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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 La Promesa Charter 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

APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

The Charter School Division recommends that La Promesa be approved for a term of 3 years with conditions to be determined through the development of an Improvement Plan. While the school's overall score on school grades has increased each of the last three years, La Promesa has had inconsistent progress around the school grade measures, with some strong areas of growth and some declines. Additionally, they struggled to present sufficient data around several charter goals, due to the challenges the school faced in tracking the goal or measuring the entire goal. The school has demonstrated the capacity for growth around their challenges and is on an upward trajectory of academic performance. La Promesa school has no material violations, and the CSD finds that the school operates efficiently in terms of Governance procedures, and organizational stability. The financial audits showed that there were no significant or material findings and internal control weaknesses have been rectified. The school has not violated any provision of the law and the CSD notes the school's leadership and governance are sound. The school proposed goals that could provide for growth over the next charter term and were in SMART format

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

La Promesa Early Learning Center is a Dual Language school that supports students in developing high levels of proficiency in their first language and second language. The school works to support academic performance and develop a cross-cultural competence for all students. The Mission of La Promesa Early Learning Center is to “ensure that culturally and linguistically diverse students thrive in an academic, family centered, developmentally seamless continuum of learning where high expectations, pride, respect and empowerment meet grade level proficiency”.

The Charter School Division recommends that La Promesa be approved for a term of 3 years with conditions to be determined through the development of an Improvement Plan. While the school’s overall score on school grades has increased each of the last three years, La Promesa has had inconsistent progress around the school grade measures, with some strong areas of growth and some declines. Additionally, they struggled to present sufficient data around several charter goals, due to the challenges the school faced in tracking the goal or measuring the entire goal. The school has demonstrated the capacity for growth around their challenges and is on an upward trajectory of academic performance. La Promesa school has no material violations, and the CSD finds that the school operates efficiently in terms of Governance procedures, and organizational stability. The financial audits showed that there were no significant or material findings and internal control weaknesses have been rectified. The school has not violated any provision of the law and the CSD notes the school’s leadership and governance are sound. The school proposed goals that could provide for growth over the next charter term and were in SMART format.

La Promesa Early Learning Center currently maintains a 3 year school grade average of a D. The school is 5.7 points away from obtaining a C. The “School Growth section of the school grade has seen a consistent upward trajectory and shows a narrowed gap by 5.3 points in reading and 1.1 points in math in 2013-14. However the Current Standing has remained an F for the last 3 years. La Promesa has seen a dip in scores for highest performing students from 5 in 2012 to 4.11 in 2014. Additionally, scores for Lowest Performers has declined 4.36 points since 2012. In a comparison with like student populations the school ranks particularly high in School Growth (A), and Opportunity to Learn (A). Neighboring elementary schools include MaryAnn Binford, Adobe Acres and Carlos Rey, all of whom received a D on the most recent grade report. In comparison to community schools, La Promesa is on a positive trajectory with regards to performance as well as individualized support approaches with students and families.

La Promesa Early Learning Center proposed 6 goals in their original charter, 3 of these goals were met. The presentation of data around the goals proved to be a challenge for the school, either because of the wording of the goal, the metrics used, or the inability to continue to track a certain data set. Moving forward the CSD would like to place particular focus on school goals, the metrics to support the goal and finally the tracking systems that will be used for the goals. The goals that were proposed in Section “C” are in SMART format and include metrics. The CSD noted that in Goal 2 these metrics should be further clarified.

La Promesa Early Learning Center has met generally accepted standards of fiscal management. All 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 current cash balance percentage is 5.03% for FY 2013.

The CSD finds the organizational structure at La Promesa is sound. As stated above, the school has not violated any provision of the law. The school is working towards improving faculty collaboration and the utilization of data to inform their practice. The Governance Board understands and abides by its bylaws and is looking to implement best practice and the school leadership is sound and dedicated to the mission of the school and their students.

The Charter School Division recommends that La Promesa be approved for a term of 3 years with conditions to be determined through the development of an Improvement Plan. Promesa Early Learning Center is on an upward trajectory with regards to student performance and is implementing its mission with fidelity.