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BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
PUBLIC INPUT MEETING
ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES ACADEMY
August 22, 2012

4:00 p.m.

Frank O'Brien Papen Community Center
Las Cruces, New Mexico

REPORTED BY: Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219
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A P P E A R A N C E S

COMMISSIONERS:

MR. M. ANDREW GARRISON, Chair
MS. CAROLYN SHEARMAN, Vice Chair
MR. EUGENE GANT, Secretary
MS. CARLA LOPEZ
MR. VINCE BERGMAN
MR. GILBERT PERALTA

STAFF:

MS. KELLY CALLAHAN, Director, Charter School Division
MS. CORDELIA CHAVEZ
MR. BRAD RICHARDSON
MS. SHELLY CHERRIN
MS. RACHEL STOFICK

1 THE CHAIR: Good afternoon, everyone. The
2 Public Education Commission community input meeting,
3 August 20th to 24th, 2012, is back in session. This
4 meeting is being conducted pursuant to New Mexico
5 Statutes Annotated, Title 22, Section 8B-6J, 2009.
6 The purpose of these community input hearings that
7 will be held from August 20 through August 24, 2012,
8 is to obtain information from the applicant and to
9 receive community input to assist the Public
10 Education Commission in its decision whether to
11 grant the proposed charter applications.

12 According to this section of the law, the
13 Commission may appoint a subcommittee of no fewer
14 than three members to hold a public hearing.
15 According to law, these hearings are being
16 transcribed by a professional court reporter. The
17 total time allocated to each applicant is 90
18 minutes, which will be timed to insure an equitable
19 opportunity to present applications.

20 During the hearing, the Commission will
21 allow for community input about the charter
22 application. The time for public comment will be
23 limited to 20 minutes. If you wish to speak on
24 behalf of the applicant, please sign in at least
25 15 minutes before the applicant's presentation.

1 And I see that a couple of folks arrived
2 just now. I have the sheet up here. So if you're
3 part of the local school district we have five
4 minutes for you, anyway. So you have a set time
5 separate from the comments, and you'll hear this
6 again.

7 Please be sure that you indicate on the
8 sign-up sheet whether you are here in opposition or
9 support of the charter school. The Commission
10 Chair, based on the number of requests to comment,
11 will allocate time to those wishing to speak. If
12 there are a large number of supporters or opponents,
13 they are asked to select a speaker to represent
14 common opinions. We will try to allocate an
15 equitable amount of time to represent the community
16 accurately.

17 The Commission will follow this process
18 for each community input hearing: The Commission
19 will ask each applicant or group to present here in
20 front. They will be given 20 minutes to present
21 their application in the manner they deem
22 appropriate. The Commission will not accept any
23 written documentation from the applicant, but the
24 applicant may use exhibits to describe their school,
25 if necessary.

1 Following the applicant's presentation,
2 the local school district representative or
3 representatives will be given five minutes to
4 comment on the proposed application. Subsequently,
5 the Commission will allow 20 minutes for public
6 comment, as I have described.

7 And, finally, the Commission will be given
8 45 minutes to ask questions of the applicant.

9 I'd like to ask Secretary Gant if you
10 would take roll call, please.

11 COMMISSIONER GANT: Commissioner Peralta.

12 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Here.

13 COMMISSIONER GANT: Commissioner Bergman.

14 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Here.

15 COMMISSIONER GANT: Commissioner Shearman.

16 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Here.

17 COMMISSIONER GANT: Commissioner Lopez.

18 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Here.

19 COMMISSIONER GANT: Commissioner Garrison.

20 THE CHAIR: Here.

21 COMMISSIONER GANT: Commissioner Gant.

22 You have a quorum.

23 THE CHAIR: Thank you, sir. Academic
24 Opportunities Academy.

25 For the record, please state the name of

1 your school, the names of the founders of the
2 school, and, of course, your name and title.

3 MR. CASAVANTES: Academic Opportunities
4 Academy. My name is Mark Casavantes. I'm a
5 founder. My last name is spelled
6 C-A-S-A-V-A-N-T-E-S. Was there another item?

7 THE CHAIR: Name of the school. Got it.
8 Name of the founders of the school.

9 MR. CASAVANTES: Oh. Wes Clarkson. He's
10 still a founder of the school and still involved.
11 The thing is he moved up to work at McCurdy School,
12 the charter school up there. And he has bad knees
13 and hips that are due for replacement. And I guess,
14 in doing his move, he was not able to come down
15 here.

16 THE CHAIR: So when -- when did he start
17 doing work for McCurdy?

18 MR. CASAVANTES: This school year. He
19 just -- has been in the process of moving. And I
20 think he just completed it maybe a week -- a few
21 weeks ago, I think.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you for that
23 information. You will have 20 minutes to present
24 information about your application, and you may
25 begin, sir.

1 MR. CASAVANTES: Okay. Well, I want to
2 start with that the last meeting was very
3 educational to me, okay? And I was -- I've been
4 processing what was told to me the last -- the last
5 meeting. And I am trying to see if the errors in my
6 plan are fatal or not. That is the question that
7 I'm asking myself.

8 I sought solutions to problems in
9 education, and I think that you all saw that that
10 was my intention in trying to -- in the writing of
11 this application, and that I -- that we wrote a
12 creative plan, and I thought it would address the
13 needs of the students in New Mexico.

14 And I'm just going to summarize some of
15 the errors. I think the errors in the plan, the
16 budget, were some numbers did not coincide. The
17 problem with tutors versus educational aides and to
18 adjust the staff and budget on those items, and the
19 community advisory group's role in governing -- or
20 what their role is in the school. Community
21 involvement in the various communities, partnership
22 agreements and getting partner -- those agreements
23 in writing. The selection of board members.

24 And then I guess the -- maybe the
25 arrangement between the Texas entity and the

1 New Mexico entity, and that our goal would be to set
2 it up similar to the way the other school in
3 Las Cruces is doing it with a partnership.

4 Anyway, our plan is to have a main
5 educational space with a principal leader in the
6 center that is observing and guiding how the
7 students and staff is working, and making the
8 adjustments, providing corrections and so forth.
9 It's a dynamic system. But it is geared for
10 providing what each individual student needs at any
11 given time. And it is a self-paced, individualized
12 program based on how -- what they know and don't, to
13 find their educational gaps, to fill those gaps, to
14 find the next things that they need to learn in the
15 scope and sequence, to -- and that the students have
16 a choice in what they are able to work on.

