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BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE MATTER OF:

UPLIFT: A SCHOOL OF EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
CHARTER SCHOOL PUBLIC INPUT HEARINGS
August 16, 2010
5:36 p.m.
University of New Mexico Gallup Campus
200 College Road, Auditorium CH 248
Gallup, New Mexico

REPORTED BY: Sally Peters, RPR, New Mexico CCR 57
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A P P E A R A N C E S

COMMISSIONERS :

MR. ANDREW GARRISON, Chair
MS. CAROLINE SHEARMAN, Vice Chair
MR. EUGENE GANT, Secretary
MS. KATHRYN KRIVITZKY
MR. VINCE BERGMAN

STAFF :

DR. DON DURAN
MR. SAM OBENSHAIN
MR. MICHAEL C DE BACA
MR. RUDOLPH ARNOLD, Attorney for PED
MS. MARJORIE GILLESPIE
MS. CORINA CHAVEZ

1 CHAIR GARRISON: We are going to call this
2 Public Education Commission charter school public
3 input hearing to order. We will start with roll
4 call.

5 MR. GANT: Commissioner Krivitzky.

6 MS. KRIVITZKY: Here.

7 MR. GANT: Commissioner Bergman.

8 MR. BERGMAN: Here.

9 MR. GANT: Commissioner Shearman.

10 MS. SHEARMAN: Here.

11 MR. GANT: Commissioner Garrison.

12 CHAIR GARRISON: Here.

13 MR. GANT: Commissioner Gant, here.

14 The following are not present:

15 Commissioners Lopez, Price, Smith, Carr, and Pogna.

16 CHAIR GARRISON: Stand for the Pledge of
17 Allegiance and salute to the state flag.

18 (Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to the
19 New Mexico Flag.)

20 CHAIR GARRISON: The purpose of this
21 hearing is to solicit both written and oral input on
22 the proposed charter. In accordance with the
23 Charter Schools Act, the commission shall receive
24 application for initial chartering and renewals of
25 charter schools that want to be chartered by the

1 state and approve or disapprove those charter
2 applications.

3 In addition, the Charter Schools Act
4 states that the chartering in which the charter
5 school is proposed to be located to obtain
6 information and community input to assist in its
7 decision whether to grant a charter school
8 application. Community input may include written or
9 oral comments in favor of or in opposition to the
10 application from the applicant, the local community,
11 and for state chartered schools, the local school
12 board and school district in whose geographic
13 boundaries the charter school is proposed to be
14 located.

15 Almost ran out of breath. I ate at
16 Earl's, so what's happening here.

17 Just a couple of housekeeping items. Our
18 record keeper does have a sign-in sheet, so although
19 I will be asking people's name and title, please
20 spell the name out for her. She can just have that
21 as a reference afterward. So please if you are at
22 the table, make sure that you sign in.

23 The applicant at this time will be the
24 Uplift, a School of Expeditionary Learning. And at
25 this time we would like to hear from the applicant.

1 Please, for the record, state the name of the
2 school, the names of the founders of the school,
3 proposed grade levels to be served, and membership
4 projection of the school. And I can repeat that you
5 if you need.

6 MR. HEIL: I will do that, Mr. Chair,
7 thank you.

8 The name of the school is Uplift School of
9 Expeditionary Learning. The founders' names are
10 Cindi Tah, Steve Heil, Kimberly Ross-Toledo. Next.

11 CHAIR GARRISON: Favorite color. I'm not
12 running for federal office. This is just right in
13 front of me. Proposed grade levels to be served and
14 membership projection of the school.

15 MR. HEIL: Grade levels to be served are
16 proposed to be K through eight. The membership
17 projection at full capacity would be 252.

18 CHAIR GARRISON: Excellent. And the
19 founder names you gave are you two folks?

20 MR. HEIL: They are not the same as the
21 panelists.

22 CHAIR GARRISON: Go ahead and introduce
23 each one of yourselves for the record.

24 MR. HEIL: All right. With me tonight are
25 Catherine Curtis of the founding group, and Scott

1 Gill, Southwest Regional Director of the
2 Expeditionary Learning Schools, and my name is Steve
3 Heil of the founding group.

4 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you so much.

5 We will now request that you state for the
6 record a brief description of the school, the
7 reasons you believe this school will benefit the
8 children and citizens of this community, and any
9 other information that you would like the commission
10 to know about your application. You have 15
11 minutes, so please be as precise as you can during
12 this time. You may now begin.

13 MR. HEIL: It is our desire, Mr. Chair and
14 commissioners, to express publicly our vision for a
15 school that will provide a much needed alternative
16 in public education for families in our area and to
17 explain what we value about the Expeditionary
18 Learning model of education. Uplift, an uplift can
19 be the increase in elevation of a region by geologic
20 forces or a feeling of exalted emotions, especially
21 with pride, or a positive influence in a community.

22 Our vision for a new public school in
23 McKinley County involves all three of these
24 meanings. We envision Uplift School encouraging a
25 connection between children and the land and

1 engendering in all students a sense of pride based
2 on meaningful contributions and accomplishments and
3 benefiting our region for generations to come.

4 The geologic meaning of uplift is apt for
5 our school. The high dry territory we inhabit is
6 known as the Defiance Uplift, a portion of the
7 Colorado plateau. Once a sea bottom and seashores,
8 the sands, silts, dunes, reefs, and marshes have
9 become cliff edges, the walls of vast canyons,
10 meandering intermittent arroyos, hoodoos, and
11 striated bluffs jutting into a clear, rarefied sky.
12 The land has been lifted up and erosion has shaped
13 it into a dramatic landscape we all love.

14 Many of us have centuries old roots in the
15 land. Others are drawn here by the opportunities
16 this area provides. We interact with the land when
17 we plan towns, build roads, use the wind, sun, and
18 rain to meet our needs, drive herds, plant crops,
19 and paint pictures. Uplift School will stand out
20 from other schools in the area in that its
21 curriculum will be dynamic, responsive, and centered
22 on local people's land and current events.

23 Also associated with our school is a
24 feeling of uplift, an authentic sense of pride that
25 comes from making meaningful contributions to the

1 community. Students of all ages at our school will
2 feel good about themselves and their community,
3 because their learning will be centered around
4 projects that make a difference beyond the school
5 walls. Their school projects will result in high
6 quality products and performances. Their academic
7 achievements and accomplishments will supersede test
8 scores as milestones in their lives.

9 Students will develop an intrinsic
10 permanent desire to learn. They will learn to
11 inquire, explore, and persist and to revise work
12 that doesn't meet their own high standards, and
13 because people of all ages can experience joy when
14 they are engaged in a challenging project, Uplift
15 School students will be happy and have fun.

16 The third meaning of uplift relates to the
17 effect the children will have on the community,
18 which will be positive both immediately and
19 perennially. In the first year, students may
20 publish a community history guidebook or a field
21 guide to the wild animals of our canyons and mesas,
22 or perform a historical reenactment that makes
23 distant times seem more accessible. Many people in
24 the community will find these products and
25 performances are useful. In the years to follow,

1 the students may help realize a plan for clean solar
2 power for the area, or protect ruins of ancient
3 civilizations, identify local endangered species, or
4 host scientists, artists, and historians who are
5 involved in local issues.

6 Students themselves, by engaging in
7 relevant projects at Uplift School, will learn to
8 speak, read, and write fluently. They will some day
9 be informed citizens and community leaders, and they
10 will have a broad knowledge of and a value for our
11 community. This school will also affect the field
12 of education in our area, forging a new path in
13 educational reform that will serve as a model for
14 other schools creating new opportunity for teachers
15 who desire a real challenge and greater
16 responsibility in their careers and providing a
17 training ground for future teachers, teaching
18 assistants, and school administrators.

19 Uplift School will invest significantly in
20 teachers, in good teaching, and in the relationship
21 between teachers and students and their families.
22 Teachers will collaborate to design the
23 project-based curriculum in cooperation with
24 families and community medication. The curriculum
25 will be experiential, academic, and culturally

1 relevant, connecting to Native American and Hispanic
2 cultural ideals and current issues of importance in
3 this region.

4 Teachers' added responsibilities will be
5 accompanied by extra training and extra pay. There
6 will be more professional development days in the
7 school calendar for collaboration and designing,
8 reflecting upon and reworking the curriculum.
9 School culture will be a key area of emphasis.
10 Small class sizes and multi-age classrooms will
11 allow for all students to speak and do more in
12 school and develop strong bonds with their teachers.

13 Uplift School will differ from other local
14 public schools in scale of governance and in the
15 focus of its governing body. Five council members
16 will be responsible for the school. They will be
17 accessible and responsive to the families of the 250
18 students, the staff, and the community, a very
19 favorable board member to student ratio. They will
20 be united in a shared educational philosophy,
21 supporting the principles and practices of
22 Expeditionary Learning, and this focused educational
23 philosophy will attract interest and support to the
24 school, allowing it to tap into resources to improve
25 education that have not begun to be explored by

1 other schools in the area.

2 As an Expeditionary Learning school,
3 Uplift School will be part of a network of excellent
4 schools based on hands-on learning that is
5 significant and relevant to the community. EL is a
6 model that has proven effective with diverse
7 populations, including students receiving free and
8 reduced priced lunch, English language learners, and
9 native populations raising test scores in math and
10 reading. Nationwide in EL schools, students of all
11 ages, diverse backgrounds, and varying abilities are
12 taught to do rigorous academic work as a lasting
13 contribution to their community. Most learning
14 occurs within interdisciplinary thematic units,
15 called learning expeditions, that result in high
16 quality projects.

17 An EL school designer is on the site in
18 the classrooms 30 or more days per school year to
19 work with staff and to evaluate the level of
20 implementation of Expeditionary Learning or
21 practices. The founders of Uplift School see New
22 Mexico charter school law as an invitation for
23 grassroots initiatives in public education. We are
24 teachers and parents with students' best interests
25 in mind, and we feel the charter school law was

1 written for people like us. We have accepted the
2 invitation to envision a school, create a detailed
3 plan for it that we feel will draw broad public
4 support, and be good for students, families,
5 teachers, and the community, and submit that plan as
6 a charter school application to the New Mexico
7 Public Education Department for review and to the
8 Public Education Commission for consideration.

9 We have asked Scott Gill to be here
10 tonight to speak more about the Expeditionary
11 Learning model in order to provide a wider angle
12 view of what is being done regionally and nationally
13 in the EL network of schools and to explain the
14 relationship between Expeditionary Learning and the
15 proposed Uplift School.

