membership be maintained and increased.

2 And we see this in charter schools who
3 maintain the bare minimum of five members of a
4 governing council. Our continual advice to those
5 schools is to get beyond five members, so that this
6 situation does not happen.

7 The last one will be the most challenging
8 for the school, because of its situation. And that
9 is, that we would like to see a plan for how it
10 intends to solve its facilities issues. They've
11 done a marvelous job having a campus of portable
12 buildings on the Mesa. Their governing board does
13 not intend to live there permanently. The
14 leadership does not intend to live there
15 permanently. All of that is totally understandable.

16 We'd just like to see a plan of how that
17 is going to be resolved.

18 So, those are the conditions that CSD
19 would like to place on the school as it recommends
20 its renewal for a three-year term.

21 Thank you, Madame Chair.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Good afternoon. I
23 know it's late. We appreciate your being here.
24 Please introduce yourselves, and we would like to
25 hear your comments.

1 MR. JOYCE: Good afternoon, Madame Chair,
2 Commissioners. My name is Sean Joyce, J-O-Y-C-E.
3 And I am the head of school at the International
4 School at Mesa Del Sol.

5 MS. SANDERS: Good afternoon. I am Heidi
6 Sanders, H-E-I-D-I, S-A-N-D-E-R-S. And I am the
7 president of the governing council for the
8 International School.

9 MR. DALY: Good afternoon. My name is
10 Michael Daly, D-A-L-Y. I am the president and
11 principal of Mesa Del Sol.

12 MR. JOYCE: I probably should have spelled
13 my first name, S-E-A-N.

14 Thank you this afternoon for the
15 opportunity to address the Commission and to speak
16 about our little school on the mesa. It is my
17 pleasure and privilege to be here in front of you
18 today representing this organization that has been
19 my personal passion for the last five years.

20 I'm here with you today representing the
21 International School at Mesa Del Sol, the governing
22 council, the students and staff, and the larger
23 community of our school. I also express a sincere
24 thank you to Dr. Gerlicz and his staff who spent a
25 great deal of time looking, listening, asking

1 questions, and thinking deeply about our school, our
2 community, and the data offered by the Public
3 Education Department.

4 The mission of the International School at
5 Mesa Del Sol is to provided a meaningful and
6 globally connected and comprehensive educational
7 program to all students, regardless of personal
8 circumstances, to develop knowledgeable, reflective,
9 critical, and compassionate lifelong learners, who
10 understand, appreciate, and respect the common bonds
11 of humanity in a culturally diverse world.

12 Our vision is to bring a meaningful,
13 comprehensive, contemporary education to all
14 students, regardless of their personal
15 circumstances, to motivate them to learn and be
16 actively engaged in our school community.

17 It is our vision that, with this
18 foundation, children will grow into adults with the
19 hearts, minds, and hands to build a better world.

20 The principles that support this vision
21 include the following:

22 All students, regardless of personal
23 circumstance, are entitled to a rich, relevant,
24 challenging, and international academic program.

25 All students must be held to high

1 standards and be expected to achieve them.

2 All students can and will learn, given the
3 appropriate context and support.

4 All students should expect that their
5 education will not prepare them for the next phase
6 of their academic or vocational careers, but equip
7 them with the essential lifelong skills.

8 All students should expect that their
9 academic experience should be influenced by broad
10 diversity in student and teacher makeup.

11 A meaningful education is a key to
12 understanding the world today, recognizing that the
13 development of new knowledge can be constructed both
14 from individual cultural perspectives, as well as
15 from perspectives that draw across cultures.

16 The academic program will embrace
17 international content, skills, assessment, and
18 benchmarks, as well as that of local context.

19 The expectation that students will not
20 only master foundational and threshold skills, but
21 will become critical and creative thinkers who are
22 competent in their abilities to independently
23 construct, evaluate, and apply knowledge.

24 The International School at Mesa Del Sol
25 opened its doors on August 30, 2009, with

1 51 students in grades kindergarten through four,
2 housed in a small circle of portable buildings on
3 the mesa just south of Albuquerque and the Sunport
4 Airport and Kirtland Air Force Base.

5 Today, four-and-a-half years later, we
6 continue to be housed in a larger circle of portable
7 buildings, but publicly owned, with 310 students in
8 grades kindergarten through eighth grade.