17 Because the interests of, let's say, boys
18 and girls are different. The people with different
19 learning styles have different -- learn better under
20 different situations. And so we want to provide
21 those opportunities. And that we are using a
22 curriculum mapping and database software that has
23 some algorithms that select -- "You had -- you had
24 errors here. You're going to get a choice of these
25 assignments." And the students get to work on these

1 assignments on an individualized basis with some
2 guidance.

3 And if they need -- and that we provide
4 the different levels of guidance. Might be just,
5 like I say, tutorial-type advice and guidance. And
6 some students might need a lot more standards. In
7 fact, we are thinking of having the tutors -- you
8 know, close the gaps -- to have a tutor assigned to,
9 let's say, the bottom 5 percent, another tutor
10 assigned to the bottom 25 percent, and another tutor
11 working on the 25 to 50 percent, to narrow -- and
12 that they work with only those students in trying to
13 narrow the gap.

14 And that a class will only have -- one of
15 the things in the regular classroom is that
16 students -- there are students in the classroom that
17 don't need the instruction. They already know the
18 material, and they're listening to it again and
19 again. And then there's others that it's over their
20 head. And then there is a group that it is
21 appropriate for them.

22 And the thing is that what we're trying to
23 do is have the group that's in this classroom be
24 needing the same instruction, so that you're wasting
25 nobody's time and being efficient with your staff so

1 that you get the most productivity in learning in a
2 school year.

3 And I've also thought that some of the
4 tutors might be, let us say, at a tutor station,
5 where students go up there if they had a question.
6 So depending on the situation, those that need to be
7 kind of checked have tutors going to those students
8 and monitoring and checking to see if they're making
9 the progress; other students that can individually
10 go up to a tutor and get help and so forth. And the
11 plan was to -- is, like I said, to try to solve some
12 of these problems that we have in education and to
13 be efficient and effective.

14 And, then, some of the other components is
15 a lot of students are disillusioned with the
16 educational system. They -- they don't see that
17 they can get a very good-paying job upon graduation.
18 And so we have attempted to solve that problem
19 through a dual-credit program in nursing and
20 computer programming. And -- and that if we have a
21 student that starts by the sixth gr- -- oh. But one
22 of the things I think you had the question about
23 what happens.

24 Below the sixth grade, our plan is that
25 they kind of are doing -- are going to have

1 integration of both subjects. And they don't make a
2 choice until the sixth grade. The sixth grade, they
3 make a choice based on if they're going to go on the
4 nursing route, or they're going to go for computer
5 science -- computer programming. And we picked
6 those areas because those are areas where we believe
7 that, when a student graduates, that we could get
8 them appropriate -- an appropriate job that they
9 would be self-sustaining.

10 And -- and so that's -- that's one of the
11 goals that we're trying to solve. And I think that
12 if you -- if a student sees that there's opportunity
13 for good employment upon graduation, they will --
14 they would be interested in staying in school,
15 attending school, because they see that there's a
16 reason for attending. And I think I basic- -- that
17 basically presents our plan.

18 THE CHAIR: Thank you, sir.

19 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir.

20 THE CHAIR: I ask that you yield the table
21 briefly for the local school district. We have
22 Superintendent Stan Rounds and Dr. Steven Sanchez.
23 Good afternoon, gentlemen.

24 MR. ROUNDS: Good afternoon.

25 THE CHAIR: For the record, state your

1 name and the role you play at the local school
2 district. And you will have five minutes to comment
3 about the application for the Academic Opportunities
4 Academy.

5 MR. ROUNDS: Very good. Thank you so
6 much, and good afternoon. I'm Stan Rounds. I'm
7 Superintendent of Schools here in Las Cruces. With
8 me today is Associate Superintendent Steven Sanchez,
9 Dr. Steven Sanchez, who's the Associate
10 Superintendent for Teaching, Learning, and Research.
11 Dr. Sanchez will give you some highlights within a
12 document we will submit to you, both today and then
13 by e-mail, so you'll have it for the record about
14 our objections.

15 THE CHAIR: We won't accept any written
16 documentation today. But surely, you have the time
17 line to turn in the written work to our office.

18 MR. ROUNDS: Very good. I misunderstood
19 that. Thank you so much. Basically, the District
20 stands in opposition to this. As we look at the
21 charter school laws on the books, the charter school
22 law requires several things, including high rigor,
23 high relevance, a requirement that what is brought
24 before you is differentiated from what the school
25 district is able to offer and afford our children.

1 And Dr. Sanchez will talk about the issues we have
2 with this particular application, if I may.

3 THE CHAIR: Thank you, sir.

4 DR. SANCHEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
5 members of the Commission. Very briefly, the school
6 proposes to develop an individualized prescription
7 for students not meeting appropriate benchmarks to
8 insure that students pass the State assessments,
9 although no details are really provided how this
10 will be accomplished in the application.

11 They've established an attendance marker
12 of 99.5 percent and note that parents will sign
13 attendance contracts. The contract -- contacted
14 regularly by school personnel, and that continued
15 unexcused absences will result in the removal of the
16 student from the charter school and removing them to
17 the public school setting. Perhaps this is the most
18 troubling comment made in the proposal.

19 The school -- the application identifies
20 four -- four focus areas by grade level that are
21 common to the school programs already in existence
22 in Las Cruces Public Schools; for example, music in
23 the lower grades, dual language, career academies,
24 with little detail on how the proposed instructional
25 model is different from what is already offered to

1 students in Las Cruces; and notably, that ELL
2 students may be placed on a modified graduation plan
3 that may not be as rigorous as the one proposed for
4 other students.

5 This is identified on Page 23, and perhaps
6 only meets minimum State requirements; whereas,
7 other students will be required to meet much higher
8 standards.

9 Tutors working with certified teachers --
10 the application identifies two per teacher -- will
11 provide direct instruction to students in meeting
12 the goals outlined in their individualized plan.
13 And little detail, including research data or past
14 performance data, is provided as to why this
15 approach is an answer to reversing the achievement
16 gap and engaging high expectations for student
17 achievement on the NMSBA, as proposed.

18 There is documentation -- has
19 documenta- -- documented the experience of the
20 founders with impressive credentials. And I was
21 impressed with their credentials; yet there is no
22 mention of success, student achievement data in
23 achieving the goals, as articulated in this proposal
24 as part of that narrative.

25 Another thing that we noted is replacing

1 board membership from nominations of existing board
2 members, not allowing parents or other community
3 members to serve on the board, perhaps. This
4 appears to be somewhat contradictory to the
5 community inclusiveness addressed in prior sections
6 of the application.