16 MR. GILL: Mr. Chairman, members of the
17 commission, our organization is here to support this
18 particular application. We have a history of
19 working with schools in New Mexico, and, in fact,
20 partnered with Roots and Wings, a charter school
21 that has a long history within the state. We are
22 currently working with a number of charter schools
23 and district schools within the state, helping them
24 raise their student achievement and engage kids more
25 actively in learning.

1 Last week I was down working at the Alamo
2 Navajo school near Magdalena. I noticed in the
3 newspaper that there was an article indicating that
4 in general, charter schools in New Mexico are not
5 meeting the same test results as the districts in
6 which they are located. It's interesting, because
7 in charter schools that we have worked with in New
8 Mexico three years or more, each of those schools
9 are outperforming the district schools that they are
10 located in.

11 This school will be joining a network of
12 about 165 charter and regular district schools
13 across the United States, all focusing on a form of
14 learning that really engages students more actively
15 and focuses on the work that students do in creating
16 projects, products, and performances, all based and
17 tied to the state standards. The role of our
18 organization is to team with the teachers and to
19 help teachers teach what it is they are required to
20 teach and discover ways of creating a more
21 compelling and interesting and engaging way for them
22 to learn the content, the skills, and the knowledge
23 that we would like for them to be receiving.

24 In a recent study by a third party
25 research organization about schools nationwide

1 implementing Expeditionary Learning, it indicated
2 that, in general, schools with a high level of
3 implementation have been succeeding and
4 demonstrating higher test scores than the districts
5 in which they are located. It's also interesting
6 that they have been outperforming the free and
7 reduced lunch students and the students identified
8 in special populations. They have been out
9 performing the district averages as well.

10 Expeditionary Learning teams with those
11 teachers to focus on five areas. They are called
12 the core practices. The first is really in
13 curriculum design, and as I mentioned, help teachers
14 take back the responsibility of designing curriculum
15 that is engaging for the students in that particular
16 area, using curriculum materials as resources, but
17 helping design learning experiences that actively
18 engage students on a daily basis in the classroom.

19 We also work with teachers on what we call
20 active pedagogy, which are instructional strategies
21 that have been proven across the country to be
22 effective, and we bring them to scale and help
23 teachers to understand how to implement these in
24 their particular classrooms. We focus on the
25 culture and character development within schools.

1 We help also schools focus on leadership and school
2 improvement as a way of continuous improvement
3 within the schools, and also take a look at
4 structures, because in many ways structures can
5 either enhance or inhibit the implementation of
6 these kinds of teaching strategies.

7 Nationally what Expeditionary Learning has
8 been doing is demonstrating that performing well and
9 high test scores and having an engaging active
10 school environment are not mutually exclusive, but
11 indeed, we can create learning environments that
12 actively engage our students around real projects
13 that have benefit beyond the classroom and yet have
14 these students performing well on standardized
15 tests.

16 So at this point I think we have concluded
17 our presentation in front of the board.

18 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you.

19 The local school board, district
20 representative section. At this time we would like
21 to hear from the local school board and/or district
22 representative. Please state your name and title
23 for the record when you come up, please. Do we have
24 any representatives from the local school board or
25 district?

1 Please state your names and titles for the
2 record.

3 MR. PEREZ: My name is Max Perez,
4 P-E-R-E-Z. I am assistant superintendent for
5 services.

6 MR. ARSENAULT: Ray Arsenault,
7 superintendent of Gallup McKinley County Schools.
8 A-R-S-E-N-A-U-L-T.

9 MR. TEMPEST: Bruce Tempest,
10 T-E-M-P-E-S-T, and I am a member of the school
11 board.

12 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you, gentlemen.

13 We will now request that you state your
14 reasons this charter school application should be
15 approved by the commission and/or reasons why this
16 charter application should be denied. You have ten
17 minutes, so please be as precise as you can during
18 your time. You may now begin.

19 MR. PEREZ: We generally support new ideas
20 and creative concepts by the public whenever an
21 effort is proposed that serves the needs of the
22 students for the Gallup McKinley County area. A
23 charter school being proposed for the area could
24 have substantial impact on GMCS services that are
25 currently being provided. This in itself makes the

1 decision to add any charter school to the district
2 or to the state a matter of our concern, and we
3 would like to have some assurance, that in our time
4 of budget crisis in the State of New Mexico, that we
5 are indeed working together with the resources that
6 we have available.

7 In reviewing the application, we had
8 several questions and/or concerns. The first -- and
9 I will try to go through these briefly. I will not
10 go through them in detail. I will have a copy for
11 everybody. I was expecting Mavis Price to be here
12 tonight. I gave her some copies to bring. The
13 first question, will teachers receive training in
14 the expeditionary model and then some detail on
15 that.

16 There is a section in the application
17 called current lack of alternatives for students and
18 families. It should be noted that much of New
19 Mexico faces the same challenges. In fact,
20 78 percent of schools did not make AYP, and GMCS is
21 not the only district in restructuring status. We
22 need a little bit more noting of that.

23 In that same section, the charter
24 founders' analysis of current administrative
25 mandates points to one key characteristic, a

1 tendency towards redundant approaches to remediation
2 in math and reading requiring local performing
3 students to do more of what didn't work for them in
4 the first place. We would like a little bit more
5 backup to the comment.

6 We accept the fact that we are not a
7 perfect organization, and we have a lot of work to
8 do. However, we do have several things going on
9 with remediation in math and reading. In the same
10 section, evidence of lack of adaptability. The
11 educational plan for student success is pointed out.
12 A lot of that is guided by the Public Education
13 Department, specifically the Priority Schools
14 Bureau. Especially that we do have many schools in
15 restructuring status and in our district, we have a
16 lot of guidance. We have a lot of parameters that
17 we have to keep with our plan for student success.

18 There is also a comment about
19 unresponsiveness is also evident in the school
20 district's handling of schools in need of
21 improvement. There is a little mixup there that
22 refers to a press release that was made April 7th,
23 about some schools that were in need of
24 restructuring, and the comment alluded to
25 nonresponsiveness by the district.

1 I have to make the record clear, that
2 there were originally ten schools. Seven of the
3 schools we went through a rigorous process for
4 several months in applying for the funds so that we
5 could further support those seven schools in need.
6 At the end of it all, after applications and
7 presentations and trips to Albuquerque, et cetera,
8 we were only awarded one school to get the funding
9 for that school improvement. So I would just like
10 to get a little bit more clarification on that
11 process.

12 Some of the other -- I want to run through
13 this. It's unclear how the charter is proposing to
14 work with the English language learning students.
15 Would the multi-cultural curriculum be developed
16 prior to opening the school or would that be
17 developed during the school process? You have got
18 to excuse me. I didn't bring my glasses with me. I
19 am struggling with this.

20 There are other like more minute
21 questions, like \$5,000 for counseling. That seems
22 like a significantly underestimated amount. Will
23 the school -- I think there is reference to the
24 school being housed downtown. We have questions
25 about that. Is that multiple buildings? Are those

1 buildings adjacent to each other? Is there a gym, a
2 playground needed or going to be proposed?

3 There is reference to being located on the
4 north side downtown in the Chihuahita neighborhoods
5 for independent walking and biking to school. One
6 concern is that this is in proximity of the downtown
7 railroad crossing which runs about 100 trains per
8 day. The charter school uses district bus drivers.
9 Do they anticipate additional costs and would we be
10 involved in that part of it? Do we have to gear up
11 maybe for additional bus drivers or additional
12 buses?

13 So in a nutshell, those are some of the
14 questions we have surrounding this. And again, I
15 would like to applaud the people that are proposing
16 this. We're not against the idea in concept. But
17 we have to be very careful that we proceed carefully
18 with the operationalizing of it.

19 MR. ARSENAULT: I would like to make a few
20 comments. I think in an ideal financial situation
21 that I experienced when I moved to New Mexico eight
22 years ago, I would be much more open to the idea,
23 but my responsibility is to be sure that the school
24 district is going to be able to operate fiscally.
25 One thing that occurred recently was we lost a \$1.8

1 million sparsity index isolation formula for our
2 schools in the northeastern part of the school
3 district. It was originally established for
4 Crownpoint, Thoreau, and for Tohatchi High Schools.
5 Our enrollment had to stay at 400. That was to
6 backfill for the impact aid that we lost of
7 approximately \$20 million per year now. While we
8 also have lost \$1.8 million sparsity index because
9 we dropped 22 students below that level.

10 The reason it occurred is we built a new
11 high school in Sayaguy [phonetic] which has over 100
12 students there. So that is one concern I have
13 fiscally.

14 Another problem that I have is we are in a
15 declining enrollment environment. We are dropping
16 approximately 200 students per year, which would
17 translate into the neighborhood of \$2 million. So
18 if I look at those two figures, that puts me close
19 to \$4 million that I have to try to find ways to
20 either supplement that or make cuts for that
21 situation.

22 Plus I stay in close contact with Tom
23 Sullivan, the president of the State Coalition of
24 School Administrators, and we are being told that
25 while we may receive some backfilling from the US

1 Department of Education, according to new
2 legislation passed last week, what are we going to
3 do in the future. These funds will run out in
4 approximately one year. We have to have a longterm
5 budget and a longterm vision for the school district
6 that I am concerned about losing 250 students, which
7 could be several million dollars per year funding in
8 addition to what we have already lost.

9 Finally, in the application I believe
10 there was a portion dealing with community input. I
11 would like to comment that I believe that has not
12 been filled out, that about 85 percent of my
13 students are from the Navajo Nation, a large
14 percentage of the residents of Gallup are. I don't
15 believe there was an opportunity for input from that
16 group.

17 MR. TEMPEST: I don't really have anything
18 to add. Mr. Arsenault and I reviewed this
19 application in some detail last week and discussed
20 it at length, and I just support the comments that
21 he has made.

22 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you, gentlemen.

23 MR. ARSENAULT: Thank you.

24 CHAIR GARRISON: Community input. Public
25 comments and observations regarding the application

1 will be heard at this time. There will be a four
2 minute time limit per presenter. Persons from the
3 same group and having similar viewpoints are asked
4 to select a spokesperson to speak on their behalf.
5 Multiple and repetitious presentations of the same
6 view will be discouraged.

7 Is there anyone with community input that
8 would like to speak before the commission. We will
9 start one, two, three, four, five, and then we will
10 play rock, paper, scissors after that. We will get
11 everyone.

12 Yes, sir.

13 MR. BRIGHT: My name is William -- Bill
14 Bright, B-R-I-G-H-T, resident of Gallup for the last
15 18 years. I am retired from careers in the field of
16 health, education, small business ownership, and
17 have degrees in occupational therapy and special
18 education.

