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PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
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HANNA SKANDERA
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

SUSANA MARTINEZ
GOVERNOR

December 5, 2014

Dear Public Education Commissioners:

Enclosed is the Final Recommendation for the Albuquerque Institute for Mathematics and Science 2014 renewal application. Charter Schools Division (CSD) staff at the Public Education Department analyzed the renewal applications, reviewed past performance of the school, conducted site visits and gave full consideration to the information gathered in this process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matthew Pahl".

Matthew Pahl
Interim Director
Charter Schools Division

I. Recommendation

APPROVE

The Charter School Division recommends a 5-year renewal term for AIMS charter due to the following factors: This school has no record of material violations; the school's 3-year grade average is an A; financial matters seem in good order and the school has not violated any provision of law; the school has analyzed its progress and shortcomings and proposed future goals for community service and dual credit enrollment in SMART format to assure continued growth for next charter term.

APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

PROPOSED CONDITIONS

The Applicant will negotiate a contract with the Public Education Commission pursuant to 22-8B-9.1: to include:

1. A shortened contract term of two or three years
2. Completion of an improvement plan specific to the school
3. Two annual monitoring visits by CSD

DENY

Overall the application is either incomplete or inadequate; or during their Capacity Interview, the applicant(s) did not sufficiently demonstrate the experience, knowledge, and competence to successfully open and operate a charter school.

The Charter Schools Act, in paragraph 1 of Subsection L of Section 22-8B-6 NMSA 1978, states that a chartering authority may approve, approve with conditions or deny an application. A chartering authority may deny an application if:

- (1) the application is incomplete or inadequate;
- (2) the application does not propose to offer an educational program consistent with the requirements and purposes of the Charter Schools Act;
- (3) the proposed head administrator or other administrative or fiscal staff was involved with another charter school whose charter was denied or revoked for fiscal management or the proposed head administrator or other administrative or fiscal staff was discharged from a public school for fiscal mismanagement;
- (4) for a proposed state-chartered charter school, it does not request to have the governing body of the charter school designated as a board of finance or the governing body does not qualify as a board of finance; or

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- (5) the application is otherwise contrary to the best interests of the charter school's projected students, the local community or the school district in whose geographic boundaries the charter school applies to operate.

CHARTER SCHOOLS DIVISION

By: 

Matthew Pahl, Interim Director of Charter Schools Division, or Designee

CSD Summary and Final Recommendation

The Albuquerque Institute of Math and Science was chartered by the state in 2009. Their first year of operation commenced in July of 2010. The school's mission is: "Albuquerque Institute for Mathematics and Science at UNM is prepared to provide an extraordinary education to students in the Albuquerque metropolitan area who are interested in pursuing careers requiring advanced math science, and technology skills. AIMS@UNM will educate an intellectually single minded blend of culturally, ethnically and economically diverse students in a culture of rigor and strength of fortitude, preparing them for early college entrance; driven by motivation, fueled by innovation and guided by a spirit of public service. It will prepare its graduates for post-secondary education, gainful employment, and leadership in New Mexico's high technology industry." This is a STEM-based, dual credit, secondary school with a strong connection to the University of New Mexico community.

CSD recommends a 5-year renewal term for AIMS charter due to the following factors: This school has no record of material violations; the school's 3-year grade average is an A; financial matters seem in good order and the school has not violated any provision of law; the school has analyzed its progress and shortcomings and proposed future goals for community service and dual credit enrollment in SMART format to assure continued growth for next charter term.

AIMS' 3-year report card average is an A with consistent scores of A (2012, 2013, 2014); a 3-year school growth of highest performing students is consistently high with B (2012) to A (2013) then to B (2014); a 3-year school growth of lowest performing students progressed from D (2012) to B (2013) then to B (2014); the school outscored or equaled their neighborhood school, (Albuquerque High School) in all areas for 2014 from final school grade, current standing, school growth, the growth of lowest performing students, Opportunity to Learn and College and Career Readiness. AIMS scored lower than AHS in graduation with an explanation that many of their seniors were advised to take the GED then recruited directly from high school to a university, thereby being counted by the state system as "Dropouts." The school has maintained an A for a period of 3 years and shows consistently high levels of student achievement.

The Albuquerque Institute for Math and Science proposed 3 goals in its recent charter. The school met or exceeded all of these goals. They provided comprehensive data around their goals for the full term of the charter. The goals provided a clear picture of the level of rigor and growth students maintained over the last four years. The goals that were proposed in Section C are in SMART format. Goal 1 requires an increase of Advanced Placement students to earn 3 or above on the AP exams. Goal 2 requires replication of the school model by adding 2 new sites by the end of the charter term. Both of these goals are ambitious and attainable and will serve as an adequate foundation for Contract Negotiations with the PEC should the school be approved for renewal.

To highlight areas of importance there is no record of material violations and with a new Business Manager since 2012 and the audit findings have decreased from 13 in 2012 to 1 in 2013. AIMS demonstrates compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations relating to financial management. Oversight expectations were evidenced by an audit devoid of significant findings and conditions, material weaknesses, or significant internal control weaknesses. AIMS also demonstrates complete and timely compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations relating to sound financial principles and financial reporting requirements. The end of year cash

balance for FY 2013 was 38.09% of the operational budget.

AIMS has had a stable administration. The current administrator has been in place since the school's beginning. The school has no material violations and it appears that the school operates efficiently in terms of Governance procedures, its reporting duties, and organizational stability. AIMS has not violated any provision of the law.

The school is meeting all provisions of law. All personnel files are up-to-date. The 8-member Governing Board is sound and functions in accordance with their bylaws and open meetings act. The principal's evaluation is based on achievement scores and teacher turnover. The Governing Board members do not yet have a formal process of self-evaluation. They use a reflective method when there is a board vacancy. The members discuss the state of the Board at that time and proceed to fill the position.

The Charter Schools Division recommends approval of a full 5-year charter term without conditions for The Albuquerque Institute of Math and Science. They have complied with charter laws and show stability in governance and operations. The parents, students, staff and administration indicate they are pleased with the direction the school is going as there has been sustainable progress through the years. The goals are adequate for negotiations if the school is renewed.