7 The application, on Page 50, notes that
8 enrollment will be based on the size of the building
9 to be leased. While the founders mention that they
10 have engaged in a community study of available
11 properties, there is no discussion of whether
12 available properties meet all applicable occupancy
13 standards, as required by the State of New Mexico,
14 that can potentially house the charter school.

15 The Commission should explore this issue
16 in depth, as another charter school in our community
17 is experiencing great difficulty in finding suitable
18 quarters to house their school.

19 They also talk about establishing a high
20 school program; yet there is no discussion of State
21 and Federal requirements to employ highly-qualified
22 teachers in the various subject areas proposed. The
23 application notes seven teachers from Grades 1
24 through 12, complemented by tutors in various
25 subject areas; no mention of qualified elementary

1 teachers; market availability for multiply-certified
2 secondary teachers teaching in the elementary
3 setting; one ESL teacher, when the proposal notes
4 that all students will be placed in the
5 dual-language program that prepares students to be
6 proficient in three languages.

7 The proposal notes that it will serve all
8 segments of our diverse community; yet proposes to
9 not provide transportation. Personally, this was a
10 little troubling to me. This calls into question
11 how this limits the population to be served, since
12 many parents in impoverished areas are not able to
13 transport their students across the city based on
14 the location of the school, once it's established.

15 Cost-cutting measures, identified in the
16 proposal on Page 59, during start-up are troubling
17 and need to be further explored by the Commission to
18 insure that the school has the capacity to open its
19 doors and meet the learning expectations identified
20 in the charter application. And, lastly, the
21 proposal asks the founders --

22 MS. CHAVEZ: Mr. Chairman, time is up.

23 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much,
24 Superintendent Rounds and Dr. Sanchez. We
25 appreciate your attendance today, and I assure you

1 we will read the rest of that when it gets turned
2 in.

3 MR. ROUNDS: Thank you, sir.

4 THE CHAIR: So if that seemed aggressive,
5 she's been on the time clock all day long. She's
6 put me in time-out twice. So I don't know what to
7 do with Cordy.

8 MR. ROUNDS: That's fine.

9 THE CHAIR: Just obey her; that's what
10 I've decided.

11 MS. CALLAHAN: That's always wise.

12 THE CHAIR: We will now hear public
13 comment from the community of Las Cruces. And the
14 first name I have is Tita Brewster -- or Tita?

15 MS. BREWSTER: Yes, correct.

16 THE CHAIR: Okay. So you will have -- I'm
17 going to give four minutes for each individual
18 speaker to comment on the application. Good
19 afternoon.

20 MS. BREWSTER: Good afternoon. Thank you
21 very much for -- for allowing me to speak today.

22 I've known Mark Casavantes for over
23 40 years. And throughout this time, I found him to
24 be extremely intelligent and creative. And I know
25 what he's trying to do is in the best interests of

1 our children.

2 My family has been here in the Mesilla
3 Valley for over five generations, and I know that,
4 without pointing fingers, everyone here will admit
5 that there are some discrepancies in how our
6 children are learning, how they're able to learn.
7 And they all need individual -- because of the way
8 evolution is in teaching and learning, I think that
9 someone with a creative idea to help those children
10 who otherwise might not get help is -- it's a --
11 it's a no-brainer. It's something that we should do
12 and look at.

13 And Mark mentioned -- I heard a few
14 minutes ago about his application perhaps having
15 some flaws. Hopefully, they're not fatal flaws.
16 Hopefully, they can work -- he can work within the
17 community to meet the requirements that will be
18 necessary. Some comes from lack of information.
19 But I'm sure, and I hope, that you will listen and
20 help put this together to where this will accomplish
21 the needs of the most important people around here,
22 and that -- those are the needs of our children.

23 And thank you again for your help. But
24 please see what we can do about meeting the needs of
25 everyone and help us meet the requirements. I have

1 offered to work on Mark's board. I've worked on
2 several boards locally: Jardín de los Niños; Big
3 Brothers and Big Sisters. Our son is 43 years old
4 now, so I have the time, and I retired. So let's
5 see what we can do to help out. Thank you all for
6 all the hard work that you do. Thank you.

7 THE CHAIR: Thank you for your comments.
8 Bonnie Burn. Good afternoon.

9 MS. BURN: Good afternoon. I'm sorry I'm
10 not as well prepared as Mr. Rounds and Dr. Sanchez.
11 But I believe, on the bit of information I heard
12 here, that the concerns about the charter school
13 that I came with may have been reinforced.

14 I am very concerned about charter schools
15 and the for-profit goals that they have. I'm
16 concerned also about the students that will be
17 admitted. And I'm concerned that, in this school
18 district in the last two years, we have had at least
19 two new charter schools: The American School
20 [verbatim], which is supposed to be teaching
21 English, which I think the public schools does very
22 well.

23 We've just completed a study in 2011, and
24 the literature search that we did demonstrated that
25 sometimes there are significant gains for the

1 children; but other times, the charter school
2 results are the same as the public schools. So
3 whether or not we have another public charter
4 school, I don't know that it's going to make a great
5 deal of difference.

6 The League supports publication, and we
7 also support alternatives for children who are
8 having difficulty. The Las Cruces Public Schools
9 does have an alternative high school, and they have
10 several good charter schools. So I believe that
11 this particular proposal would need to be really
12 investigated a little further before the League
13 would support it. Thank you very much.

14 THE CHAIR: Thank you for your comments.
15 John Griffith.

16 MR. GRIFFITH: Good afternoon.

17 THE CHAIR: Good afternoon.

18 MR. GRIFFITH: I feel privileged to be
19 here today as part of a community effort to meet the
20 needs of our students. I think it's just terrific
21 that there is this aspect of our process where
22 people can come forward with a lot of creativity and
23 ideas about how to do things differently or better
24 or in a new way. And I read his proposal, and I was
25 impressed by -- I think someone mentioned the

1 creativity involved.

2 I think we're in a time when there's need
3 for creativity in education. And, personally, my
4 background is I'm working with online course design,
5 and I'm aware of all the changes that are coming
6 along because of the potentials with that
7 technology. So I'm really happy to see this going
8 on, that your Commission has a chance to hear these
9 proposals and that the school district is here and
10 that they get a chance to hear these proposals.