19 While living in Gallup, I have served on
20 the Gallup McKinley School Board and the UNM-G local
21 board. I have served on the Middle College High
22 Charter School Board from its inception to the
23 present. Middle College High was authorized by and
24 maintains a positive relationship with the school
25 board for eight years now. It is the leading

1 secondary school in this area in the attainment of
2 annual AYP status.

3 I recommend the approval of the Uplift
4 School charter school for the following reasons,
5 three reasons. One, family educational choice.
6 There is a lack of this here compared to New Mexico
7 urban areas. There are over 80 charter schools in
8 New Mexico, but only one in this district, and
9 that's restricted to grades 10 through 12. This is
10 an imposition put on the area families who would
11 like to take a proactive role in educational choice
12 but are faced with tuitions they can't afford or
13 religious training requirements they don't desire
14 when choosing among this area's private schools.
15 The NCLB provision of parent choice among public
16 schools is negated here when almost all the schools
17 to choose have failed AYP.

18 Two, cultural fit: Having worked in area
19 schools for seven years and served in a leadership
20 role here for another eight, I believe on the
21 hands-on, active involvement and small size proposed
22 by this Expeditionary Learning model will
23 effectively educate this area's native and Hispanic
24 populations and be more likely to involve parents,
25 which we all know is key to children's school

1 success.

2 Three, quality of charter proponents:
3 Having worked with and or known the individuals
4 submitting this charter, I believe that they have
5 the knowledge, energy, and motivation to complete
6 the efforts needed to successfully complete the
7 initial planning year process until certified staff
8 are on board. Thank you.

9 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you. There was a
10 hand up there. Who was that?

11 Come on down. Ma'am, you may sit if you
12 please. Lay down on all three and relax.

13 MS. KACZMAREK: Do I introduce myself?

14 CHAIR GARRISON: Yes.

15 MS. KACZMAREK: My name is Marianne
16 Kaczmarek. M-A-R-I-A-N-N-E. My last name is
17 K-A-C-Z-M-A-R-E-K.

18 As a parent of two children ages two and
19 six, I am really thrilled about the potential of
20 Uplift being established as an alternative to
21 traditional public education in Gallup. When I
22 think about what I want for my children's education,
23 I think of a strong academic curriculum that is
24 meaningful and relevant. In other words, I don't
25 just want my kids to know a bunch of stuff. I want

1 their hearts and their hands to be fully engaged in
2 their learning.

3 Prior to moving to Gallup a little over a
4 year ago, we lived in an apartment in downtown
5 Seattle, without the pleasure of a garden or a
6 backyard. Moving to Gallup and buying our first
7 home has given us a new opportunity as a family to
8 grow and tend a garden together. And I never would
9 have expected the joy that we have experienced in
10 watching the first hollyhocks and sunflowers blossom
11 this past spring. Seeing the delight in my
12 children's eyes, because they have been a part of
13 this process, has been sheer joy for me.

14 I would like to share another example of
15 learning which engages the head, the heart, and the
16 hands, and this example comes from an experience I
17 had this past year. Once a week, a group of
18 preschool age kids and their moms met at my house,
19 and as part of our time together, we baked bread.
20 And each child was given their own lump of dough to
21 work with, and it was such a delight to see kids
22 press their hands into the stickie dough and knead
23 and shape it into their own creations. One child
24 would make a monster truck and another one would
25 make a fairy princess, and another a caterpillar as

1 it was turning into a butterfly, and their
2 creativity was truly endless. And after they were
3 done baking, the kids devoured their tasty bread
4 creations and they appeared fully satisfied.

5 Baking engaged the children's mind as they
6 formed ideas about what to make. As they worked
7 with the dough, their hand muscles and fine motor
8 skills were strengthened and engaged, and while the
9 warmth and aroma and eating the bread engaged their
10 hearts.

11 I think that our kids need these kind of
12 hands-on experiences, not just occasionally as part
13 of their public school education, but rather as the
14 primary means for learning. The Expeditionary
15 Learning model is based on hands-on projects and
16 learning expeditions and producing high quality
17 working is encouraged and expected.

18 I also really want my kids to have the
19 feeling that what they are learning and doing in
20 school is intricately connected with what is
21 happening in their community, that it is relevant,
22 that it is authentic. As a result of their
23 education, I would like them to come to really care
24 about making a difference and have the skills and
25 knowledge to make a difference.

1 I love the way the Expeditionary Learning
2 model is invested in creating learning experiences
3 which bring the community into the curriculum. I
4 can't stop thinking about what a rich experience
5 that will be for kids.

6 The bottom line for me is that education
7 should be meaningful and relevant. I think Uplift
8 will be a school that really gets kids excited about
9 learning and about being active participants in
10 their community and about growing as human beings.
11 I really hope I get to send my kids to Uplift.
12 Thank you.

13 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you.

14 I have these three, I think, marked for
15 the next three. Then we will take you, ma'am. I
16 lost count, and now I don't know who is who. We
17 will get to everybody. We are well fed, so we're
18 good.

19 Still awake?

20 CHAIR GARRISON: I was told speak for
21 yourself over there.

22 MS. ROSS-TOLEDO: Yatahey. My name is
23 Kimberly Ross-Toledo. I am of the Waters Flow
24 Together people, born for the Spirit Lake-Shooters
25 from the Woods people in Minnesota. My maternal

1 grandfathers are the Two Who Came to the Waters Edge
2 in Pinedale, New Mexico, and my paternal
3 grandparents are the Burnt Thigh People of Rosebud,
4 South Dakota.

5 I am currently the executive director for
6 the coalition for helping youth here in McKinley
7 County, and I am a parent of two little girls in the
8 Gallup McKinley County School District. I am also
9 one of the founders for this project, this
10 application.

11 I come to you tonight to talk a little bit
12 about how this conversation started, why we felt
13 like it was necessary to really examine building a
14 charter school for elementary students. As you
15 know, McKinley County is roughly 75 percent Native
16 American, and as you can see in this crowd, we are
17 two strong here, me and my mother, which tells you a
18 lot about the community and how disempowered and
19 oppressed they feel about education.

20 Oftentimes families are struggling to
21 survive, and they are sending their children to what
22 can be seen or can be construed as a fairly
23 functional system of education. And many of them,
24 because of historical trauma and multigenerational
25 trauma, have developed norms that are not -- what

1 would you say? -- that are not inclusive of academic
2 success, okay, so they don't have that kind of
3 forethought about the importance of academic
4 success.

5 So one of the things that we started
6 talking about was really how are these social
7 determinants of health impacting our families and
8 their engagement in the education system, and how is
9 the education system taking into account those types
10 of social determinants. Many of our young people
11 and families in this area live below the poverty
12 level, and so access to schools is really important,
13 access to quality education is very important.
14 However, when you have teachers in our current
15 school system who are overwhelmed with having to
16 deal with children who are coming to school saying,
17 you know, "My mom got thrown in jail last night, and
18 I haven't had anything to eat," and the teachers are
19 hard pressed by their goals, their administrative
20 goals in terms of teaching, I mean, you know, it's a
21 really hard thing to balance.

22 And so we really need to think about, when
23 we were talking about the school and developing it,
24 we were talking about, well, how do we encourage
25 learning in a way that is culturally competent,

1 culturally appropriate, and one of the things that
2 we really truly liked about the Expeditionary
3 Learning model is that it is very similar to the way
4 native families teach young children. Oftentimes
5 children are not expected to know exactly what it is
6 they are learning, but to experience it through
7 activity. So we really wanted to touch on that.

8 We had a lot of issues about displacement
9 of students. Many of our young people are being
10 displaced out of the high school because of
11 behavioral health issues related to substance abuse.
12 We feel like if we can provide counseling and a
13 supportive environment, a learning environment at
14 the elementary age, by the time they get to high
15 school, we will see less dropout rates.

16 You know, a lot of times people talk
17 about, well, why not send them to BIA schools. BIA
18 schools are underfunded and overcrowded. I have
19 worked with a lot of BIA schools in terms of
20 prevention, and there's waiting lists of 100 to 150
21 students waiting to get into those schools. So
22 realistically that's not an option here.

23 We feel that if we can provide a quality
24 education and a sound learning board for our young
25 elementary students, it would be to the benefit of

1 this community. And so that's why I got involved.
2 I am here as a parent of a gifted student within the
3 gifted services, and so I just want that opportunity
4 for my children and my family.

5 CHAIR GARRISON: Your time is up. Thank
6 you.

7 MS. TOLEDO-ROSS: Thank you.

8 CHAIR GARRISON: Are these to the same
9 viewpoint?

10 MS. TAH: We each have different points we
11 are making.

12 CHAIR GARRISON: But are you two founders
13 also?

14 MS. TAH: I am a founder also.

15 CHAIR GARRISON: I'm going to cease any
16 other founders coming down to speak, because you
17 should have been there at the table as an applicant.
18 You are applicants, and so just to keep the process
19 clear, I let you continue while I got legal advice,
20 so that's where we stand, but I appreciate you
21 coming down.

22 So we will go with you.

23 MS. FARVER: Hi. My name is Erin Farver,
24 F-A-R-V-E-R, and I am a third grade teacher here in
25 the Gallup McKinley County School District. As a

1 teacher, there are many reasons I support this
2 school, but I would like to focus my comments on
3 what I have seen to be the effectiveness of this
4 expeditionary model of learning, in particular for
5 English language learners and Native American
6 students.

7 Last year my third grade colleagues and I
8 tried to implement this model of learning in the
9 area that we felt like we had freedom to do so, and
10 that was in our science, social studies, and writing
11 curriculum. We were not specifically trained, but
12 we were just inspired by the ideas, and we worked
13 really hard to collaboratively plan science units
14 that involved projects, presentations, final
15 products, and exciting experiences for our students.

16 The standardized test result data we just
17 received show pretty clearly that this model of
18 hands-on project based learning is especially
19 beneficial for our Native American students and our
20 students that are learning English. On the NMSBA
21 test this year, our third grade students scored very
22 well in science and writing. With our Native
23 American and English learner subgroups actually
24 outperforming district averages by quite a bit in
25 science.

1 Often unfortunately these results
2 typically show our Native American and ELL students,
3 those subgroups always behind other subgroups, and
4 in this subject area in particular where we taught
5 this way, those students surpassed, their scores
6 surpassed the other subgroups, which was really
7 exciting to us. We always hear that these students
8 in particular are visual learners and need hands-on
9 examples. And I feel like this expeditionary model
10 is just a wonderful way to provide that, and I think
11 that our scores are just the beginning of evidence
12 that this model and learning could provide those
13 experiences that these students need. Thank you.

14 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you.

