



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
300 DON GASPAR
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501-2786
Telephone (505) 827-5800
www.ped.state.nm.us

CHRISTOPHER N. RUSZKOWSKI
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

SUSANA MARTINEZ
GOVERNOR

2019 CSD Preliminary Analysis of Renewal Application and Site Visit

School Name: Southwest Aeronautics, Mathematics, and Science Academy (SAMS)
School Address: 4100 Aerospace Pkwy NW, Albuquerque, NM 87120
Head Administrator: Coreen Carrillo
Business Manager: Ronda Joyce
Authorized Grade Levels: 7-12
Authorized Enrollment: 500
Contract Term: July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2019

Mission: *“The mission of the Southwest Aeronautics, Mathematics and Science Academy is to prepare students in grades 7-12 in an integrative STEM 21st century educational environment which offers a unique option in aeronautics. Students will be competent in the reading, writing, mathematics, science, technology and problem solving skills necessary for success in post-secondary education, high-tech, or aviation related careers.”*

Part B (Progress Report) Evaluation
based on the rubric contained in the application

Chart 1, below, summarizes CSD’s ratings of the school’s renewal application and site visit:

Chart 1. Renewal Application Ratings by Indicator		
Section	Indicator	Final Rating
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE		
1.a	Department’s Standards of Excellence— A-F School Letter Grades	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
1.b	Specific Charter Goals	<i>Not applicable</i>
FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE		
2.a	Audit	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
2.b	Board of Finance	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
CONTRACTUAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND GOVERNANCE		
3.a	Material Terms	<i>Meets the Standard</i>
3.b	Organizational Performance Framework	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
3.c	Governance Responsibilities	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>

CSD Review of Part B (Progress Report) and Renewal Site Visit in October

The PED team reviewed the Part B (Progress Report) submitted by the school and conducted a renewal site visit on October 4, 2018. The following sections provide additional analyses supporting the ratings summarized in Chart 1, above.

Academic Performance

1a) Schools that maintain a C or better letter grade over the term of the contract and have not received a D or F in any indicator of the letter grade are rated as “meets the standard”. Southwest Aeronautics, Math, and Science Academy (SAMS) has earned a letter grade of C during the first year of the current two-year contract term. However, two indicators received grades of D (Current Standing and School Improvement) and one indicator received a grade of F (Improvement of Lowest-Performing Students.) To address these concerns, the school has hired an assistant principal to assist with data studies and analyses. With his help, the school has implemented new systems including academic absences, parent conferences, PLCs grouped by grade level, Sponsor teachers, iReady, a Success Lab, intervention software, NM DASH plan and participation in Principals Pursuing Excellence. The CSD team has rated this indicator as “**demonstrates substantial progress**” due to the implementation of policies and procedures intended to improve student achievement.

1b) Schools that meet or exceed their specific charter school goals each year of the contract term are rated as “meets standard”. The CSD Team has rated this indicator as “**not applicable**” because the school did not have any mission-specific goals for this charter term.

Financial Compliance

2a) Schools that have received no material weakness, significant deficiency, or repeat audit findings in each of the annual audits are rated as “meets standard”. Since SAMS received two repeated significant deficiencies (cash disbursements and payroll) in 2017 and the school has implemented new policies to address the issues, the CSD team has rated this indicator as “**demonstrates substantial progress**”.

2b) The school’s Board of Finance was suspended in 2014 and the school was placed under financial corrective action. In 2015, the school hired an on-site business manager that works closely with the Vigil Group, and the Finance Committee has been meeting monthly. Finances at SAMS have improved such that the Public Education Department returned the school’s financial authority in January, 2018. The CSD team has rated this indicator as “**demonstrates substantial progress**” due to the efforts the school has made and the actions taken to have the Board of Finance reinstated.

Contractual, Organizational, and Governance

3a) The CSD team has rated this indicator as “**meets the standard**” because the school has implemented the Material Terms of the Charter including the operational structure, the mission of the school, and the educational program of the school (including student-focused terms, teacher-focused terms, and parent-focused terms).