11 Personally, I'm not in a position to
12 evaluate what the gentleman has brought forward as
13 far as viability goes. I was a little surprised
14 that he had four schools. I don't know if he still
15 is applying for four. I thought that was a little
16 bit ambitious. And I would hope that someone with
17 this much drive and innovation might have an
18 opportunity to exercise his -- his goals and work on
19 this in maybe a limited fashion, where he could
20 start out in a small school of some kind, someplace
21 that really desperately needs his help, and so that
22 he might have an opportunity to see what he could do
23 with this.

24 But other than that, I can't really
25 comment on his particular proposal. Just happy, as

1 I said earlier, that you guys are undertaking these
2 questions. I want to say that some people have said
3 that private schools are for-profit schools, and
4 that that's a bad thing. I'm not representing the
5 Chamber of Commerce or anything. But I don't see
6 anything wrong with an undertaking that makes a
7 profit in the United States. I don't think we
8 consider that to be a pejorative right out of the
9 gate.

10 And I sincerely doubt that this gentleman
11 is motivated because he's trying to get rich quick.
12 So I would question any -- any concerns that --
13 because this is a private school, and there might be
14 a profit involved, that we need to be concerned or
15 worried about it. So I'm actually a little
16 concerned that the League would have that as a
17 pejorative right out of the gate. I know that there
18 are outfits out -- there.

19 MS. CHAVEZ: Mr. Chairman, time is up.

20 MR. GRIFFITH: Okay. Thank you.

21 MS. CHAVEZ: Also, Mr. Chairman, there is
22 one individual in the audience that would like to
23 sign up that did not get the opportunity to sign up.

24 THE CHAIR: I will allow that. Federica
25 Lanza.

1 MS. LANZA: Thank you.

2 THE CHAIR: Here's the sign-in sheet.

3 MS. LANZA: I came to the meeting mostly
4 to learn more about the proposed charter school. I
5 know the public school does a great job. And I hope
6 that these meetings will start something else in
7 terms of thinking about other ways to support
8 children in public school.

9 As a mom, I like the idea of having
10 options. And, as a mom, I have one very bright
11 child who is not gifted, but bright, who gets bored
12 easily in the classroom. I'd like to have the
13 opportunity to have my child in a place where he can
14 learn at his own pace and where he can be stimulated
15 and have his needs met.

16 So, again, I don't know much about this
17 proposal, and that's why I'm here. But, again -- I,
18 as a mom, I like to have the opportunity to have
19 options.

20 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. Colleen
21 M. Blackman?

22 MS. BLACKMAN: I just retired from the
23 Las Cruces Public School System a year ago, and I
24 have been a teacher at Doña Ana Branch, San Andres,
25 Vista Middle School, Lynn Middle School, and worked

1 as a gifted facilitator for 17 years. And I still
2 want to continue my interest in helping students
3 learn.

4 And, overall, the 30 years that I have
5 taught, as we all know, children need to feel
6 important. I believe that all children have an area
7 that they have to search for for expertise. And I
8 was really happy to see and hear about your
9 proposal.

10 They have to have -- feel like they're
11 engaged and can advance with the ungraded system,
12 like, if it's science or English or whatever. Then
13 that will keep them motivated. And I think then, we
14 could possibly raise our retention level. But I
15 would like to see -- I agree with Stan and Steven
16 Sanchez about how I would like to see the entire
17 proposal. And I think that, you know, we need to
18 see and look at more.

19 I am concerned about the profit as well,
20 because we're losing the kids because they're not
21 motivated. And I believe in the technology
22 component. I bought myself a tablet, and I'm
23 working, and I'm learning, too, because we've got to
24 stay ahead of learning through technology and
25 motivating the child in their area of expertise.

1 And it's our job as teachers and parents to find
2 that area that they like and can thrive in.

3 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. That
4 concludes our public comments section. We will
5 continue with the Public Education Commission
6 questions for the applicant. The Chair will open up
7 the floor for questions. Commissioner Gant.

8 COMMISSIONER GANT: Mr. Chair, members,
9 audience. Sir, we have a couple of questions. And
10 as you know, we went through this this morning --

11 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir.

12 COMMISSIONER GANT: -- over at Deming.
13 And you'll probably hear a lot of the same
14 questions.

15 MR. CASAVANTES: I understand.

16 COMMISSIONER GANT: Don't feel like we're
17 beating on you. But maybe we are. I assume you
18 know this, but I'm going to say it anyway. I am not
19 sure why we need another charter school. We have
20 eleven high schools -- and part of your school is
21 one through twelve -- four comprehensive; one early
22 college high school; one traditional high school
23 that's an alternative high school that goes from
24 9:00 in the morning to 9:00 at night; three charter
25 high schools; Holy Cross High School; Mesilla Valley

1 Christian High School; 37 elementary schools,
2 traditional, private, and charter; and 12 middle
3 schools, traditional, private, and charter.

4 So parents in this district, really, no
5 larger than this community is, right around 100K --
6 around 100,000 -- they really have a lot to choose
7 from. So I'm not sure what you can bring to the
8 table that parents can't find, students can't find
9 out there to satisfy their needs for education.

10 Can you -- I assume you know what goes on
11 in these -- all these schools. Can you tell me what
12 is so different from yours -- so completely
13 different that we should authorize this school?

14 MR. CASAVANTES: I understand your point.
15 I -- I don't think that all of the components -- I
16 mean, you can find components that are available
17 elsewhere. But I don't think you find a -- the --
18 the collection of items in one plan like in our
19 plan.

20 And then, also, I just want to address
21 some of the things that -- we are a nonprofit
22 501(c)(3), and so we're a nonprofit. Those that
23 were thinking that we were a profit organization.

24 And then as far as identifying facilities,
25 we're using a firm called Insight that has

1 identified eleven facilities that are meeting our
2 criteria in Las Cruces.

3 And -- and the -- one of the things, too,
4 was that this is the -- that this year, there was no
5 start-up funds, and there was no indication of how
6 we could resolve that issue. You know, I brought up
7 that I have found an entity that -- that would loan
8 us \$1.5 million to start up our schools. But we're
9 not to have any loans, so -- not to be in any debt.
10 So, therefore, we're going to seek grants to get
11 this school started.

12 And, you know, it's one of those things
13 that you cannot foretell how much -- how much grant
14 funding you're going to -- you're going to be
15 receiving. But we will attempt to get all the funds
16 necessary to open these schools.

17 And the transportation issue, from what I
18 understand, that those are -- that can be achieved
19 through a federal grant and not through New Mexico,
20 and that's why it wasn't in the application.