15 Yes, ma'am, good evening.

16 MS. REEVE: My name is Mary Reeve. I am
17 here as a community member and an advocate, but I
18 feel it necessary to disclose I am also the director
19 of special education. And over the last 38 years
20 working in public education and children services,
21 one of the things that I always find very disturbing
22 and I have to listen for very carefully, and I have
23 not heard that this evening. I applaud people for
24 coming up with better solutions for kids. I totally
25 do.

1 What I am personally not hearing, and I
2 finally had to stand up and say something I am not
3 hearing, are children with low incidence
4 disabilities welcome? Are children with specific
5 learning disabilities welcome? Are children who are
6 gifted welcome? The rhetoric I have heard this
7 evening has been around ELL and hands-on learning.
8 I have not heard how the product, the methodology,
9 how the pedagogy invites in those children with
10 learning disabilities.

11 I have a lot of colleagues across the
12 state of New Mexico and certainly reach out, and if
13 I can help you do something I am there for you. I
14 constantly get calls from charter school people and
15 when I go to special ed directors' meetings, and
16 sometimes when I am just out there helping somebody
17 out. And what I hear over and over and over is,
18 "Mary, how do we take care of special ed kids? I'm
19 in a charter school. They didn't give me a special
20 ed director. I don't have enough staff members to
21 take care of this one."

22 So whatever the decision is that is made
23 tonight -- and I know it's going to be a good one --
24 what I am asking you to help me as an advocate for
25 children across the state is that when we have

1 children that are a little bit different, their
2 behavior is a little bit more challenging, maybe
3 they learn at a different rate and different style,
4 or maybe they are blind or maybe they are deaf, that
5 those children are equally welcome at a charter
6 school as they are at a public school. Thanks for
7 listening.

8 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you.

9 Yes, ma'am.

10 MS. LUNDBERG: I am Anneke, A-N-N-E-K-E,
11 Lundberg, L-U-N-D-B-E-R-G. And this is my third
12 academic year as an assistant professor in early
13 childhood multi-cultural education. I moved here
14 from western Massachusetts and was involved in
15 Boston in charter schools in the 1990s when they
16 were first getting started there. And why I am here
17 is because of community schools and the community
18 involvement the charter schools have.

19 I think that in Massachusetts 20 years
20 ago, we were hearing charter schools were going to
21 pull kids away or that they were being privatized,
22 that they weren't for communities, and over the 20
23 years we have shown that that's not necessarily
24 true. It can be true, but it's not necessarily.
25 Charter schools are based on community involvement.

1 I really believe they exist, in addition to, not
2 instead of public schools, or other types of
3 schools -- parochial, private.

4 Being a teacher, research shows that the
5 three spheres that influence kids are their schools,
6 their communities, and their families. And UNM --
7 so I am representing UNM in this -- for the last
8 three years has been doing something called talking
9 circles which is using federal money, going out into
10 the community to talk to people about what's not
11 working. It's been in higher ed, high schools,
12 middle schools, community members all the way down.
13 And I was a facilitator and a group member and
14 reporter in the Navajo Nation in Zuni and here on
15 this campus, and it's clear that you can't just say
16 UNM Gallup isn't doing -- you can't blame it on the
17 high schools. You can't blame it on the middle
18 schools. Everyone was going back to saying, we lose
19 our kids in their hearts by third grade. They
20 detach in this community.

21 I am a new member of the community, so I
22 am just reporting what I have heard from other
23 people. But that then we lose their bodies as soon
24 as they can drop out, and the statistics are there.
25 I don't have to say anything about that.

1 So how as a community do we work with
2 that, and I think I just -- I feel that diversity is
3 a really over-used word in education and media, but
4 I choose it because science has shown and ecology
5 has shown environmental educators that diverse space
6 provides stability to any system. I think Gallup
7 McKinley County District would be wise to develop a
8 wider and stronger base in its educational
9 community. I think the options for families are
10 limited.

11 That does not mean that the current
12 schools are limited. We need to have a provider
13 base. We need more talking. I was the chair of a
14 school committee for six years in western
15 Massachusetts that was regionalized to two
16 districts. It was really complicated financially.
17 I totally understand where the district is at, and
18 these times economically are hard. But I feel
19 that -- well, I guess I believe that people talking
20 about children, about clarifying when they value in
21 their schools, I believe all of that is good no
22 matter what the range of ideas are held. I think
23 that a community talking about their young children
24 and the next generation and what they want them to
25 learn or how to prepare them for their futures can

1 only make things better for all involved.

2 I support the charter school, because I
3 believe the communities will be involved. And it's
4 not one community here. In my whole time, I have
5 had one Anglo student. I have 80 percent Navajo. I
6 have Zuni, and I have had Hispanic. So it's a very
7 different population, and I think a community based
8 school, if we can get that started, people coming to
9 Gallup in 20 years will look different. Thank you.

10 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you for your time.

11 MS. BROWN: I have been doing this a lot
12 lately, but from a different perspective. My name
13 is Jennifer Brown. I am a community member. I am
14 also an employee of the school district. I am a
15 nationally board certified librarian. I work in
16 probably, well, as of this year not the lowest
17 elementary school in this district, just on the edge
18 of town on the reservation, Church Rock Elementary.

19 But tonight I am here to speak as a parent
20 of a child who will get lost in this district, who
21 does get lost in this district. My daughter, who is
22 being raised by my husband and I, has a grandmother
23 who only speaks Navajo. She also has a grandmother
24 who has a PhD. Our kids who are bi-racial in this
25 district are forced to choose who they are going to

1 be. I have witnessed it for eight years. We are
2 trying to raise a child who is comfortable with a
3 foot in each one of those worlds, and there are very
4 few people around here who are comfortable in both
5 of those worlds.

6 She is a hands-on learner. She is only
7 two and a half, and we know that. The reason I was
8 late getting here, I was busy building a sheep camp
9 with her in the dark, because that's what we were
10 doing tonight. She is exposed all day long with her
11 grandmother to Navajo culture, Navajo traditions.
12 She is learning the herbs. She is learning to
13 weave. On weekends she goes to Albuquerque and she
14 is exposed to the museums and the zoos with her
15 Anglo grandparents.

16 Those two things, when she gets into the
17 public schools around here, she has sort of got to
18 pick which direction she wants to be, and I just
19 don't want that to happen to her. I want her to
20 have the opportunity to choose to be who she is.

21 The Uplift School concept encourages
22 students to explore who they are through their
23 education and to develop themselves as a whole
24 child, as a whole person. And I think that's
25 something that right now, the public school system

1 is not necessarily meeting.

2 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you. We will go
3 here, then we will go with you in green and white.

4 MR. SARGENT: My name is Fitz Sargent. I
5 am relatively new to Gallup. I moved here six
6 months ago. I am an architect and an artist. I
7 spent the last ten years teaching at the Hyde School
8 in Bath, Maine where I ran essentially an
9 Expeditionary Learning program for the ninth grade,
10 and I just want to speak to this from sort of three
11 perspectives.

12 As a professional before my teaching
13 career, my major concern with my kids when they were
14 in elementary schools is that they came home knowing
15 something. And I always felt like if they could
16 write and they could measure, that was a good
17 measure of what school was able to do for them. I
18 am a practical person.

19 When I got an opportunity to run a little
20 program like this as a teacher, I think the two
21 things that I saw the most beneficial to kids -- and
22 these were ninth graders, so a little older than
23 these kids -- is they could really learn how to do
24 something. And one of the things you may find with
25 your own ninth grader is almost none of them know

1 how long an inch is. And if they do something that
2 forces them to figure out, for instance, to know how
3 big their hand is or to know how many sticks they
4 are going to need to collect to build a fence, they
5 will never forget how big an inch is. I think that
6 kind of thing is super important.

7 The other things is writing. When kids
8 have an experience that's difficult and challenging
9 and exciting and then write about it, they are so
10 much more invested in that than when they are given
11 a prompt to write which is, you know, the way in a
12 classroom you are kind of restricted. So I just
13 think from those two perspectives, it's an awesome
14 thing.

15 The third thing is I am so excited to be
16 able to be one of the people that might come in for
17 a day or two days during the week when they are
18 doing a piece that involves the kind of thing I do.
19 I am both a sculptor and an architect, and as a
20 community person, I am excited to be able to
21 participate and be invited to participate and be a
22 part of this kind of thing. I think it's a great
23 idea. Thank you.

24 MS. WINDISCH: Good evening. My name is
25 Betsy Windisch. I will give you this with all the

1 scribbles. I am employed part-time. I have many
2 part-time jobs. I am employed part-time as a
3 Christian educator with the First United Methodist
4 Church. I am the recycling coordinator through
5 Connections Incorporated. I am an advocate of the
6 environment, and I sit on the board of the New
7 Mexico Interfaith Power and Light Group, and through
8 the stewards, The New Mexico Stewards of Creation.
9 I have also been involved with school reform through
10 relearning -- many of you remember that word --
11 relearning and the Coalition of Essential Schools in
12 past years. I have worked as a substitute teacher
13 for 18 years in Gallup McKinley County Schools.

14 From my work in the schools, I have seen
15 too many children who are distracted in the
16 classroom. Some children need additional help of
17 which the teachers only have so much time to give.
18 Others are bored, because they are ready to move on,
19 but they often become behavior problems because they
20 are not being challenged. Once labeled a behavior
21 problem, it sticks, and these children are often
22 ignored.

23 I applaud the concept of small class sizes
24 where children can be given the attention they need.
25 For too many years, the pleas of parents and

1 teachers for smaller classes have been ignored by
2 administrators and the legislators.

3 Many schools give lip service to parental
4 and community involvement, but it takes time,
5 patience, and nurturing. The national PTA has
6 stated that parental involvement, even if only once
7 a year, can enhance a child's school performance.
8 Teachers and administrators are often too busy to
9 encourage parents in this important undertaking.
10 Community partners are often nurtured for their
11 monetary gifts, not their people gifts and
12 resources.

13 Uplift School's investment in working with
14 families in the community is a return to what
15 schools are, have been, should be, and need to be.
16 I believe in Expeditionary Learning, hands-on
17 projects that are significant and relevant to the
18 community, and encourage lifelong learning
19 opportunities.

20 I brought with me some books that
21 enlightened me about the problems in the schools.
22 "What We Want of Our Schools: Plain Talk on
23 Education," 1957. "Teaching as a Subversive
24 Activity" -- I picked this one up real quick -- "A
25 no-holds-barred assault on outdated teaching

1 methods -- with dramatic and practical proposals on
2 how education can be made relevant to today's
3 world," 1969.

4 "Crisis in the Classroom: The Remaking of
5 American Education," 1970. "Last Child in the
6 Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-deficit
7 Disorder," 2005 and 2008. I will talk faster.
8 Excuse me. "Many Children Left Behind: How the No
9 Child Left Behind Act Is Damaging Our Children and
10 Our Schools."

