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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 School of Excellence 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 that The Albuquerque School of Excellence should be approved without conditions for a term of 5 years due to the following factors: This school has no record of material violations; the school's 3-year grade average is C; 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 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

- (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 School of Excellence was chartered by the state in 2009. Their first year of operation commenced in 2010. The school's mission is: "Albuquerque School of Excellence is to provide a safe and collaborative environment which will cultivate the academic and social development of its students by emphasizing math, science, and technology for the purpose of students setting and meeting higher education goals." This is a STEM-based school with rich diversity in cultures.

The Charter School Division recommends that The Albuquerque School of Excellence should be approved without conditions for a term of 5 years due to the following factors: This school has no record of material violations; the school's 3-year grade average is C; 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 in SMART format to assure continued growth for next charter term.

The Albuquerque School of Excellence 3-year report card average is C with scores ranging from the 2014 grade of A up from C (2013) which was down from B (2012); a 3-year school growth of highest performing students progressed with A (2014); from C (2013) which was up from D (2012); the school outscored or equaled their six neighborhood schools, (Apache, McCollum, Tomasita, Kennedy, Chelwood, Manzano) in all areas for 2014 from final school grade, current standing, school growth and growth of highest performing students; the growth of lowest performing students dropped to F (2014 and 2013), from a grade of B (2012) and the school plans remedial measures to correct this grade which are detailed in Section C, Self- Study, of the Renewal Application.

The Albuquerque School of Excellence proposed 6 goals in its recent charter. The school met 2 of these goals. The school provided adequate data to show the goal was either met or exceeded for many of the groups or years but not for all targeted in the goal. Albuquerque School of Excellence included goals for reading, math, science and related academic competitions. They met or exceeded the participation goals for each year.

Based on adequate review of the past four years' data and outcomes, the school has reflected upon and created three SMART format goals for the new charter term. Goal 1a requiring 1 credit per year of a CTE course is not an ambitious goal. CSD recommends higher expectations of 2 or more CTE courses per year within this goal. Goal 1b is strong and comparable to a college or university entrance requirement for languages other than English, aligning with the school's mission of meeting and setting higher education goals. Goal 2, of college acceptance, aligns with the mission of meeting the higher education goal.

The Albuquerque School of Excellence demonstrates compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations relating to financial management. In 2012-2013, three compliance findings were listed with explanation and remediation provided in the renewal application. Oversight expectations were evidenced by an audit devoid of significant findings and conditions, material weaknesses, or significant internal control weaknesses. The Albuquerque School of Excellence also demonstrates complete and timely compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations relating to sound financial principles and financial reporting requirements. The school's cash balance at the end of fiscal year 2013 is 4.8%. The Albuquerque school of Excellence had minimal instability with administration. The current administrator has been in place since July of 2013. 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. The Albuquerque school of Excellence has not violated any provision of the law.

Organizational analysis indicates the school is meeting all provisions of law. The school complied

with reporting out on material terms, a comprehensive next-step plan, curriculum and assessment, and survey. The Charter Schools Division finds the school operates efficiently in terms of governance procedures. The school has a full 7-member Governing Board which evaluates the administrator on an annual basis using the HOUSSSE instrument and an administrator self-reflection. The school grade is also a consideration within the evaluation. There is no formal evaluation of the Governing Board members, though they plan to create and implement one for the next charter term. The Charter Schools Division recommends approval of a full 5-year charter term without conditions for The Albuquerque School of Excellence. The school has shown an upward trajectory with regards to student performance and is implementing its mission with fidelity. 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 continual progress through the years. The goals are adequate for negotiations if the school is renewed.