21 And -- and that -- the students that
22 graduate from any of these areas are not -- not
23 graduating with a career that they can be
24 self-sustaining. They may have some individuals
25 that are in dual credit and so forth, but not an

1 attempt for every student that comes to us to
2 graduate -- if they enter the sixth grade with us,
3 to complete a -- an associate's degree by the time
4 they graduate. And we're seeking to do this, not to
5 the gifted and talented and the best students in the
6 schools, but to the average students that would come
7 to us.

8 COMMISSIONER GANT: This morning, sir, you
9 mentioned -- and I just jotted a note with lots of
10 question marks -- you said you were going to have
11 sixth-grade students enrolling in college courses
12 for dual enrollment.

13 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir.

14 COMMISSIONER GANT: Is that correct?

15 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir.

16 COMMISSIONER GANT: Do you think a
17 sixth-grader is prepared academically and socially
18 and maturely to go out on a college campus and sit
19 in a classroom?

20 MR. CASAVANTES: I'm not proposing that
21 they be in the college classroom. I believe that --
22 you know, that the -- that the courses we're hoping
23 to bring would be online courses with a -- a nurse
24 and computer programmer to -- and we're going to be
25 integrating computer programming and nursing

1 starting in the first grade. And we plan to
2 integrate this with the standards, and so that, by
3 the time our students get to the sixth grade, they
4 have a lot more background and knowledge about
5 nursing and computer programming than students of an
6 older age.

7 COMMISSIONER GANT: Do you think you're
8 going to have a sixth-grader --

9 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir.

10 COMMISSIONER GANT: -- ready to have --
11 with all the math and science required to take these
12 online courses so they can be very successful? Once
13 they fail an online course, you may not get them
14 back.

15 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir. One of the
16 things is that we -- is that we were intending to
17 have one course of the sixth grade, okay, like an
18 Introduction to Nursing or an Introduction to
19 Computer Programming, where we're not planning, in
20 the sixth grade, to have a class like pre-calculus
21 or calculus and so forth. But I believe that there
22 are courses that we can prepare students for that
23 they would be successful in the sixth grade.

24 And I'm saying, like, the Introduction to
25 Nursing and Introduction to Computer Programming.

1 COMMISSIONER GANT: All right. You just
2 said you believe there's courses out there. Have
3 you talked to any universities or community
4 colleges, and do you have --

5 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER GANT: It's not in the -- in
7 the application, so I don't know what courses you're
8 talking about. I don't know what universities or
9 community colleges are offering these. Can you give
10 me one example?

11 MR. CASAVANTES: Almost every major has a
12 course that's an introduction into the field:
13 Introduction to Engineering, Introduction to
14 Nursing, Intro- -- and so they -- and those courses
15 are usually not as rigorous as other courses. And I
16 mentioned at the other meeting in Deming that we
17 have talked to New Mexico State University, and
18 they -- they would not want us to do this initially.
19 We would have to earn the ability to -- to do it in
20 the sixth grade.

21 They would consider that with some
22 students in the freshman year that pass some tests
23 that they could start this. And then we would --
24 and then after we have proven that they can be
25 successful, they would be -- they would consider

1 possibly having us start sooner.

2 COMMISSIONER GANT: All right. Moving on
3 to your budget. You have, on Function Code 1000,
4 Object Code 51100, Job Class 1611, you talk about
5 instructional assistants.

6 MR. CASAVANTES: Uh-huh.

7 COMMISSIONER GANT: And then we talked
8 this morning about tutors.

9 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir.

10 COMMISSIONER GANT: Are these -- you know,
11 it was kind of confusing after the whole thing was
12 talked about. Are these tutors the instructional
13 assistants? Yes or no?

14 MR. CASAVANTES: They're the instructional
15 assistants, yes.

16 COMMISSIONER GANT: And, therefore,
17 they're going to have to be -- meet the qual- --

18 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir.

19 COMMISSIONER GANT: -- qualifications for
20 the State of New Mexico?

21 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir.

22 COMMISSIONER GANT: And do you think you
23 can find -- I can't remember how many were in there.

24 MR. CASAVANTES: Well, we will have to
25 adjust the staffing number and budget, because we

1 would not be able to have the same number of staff
2 using the instructional aides as we could when we
3 were planning to use tutors.

4 COMMISSIONER GANT: Well, as I said this
5 morning, and I believe it was said by Commissioner
6 Shearman, that what we see in front of us --

7 MR. CASAVANTES: I understand.

8 COMMISSIONER GANT: -- whether it's paper
9 or computer is what you're voted on; not promises to
10 do something different down the road.

11 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir.

12 COMMISSIONER GANT: Again, Function Area
13 2100, Object Code 51100, Job Class 1211 to 1511;
14 these are the professional services required by
15 students in special needs. And you've said that, in
16 your application, that you were going to contract
17 these out with a company in Tucson, Arizona. But
18 now you said this morning you'll find somebody in
19 the state of New Mexico to do it.

20 Well -- but then in the same budget, you
21 don't have any money in the budget line to contract
22 these. So you haven't put any money in, whether
23 it's salaried or contract. And I can't find it.

24 MR. CASAVANTES: You can't find it? Well,
25 in my comments, I will locate that information and

1 forward it to you.

2 COMMISSIONER GANT: Let's go to land and
3 buildings, if you will.

4 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir.

5 COMMISSIONER GANT: That's Function 2600.
6 You talked earlier about that you worked with this
7 company -- I -- the name escapes me.

8 MR. CASAVANTES: Insight.

9 COMMISSIONER GANT: Insight. Did they
10 tell you how much it was going to cost to set up a
11 facility lease, how much per square feet for a lease
12 it's going to cost in the City of Las Cruces?

13 MR. CASAVANTES: They're aware of the
14 budget figure we have in there, and they're going to
15 do their best to try to meet that target.

16 COMMISSIONER GANT: Sir, the new school
17 that's opening up, New America, is \$14 per square
18 foot. And you have a very large number, I believe,
19 that you want to have set up for. And you want to
20 have multiple buildings; right? Is that correct?

21 MR. CASAVANTES: In one site or -- each
22 site will just have one building.

23 COMMISSIONER GANT: How many sites are you
24 planning?

25 MR. CASAVANTES: Well, we have applied at

1 five sites.

2 COMMISSIONER GANT: No. In Las Cruces, is
3 it going to be one building?

4 MR. CASAVANTES: One building.

5 COMMISSIONER GANT: A rather large
6 building?

7 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir.