11 These are the books of which I am aware.
12 I'm sure there are many others. The point I would
13 like to make is that concern for the way this
14 country has been educating this country is not new,
15 the oldest reference being 1957. From my reading of
16 these texts, what we have been doing in this country
17 with public education has unfortunately been
18 spiraling downward for the last 50 years. These
19 prophets were not heard. To save our children and
20 country, radical changes in the way we educate need
21 to takes place. It is time to reinvest in our
22 teachers, supporting them by giving them the tools
23 and flexibility to teach and share best practices.

24 The educational hierarchy has emphasized
25 proficiencies through testing. We are getting that

1 not all children learn the same way and not all
2 children demonstrate their knowledge in the same
3 way. The child is often sacrificed through
4 inflexibility and standardization.

5 (The bell of the timer rang.)

6 MS. WINDISCH: Oh, I have a wonderful
7 quote, but you will have to talk to me later.

8 CHAIR GARRISON: How long is the quote?

9 MS. WINDISCH: It's real short.

10 CHAIR GARRISON: Give it to me.

11 MS. WINDISCH: Thank you. This is from
12 "Crisis in the Classroom."

13 "Reading for what? the head of a primary
14 school asks. If my children get perfect reading
15 scores and then grow up to read only the tabloids, I
16 shall have failed. My job is to develop attitudes
17 and values as well as skills, to make music, art,
18 and poetry experiences they will enjoy throughout
19 their lives. I don't want to develop a generation
20 of proficient readers that lacks humane values."

21 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you for your time.

22 MS. WINDISCH: Thank you.

23 CHAIR GARRISON: Sir. Wait, I'm sorry.
24 And then you, sir, in the white.

25 MS. STONAWSKI: Good evening. Thank you

1 for staying focused and having patience with us. My
2 name -- I'm just going to write it in here.

3 I am since ten years in Gallup. Since
4 five years I am a teacher of the gifted. The lady
5 who spoke so passionately is my super boss. Since
6 she is there, the department of the gifted I think
7 is maybe the best in the New Mexico.

8 Before I was teacher of the gifted -- I
9 have a master's in special ed and a master's in
10 social studies -- I was a special ed teacher at a
11 junior high school, my first experience with
12 American schools. And we all believe inclusion is
13 so beautiful, and I had B level and I had also
14 special ed kids that were 13, 14, and 15, that had
15 hurt for ten years. They are college bound, and
16 discovered by the time they are in fourth,
17 elementary, they are never going to make it.

18 I had 15-year-old kids that had a big
19 buckle, because they are bull riders. They are able
20 to face the bull, sit on it, and they cannot write a
21 sentence, because they have lost any motivation to
22 write sentences for us Caucasian teachers. I had
23 those children walk through being stuck in a
24 blizzard, children that haven't written for years.
25 They wouldn't write for me until I said, "I give it

1 up. Tell me what I have to do. There is no way.
2 Just hang on until you are in high school, but don't
3 drop off before. Don't drop off before, because you
4 will never make enough money to buy diapers."

5 So after we got to cooperation, and it was
6 a blizzard, and they were playing sports out there
7 in T-shirts, and they could do everything except
8 writing. They could do their math of how much
9 diapers cost per month and how much your minimum
10 wage with a high school diploma allows for diapers.
11 How much do you earn without a high school diploma,
12 they understood.

13 But walking them through a blizzard --
14 they all can drive a car when they are 15. They
15 know about cars more than I ever will. After they
16 could figure out the battery is dead. You are
17 snowed in. How can you open the door? What are you
18 going to drink? How do you keep warm? What do you
19 need in your car? It took three weeks, but all of
20 those kids wrote five paragraphs.

21 It's the best writing I have ever read,
22 much better than my gifted kids. My gifted kids can
23 do everything. They are super. Those were special
24 ed kids, and some of them had not written a sentence
25 in years. They wrote five paragraphs. It took us

1 three weeks, but it was fantastic.

2 I speak today just on behalf of those
3 special ed kids. Today I meet them, at Bigger
4 Tires, at Big Lots, hanging out in front of the
5 library waiting for the computer. They are lost to
6 this society, those children that cannot write but
7 can ride a bull. One kid, I observed him. He was
8 sitting in a classroom like this, bending over,
9 looking what the other kids wrote. He could read
10 upside down and copied and delivered a paper that
11 was perfect. I need glasses to read upside down.

12 When I was behind him and listened to what
13 he is telling, because there were three kids around,
14 you know, sharpening their ears. His older brother
15 said, 10:00 at night, "You want to go to Albuquerque
16 with me?"

17 "Yeah, why not?" They take off. No
18 driving lessons. The next car, of course,
19 95 percent of my kids were Navajo. This is their
20 work. They don't ask for permission. They have to
21 decide. They take off with the car. The car breaks
22 down. At 3:00 in the morning, they take a
23 flashlight and take the manual to repair the car to
24 go to Albuquerque. He doesn't care about homework
25 or school the next day.

1 I only speak on behalf of the special ed
2 kids that are marvelous and that we are losing.

3 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you for your time.

4 Yes, sir.

5 MR. HOZID: My name is Aaron Hozid.

6 That's H-O-Z-I-D, Z as in zebra, D as in David, and
7 it's two A's in Aaron.

8 I am coming here to support the Uplift
9 School. And I just want to say that I speak with
10 someone with 20 years of experience in education and
11 in community development related to education,
12 including teaching here reading development and
13 teacher ed classes at UNM Gallup, and including
14 being a parent and a parent volunteer in the
15 Gallup-McKinley school system as well.

16 I just want to say that my experience in
17 research, which has also included working as a guest
18 instructor in contemporary issues in Native American
19 education at Harvard University for the Harvard
20 University Graduate School, is that along with the
21 research that I was conducting, and also that of
22 students and instructors, that there is no question,
23 as Kimberly Ross has mentioned, that this is a
24 process of education that is valuable across
25 cultures, but particularly shows strong results with

1 Native American students across the board. And I
2 would also say that utilizing these approaches here
3 in Gallup, I saw, as a parent volunteer, as an
4 instructor, as a person who worked here also with
5 the Council of Governments and working with the
6 education system, exceptional results of students
7 across the board, including native students,
8 including Hispanic students, including students with
9 special ed needs.

10 And I just want to end that as a parent,
11 that when I go back to my own son's educational
12 experience in the first grade in the Gallup-McKinley
13 system, I ask him what do you remember about first
14 grade, and he remembers that Expeditionary Learning
15 experience that he had with Little Sisters of the
16 Poor in this community, and he can remember almost
17 every detail. He can hardly remember much of
18 anything else. And as a parent, I emphasized
19 Expeditionary Learning, because he is one of those
20 hands-on learners who also ended up in the
21 principal's office a lot because he was like that,
22 but I had him involved in the performing arts
23 program here.

24 We moved later to Juneau, Alaska. I had
25 him involved in the community, and he is now an

1 honor student at the University of Alaska and a peer
2 advocate, and I will tell you if it wasn't for
3 Expeditionary Learning experiences and the
4 experience I as a parent provided for him because of
5 my background, he would not be there today.

6 And also I just wanted to say as an
7 evaluator, an educational evaluator, I have watched
8 this committee. I have watched these founders work
9 over the past six months. I am extremely impressed,
10 and it's my feeling very strongly, not just my
11 feeling but the knowledge that I have seen them
12 develop over time, that they are going to develop an
13 exemplary expeditionary school in this community
14 that will be a benefit to the entire school
15 district. Thank you.

16 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you.

17 MS. IRALU: My name is Elspeth Iralu,
18 which is E-L-S-P-E-T-H. Iralu is I-R-A-L-U.

19 I want to speak to you from two
20 perspectives. First, tonight you heard from parents
21 and community members and teachers, but you haven't
22 heard from any students that I know of. And I grew
23 up in Gallup. My family moved here when I was five
24 years old, and I went to school for three years.
25 During those three years, I started off, first grade

1 I loved, and after that I couldn't stand school and
2 I wanted to get out.

3 My parents decided to home school me.
4 While I was home schooled, I was able to do all
5 kinds of activities where I got to work outside and
6 learn about the environment in which we lived and
7 about New Mexico history and things that my friends
8 were not doing in school. When I finished eighth
9 grade, my parents told me I had a choice, that I
10 could go to public school or I could go to private
11 school or I could continue home schooling. Then if
12 I continued home schooling, it would be on me to do
13 a lot of work on my own, and that's what I chose.

14 After I graduated I went to college, and
15 when I finished college, I decided to come back to
16 McKinley County to be a teacher, and I am now
17 teaching at Zuni High School, about 45 minutes down
18 the road. The reason I wanted to be a teacher here
19 is that I didn't think it was fair that you could --
20 I didn't believe that you could only learn about
21 your environment and the place where you lived when
22 you taught yourself. I thought that you should be
23 able to do that in a group, and that people in
24 school should be able to do that just as much as
25 people at home who had the resources at home. I

1 thought it was unfair that only home schoolers
2 should be able to do that.

3 As a teacher I have seen a lot of students
4 come into my classroom who have never been outside
5 during school, who have never done a lab, who have
6 never learned any native plants, who have never
7 learned anything about the environment that we live
8 in. I think that's pathetic to be perfectly honest,
9 and I think one of the best things about being a
10 teacher is that I get to teach kids that and let
11 them have those experiences. What I think is a
12 shame that kids aren't getting that until they get
13 into high school. So I see Uplift School as a way
14 to get kids to do that early on when they are young,
15 so they will stay excited about learning. Thank
16 you.

17 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you.

18 MS. FAZ: My name is Sue Faz. My last
19 name is F-A-Z.

20 I am many things, as we all are, but I am
21 speaking to you as a parent for the most part. I
22 have two sons that currently, currently and for the
23 past seven years have been in a private school in
24 Gallup, and I think there is a lot of good in all
25 the schools here as some of the others have

1 mentioned.

2 My sons academically are doing, according
3 to the report cards and the state standards,
4 extremely well. My greatest wish, though, is that
5 they are also taking it into their whole person and
6 growing as a whole person, some of the phrases that
7 were mentioned before, into their hearts, hands, and
8 minds. And as a teacher once told me, there is more
9 than one way to Chicago. I am from the Midwest.
10 You can take the interstate, you can take the back
11 roads. You can take a charter school, you can take
12 a public school, or you can take a private school.
13 There's a lot of good in all of them.

14 So my main statement is that I support
15 Uplift School. I think it's particularly an
16 excellent match for Gallup. Gallup is a great
17 place. We have great people. I am glad you all are
18 here, and I hope you come back again many times.
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you. Go ahead and
21 write your name also just to have it.