9 We are an International Baccalaureate
10 World School for the Primary Year Program, which is
11 a highly ambitious and coveted authorization that is
12 both difficult to earn and difficult to maintain.
13 We are eager to initiate the same authorization for
14 a Middle Year Program.

15 As noted in the Charter School Division's
16 report and analysis, both our Quality of Education
17 survey, which is much higher -- which has a much
18 higher return rate than most public school
19 districts, indicates that our 2012-2013 report card
20 has a very high Opportunity to Learn category,
21 deriving better students from our student surveys of
22 a 9.05 out of 10 points.

23 There are a number of reasons why the
24 International School at Mesa Del Sol is considered
25 only for a conditional charter school

1 reauthorization, and the Charter School Division
2 analysis of our school was not a surprise to us, but
3 well received as confirmation of our own internal
4 self-study that began last spring. As a result of
5 our own spring internal investigations, we began to
6 correct weaknesses and to initiate programs and
7 processes to redirect our school, overall, and in
8 specific areas.

9 While we never have accepted that our
10 student achievement have declined over the past two
11 years, it has been anticipated, as indicated from
12 the Charter School Division for some of those
13 reasons.

14 We have rebuilt our governing council
15 membership to a present membership of seven members,
16 as noted by our November agenda and minutes. And we
17 hope to recruit a possible eighth member for our
18 January meeting.

19 As indicated in the Charter School
20 Division analysis, our school has no material
21 violations. While our special ed program has been
22 less than acceptable, and is noted by that report,
23 there are a number of compliance issues that have
24 already been addressed.

25 We have hired two special education

1 teachers to support students in the classroom and to
2 support teachers, as well, with their instructional
3 delivery and curriculum development, to facilitate
4 the support of those students.

5 We've hired an Assistant Head of School,
6 who has an extensive professional career in special
7 education, as well as having earned his Ph.D. in
8 special education.

9 We've hired a .5 FTE personnel to assist
10 our special education program, specifically with
11 compliance issues, to focus on establishing
12 processes, procedures, and accountability for all
13 the compliance issues noted.

14 We have received a Reads to Learn grant to
15 help our most struggling and underperforming
16 students in reading and writing, and to support our
17 instructional staff in their curricular
18 instructional delivery.

19 As of this moment, noted by Dr. Gerlicz,
20 the Public Education Bureau is conducting an audit
21 on our campus today. And as of 2:00 their findings
22 are that, based on our ADA report, there is only one
23 IEP and one reevaluation out of compliance. That is
24 a significant change from the October visit.

25 The school leadership here concurs with

1 much of the CSD analysis, with the exception of two
2 points; and that is, the school growth component
3 over time.

4 We have indicated that, though the
5 students may be different in those grades, our
6 longitudinal data, drawn from both the NMSBA and the
7 MAP's, Measures of Academic Progress, as reported in
8 our initial report in October, shows that our cohort
9 students, those students that have been with us for
10 three or four years, do perform better, in almost
11 all cases, though not always significantly. The
12 importance of this distinction is, we believe,
13 twofold:

14 One, having to deal with the instructional
15 turnover of staff, as highlighted in the analysis
16 report from CSD, and the difficulties that we face
17 in maintaining those staff. And, two, the nature of
18 the IB curriculum instruction being new and
19 different for the majority of instructional staff
20 each year, with instructional delivery learning --
21 being a curve, a very steep curve.

22 And as Dr. Gerlicz indicated, there aren't
23 very many International Baccalaureate-approved World
24 Schools in New Mexico. Hiring already approved,
25 already trained IB instructors has always been a

1 difficulty for us IB schools.

2 While the instructional staff is ramping
3 up their IB curriculum instruction, and wrapping
4 their brain around the very different, for them, at
5 least, delivery system, they're also juggling
6 differentiation of instruction and interventions for
7 students that are both under-performing and new to
8 both the school, our school, and the IB environment.
9 This is a significant challenge for the
10 instructional staff, even though our data indicates
11 that 15 percent of our students, right now, have a
12 special education IEP.

13 What may be overlooked in the conversation
14 concerning underperforming students, the enrollment
15 numbers and the class ratios and the funding, is
16 simply this: The proportion of general education
17 students to special education students in the
18 classroom is higher than in many other public school
19 settings. The overall funding to our school is
20 proportionately lower than most other public
21 schools, so that the resultant funding to each
22 classroom and each student within that classroom,
23 special education or general education, is
24 proportionately lower than most public school
25 district schools.

