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2019 CSD Preliminary Analysis of Renewal Application and Site Visit

School Name: School of Dreams Academy
School Address: 1800 Main St NE Ste 250 Los Lunas, NM 87031
Head Administrator: Mike Ogas
Business Manager: Geri Bennett
Authorized Grade Levels: 7-12
Authorized Enrollment: 525
Contract Term: July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2019
Mission: *“The Mission of the School of Dreams Academy is to graduate students of the Rio Grande Valley who embrace an education that emphasizes Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) while focusing on developing well-rounded individuals with good character ready for post-secondary success.” (Contract, p. 35)*

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 Letter Grades	<i>Failing to Demonstrate Substantial Progress</i>
1.b	Specific Charter Goals	<i>Failing to Demonstrate Substantial Progress</i>
FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE		
2.a	Audit	<i>Failing to Demonstrate Substantial Progress</i>
2.b	Board of Finance	<i>Meets the Standard</i>
CONTRACTUAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND GOVERNANCE		
3.a	Material Terms	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
3.b	Organizational Performance Framework	<i>Failing to Demonstrate 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 10, 2018. The following sections provide additional analyses supporting the ratings summarized in Chart 1, above.

Academic Performance

1a) School of Dreams Academy has earned D, C, B, and C consecutively on the Overall School Grade during the current contract term, as well as Ds on the graduation indicator and an F on the Q1 indicator on the A-F school grade report card. The CSD team has rated this indicator as **“failing to demonstrate progress”** because the school has implemented most improvement actions only during the current year (2018-2019) and no evidence of success has been demonstrated. The school did provide the following details regarding improvement actions, which were verified at the site visit:

- 2014-2015 Overall Report Card Rating (D)
 - Created essential learning standards
 - Hired outside analytical help
 - Provided NWEA Training
 - Implemented Summer School
- 2016-2017 graduation and 2017-2018 graduation indicator (D)
 - Hired a full-time school counselor for the secondary school
 - Hired a full-time school counselor for the elementary side.
 - Held senior meetings at the beginning of the school year to make sure that all the information a student needs to graduate is available to them and their parents
 - Hosted a senior information session evening meeting for seniors and their parents with important information about graduation and scheduling senior meetings
 - Provided a monitored computer lab where students are assigned to complete Edgenuity credit recovery courses
 - Implemented a block schedule that increased the amount of course offerings per school year from six to eight to help ensure that students get all the credits they need to graduate on time and also allowed teachers to expand their course offerings to include intervention classes for the lowest performing students in math and reading.
 - Renewed the contract with Edgenuity in the 2017-2018 school year and key staff attended an Edgenuity re-training.
 - Purchased iStation licenses and placed students with the lowest reading scores into iStation intervention courses to build their reading skills (in addition to their regular grade-level English classes)
 - One staff member has been assigned to work on transition IEP plans part-time to help students with IEPs make and keep plans for graduating on time
 - Hired a full-time test coordinator to ensure that testing was performed appropriately and audited for feedback to teachers and students
- 2017-2018 Performance of Lowest Performing Students F
 - Implemented a block schedule which allowed for 8 classes per year, instead of 6
 - Adopted programs designed to provide targeted, individualized instructional interventions in areas identified by standardized testing and or classroom performance including iStation, MobyMax, Khann Academy, and Edgenuity Supplemental
 - Hired two Special Education teachers (one for elementary and one for secondary)

1b) Schools that meet or exceed their specific charter school goals each year of the contract term are rated as “meets the standard”. Since the school has not met one of the goals in any year of the contract

term, the CSD has rated this indicator as **“failing to demonstrate progress”**. The first goal was to make one year’s worth of growth on NWEA and the school has not been met this goal during the current contract term. The school questions the validity of using NWEA assessments for secondary school students and indicated in their Progress Report that even though this goal is not being met, the school is improving PARCC and SBA scores. The second goal, College and Career Readiness (C&CR), was met/exceeded in 2016 and 2018. The third goal regarding Graduation Rate for Cohorts did improve in 2018 (“exceeded”) from 2017 (“falls far below”). The school also refers to hiring a consultant this year to develop a system to track data related to material terms but the effectiveness of this support cannot yet be evaluated.

Financial Compliance

2a) A “meets the standard” rating is provided to schools who have received no material weakness, significant deficiency, or repeat audit findings in each of the annual audits during the term of the contract. The CSD team has rated this indicator as **“failing to demonstrate progress”** because School of Dreams Academy has continued to receive audit findings each year, with a dramatic increase in the number of findings received in FY17. In FY15, there were four (4) findings, one of which was a repeat. In FY16, there were two (2) findings. In FY17, there were 10 audit findings, including two (2) repeat and one (1) material weakness.

2b) The CSD team has rated this indicator as **“meets the standard”** because the school has maintained all Board of Finance authority during the entire term of the contract.

Contractual, Organizational, and Governance

3a) The CSD team has rated this indicator as **“demonstrates substantial progress”** 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). The school did not provide academic evidence it is implementing the material terms of its contract [NMSA § 22-8B-9.1] resulting in a “falls far below” rating in 2016-2017, which the school raised to “meets standard” in 2017-2018.

