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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 ASK Academy 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

Charter School Division recommends a 5-year renewal term for ASK Academy charter due to the following factors: 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's 3-year grade average is B with the last 2 years earning A; 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:  \_\_\_\_\_

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

### CSD Summary and Final Recommendation

The Attitude Skills and Knowledge Academy, (ASK), was chartered by the state in 2009. Their first year of operation commenced in Summer of 2010. The school's mission is: "The ASK Academy will emphasize science, technology, engineering, and mathematic (STEM) curricula to create a learning culture through: project-based learning experiences, 21st century technology, research programs, relationship building, and a partnership program engaging scholars in the learning process. The ASK Academy will provide multiple opportunities for scholars to demonstrate attitudes, skills and knowledge of the core standards through independent learning experiences." The Attitude Skills and Knowledge Academy is a STEM-based dual credit secondary school with strong community connections to universities, businesses, industries and between parents, students and staff.

Charter School Division recommends a 5-year renewal term for ASK Academy charter due to the following factors: 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's 3-year grade average is B with the last 2 years earning A; 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.

The Attitude Skills and Knowledge Academy 3-year report card average is a B trending upward from D (2012) to consistent scores of A (2013, 2014) then a 3-year school growth of highest performing students progressed from D (2012) to A (2013, 2014); a 3-year school growth of lowest performing students progressed from C (2012) to B (2013) then back to C (2014); the school outscored or equaled their 2 neighborhood schools, (Rio Rancho High School and Cibola High School), in all areas for 2014 from final school grade, school growth, the growth of highest performing students, and Opportunity to Learn. ASK scored lower than both schools in Current Standing but with a B rather an A. ASK scored lower than Rio Rancho High School (A) but equal to Cibola(C) in Growth of Lowest Performing Students and has included interventions and tutoring to remedy this situation. The school has maintained an A for a period of the last 2 years.

Based on adequate review of the past charter term, the school has analyzed its progress and shortcomings and proposed two future goals for reading comprehension and fluency in addition to research projects in SMART format to assure continued growth for next charter term. Goal 1 requires any subgroup of students totaling 40 or more will have an average Reading Lexile by the end of the year. CSD recommends a clarification of this goal being more specific with indicators of "subgroup" and "average". Goal 2 requires scholars to "engage" on 2 or more "sustainable research projects." CSD recommends a clarification of this goal being more specific with vernacular of "engage" and "sustainable research projects." CSD recommends description of metrics used to account for scholars being "engaged."

ASK Academy demonstrates compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations relating to financial management. There were 3 compliance issues in 2013 but the school reported it is continually improving in adherence to policy and best practices. Oversight expectations were evidenced by an audit devoid of significant findings and conditions, material weaknesses, or significant internal control weaknesses. ASK also demonstrates complete and timely compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations relating to sound financial principles and financial reporting requirements. The cash balance percentage of the operational budget for FY 2013 was 16.29%

ASK has stability with the administration as their former administrator relocated to Texas this summer. She

was replaced by the current head administrator, termed general manager, in the Summer of 2014. 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. ASK has not violated any provision of the law. Charter Schools Division finds the school's leadership and governance are sound.

Organizational analysis indicates the school is meeting all provisions of law. All personnel files are up-to-date. The school has a full 6-member council which evaluates the administrator on an annual basis. The evaluation is designed in conjunction with the administrator and Governing Board members. The school is stable and in a good position to continue moving students towards high academic achievement. The Governing Board functions are sound and in accordance with their bylaws. They are working toward developing a self- evaluation system. Currently, they use an informal assessment. The Charter Schools Division recommends approval of a full 5-year charter term without conditions for The Attitude Skills and Knowledge Academy. They have complied with charter laws and show stability in governance and operations. The parents feel welcome, the students feel challenged, and the staff and administration indicate they are pleased with the direction the school is going. The goals are adequate for negotiations if the school is renewed.

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