8 COMMISSIONER GANT: And do you plan for
9 any renovation?

10 MR. CASAVANTES: We are working to try to
11 find the facilities that do not require a lot of
12 renovation.

13 COMMISSIONER GANT: Well, I wish you luck
14 in that one. But being from here for 32 years, I
15 think you're going to find it very hard to find a
16 building that will meet E-Occupancy that does not
17 need to be renovated.

18 Twenty six hundred, 54311 through 54416,
19 is the budget line for maintenance and repairs and
20 utilities. Absolutely zero in the budget. Please
21 explain to the Commissioners and to the community
22 why -- I mean, this is a very big cost, one that
23 keeps going up every year. So what's your plans to
24 cover that? It's not in the budget.

25 MR. CASAVANTES: Well, we do feel that

1 there -- like I mentioned earlier, there are some
2 items where I do think that we could re- -- and I
3 know that you said once, you have a budget, it's
4 pretty much fixed. But the price of tablet
5 computers has gone down. And some of the things --
6 some other aspects of our budget, let's say, field
7 trips and some other things might have to be
8 curtailed to -- to -- to provide more money towards
9 facilities.

10 COMMISSIONER GANT: Reference the budget
11 and salaries and all that type of information, this
12 morning you stated that you're going to find
13 principals for all five locations. So we won't go
14 down that road again.

15 MR. CASAVANTES: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER GANT: All right? Although
17 you did say that you and your -- I back up. That
18 raises a question.

19 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir.

20 COMMISSIONER GANT: Since your cofounder
21 is no longer -- is he still working for this one?

22 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes. Yes, sir. He will
23 return.

24 COMMISSIONER GANT: So he's going to be
25 working for both McCurdy and this one?

1 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir. And he will
2 return here in the next school year.

3 COMMISSIONER GANT: So what is he doing
4 for McCurdy, if I may ask?

5 MR. CASAVANTES: He is a math teacher.

6 COMMISSIONER GANT: Okay. And I need to
7 ask this question. Maybe it's out of line. And,
8 Kelly, you tell me if I'm out of line, please. You
9 mentioned this morning that once you set up the
10 schools with the proper principals and they are
11 properly trained, that you and your cofounder were
12 going to back out.

13 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir.

14 COMMISSIONER GANT: Are you telling me
15 that there will be no financial remuneration for you
16 and your cofounder once you back out?

17 MR. CASAVANTES: We are planning to --
18 while we are working in the schools, we'll be paid
19 as teachers. And then when we pull out, we are
20 looking at some options for how we would be
21 compensated. But it appears, in the New Mexico
22 system, there is either not much money available, or
23 it's difficult and so forth, and that we may have to
24 depend on the Texas applications and our Texas
25 charter schools for our compensation.

1 COMMISSIONER GANT: Okay. Dr. Sanchez
2 already brought up one of the problems I had with
3 this -- I'm going to bring this one up again,
4 because this really has bothered me all along with
5 your application, in that I had a strong feeling
6 that you were going to have one centralized board
7 for all five schools. And that's -- I guess that's
8 what you were talking about when you were talking
9 about the New Mexico -- it's called "the New Mexico
10 board." Was that the -- the gist of what you were
11 doing?

12 MR. CASAVANTES: You know, I was -- I had
13 a difficulty trying to find out what was acceptable
14 to New Mexico, as far as what they -- what was -- if
15 we were to have a board for each campus or a
16 New Mexico board, or that if we had a board for each
17 campus, that we had representatives from each
18 individual campus make up a New Mexico board.

19 And it wasn't, I think, until recently
20 that I -- my understanding is that each school would
21 require its own independent board, and it would have
22 to have five members.

23 But I was -- when -- I brought this
24 question up, and I had not received an answer in
25 time for the application to be -- when it was turned

1 in.

2 COMMISSIONER GANT: And who did you bring
3 that up to?

4 MR. CASAVANTES: I can't recall. But I
5 have brought -- I had brought it up.

6 COMMISSIONER GANT: And I understand that
7 you're a very experienced individual, as well as
8 your cofounder. So going to the State statutes,
9 22-8 NMSA, 1976 -- '78 -- it's right there, clear as
10 it can be, what a school board and a school
11 requires. So, you know, that's why I raise this
12 question, because it leaves me in doubt as to -- as
13 if this charter or this series of charter schools,
14 that the governance boards and the direction they're
15 taking -- you're taking with the governance boards,
16 really, whether you have an understanding of what a
17 governance board is and how it's supposed to
18 function and the New Mexico Open Meetings Act. To
19 me, it seems very strange to have -- they don't even
20 do that with the State's colleges and universities.
21 Each one of them has its own board of regents, you
22 know. To have one single board spread out across
23 five locations from Carlsbad to Deming, Alamogordo,
24 Cruces, and Anthony, wasn't logical to me.

25 Explain to the Commissioners and the

1 community, please, your concept of the open
2 architecture.

3 MR. CASAVANTES: Okay. That -- there is
4 going to be a main space similar to -- like this --
5 let's say this room, where students would be
6 working. And then around the perimeter of this
7 room -- I think I have a diagram, but this may not
8 be the most -- what do you call it?

9 MR. GANT: Sir, would you just explain?
10 Maybe you have it up there. I don't --

11 MR. CASAVANTES: Okay. That the
12 classrooms would be surrounding the main academic
13 space, with the lead teacher in the middle, and that
14 the kids that needed to be instructed in a
15 particular concept would be pulled out to these
16 conference-room-style classes. And so the only
17 students that are in the class are students that
18 need that instruction.

19 Then the traditional classroom, when you
20 have 30 kids or 24 or whatever kids in a classroom,
21 they -- some of them have already learned the
22 material and are wasting their time, and there's
23 others that maybe it's over their head. This way,
24 the class that you pull out -- and the other thing
25 is that we -- the teacher has the ability to take

1 the amount of time necessary to teach these students
2 successfully.

3 There's no bell schedule, so that the
4 students can be taught and -- to conclusion each
5 concept before they're released, or the teacher can
6 even release some of the students once they find
7 that they are capable of the material. They can be
8 released to the main academic space to continue
9 their work, and the ones that need further
10 instruction are kept in the classroom until they
11 are -- they have had all the instruction that's
12 necessary for them to be successful.

13 COMMISSIONER GANT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
14 No more questions at this time.

15 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Mr. Chair?

16 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Gant.
17 Commissioner Lopez.

18 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I have some
19 follow-up. You said that you -- you and the other
20 founder would serve as teachers, and then you would
21 pull out, and you would figure out some way of being
22 compensated. What would you be compensated for?
23 What would you be doing at that point?

