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2019 CSD Preliminary Analysis of Renewal Application and Site Visit

School Name: Southwest Preparatory Learning Center (SPLC)
School Address: 10301 Candelaria Road NE, Albuquerque, NM 87112
Head Administrator: Robert Pasztor
Business Manager: Rebekah Mahape
Authorized Grade Levels: 4-6
Authorized Enrollment: 500
Contract Term: July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2019
Mission: *“The mission of the Southwest Preparatory Learning Center is to sustain a high-performing learning community.”*

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>Meets the Standard</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 9, 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”. The CSD team has rated this indicator as “**demonstrates substantial progress**”. Southwest Preparatory Learning Center (SPLC) has earned a letter grade of B during the first year of the current two-year contract term. However, the school did receive a grade of D for both Current Standing and Improvement of Lowest Performing Student (Q1) in 2018. In response, the school changed the half-time teacher of special education to a full-time position, added a full-time Special Education Educational Assistant, and is using ten (10) UNM work-study students as tutors this year.

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 renewal period.

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”. The CSD team has rated this indicator as “**demonstrates substantial progress**” because while SPLC received one repeated significant deficiency related to payroll in 2017, the school has since drafted new policies to address the issue.

2b) The CSD team has rated this indicator as “**demonstrates substantial progress**” because SPLC’s Board of Finance was returned to the school from the NM Public Education Department on January 1, 2018. The school also hired an on-site business manager in January 2017 and contracts the Vigil Group as well.

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 4 “working to meet” and 2 “falls far below” ratings in 2018. The areas of concern are: (1) Special Education IEPs, (2) identifying and servicing English Language Learners, (3) recurrent enrollment (72.82%), (4) repeat audit finding, (5) significant deficiency audit finding, and (6) School Safety Plan. The school has addressed all of the concerns.

3c) The CSD team has rated this indicator as “**meets standard**” due to the fact that the SPLC Governing Council has maintained membership of five (5) throughout the renewal period and all members completed their annual training in 2017-2018.

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews were conducted on October 9, 2018 at Southwest Preparatory Learning Center. The participants included two (2) parents, sixteen (16) students, one (1) Governing Board member, and five (5) staff members.

Both parents expressed their concern for their children to have a quality education. One listed personable staff, safe environment, no tolerance for bullying, and the hands-on SMART Lab as what he likes about the school. The other stated that his student is supposed to attend a school in APS that *"is not a good school"*. After looking at a few charter school options, he chose this school because his student was impressed during the tour, is interested in computers and aviation and *"this school offers things that APS couldn't, in their wildest dreams, offer"*.

The sixteen (16) students who were interviewed represented grades 4 – 8 and have been attending the school for a range of years (1 – 4). Common themes for choosing to attend this school were that it is more challenging and that family members recommended the school. One mentioned that she gets excellent support from her special education teacher, another that she is understanding math better since coming to this school, and another that *"there is less drama here"* [than at the traditional public schools she attended previously]. When asked what they liked about the school, the unanimous answer was that teachers are kind and supportive: *"teachers are much nicer," "the school supports you more," "teachers are nice and they make you get involved," "teachers get to know you more and make it to where you aren't afraid to ask for help," "it's smaller and you feel more comfortable in the environment," "more one-on-one time with the teachers."* If they could change anything, it would be to add more sports.

The Governing Council member serves on the board because his son attends the school and he was invited to join. When asked about the academic performance of the school, he stated that *"we're doing well overall with some areas that need improvement."*

The four staff members interviewed were all teachers who have worked at the school for 2-5 years, with one having been there since the school opened. Two of the teachers had children who attended the school. Teachers were strong supporters of the school and its benefits, describing the school as *"a phenomenal place," "a small community focused on students and improvement,"* and that the staff collaborates well and receives excellent support from administration. They also described the monthly community-based activities and the strong parental support.

[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