1 Mesa Mesa Del Sol has fewer dollars per
2 student in funding, which then equates to less
3 support for both the students and the teachers in
4 the classroom. Less funding, in this case, as in
5 most cases, equals less support and less success for
6 the most difficult and expensive students to
7 educate.

8 Madame Chair, Commissioners, thank you
9 very much for this opportunity to continue to serve
10 our growing and diverse student population and
11 culturally diverse community, with the much coveted
12 and applauded International Baccalaureate World
13 School status that our little school on the mesa
14 has. And I welcome questions. Thank you.

15 THE CHAIR: Thank you for that
16 presentation. Is there anyone in the audience who
17 wants to comment on this application?

18 Seeing none, we will move on to PEC
19 Commissioners' questions and comments. Anyone with
20 a comment?

21 COMMISSIONER GANT: I'll start.

22 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Gant.

23 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair, members,
24 I have been -- I live in Cruces, so I have to swing
25 through Albuquerque regularly, about three times a

1 month, coming up here. And I have been by your
2 "circle of wagons" out there. And it's interesting,
3 as it's grown.

4 But what is the plan? Now, I know that
5 you have talked to PSFA about the possibility of
6 building a building on a lease-purchase scenario.
7 And I think, at one time, you had a 20-year lease
8 purchase, or something like that? But it was a long
9 lease-purchase, not normally acceptable.

10 So, what is your plan to get out of the --
11 the current portables that you are in with the fence
12 around it?

13 MR. JOYCE: Madame Chair,
14 Commissioner Gant, I have been with the school since
15 its inception, after the charter was authorized.
16 And I am aware of only a charter -- a lease-purchase
17 of five years. So, I'm not sure that we have on
18 record anything longer than that. We are currently,
19 and continue to be, in negotiations with Mesa Del
20 Sol, our partner, who is also represented here at
21 the table. We have looked at sites on the mesa, as
22 well as off the mesa.

23 As you are aware, we are to -- unless we
24 have an approved amendment, we are to stay on the
25 mesa. So, we are looking at both foundation --

1 private sponsorship with our partner here, Mesa Del
2 Sol, as well as finding a charter school bonding, as
3 other charter schools have done, so that we would
4 enter into a lease-purchase.

5 COMMISSIONER GANT: Another -- just a
6 comment. The -- you alluded to less funding per
7 student in your school. And has been stated by the
8 Governor and stated by the Secretary of Ed Designee
9 several times, particularly in traditional public
10 schools, no excuse is acceptable for not teaching.
11 And funding, to me, is not an excuse for not
12 reaching the goals of a school.

13 I would not accept it in a traditional
14 school. I sat on a school board for eight years.
15 That is not an excuse for teaching. I'm just making
16 a comment. When you said that, it kind of smacked
17 me in the eye, okay? Thank you.

18 THE CHAIR: Other comments? Questions?
19 Commissioners?

20 MS. SANDERS: Could I make a comment to
21 that?

22 THE CHAIR: Oh, yes.

23 MS. SANDERS: And I would agree completely
24 with that, that we know that whoever we have in our
25 school, we need to do the best that we can. And

1 within IB, we follow differentiated instruction.
2 And that is what our teachers are working on each
3 day.

4 I think when we talk about funding, we do
5 realize that we don't have the number of special
6 education staff that we would like to support that
7 for the teachers. So, the teachers are doing the
8 best they can, but they -- the teachers could have
9 more support to then support the students.

10 And just an example of that, this year, we
11 have more than doubled -- or tripled -- our number
12 of special education students. And as you know, we
13 won't get the funding for that until next year.

14 So, where we should have more FTE to serve
15 those students, we don't have the funding to hire
16 that person.

17 So, I do believe that we're trying to give
18 our teachers everything we can, but we could have
19 more support. Thank you.

20 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

21 MR. JOYCE: Madame Chair and
22 Commissioner Gant, I don't argue with you, either.
23 I've always said that it's not a matter of money.
24 It does take a certain amount of money to,
25 obviously, operate schools.

1 One of the additional benefits of being an
2 International Baccalaureate School is the additional
3 expense of authorization and the additional expense
4 of training, which is required in both cases. Those
5 are not funded from the State. It's an additional
6 expense that most non-International Baccalaureate
7 Schools would incur.