3b) The CSD team has rated this indicator as “**demonstrates substantial progress**” because the school received four (4) “working to meet” and two (2) “falls far below” ratings in 2018. The areas of concern are: (1) Next Step Plans; (2) annual notification regarding English Language Learners; (3) attendance /

truancy letters, (4) recurrent enrollment at 79.81%; and (4) repeat audit findings. The school has addressed all of the concerns by providing evidence that each item was resolved.

3c) In order to achieve a “meets standard” the school’s Governing Body must have at least five members at all times, must maintain audit and finance committees, and must complete all required annual training hours and topics. The CSD team has rated this indicator as “**demonstrates substantial progress**” due to the fact that two members of the SAMS Governing Council did not complete all required training hours in 2018. One of those members did attend a “remedial training” offered by NMCCS in August 2018. This training was not approved for credit toward the mandatory hours, however, does demonstrate an attempt by that board member to rectify the problem. The school has six members currently seated, has not had any vacancies nor fallen below five members, and meets the audit and finance committee requirements.

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews were conducted on October 4, 2018 at Southwest Aeronautics, Mathematics, and Science Academy. The participants included five (5) parents, fourteen (14) students, three (3) Governing Council members, and seven (7) staff members.

Of the three Governing Council members, two became involved because their children were students at the school (one is now graduated and has his flight certificate and the other is currently enrolled). The third member works in civil airspace aviation and thought he could add his aeronautics experience to the board. The board members stated that they talk about academics at the board meetings. They mentioned that they hope that the staff is going to improve the school grade and that they are very supportive of the new Support Lab. When asked about the evaluation of the Head Administrator, they explained that they evaluate on a regular basis and provide feedback but that the formal evaluation is completed in February or March, using a rubric. The members also confirmed that the Finance Committee meets once per month.

The students represented a wide range of grades and length of time at the school. When asked why they chose to attend this school and what they liked about the school, the most common response was that the schools in the local district are not good schools and that they were attracted to the flight program and/or the flexibility of the school. The students further described the school culture as “*a very close knit group*”, “*everyone wanting to help each other out*”, “*a lot less intimidating*” [than larger traditional public schools], and that “*you can get the help you need and at the pace you need to.*” When asked if there was anything that they would change about the school, the students candidly shared a few things. The first was that the school seems overly strict this year (with complete silence in the lab, staying in seat at all times) which several admitted was due to the fact that things were too lenient in the past and kids were not focusing on their work. A second item was that the teachers are not as willing to spend time with each student when they need help and seem to be rushing, rather than making sure students fully understand.

Several parents mentioned that they like that students can work at their own pace and at the way they learn. They also appreciate that they can work at home, particularly if sick or other extenuating circumstances. At least two parents stressed that “*it is worth the drive*”, even from the east mountains, and others said that their students enjoying going to school and want to be there. Parents also stated that they like being able to monitor their child’s progress online and described the online platform. Communication was described as weekly emails and the online portal access. When asked about

scheduled parent conferences, one parent (who is also a teacher at the school) responded that *"We're trying to have more conferences with everyone and not just the students who aren't doing well."*

The staff members have been working at the school from one to four years, plus one person who has been employed there since the school first opened. When asked what they liked about working at the school, the positive environment was mentioned and that they *"have great kids here"* and *"the students are very supportive of each other"*. When asked what they do to support academically struggling students, the teachers listed several items: the new Success Lab for more individualized, focused attention, setting accommodations and individualization in the online Edgenuity courses, providing options, and student mentors. The teachers who work in the Success Lab are seeing *"exciting improvement"* and that the class has one hour of direct instruction and one hour of online Edgenuity work with teacher support during that assigned class time.

[Please see sections of the renewal application package for additional details, as follows:](#)

Part A: Data Report and Current Charter Contract Performance

SECTION 1. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES

SECTION 2. FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE

SECTION 3. CONTRACTUAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Part B: Progress Report

Part C: Financial Statement

Part D: Petitions of Support

Part E: Description of Charter School Facilities and Assurances

Part F: Amendments and Amendment Requests