3b) The CSD team has rated this indicator as **“failing to demonstrate progress”** because the school received 11 “falls far below” ratings in 2016-2017 and nine (9) “falls far below” and two (2) “working to meet” ratings in 2017-2018. The school did not respond in the 30-day window following the release of the annual site visit reports each year and, in several instances, only began addressing the concerns during the current (2018-2019) school year.

The concerns identified that have been resolved include:

- Students with Disabilities: The school did not provide evidence of compliance with the Corrective Action Plan instituted by the Special Education Bureau. However, the matter was resolved and a formal letter was received on October 16, 2017. The details of the Corrective Action Plan and the school’s response are described by the school in Part B.
- A compliant mentorship program for novice teachers [6.60.10.8 NMAC] has now been implemented. The PED team observed a formal mentorship process and handbook that appeared to align with statute, in which expectations and monthly objectives were clear for both the mentor and mentee.
- RtI/SAT Process: The school did not provide evidence of implementation of an RtI/SAT process for its students [6.29.1.9 NMAC]. The school has responded with a new secondary SAT chair, training for staff, and monthly staff meetings this academic year (2018-2019).

The concerns identified that have not been resolved include:

- McKinney-Vento Dispute Resolution Policy: The school did not provide evidence of a dispute resolution policy, approved by the governing board [6.10.3.9(D)(2) NMAC]. At the time of application, this policy had still not been adopted.
- English Language Learners: The school did not provide evidence of implementation of the Bilingual Multicultural Education Bureau annual progress report for the school's state-funded program. The school also did not provide evidence of the proper use of the Language Usage Survey [6.29.5.11 NMAC] and, despite identifying concerns at the 2017-2018 site visit, the CSD team discovered that the regulations for properly identifying and assessing English language learners were still not being followed at the renewal site visit in October 2018.
- Evaluation of head administrator: The school did not provide evidence that the governing council evaluated the head administrator annually [6.29.1.9.B.2 NMAC]. At the renewal site visit in October, the CSD team observed a partially-completed evaluation for 2016-2017 and none for 2017-2018.
- Staff Files: The school did not provide evidence that all instructors had proper licensure and endorsement(s) for course(s) taught [NMSA§ 22-10A-3]. At the renewal site visit in October, there was one (1) file that was missing the NMPED License Certificate and ten (10) that were missing official transcripts. In addition, a repeat concern was noted with one staff member being paid as a Level 2 on the salary schedule even though she only possesses a Level 1 NMPED License.
- Background checks: The school did not provide evidence of completed background checks for all licensed staff [NMSA § 22-10A-5]. At the renewal site visit, there was one (1) staff member who did not have a background check in the file.
- Health and safety: The school did not provide evidence of child abuse and neglect detection training for all licensed staff [NMSA § 22-10A-32; 6.29.1.9(D)(3)(f) NMAC]. At the renewal site visit, there were four (4) staff members who had no evidence of completing the mandatory child abuse reporting training.
- Financial reporting: The school did not provide evidence of implementation of remedies that resulted in compliance or sufficient movement toward compliance for the school's internal control audit findings.

3c) The CSD team has rated this indicator as “**demonstrates substantial progress**” because the Governing Council has maintained a minimum membership of five (5) throughout the contract term, with the current board members having served two or more years. However, two Governing board member did not complete the required training in 2017-2018. In 2016-2017, five members completed the training and in 2015-2016, no training was reported by the school. The school and Governing Board are aware of the mandatory training requirements and the school indicated that *“Both are dedicated governing council members and have committed to resolving this issue within this next school year.”*

Stakeholder Interviews

As part of the school's renewal site visit, stakeholder interviews were conducted on October 10, 2018 at School of Dreams Academy. The participants included two (2) Governing Council members, eleven (11) students, eight (8) parents, and seven (7) staff members. The following provides some additional context regarding the school from various perspectives.

The Governing Board members expressed that the school caters to those students who do not always fit into the same box and is really invested in the kids. Regarding academic performance, the response was *“If you get a base score from when these kids come in, you see improvement.”* In response to a question

about the school's decision to hire a consultant to collect data related to the material terms as an improvement action, the Governing Board members said that the school "*has had lapses in getting data together*" and that the Head Administrator "*has hired Kim Johnson to set up the system.*" It was unclear what data would be collected, how it would be used, and how this would help improve the school. Finally, the board members were questioned about completing the required trainings and it was confirmed that the Board President received the email notifications. The board members expressed concerns about having to travel long distances to attend trainings, asked if those who have been in education or serving on a Governing Board for a while could have a reduced number of required hours, and wanted to know why they are not getting credit for financial trainings provided by NMASBO.

The students primarily stressed that they attend the school because the traditional public schools did not offer what they wanted. The small school size, dual credit program, dance/arts, and STEAM were specifically mentioned.

The parents also listed small class sizes, welcoming environment, and challenges in traditional public schools as reasons for choosing this school for the students. Several mentioned that their children have improved or excelled at this school.

The staff are most pleased with the sense of community and the comradery that exists among the employees. Other highlights include structure that allows students to have options, parent-teacher collaboration, hard-working colleagues, support from fellow teachers, and focus on the students as individuals. When asked about struggling students, the teachers described the intervention program, iStation, and using NWEA MAP data, along with Khan Academy as added supports.

[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

Appendices of additional documentation from the school, if any