24 MR. CASAVANTES: Are you talking about
25 after we're not there?

1 COMMISSIONER GANT: Yes.

2 MR. CASAVANTES: Well, like I said, it
3 appears that, in New Mexico, it's very difficult
4 for -- for us to be compensated. And we're planning
5 to start the Texas application in November. And so
6 that we are going to figure that we are probably
7 going to have to be compensated through the Texas
8 charters.

9 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Thank you.

10 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Lopez.
11 Commissioner Bergman, and then Commissioner
12 Shearman.

13 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Thanks. Thank you,
14 Mr. Chair. On Page 23 of your application, I want
15 to explore a statement that you made there. And it
16 reads -- it's in the third paragraph. "Our
17 development plan is to begin the first year with
18 enough lessons and learning activities in our
19 database to meet the needs of our students for the
20 first four months of the first school year."

21 So you're going to start a school year
22 with only four months of curriculum and lesson
23 plans. And you do say, in the next sentence, that,
24 "As the year progresses, our teachers will be
25 assigned to create additional learning activities."

1 I don't -- I'm not a teacher, but I think
2 teachers are pretty busy. I'm not sure how they can
3 teach classes and also be developing another five
4 months of curriculum. Can you address that issue
5 for me?

6 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir. Okay. Well,
7 currently, Wes is working on developing the
8 curriculum. And we changed our idea to have a
9 single strand all the way through the year, and
10 then -- and then start a second strand and so forth
11 until we eventually have all the -- enough strands
12 with enough variety. But -- so we have modified
13 that from what we wrote in the application. We feel
14 that's better to do one strand all the way through
15 instead of do four months.

16 Let's see. Refresh me on the other
17 questions.

18 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: I was just -- that
19 was it.

20 MR. CASAVANTES: Oh, about the teachers
21 wri- --

22 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Then the teachers
23 would be doing that -- in addition to their
24 teaching, they would be doing the next five months.
25 That's what the next sentence says.

1 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes. We are planning on
2 hiring our teachers on a longer school year than the
3 traditional -- traditional teacher, so that we can
4 have them write curriculum during that time.

5 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: That's an
6 interesting point. Later, you do state in there
7 that you're going to ask your teachers to work
8 during the summer to work on the next year's stuff.
9 So it almost sounds like your teachers are going to
10 be on an annual contract to --

11 MR. CASAVANTES: We're looking at about
12 the same number of days as a central office person
13 would work.

14 COMMISSIONER BERGMAN: Okay. I think
15 that's all I have, Mr. Chairman.

16 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner
17 Bergman. Commissioner Shearman.

18 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Thank you. Good
19 afternoon.

20 MR. CASAVANTES: Good afternoon.

21 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: This morning you
22 and I talked a lot about student goals.

23 MR. CASAVANTES: Uh-huh.

24 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: And I think I
25 said -- I know I did at the time -- that not only

1 are these goals important to the application in this
2 phase, where we're looking at either approving the
3 school or otherwise; but, should the school be
4 approved, then these goals will come back with you
5 at renewal, so that we may look at the goals and
6 say, "Did you get it done, or didn't you?"

7 And so that's why I really look at goals.
8 So I want to go back over those, even though we did
9 it this morning.

10 MR. CASAVANTES: Uh-huh. Yes, ma'am.

11 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: On Page 11 of your
12 application, under "Student Academic Performance,"
13 as I have told you this morning, I wrote myself some
14 notes as I was going through this. The first that I
15 wrote is that, realistically, there will be no
16 student performance data until years 4 and 5.

17 MR. CASAVANTES: Uh-huh.

18 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Students must be
19 full time for two years for the goal to apply.

20 MR. CASAVANTES: Uh-huh.

21 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Year three will be
22 set as the previous year's performance level.

23 MR. CASAVANTES: Uh-huh.

24 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: And then the
25 fourth and fifth year, then, will be -- hopefully,

1 the students will progress from that. There is no
2 student performance goals for Grades 1 through 3, 9
3 and 12, because SBA is not given in those grade
4 levels. And the goals are not measurable because
5 they both have disclaimers.

6 The first is, "Depending upon the
7 performance mix of our students at the beginning of
8 the school year"; and the second is, "Assuming a
9 90 percent year-to-year reenrollment rate and a
10 normal distribution of newly enrolling students."
11 Gives us really nothing to work on should this
12 application come back for renewal, or this school.

13 Under "Student Academic Growth," I see the
14 same -- pardon me -- better I should turn the
15 page -- no specific measurable goals; not
16 acceptable. In Section D-1 and 2 are not acceptable
17 here for the same reason.

18 I -- next, I'd like to go to -- I think
19 that said enough about goals. There are others that
20 we could talk about, but it's -- the one I did want
21 to get to -- oh, my goodness; my computer is going
22 nuts. Hello. Wake up.

23 COMMISSIONER GANT: Space bar.

24 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Thank you very
25 much. I don't like those.

1 The one I wanted to get to is high-school
2 college readiness. And it says, "100 percent of our
3 graduating eighth-graders will be ready for high
4 school beginning in year one and beyond."

5 And this morning, I asked you, "How will
6 you prove that?" And you've had some time to think
7 about it.

8 MR. CASAVANTES: Well, I think that -- I
9 mean, I'd be glad to read -- you know -- as I told
10 you this morning, I know that when the -- this was
11 written, we were trying to make sure we didn't box
12 ourselves in a corner. And I see that -- I see from
13 your response what your perspective is. And we
14 didn't know that perspective. I would gladly modify
15 and change the requirements to meet whatever you
16 desire to have as the goals and be measurable and so
17 forth to your satisfaction.

18 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: But they're not
19 here.

20 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, ma'am, I agree.
21 Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Okay. And under
23 your curriculum section, in F-1, you talk about,
24 "Each student will be provided a tablet computer."
25 And I asked you where that was in the budget. And

1 at that time, you weren't completely sure.

2 MR. CASAVANTES: That's another -- that's
3 another item that I'm going to have to look for it
4 and find out what line item it is and so forth.

5 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Okay. Let me move
6 on to -- I'd like to talk about Page 50, Section 3.
7 And we talked about the chart that you have there
8 listing the grade and the number -- pardon me -- the
9 year and the grade and the number of students that
10 were projected for each grade.

11 And I suggested to you that that did not
12 correspond to the budget, because your budget has
13 been built on 300 students every year. And this
14 shows 200 -- pardon me -- 300 and then 400. So --
15 and you said at the time this is incorrect.

16 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, ma'am.

17 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: But this doesn't
18 match the budget.