8 So, we, again, have to find additional
9 funding sources to pay for those additional
10 expenses, which we are happy to bear, because we
11 appreciate the International Baccalaureate, which is
12 the core of our program. But it is an additional
13 expense. Thank you.

14 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Other comments?
15 Commissioner Bergman?

16 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: I had already noted
17 in one of your responses that your governing
18 council, as you just noted in your remarks, was now
19 seven. Your approved level was five, I thought.
20 And my comment and question may be directed to the
21 Director. I do not remember an amendment being
22 presented to the PEC to approve them to expand their
23 board. Am I misinformed?

24 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, Commissioner
25 Bergman, I don't think that an amendment was

1 presented to the PEC. I don't know what is
2 actually, word for word, in TISNM's charter. Do
3 they say exactly five? Or do they say the range?
4 I'd have to go back into the charter to see what the
5 specific language is. Five, of course, is the
6 statutory minimum. But it depends on what they
7 specifically say in the bylaws.

8 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: I was just going
9 by, when you pointed out that they were out of
10 compliance with the statute and only had four
11 members, you were saying they should have had five.
12 And they only had four at that time for eight
13 months, which also concerned me a little bit, too.
14 But I wasn't even going to raise that issue.

15 But maybe that require -- you could at
16 least investigate for us and tell us what was that
17 in their original charter, because we have had this
18 debate before. What constitutes a material change
19 to an original application, or an original charter?
20 And we have had this debate.

21 And, just, in my opinion, which my fellow
22 Commissioners may not share, changing the size of
23 your governing council is a material change. Others
24 may disagree with me. If you would just look into
25 that for me, just give me an e-mail or something?

1 Thank you.

2 THE CHAIR: Do you, by any chance, recall?

3 MR. JOYCE: Madame Chair, Commissioner
4 Bergman, our bylaws require a maximum of seven. But
5 it is amendable, as you've indicated. But our
6 bylaws do indicate seven.

7 COMMISSIONER GANT: What does the charter
8 say?

9 THE CHAIR: What does the charter say?

10 MR. GERLICZ: The bylaws are included in
11 the charter. So, if the bylaws say "seven," they
12 can go from -- well, let's see. We have to
13 hair-split the words. Do they say exactly "seven,"
14 or is it "five to seven"? "Up to seven"? It
15 depends on their language. If it says "up to
16 seven," then they're allowed five, six, or seven.

17 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Okay. So, maybe
18 you've answered my question. You just said you
19 wanted to add an eighth one by next month. We've
20 done that with another application already, on a
21 mission statement. Do we want to go ahead and give
22 them approval to go to eight, then, or --

23 THE CHAIR: Is it included in here?

24 MR. GERLICZ: Madame Chair, Commissioner
25 Bergman, if it's in their bylaws, and they go beyond

1 what's ever in the bylaws, they'll have to change
2 their bylaws first.

3 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: And then come to
4 us?

5 MR. GERLICZ: And, then, that's a revision
6 of the charter.

7 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: So, that would be
8 handled down the road?

9 MR. GERLICZ: Correct.

10 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Okay. I'm done.
11 Thank you.

12 MS. LEWIS: I don't necessarily agree with
13 that assessment. They could -- they don't have to
14 change their bylaws before they request an amendment
15 from you. It's kind of a chicken or the egg. So,
16 if it's easier or makes more sense to do it now --

17 THE CHAIR: But it's not written in here.

18 MS. LEWIS: Well -- okay. I don't believe
19 the amendment has to be in writing. They may be
20 able to verbally ask for an amendment. But let me
21 just get to that, hopefully.

22 COMMISSIONER GANT: Madame Chair. Is that
23 what you'd like to do?

24 MR. JOYCE: Madame Chair, Commissioners,
25 not necessarily. We were following the guidance of

1 the corrective action plan to make sure we had a
2 full complement. If that's not necessary, we would
3 be happy not to do that.

4 As I say, we have a continual recruitment
5 process; we have people who are going through that
6 process.

7 THE CHAIR: Then, let me suggest, for the
8 moment, let's leave it to investigate what the
9 wording actually is. If it says "up to seven," then
10 everything is fine. If it says "seven" as a stated
11 number, then we have a problem. If it says "five,"
12 we have a problem.

13 Mr. Director, I'm going to ask that you
14 take care of that --

15 MR. GERLICZ: Got it.

16 THE CHAIR: -- please. Okay, thank you.

17 Commissioner Bergman?

18 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: I really try not to
19 be a nitpicker, and it just caught my eye. That's
20 fine. I'm done. Thank you.

