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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 Amy Biehl High School 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 Amy Biehl be approved without conditions for a term of 5 years. The school has no material violations, and the CSD finds that the school operates efficiently in terms of Governance procedures, its reporting duties, and organizational stability. The school has maintained a state grade of A for the last two years and shows consistently high levels of student achievement indicated by their goals. The school has received an unqualified audit opinion. The school has not violated any provision of the law and the CSD is confident that the school's leadership and governance are sound. The school has thoroughly and carefully analyzed its progress and shortcomings during the last charter term and proposed measurable goals in SMART format which are an adequate foundation for negotiations if the school is renewed.

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: 

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

CSD Summary and Final Recommendation

Amy Biehl High School applying for its 3rd charter term. Over the years it has proven success in meeting challenges and developing in alignment with the school mission. The school mission is as follows: "Amy Biehl High School was founded in the spirit of Amy Biehl, a young scholar dedicated to social justice and service. We graduate diverse learners and leaders who demonstrate the intellectual, social, and ethical habits to improve their communities. Our graduates are civic-minded, college-bound and career-ready". Amy Biehl maintains a close knit school community where individualized support of students, collaboration among all members, and strong community partnerships are key to the overall success of the school.

The Charter School Division recommends that Amy Biehl be approved without conditions for a term of 5 years. The school has no material violations, and the CSD finds that the school operates efficiently in terms of Governance procedures, its reporting duties, and organizational stability. The school has maintained a state grade of A for the last two years and shows consistently high levels of student achievement indicated by their goals. The school has received an unqualified audit opinion. The school has not violated any provision of the law and the CSD is confident that the school's leadership and governance are sound. The school has thoroughly and carefully analyzed its progress and shortcomings during the last charter term and proposed measurable goals in SMART format which are an adequate foundation for negotiations if the school is renewed.

In 2010-11 Amy Biehl received a school grade of a C, the following year received a B and in the last two years has maintained an A. The school has seen point increases in Current Standing with 4.12 points, student in Quartile 3 exceeded the state benchmark by 5.63 points and students in Quartile 1 have made tremendous strides moving from a D to a B. The Q1 scores show a narrowing of the gap in performance between Q1 and Q3 in both math and reading. The CSD noted the Opportunity to Learn section of the Grade Report is an area of potential growth. The school has begun to focus on this growth area by addressing the results of the OTL survey during their Fall Professional Development and generating solutions that have already been implemented. In the School Grade report card Amy Biehl outranks Cibola High School in the total points possible and Student Growth of Lowest Performing Students. While the schools rank very closely, Amy Biehl offers curricular options and individualized support students would not otherwise receive at Cibola.

Amy Biehl High School proposed 6 goals in its recent charter. The school met or exceeded 4 of these goals. One goal was met for 3 of the proposed 4 years and another goal is on track to be met but requires data from 2015 to finalize the results. 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 and will serve as an adequate foundation for Contract Negotiations with the PEC should the school be approved for renewal.

Amy Biehl has met generally accepted standards of fiscal management. The school received an unqualified audit opinion. All minor audit findings have been addressed and resolved. The audit report does not include any material weaknesses. The school submitted sufficient data to explain their current school budget in Appendix A. The cash balance for 2013-14 SY was 19.24%.

As stated above, the school has not violated any provision of the law. The school is stable and in a good position to continue moving students towards high academic achievement and community action. The Governing Council functions are sound and in accordance with their bylaws and open meetings act. They are working towards developing an evaluation system for the board. School faculty note the use of data to inform program development and practice, overall collaboration, and teacher input to be key in the success of the organization. The CSD recommends Amy Biehl High School for approval without conditions for a term of 5 years. The school has shown an upward trajectory with regards to student performance and is implementing its mission with

fidelity. The school has presented action steps to address areas of weakness and has clear goals outlined to continue to develop the academic potential and social impact of each student.

The CSD recommends Amy Biehl High School for approval without conditions for a term of 5 years. The school has shown an upward trajectory with regards to student performance and is implementing its mission with fidelity. The school has presented action steps to address areas of weakness and has clear goals outlined to continue to develop the academic potential and social impact of each student.