22 MS. FAZ: Okay.

23 CHAIR GARRISON: Any another folks for
24 community input? Come on down.

25 MR. GAMBILL: My name is Michael Gambill.

1 The last name is G-A-M-B-I-L-L.

2 We have talked about some of the schools
3 that are struggling in the district. I actually
4 work at one that is in the top ten. After the NMSBA
5 results that came out they are down at the lowest.
6 That's David Skeet Elementary. I also teach here at
7 UNM Gallup. I have taught here for nine years. I
8 taught out at David Skeet for six.

9 As you know, I am here to support the
10 charter school. Most of, well, probably 95 percent
11 of the students that I have educated in the time
12 that I have lived here have been Navajo. I see
13 students every day while I am teaching that are
14 disengaged. They have teachers that don't have time
15 to be doing hands-on projects. There is large
16 amount of paperwork. It's unfortunate that there
17 are certain things that the district has put in
18 place that really seem to be taking up more of
19 teachers' time.

20 I have done a couple of projects that kind
21 of speak of what the Uplift charter school is
22 looking at with hands-on projects, some small time,
23 cold frame gardening, using cameras and creating a
24 school newspaper, those kinds of things. I choose a
25 small amount of students to deal with that, but if I

1 could, I'm sure I would have 80, 90 percent of the
2 students wanting to be involved in that.

3 Being out at David Ski, which is a little
4 bit 15 miles south of here, you know, I know those
5 students are craving for something different and,
6 you know, I know that the other representatives here
7 for the school district are concerned about
8 finances. I don't think students should be held
9 prisoner by monetary or whatever their monetary
10 value is as far as the school. I think they should
11 be able to have the opportunity to be in a place
12 that best suits them and as well as the parents.

13 I know Mr. Aresenault talked about a
14 couple of projects and some of the funding concerns,
15 and those are unfortunate, but like I said, I don't
16 think those should be anything that should dissuade
17 or inhibit an opportunity for this school to be
18 available for teachers and community members and
19 students. Thank you.

20 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you.

21 Yes, sir.

22 MR. CHOUDHRIE: My name is Sanjay
23 Choudhrie, C-H-O-U-D-H-R-I-E. I am Indian from the
24 place where you call to get your credit card
25 problems resolved.

1 CHAIR GARRISON: I send money. I am
2 waiting.

3 MR. CHOUDHRIE: I'm not an educator, so I
4 am a little embarrassed to get up and speak. I work
5 with homeless people primarily. I work for an
6 organization that tries to get low income families
7 into housing to build stable neighborhoods, and one
8 of the things that we have been hit on the head
9 with, because our primary interest is in providing
10 services to people to get out of homelessness and to
11 get into stable homes, is that education is a key
12 indicator of what a person's success is going to be
13 later on in life.

14 The primary indicators for homelessness
15 are poverty, when they can't afford homes, and we
16 have plenty of that over here, which I am told is
17 affected significantly by education. In other
18 words, what one is going to earn in life and what
19 one is going to be able to make of life has to do
20 with education.

21 We work with, most of my clients seem to
22 have a functional eighth grade education. Most of
23 them -- some of them have college degrees. They
24 tend to succeed eventually. But we work with them
25 one on one. We work with them to get them jobs. We

1 work with them to get them into housing. Most of
2 our population, the majority of our population is
3 Native American.

4 And what I am here to say is that I am
5 here to support the charter school. I think that we
6 ought to diversify the methods that we have
7 available and the opportunities that we have
8 available to people so that they can find means to
9 learn so that they will not have to live in poverty
10 like their parents did.

11 I grew up privileged, but my grandparents
12 did not, and it was an emphasis on education and a
13 lot of hard work that we were able to become middle
14 class. And it's a cultural emphasis and privilege
15 that we have and I think that all children, and my
16 children who are native Gallupians -- at least one
17 is -- should have, and I ask that you would look
18 favorably on the school. It is an experiment. It's
19 a candle of hope. It will give people opportunities
20 to get schooled that they will not have otherwise,
21 and in some way I would like to be able to help, but
22 it's a little premature to talk about that in terms
23 of money and services, so at some point in time.

24 Thank you very much for your time.

25 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you, sir.

1 MS. WINDSONG: Good evening. My name is
2 Mirakhel Windsong. I am currently a school guidance
3 counselor with the Gallup McKinley County Schools.
4 This is my 12th year as a counselor. I have also
5 been an educator in both elementary and special
6 education in North Carolina working with children
7 that were African American and Anglo. I have worked
8 on the Hopi reservation, the Navajo reservation, and
9 I am currently in Gallup.

10 I support Uplift primarily because I think
11 we need diversity, as they have spoken, as other
12 speakers have said, and because I believe John
13 Dewey, when he talked about education, he said the
14 purpose of education is to raise a child to be an
15 effective and productive citizen. And every day I
16 think about how we are not producing effective,
17 productive citizens in our country, and not in the
18 way that the view is of the people that are starting
19 charter schools, which is that we want citizens that
20 are holistic and that can do everything, not just --
21 or let me not say everything, but that have a
22 variety of ways of approaching problems that can be
23 problem solvers and that can also read and write and
24 spell.

25 So I think, you know, coming from a

1 counseling perspective, I try to look at the whole
2 child, and many children that are struggling with
3 emotional issues, those are the children that are
4 struggling with academics. Because we think from
5 this part of our brain, which is the cognitive part,
6 and when a child is back here in the primitive part
7 and they are worrying about how they are going to
8 eat or how mommy and daddy are going to have money
9 for the next day or the next week or dad is going to
10 be working or mom's going to be working, they can't
11 be up here thinking. And all of public education is
12 driven toward results: Let's get these test scores
13 up. Let's do this. Let's do that. And the kids
14 are stressed more and more, and they are not able to
15 cope.

16 And some of them, unfortunately the amount
17 of stress is coming down to the brains at lower and
18 lower levels, and they are feeling it, you know,
19 even at preschool and kindergarten. And last year
20 in our school, there were children in kindergarten
21 that were very stressed out already. I think it's
22 just because they are in this mold. You start the
23 day, you go from this to this to this, and we have
24 to get through this material and have to do all
25 this.

1 We have many wonderful educators in
2 Gallup-McKinley County Schools. The administration
3 is doing a good job, but I think we also need the
4 opportunity to serve the special needs children that
5 don't fit into the system, to help those children
6 that are emotionally challenged -- maybe they are
7 not fitting in -- and to help those kids that have
8 pressures that sometimes a smaller setting will
9 help.

10 Or, you know, the safety net too. When
11 you are in a smaller school, you have smaller
12 classes, and you have teachers that are there for
13 you and with you, and your parents are in there and
14 they bought into it, then there is more safety for
15 that child and the child will be more successful.

16 So thank you for this opportunity, and I
17 am supportive of this charter school.

18 CHAIR GARRISON: Are there any others who
19 wish to speak for community input? Seeing none, at
20 this time the public --

21 Come on up. You've got to put your arm up
22 fast.

23 MS. SCOTT: Well, I am kind of nervous.
24 I'm not really very good at speaking.

25 CHAIR GARRISON: That's okay.

1 MS. SCOTT: My name is Ella Scott. And I
2 don't know if you can tell, but I think a lot of us
3 were really nervous to come up here, because we are
4 really invested in making this happen. A lot of
5 people have been working really hard, and we really,
6 really want to see it happen.

7 I guess I am here just to say a couple
8 words as a community member here. I have also been
9 here almost two years now. But my teacher in
10 elementary school was an Expeditionary Learning
11 teacher. He is now actually working with Scott --
12 one of many teachers -- and I could tell you about a
13 million projects that we did, and I remember them
14 all. And I think a key piece that people have been
15 focused on, but I would love to reiterate, is the
16 involvement in community that these projects bring
17 and the investment as, you know, a member of that
18 community, that it makes you feel -- I don't know --
19 that it makes you feel like a member of the
20 community and you feel invested.

21 We have a lot of people here who don't
22 feel like involved, invested community members. I
23 work for a nonprofit here in town. I do a lot of
24 advocacy work, environmental advocacy, and a lot of
25 initiatives. There's a lot going on that people

1 don't know about, and I really want people to know
2 about it.

3 And I think this kind of learning is a
4 great way to involve kids at a young age in what is
5 going on, so that they are invested in this area and
6 in this space, and they don't drop out of high
7 school and leave Gallup. They stay, because, you
8 know, they know the Puerco and they know their
9 mesas, and they care about them, and they have, you
10 know, climbed up them with their classes and learned
11 about them with their teachers.

12 I don't know. I mean, New Mexico is a
13 great state. I am excited to be here. I am excited
14 to be a part of it. But a lot of New Mexico has a
15 lot of environmental things going on and a lot of
16 attraction to certain areas, and Gallup keeps people
17 here, because they really care about Gallup. Like
18 you choose to be in Gallup, I think. And we have
19 got a great group of people here who care about the
20 space and this land and this project, and I really
21 want to see that happen in 20 years. Like I want to
22 see the graduates of this school here teaching. I
23 think it's great. Thanks.

24 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you.

25 MS. SCOTT: Do I need to write my name?

1 CHAIR GARRISON: Yes.

2 Any others for community input?

3 Seeing none, at this time the public
4 education reserves time to address any questions
5 that the commissioners may have of the applicant.
6 If the applicant will please step up to the front
7 table here, and also please keep your responses as
8 brief as possible to allow for questioning from
9 other commission members.

10 So questions from the commissioners?

11 Commissioner Gant.

12 MR. GANT: Good evening. Yeah, it's
13 evening. I have a question for you. On page 52,
14 you talk about the various needs of the ELL. And as
15 I understand it, there are various languages that
16 are spoken in this part of the state. It's not like
17 where I come from it's primarily Spanish and
18 English, but you have three or four languages
19 spoken. So my question to you is, what are those
20 languages you perceive you need to help with the
21 ELL, and do you perceive there is enough bilingual
22 teachers administrators available in this local area
23 to be able to cover all these languages? Can you
24 afford them? Are they available?

25 MR. HEIL: Well, we can start by answering

1 the first part of your question, which is Navajo is
2 a key language in this area. Zuni would also be one
3 of the main languages, Spanish, of course, and there
4 is a large Phillipino population as well.

5 The second part of your question was, if I
6 remember correctly --

7 MR. GANT: Let me qualify it a little
8 further. Enough highly qualified by state standards
9 bilingual instructors?

10 MR. HEIL: I appreciate that question,
11 because I realize how important it is to address the
12 needs of those students and to work with them in
13 their native languages. However, at this time, I
14 don't have a response for you as to how easy it
15 would be to find qualified teachers to do that with
16 all of those languages. We would like to research
17 that in the next couple of days and get back to you
18 in writing, if that's okay with you.