21 THE CHAIR: Other questions or comments?
22 I see we have lost one Commissioner, and I didn't
23 realize when Commissioner Pogna left.

24 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: I was going to note
25 that before the vote.

1 THE CHAIR: All right. So we are down to
2 eight? Seven?

3 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: We still have a
4 quorum, yeah.

5 THE CHAIR: Okay. We're down to seven,
6 okay? And we do still have a quorum. Thank you.

7 Any further comments?

8 Then the Chair would entertain a motion.

9 COMMISSIONER CARR: Madame Chair.

10 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Carr.

11 COMMISSIONER CARR: I move Mesa Del Sol be
12 renewed for a three-year term, with the following
13 conditions:

14 1. The school shall present a plan for
15 execution to the PEC at a public meeting within
16 30 days of renewal of how it plans to meet the needs
17 of all its special education students, get all of
18 its files up-to-date, and how they will remain
19 up-to-date. The plan will address all findings of
20 the Special Education Division. PEC will determine
21 if the plan is completed -- if the plan is
22 completed.

23 2. The school shall present to the
24 Commission in a public meeting an academic
25 performance indicator for each year of the new

1 charter, which lists specific targets for
2 achievement of the lowest quartile of the students,
3 based upon academic performance data, that meets or
4 exceeds PED targets for growth for this quartile of
5 students, within 60 days.

6 3. The school shall present a plan to the
7 PEC in a public meeting, within 30 days of renewal,
8 that reflects the action that the school will take
9 to improve student outcomes for its lowest
10 performing students. PEC will determine if the plan
11 is completed.

12 4. The school shall provide a plan and
13 time line for receiving certification of the MYP
14 program, including requisite training for the Middle
15 Years Program, to the Commission in a public meeting
16 within 60 days.

17 5. The school shall ensure that
18 sufficient board membership is maintained.

19 6. The school shall present a plan to the
20 PEC in a public meeting of how the school will solve
21 its facilities challenges and how the school plans
22 to be in a public facility by 2015, within 60 days.

23 THE CHAIR: You've heard the motion. Do I
24 hear a second?

25 COMMISSIONER GANT: Second.

1 THE CHAIR: Motion by Commissioner Carr,
2 second by Commissioner Gant, to approve the
3 International School at Mesa Del Sol for a
4 three-year term, with the conditions, as stated.
5 Please note that those conditions differ somewhat
6 from the stated conditions that CSD has in their
7 notebooks.

8 Is there discussion, Commissioners?
9 Commissioner Parker.

10 COMMISSIONER PARKER: Madame Chair,
11 Commissioners, I had done work with, and currently
12 have a project under construction, with a company
13 that a former board member works for. As a result,
14 I'll be abstaining from this vote.

15 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner. That
16 will still leave us six votes. It's still a quorum.

17 Are there further comments or discussion?
18 Commissioner Bergman, why don't we have a roll-call
19 vote, please?

20 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Again, the Chairman
21 has already done this. But I will note for the
22 record that Commissioner Pogna did have to leave.
23 We still have a quorum with six members able to vote
24 on this motion. So, I will now proceed with the
25 vote.

1 Commissioner Peralta.
2 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Yes.
3 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Carr.
4 COMMISSIONER CARR: Yes.
5 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
6 Conyers.
7 COMMISSIONER CONYERS: Yes.
8 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner Gant.
9 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes.
10 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
11 Shearman.
12 THE CHAIR: Yes.
13 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Commissioner
14 Bergman votes "yes." Madame Chair, by a six-to-zero
15 vote, that motion carries.
16 THE CHAIR: Thank you. The vote is
17 unanimous, to approve the three-year extension --
18 the three-year renewal, with conditions, of the
19 International School at Mesa Del Sol.
20 Congratulations.
21 MR. JOYCE: Thank you very much.
22 (Applause.)
23 THE CHAIR: Ladies and gentlemen, I note
24 it is now after 5:00. Unless anyone wishes to do
25 otherwise, I would recommend that we recess for

1 today and reconvene at 9:00 in the morning,
2 beginning with Agenda Item No. 9. Is that all right
3 with everybody? We are recessed.

4 (Proceedings in recess at 5:05 p.m.)
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BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

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

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand on December 23, 2013.

Cynthia Chapman

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