19 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, ma'am, that's
20 correct.

21 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: I noticed in your
22 waiver lists -- and we didn't talk about this this
23 morning. But it's on Page 53. And you say, "If
24 driver education is required, we will not be able to
25 provide that service due to the small size of the

1 school."

2 You're not sure, huh, whether or not it's
3 required?

4 MR. CASAVANTES: No, I'm not for sure
5 that's required.

6 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: And the other
7 thing I'd like to do is look at your application --
8 pardon me -- your Appendix L, your teacher salary
9 schedule. And if this is correct, I'd like to apply
10 for a job, because -- let me find it. Under
11 Level III, Master's Plus 45, your 29 will make
12 \$6,243,125. I'm sure it's a mistake. I just
13 thought I would give you an easy question, instead
14 of everything I do is difficult.

15 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER SHEARMAN: Thank you,
17 Mr. Chairman.

18 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner
19 Shearman. Commissioner Peralta.

20 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: I have a couple of
21 things I want to bring up, but I think Commissioner
22 Bergman indirectly touched on this when it was
23 brought up about teachers and responsibilities. So
24 I want to make some sense out of this.

25 But I believe what I want to lead up to is

1 that there might be a possibility, in dealing with
2 recruitment of teachers -- when I look at -- and I
3 believe this is on Page 43 -- when you look at
4 salaries for staff, I believe it was noted that
5 there were seven regular teachers --

6 MR. CASAVANTES: Uh-huh.

7 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: -- on staff? And
8 you budgeted \$350,000, I believe, for staff?

9 MR. CASAVANTES: I can't recall that.

10 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Which would be
11 equivalent to a Level III teacher's salary at
12 \$50,000 per year. And I think you alluded this
13 morning, too, that you would like to recruit
14 teachers with master's or even doctorate degrees for
15 your --

16 MR. CASAVANTES: Well, the tutors were
17 going to be -- when we had the plan for tutors, we
18 were planning to do that with the doctor's and the
19 master's degrees. But it appears that that's out of
20 the question right now. And so that's -- but we did
21 plan to have more than one certification and hire
22 some teachers who had more than one certification.
23 And also we were going to have them working a longer
24 school year. So that's one of the reasons why we
25 had a little higher salary than normally.

1 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Okay. And that's
2 what I want to get at. I believe in your
3 application, it says 227 days for the school year?

4 MR. CASAVANTES: That sounds reasonable.

5 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Okay. So my point
6 is, that's roughly 30 to 40 extra days than someone
7 in the public school would be at a Level III. So my
8 point to be is how -- if I were a Level III teacher,
9 for \$50,000 a year, I think I would prefer to go
10 work for 185 or 190 days in a traditional school
11 versus your school. So the challenge there is how
12 are you going to recruit these teachers?

13 MR. CASAVANTES: We don't plan to have all
14 Level III teachers. We plan to have the spectrum.
15 But we budgeted at the Level III level, and we plan
16 to have new teachers at level -- some teachers at
17 Level I, some at Level II, some at Level III. And
18 they were going to -- some are going to trans- --
19 move up from a Level I to a Level II and so forth.

20 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: But, again, my
21 point is, to go work at your school, you have to
22 work an extra 30, 40 days for the same salary you
23 would at a traditional school. So what's your
24 selling point to get these teachers to go work for
25 you for longer days at the same pay rate of a

1 traditional teacher -- traditional school?

2 MR. CASAVANTES: Well, I think part of it
3 is we're going -- we budgeted at the Level III, but
4 we're not going to have all our teachers at the
5 Level III. We're going to have them throughout the
6 spectrum, and that -- that they are going to be paid
7 more than their counterparts in the public schools
8 for those additional days.

9 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Okay. And I'm
10 still confused.

11 Second point here, I'm still confused on
12 this first year, where you and Mr. Clarkson were
13 going to kind of get the ball rolling. I know there
14 was questions about whether you guys were going to
15 be the actual administrators on site. I know
16 there's four or five sites that you're applying for.
17 But you did allude to saying that you were possibly
18 going to try and recruit principals for your site
19 schools; correct?

20 MR. CASAVANTES: Yes, sir.

21 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Okay. And if, say,
22 you're able to recruit one or two, and you are
23 lacking a principal here or there at another site,
24 what takes place?

25 MR. CASAVANTES: We might have to fill in

1 until we could find something. I mean --

2 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: And that's "we"?
3 Who's "we"?

4 MR. CASAVANTES: Wes Clarkson and myself.

5 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Are you licensed
6 administrators?

7 MR. CASAVANTES: We're both Level III-B,
8 licensed in New Mexico.

9 COMMISSIONER PERALTA: Okay. Thank you.

10 MR. CASAVANTES: Thank you.

11 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner
12 Peralta. Are there other questions from
13 Commissioners? Seeing none, any member of the
14 public, including the applicant, may submit written
15 input following this hearing. Written comments can
16 be sent to the Commission via the Public Education
17 Department Web site, at ped.state.nm.us, through the
18 Calendar listing on the front PED Web page, through
19 the Public Comments section on the PED Web page, or
20 by using the link, ped.state.nm.us/comments.

21 You will be directed to an e-mail format
22 in which to write your comment. Make sure you
23 identify the school you're commenting on in the
24 drop-down menu. Please note that any written input
25 must be received by no later than close of business

1 on the third business day following the hearing on
2 the application you wish to comment on.

3 I want to thank you for your presentation
4 and your hard work in preparing your application.
5 The Commission will now recess the hearing until
6 tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m., where we will meet in
7 the district of Gadsden at the Women's Intercultural
8 Center to hear further applications. We're in
9 recess.

10 (Proceedings in recess at 5:10 p.m.)

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1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2 I, Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR, CCR #219, Certified
3 Court Reporter in the State of New Mexico, do hereby
4 certify that the foregoing pages constitute a true
5 transcript of proceedings had before the said
6 NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, held in the
7 State of New Mexico, County of Doña Ana, in the
8 matter therein stated.

9 In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my
10 hand on September 4, 2012.

11
12
13 _____
14 Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219
15 BEAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.
16 201 Third Street, NW, Suite 1630
17 Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102
18 License Expires: 12/31/12
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25 Job No.: 5152K (CC)

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RECEIPT

JOB NUMBER: 5152 CC Date: 8/22/12

PROCEEDINGS: PUBLIC INPUT HEARING

CASE CAPTION: In Re: Academic Opportunities
Academy, Las Cruces

ATTORNEY: Ms. Beverly Friedman

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