19 MR. GILL: I would just like to interject
20 that Expeditionary Learning is working with a school
21 in Portland, Maine that is an immigration port.
22 Twenty-nine different languages are spoken at King
23 Middle School. That school started out seven years
24 ago as one of the lowest performing middle school in
25 the state of Maine. Today it is the second highest

1 performing middle school in the state of Maine. And
2 Edutopia just had a complete segment that they have
3 produced on the reasons why that particular school
4 has achieved as they have, and they specifically
5 state it's because of the kind of teaching and focus
6 on instruction through Expeditionary Learning that
7 they have been successful.

8 Now, in that school they don't have
9 teachers that all are bilingual teachers in all 29
10 of those languages, but they do have bilingual
11 teachers that know how to teach kids English as a
12 second language through the process of authentic
13 projects, products, performances, and
14 demonstrations. And part of the benefit that
15 Edutopia has identified has been the expectation
16 that kids work with kids and that kids develop
17 academic language.

18 We have a lot of students coming to our
19 schools that are fluent in English, but they don't
20 know academic language, and the instructional
21 strategies that are supported through Expeditionary
22 Learning are specific about the development and
23 acquisition of academic language in each of the
24 content areas.

25 And so although I will certainly support

1 Steve in helping him research and discover the
2 ability to secure qualified, highly qualified
3 bilingual languages teachers in this particular
4 area, the work that our organization does with all
5 teachers is to help them understand how to address
6 the diverse needs of students and the diverse
7 learning styles that our students come into our
8 classrooms with and to teach to the multiple
9 intelligences, and through that process, a necessity
10 to have highly qualified teachers in each of those
11 specific languages is probably decreased.

12 MR. GANT: Okay.

13 MS. CURTIS: May I address your question
14 as well? I just graduated -- well, in 2005 I
15 graduated from UNM Gallup with my master's degree in
16 literacy language and sociocultural studies which
17 gave me an endorsement in TESOL, and I went through
18 the program with 20 teachers, around 20 teachers.
19 Some are employed by Gallup McKinley. Most are in
20 this area. So directly I know or I have had contact
21 with at least 20 that I graduated with with my
22 master's degree.

23 MR. GANT: You had some notes. Next
24 question, page 53, plan for special ed. It was
25 interesting when the lady stood up over here, and

1 this is a quote from your document: "Both gifted
2 and disabled students will be included as much as
3 possible." That sentence, "as much as possible in
4 the school-wide educational program, participating
5 in learning expeditions and all other activities."
6 My question is, what educational programs and/or
7 learning expeditions and school activities do you
8 perceive that the gifted and disabled will not be
9 able to participate in?

10 You have got that sentence in there that
11 says, "as much as possible." That doesn't say they
12 will participate at all. It says as much as
13 possible. Explain what you mean by that.

14 MR. HEIL: First of all, it is our
15 intention to involve special ed designated students
16 fully. In fact, our vision for this school is one
17 that will better include those students. And the
18 choice of words there may have a connotation of, if
19 you look at it from the negative side, there would
20 be opportunities where they couldn't participate.
21 But as much as possible is determined by those
22 students' special needs.

23 So when we envision students with issues,
24 say blind students participating in everything that
25 our other students do at our school. We envision

1 students with motor issues participating in
2 everything that students do, but the limitation
3 there is when those activities are physical, they
4 need to be there, of course. I am imagining a
5 student with paralysis, for example. However, it is
6 not possible for them to climb a climbing wall, and
7 yet some accommodations must be made which enable
8 them to get the same results of the project, of the
9 lesson, of the activity.

10 I also would like to add that it's going
11 to be -- it seems to me it's going to likely be a
12 subject of many questions here. The category of
13 special education is in our educational philosophy
14 plan, and although I think there are a lot of
15 statements that show just what I would say in the
16 application, it would be possible also to say that
17 the writers of the application were not fully aware
18 of the situation of all of the possible structures
19 that need to be in place in order to serve special
20 ed students, but the intention is there to serve
21 special ed students fully.

22 And I guess I would like the commission to
23 consider how much has been done and to consider the
24 spirit of application, especially in those areas
25 which have been strongly critiqued around the

1 special education, and realize that it's one that is
2 inclusive. It's an inclusive spirit of how to
3 address those needs. It's a desire to involve
4 students of every kind of a need.

5 And given the situation, the grassroots
6 application, with very few monetary resources, very
7 little access to the number of experts that would be
8 needed to present a full school plan, in order to
9 open the school the very next day, those resources
10 weren't there, but I think that you have here a
11 very, very strong application in general, and that
12 we have shown a capacity to seek those things out
13 and with resources that will be coming in terms of a
14 special ed teacher hired, special ed contractors who
15 can teach us how to operate properly, and also legal
16 services. All of those things are beyond our reach
17 at this point, but we expect to have that in the
18 future, and I hope that the commissioners will
19 consider that.

20 CHAIR GARRISON: Let me interject just
21 briefly to keep responses as brief as possible to
22 allow for questioning from other commission members.
23 Thank you.

24 You can continue, Commissioner Gant.

25 MR. GANT: There is one more special ed.

1 You talk in your application about working with
2 Gallup McKinley and schools in setting up to carry
3 out the special ed program and credential special ed
4 teachers, et cetera. It's not in the budget, but
5 when do you expect to set up, to meet the
6 requirements for the special ed kids? When do you
7 plan to do the IEPs? Take your time. So when do
8 you plan to do the IEPs to ensure that a child is
9 covered from the get-go from the start of the
10 school?

11 MR. HEIL: Well, the IEPs require a number
12 of staff meeting together.

13 MR. GANT: I understand the process.

14 MR. HEIL: Our structure, the reason I
15 mentioned that, Mr. Commissioner, is the structure
16 of the school allows for teachers to regroup
17 students in various ways in order to have noncontact
18 time for certain teachers. The small class sizes
19 allow the teachers to, you know, take on different
20 groups sizes, as I said, in order for one teacher to
21 participate in IEP. But we would like to add more
22 to that if we may in a written response as well.

23 MR. GANT: Commissioner Berg.

24 MR. BERGMAN: In reading your application
25 and the preliminary analysis resulting from that, I

1 notice a number of generalized statements about the
2 success of the Uplift program in other schools and
3 in other places. I have heard some general comments
4 again this evening about that same thing, but I do
5 not recall seeing any documented specific data from
6 other operating schools that documents that kind of
7 success. Is there a particular reason why you did
8 not provide it?

9 MR. HEIL: Well, the appendix does include
10 the performance report, and there were questions in
11 the PED review, sir, about where that data came
12 from. And so we have discussed that a little bit,
13 and we would likes to respond with some information
14 about that. So I will hand that over to Scott Gill.

15 MR. GILL: So I believe that the appendix
16 did include an analysis of performance based on test
17 scores of the schools involved with Expeditionary
18 Learning. This past spring, a third party research
19 team has provided a report that furthers the
20 evidence of success in schools implementing the
21 design. We will be glad to provide that additional
22 one, which actually arrived following the
23 application or submission of this particular
24 application, but I do believe that the appendix did
25 include the performance analysis of the schools

1 within the network.

2 MR. BERGMAN: Well, there was some problem
3 for some of us downloading some of the appendices,
4 and I guess that's one that I could not download on
5 my system. So if you had it there, then I just
6 didn't get to see it.

7 MR. GILL: It is there. It compares state
8 scores with district scores with individual school
9 scores as well across the nation.

10 MR. BERGMAN: I guess that takes care of
11 that.

12 CHAIR GARRISON: Any other questions?

13 MR. BERGMAN: No.

14 MR. GILL: I would be glad to provide a
15 hard copy of that if you need.

16 MR. BERGMAN: Can they do that as a part
17 of their written comments?

18 CHAIR GARRISON: Yes, they can.

19 MR. HEIL: For the record, it's Appendix
20 F.

21 CHAIR GARRISON: Thank you.

22 MS. KRIVITZKY: No questions.

23 CHAIR GARRISON: Commissioner Shearman.

24 MS. SHEARMAN: I would like to go to some
25 money questions. That's my big -- other than the

1 educational plan, I really look closely at your
2 funding, your budget, and that sort of thing.

3 My first question concerns your Title I
4 federal funding. It's in the section where it's
5 other than SEG funding. I believe the assumption
6 that you have based the amounts on is that every
7 student in your school will be Title I eligible. In
8 my perspective, from my background, that doesn't
9 always happen, just for what it's worth.

10 My other concern is in the first year, you
11 are proposing to raise \$70,000 through \$500 per
12 student, 140 students, and you propose to use
13 \$50,000 of that to contract with Expeditionary
14 Learning. Then you propose to use some of it for
15 supplemental needs for equipment supplies, student
16 travel, and you also hope to use it for a \$15,000
17 salary for an educational assistant with \$5,000
18 worth of benefits. So the \$50,000 and the 15 and 5
19 take up the entire \$70,000.

20 My question, however, is are you aware
21 that there are carve-outs that are mandated from
22 those Title I funds? There is a 20 percent
23 carve-out that is mandated for SES, which is a
24 tutoring program which is federally mandated and you
25 have to do it. So that takes a big chunk of your

1 70,000 right there. My question is, if in fact you
2 get the 70,000 -- and that's not only carve-out, I
3 might mention -- how is that going to impact your
4 ability to finance your school if you don't have
5 that money to do the things that you have outlined
6 here?

7 MR. HEIL: That's a very good question,
8 Ms. Commissioner. We presented an operational
9 budget that was solid and that is solid and that
10 covers our operational costs in every way except for
11 the Expeditionary Learning contract. And \$50,000 is
12 a good estimate for a school our size just starting
13 out, requiring a lot of attention from EL in order
14 to get off on the right foot with the core
15 practices.

16 Expeditionary Learning has a history of
17 weaning schools of their contracts. It is not a
18 for-profit organization. Its goal is simply to
19 create schools that are effective and to step aside.
20 So we see that amount reducing over the years. I
21 think Scott could say more about that, but also
22 there may be areas of weakness in projecting
23 finances about things that are not an operational
24 budget in here, such as Title I. And because the
25 founding group, again, I think did a phenomenal job

1 putting together a very savvy application in many
2 many respects. In a few areas the knowledge, not
3 being a school yet, is weak. And this is one of the
4 areas where we were not aware of the SES carve-out,
5 the 20 percent carve-out for SES, which obviously
6 changes what we could do with Title I funding.

7 Also assuming perhaps a hundred percent of
8 our students are Title I is too much to assume, but
9 basing it on the schools in the area, a large number
10 of those students can be assumed to be Title I
11 designated students. So I would like to ask Scott
12 to say a little bit more about the drawdown of
13 support for the school from EL, if that's welcome,
14 unless you feel I have answered your question.

15 MR. GANT: You have, and I appreciate it.
16 Thank you.

17 Let me go to my second question. The
18 second question is, in your budget you are
19 projecting \$50,000, and that's for your financial
20 services, and you say in the narrative that you
21 anticipate contracting with the Coalition for
22 Charter Schools or other similar group for those
23 services. My question to you is, Albuquerque is
24 kind of far away. Isn't that going to present some
25 difficulty in your day-to-day financial dealings to

1 be working totally for your financial base with an
2 entity that's, what is it, 200 miles away or
3 whatever it is?

4 MR. HEIL: That's very perceptive, and I
5 did ask the Coalition of Charter Schools about that
6 in planning for this portion of the application, and
7 they said that they do currently work with schools
8 that are as far as away or farther than Gallup, and
9 that they will even work with schools to clean up
10 their act when they are perceived to be or when they
11 are judged by the audits to be not in compliance.
12 In other words, they have a really powerful effect
13 on those schools and their fiscal services to make
14 them appropriately run.

15 So we feel that Coalition for Charter
16 Schools can do it from Albuquerque. Also in many of
17 the things that have to do with business management,
18 as I understand it, there are deposits that need to
19 be dealt with and there are checks that need to be
20 written, but in this day and age, much of that is
21 electronic. And so the people I spoke with at
22 Coalition for Charter Schools, in filing for this
23 section of the writing, say that they haven't run
24 into problems with the day-to-day operations being
25 the business manager 135 miles away.

1 They would also help us set up a system in
2 the school that is in compliance with all school
3 finance laws and meshes with their in-house system.
4 I hope that sounds like we understand what we are
5 getting into with all of this, because I can't
6 pretend to have it all figured out. I am not a
7 licensed business manager myself, nor having one in
8 the founding group, but I think that we have a good
9 start towards that.

10 MS. SHEARMAN: So the procedures, the
11 financial procedures that are in your application,
12 are those written by you all or are they from the
13 coalition or --

14 MR. HEIL: Those are the procedures that
15 would be followed by the coalition in contracting
16 with us.

17 MS. SHEARMAN: Okay. My only other
18 question in that regard is \$50,000 is five percent
19 of your operating budget. That just really seems
20 like a great deal, a big chunk out of your operating
21 budget for financial services. And I understand
22 those business managers and those kind of people are
23 expensive to hire, but that certainly seems like
24 it's going to have an impact on your ability to
25 educate the students when you are spending that much

1 on your financial services.

2 MR. HEIL: That's absolutely true,
3 Ms. Commissioner, and that's the reality of being a
4 small school that is also an LEA. Such things as
5 the annual audit as well are very, very expensive
6 compared to the number of students we are serving,
7 and yet it has to be the same rigorous audit that
8 Gallup-McKinley schools will have with 11,000
9 students.

10 But what we have found in comparing that
11 \$50,000 contract with Coalition for Charter Schools
12 to the cost of hiring a licensed business manager or
13 even finding one who is in Gallup or near enough to
14 Gallup to serve the school on a contract basis, we
15 think that that's a very good deal, especially
16 considering the coalition's track record with
17 schools in handling their fiscal issues.

18 One thing we note about charter schools in
19 general is that financial issues become -- that's
20 one of the things that can take down a school over
21 years. We really don't want that to happen. We see
22 Uplift School as being this long-lasting influence
23 on the community, and the founders decided that to
24 do this, to invest in a great fiscal plan and to
25 have people who know what they do doing it for us

1 and teaching us, too, how to do it properly is a
2 very good investment.

3 There is one other thing that directly
4 relates to your question, and that is the fact that
5 the coalition has multiple licensed business
6 managers, with one assigned particularly to your
7 school, but others available if that business
8 manager is not available. So you really have much
9 greater access to that personnel than you would if
10 you had hired somebody individually for your school.

11 MS. SHEARMAN: Okay. In that same vein, I
12 note in your budget teacher salaries don't increase
13 over the life of your five year budget and neither
14 do your principal salaries, none of them increase.
15 So you have a very ambitious academic plan, but you
16 are not going to reward your teachers additionally
17 year after year? You are not going to reward your
18 principals additionally year after year?

19 MR. HEIL: Well, rewarding teachers and
20 principals is not out of the question. However, in
21 this plan we thought at this time it would be good
22 to mimic the plans of other school districts, and
23 many teachers and principals are on pay freeze at
24 this moment and don't expect to get off of it any
25 time soon. So without being able to see what will

1 happen in the future of schools, we thought it might
2 be perfectly appropriate to plan for this at this
3 time and to, if things change, working with the
4 state agencies in order to adapt that sort of thing,
5 we might be able to make changes in the future. But
6 our purpose in submitting this budget is to show the
7 investment we are making in teachers with greater
8 salaries than for the surrounding district, anyway,
9 and also to show our capacity in learning how to --
10 in showing how to budget in that way.

11 MS. SHEARMAN: My last question, on your
12 budget spreadsheet itself, on lines 51 and 52, and I
13 believe it's property, fixed supplies and fixed
14 assets, \$5,000 or more, fixed assets more than
15 5,000. Years one, two, three and four, not much
16 there. Year five, \$99,194.53. What happens in year
17 five?

18 MR. HEIL: That's a good question,
19 Ms. Commissioner. I failed to print out that
20 appendix before me here, so I don't have that to
21 look at in responding to your question, but I would
22 like to try to respond to that in writing.

23 I might add also that adding an eighth
24 grade requires lot of new things, and I am just
25 trying to think back on how that worked without

1 having anything to look at, and I think it has to do
2 with expansion and also the increase in funding that
3 comes through operational funds with eighth graders,
4 and I would like to explain the rationale for that
5 in writing.

6 MS. SHEARMAN: Thank you.

7 That's all my questions.

8 MS. KRIVITZKY: Chairman.

9 CHAIR GARRISON: Yes.

10 MS. KRIVITZKY: I do have one question.

11 CHAIR GARRISON: One question?

12 MS. KRIVITZKY: Is that okay?

13 CHAIR GARRISON: I think so. Commissioner
14 Krivitzky.

15 MS. KRIVITZKY: I was just looking back
16 through my notes, and I think one of the things the
17 school district addressed was facilities and their
18 concern about safety of your students. Would you
19 mind addressing that, or do you want me to go over
20 it a little bit so you know what I am talking about?

21 MR. HEIL: I would appreciate any more
22 detail you can provide.

23 MS. KRIVITZKY: Yes. They were talking
24 about the trains. The trains are right near where
25 you are planning to have your facility. Is that an

1 issue or do you want to talk about it? Where was
2 your facility going to be? You said downtown.

3 MR. HEIL: Well, we chose a general area
4 in downtown Gallup, because of the minimal impact we
5 think it might have on the surrounding elementary
6 schools. We think parents really would like a
7 school that's close to their home, and we really
8 value students being able to get there independently
9 when they are old enough, walking or bicycle riding.
10 We feel students being independent in transportation
11 is an important part of their being -- I want to
12 say -- the opposite of disenfranchised -- help me on
13 that.

14 MS. KRIVITZKY: Empowered.

15 MR. HEIL: Empowered. Thank you very
16 much -- as citizens. We realize that downtown
17 Gallup is a pretty tight space. It's one of the
18 densest populations zones of our city, and that
19 there are trains going by a hundred a day at this
20 time and also an interstate highway, and also that
21 there are rules about how close a school may be to
22 any sort of major transportation through-way like
23 that.

24 I am vague on the details of those laws,
25 but the intention to put it downtown is based on

1 student needs, parent needs, family needs, and if
2 for some reason those needs are overcome or
3 challenged, compromised by other needs that are very
4 important that are represented by laws and that have
5 to do with the safety of the children, then we would
6 definitely change our strategy. But in our
7 facilities discussion, we presented a general
8 outline as to what we were looking for, and we might
9 be in a position to change that.

10 MS. KRIVITZKY: Okay. Thank you.

11 CHAIR GARRISON: Are there any other
12 questions?

13 Yes, sir.

14 MR. GANT: It's not really a question. It
15 goes back to what Commissioner Shearman was
16 addressing earlier, special needs students, special
17 education. When you send in the information that we
18 talked about earlier, since I don't see it on the
19 9108, the A, B, C, Ds, how they are broken down,
20 take the percentage of McKinley and find out how
21 many Gallup McKinley, what the percentages are and
22 what you expect they will be and let us know. Thank
23 you.

24 CHAIR GARRISON: The commission encourages
25 continued public input in writing until Thursday,

1 August 19th at 5:00 p.m. Written comments should be
2 sent to the Public Education Commission, Ms. Beverly
3 Friedman, 300 Don Gaspar Avenue, Santa Fe, New
4 Mexico 87501, or you can e-mail comments to Beverly
5 Friedman, bev.friedman@state.nm.us.

6 We also request that the applicant adhere
7 to the deadline and submit their written responses
8 to both the preliminary analysis and our questions
9 by e-mail to Ms. Friedman to ensure that they are
10 received on time for consideration in our
11 decision-making meeting on September 9, 2010.

12 I want to thank the community here in
13 Gallup and for the University of New Mexico campus
14 for hosting us this evening. We thank you for your
15 hospitality.

16 The commission will now adjourn this
17 meeting, and we are going to continue our traveling
18 show. We will be in Albuquerque tomorrow, and then
19 we are in Albuquerque and Espanola the next day, and
20 then into Santa Fe on Thursday for another PEC
21 meeting. Thank you.

22 Yes, ma'am.

23 MS. LUNDBERG: Could you write down that
24 information about where it can go. We have a public
25 service announcement on Thursday morning.

1 CHAIR GARRISON: Do we have extra copies
2 of that?

3 MR. OBENSHAIN: Are you asking for the
4 e-mail address?

5 MS. LUNDBERG: Where it's written, the
6 e-mails.

7 MR. OBENSHAIN: Come see me and I will get
8 that to you.

9 CHAIR GARRISON: And since the budget is
10 very, very cut back, this is my gavel and wedding
11 ring. Thank you.

12 (The hearing concluded at 7:32 p.m.)
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1 STATE OF NEW MEXICO)
2 COUNTY OF BERNALILLO)

3

4 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

5 I, Sally Peters, RPR, CCR #57, Certified
6 Court Reporter in the State of New Mexico, do hereby
7 certify that the foregoing pages constitute a true
8 transcript of proceedings had before the Public
9 Education Commission, held in the District of New
10 Mexico, in the matter therein stated.

11 In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set
12 my hand on August 16, 2010.

13

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