BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
OPEN PUBLIC MEETING
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December 11, 2019
8:25 a.m.
Jerry Apodaca Education Building - Mabry Hall
300 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe, New Mexico

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THE CHAIR: I'm going to bring out of recess this meeting of the Public Education Commission. It is Wednesday, December 11th, and it is 8:25 a.m.

I want to thank everyone. There was traffic issues. So everyone's got a little delayed, some of the folks did. So thanks for those -- for waiting and glad to see everyone got up here safely.

So I will ask Commissioner Armbruster to do roll call, please.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Robbins?

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Present.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Armbruster is here.

Commissioner Davis?

COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Here.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Armbruster is here.

Commissioner Davis?

COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Here.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Armbruster is here.

Chavez is not here.

COMMISSIONER GIPSON: Here.

THE CHAIR: Here.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Armbruster is here.

Raftery?

COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: Here.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Crone is not yet here. He's coming.

Commissioner Ruiz?

COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Present.

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Caballero is not yet here.

So we have a quorum of seven.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. And first up on our agenda today -- and I'm sorry, I'm just pulling it up -- is the Montessori Elementary and Middle, Albuquerque.

Because we've had this unusual circumstance with the -- the State Accountability System, you received the e-mail -- excuse me -- you received the e-mail that CSD sent out indicating that the renewals would be renewals with conditions in anticipation of the State data being available, hopefully, in January, if not February; so that if everything stays basically the same and there are no additional conditions that are placed on through today, you would go on the Consent Agenda.
But I do have a little statement that I'm making before all schools. The PED has not provided a report or review of data for the School Year '18-'19 Accountability. It is important for schools to have the complete academic data as part of its renewal information for this renewal and also for future years.

The PEC needs the complete State Accountability Report to make its best decision on school renewal applications. The PEC will review financial and operational performance because the data is complete at this meeting in December of 2019.

If the PEC decides to issue a renewal with conditions, the PEC will clearly state what Accountability information it will review from the PED Accountability Report. When the Accountability data is prepared by PED and the school has had an opportunity to review the data -- no less than ten days -- the PEC will review the data and remove the condition or take other action, such as a Corrective Action Plan or possibly non-renew the charter.

At the future meeting, January or February of 2020, the PEC will only consider the issues related to the reason for the conditions and will not consider any other issues related to the renewal. So we will close out today, absolutely all financial and operational areas. And they're not reopened for discussion in January/February, whenever we're meeting about this.

And we will close out most of the academic issues. So the only academic issues will be those that are related to those areas where the information is not available to us at this time. And that'll be clearly stated so that the school knows what, if any -- the school will know today if -- in all likelihood, if they need to come back up and you're not going to be on the Consent Agenda.

The school will know what they would need to address if they had to come up in January or February, so that there's -- there's no -- hopefully, there's no questions about that, and we don't reopen anything that's closed out today. So it should be a very limited, narrow-scoped discussion.

And if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to ask, 'cause we want people to be as clear about this as we can possibly make them.

It's -- it's new territory. We haven't done it, you know. Fortunately, we've never been in this position; hopefully, we'll never be in this position again. But we're -- you know. And what did I say yesterday? If people feel it's unfair, we're being unfair fairly, because we're being unfair to everyone.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: Favorite quote of the day.

THE CHAIR: We're treating everyone unfairly fairly. So there we go.

So good morning.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning.

THE CHAIR: If anyone wishes to speak on behalf of the school during the Public Comment portion, there's a sign-up sheet right there by Ms. Friedman. So I would ask folks to sign up. There's eight minutes, so that we divide it up -- we divide the eight minutes up by the number of people who wish to speak.

So CSD will give a brief report. You'll have your 15 minutes to do whatever. Then there's the eight minutes of the Public Comment, and then we go into our questions.

So thank you once again.

ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: Good morning, Madam Chair, members of the Commission, and members of the school.

I wanted to first acknowledge the student leaders in the room. I think it's wonderful to see so many students with us today, as well as other partners from the school staff and parents.

I -- before I defer to Deputy Director Woerner, I wanted to share just a few comments regarding my experiences with the Montessori Elementary School. I wanted to just express the partnership that we've had over the last several months. This is one school that I would say would be in the top quartile of schools that I've had discussions with, especially through the lens of a true partnership. In trying to figure out where there might be disagreements, it was how to get to a yes for both us and the school.

And so I wanted to just acknowledge that before we get into this process.

We had a lot of opportunities to have bidirectional communication over the last couple of months and weeks, for sure, in preparation for
today. And so I just want to share my gratitude to
Mr. Albrycht and Ms. Besante for the open door that
you-all have had, and I hope that you're feeling
that same thing from us as well, because I think we
do go further faster together around this process.

And so thank you for being here, and I'll
defer the rest of my time to Ms. Woerner to share
about the -- the work that the CSD has done in
preparation for today.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: Thank you, Director
Brauer.

Madam Chair, Commissioners, school
representatives. As you know, the Montessori
Elementary and Middle School is a school serving
grades K through 8 in Albuquerque, with a current
enrollment of approximately 426 students.

Their mission is focused on Montessori
methods, the Suzuki Method, and developing
responsible citizens, all of which were observed at
their site visit.

So going first to the Part A, the data for
their proficiency rates, I want to speak to the math
and reading proficiency and the drop that occurred
and explain a little bit about why that is.

This is the first -- actually, this is the
second school we've seen this week that serves
K-to-2 students. And a big reason for the
proficiency scores change has to do with Istation.
So this -- the other school had a higher population,
so their dip was not as evident as in this school.

So let me explain a little bit. I was
advised by the Accountability Bureau that the
Istation scores, which you know is State-mandated
K-to-2 -- some schools give it in 3 -- but K-to-2,
the proficiency -- the level of proficiency
requirements has changed.

So students who, last year, were
considered proficient on Istation are not
necessarily considered proficient or would not be,
on the current cutoff scores for the last year,
meaning the cutoff scores for proficiency rates got
more difficult.

To give you a context, two-thirds of the
students who scored proficiency in '17-'18 in
Istation would not be considered proficient in
'18-'19.

Let me repeat that. That was two-thirds
of students who were considered proficient in
'17-'18, with that same score the following year
would not be considered proficient.

With that information, it helps to explain
the dip that you see on their proficiency rates. I
can't tell you exactly how much it influenced that;
but that dip is influenced by the Istation scores.

So the school was showing, you know, a big
jump to '17, and then a little bit of a decline, and
then a pretty big decline this last report. I'm
looking forward to seeing the other details in the
Accountability Report that we'll be receiving.

However, I do think that some of that
large dip is due to this Istation score. I just
cannot tell you at this time how much of it.

So the downward trend was kind of there,
but not the -- I wanted to be sure to put on the
record the Istation concerns.

Moving on, the proficiency rate for
science was 64 percent, which is very high, as you
know. Our State average is 35 percent.

The indices for subgroup growth, at least
for the years that we have data, show that in the
beginning, the school was -- had some students
growing more than -- way more than expected, and
some less, but has sort of leveled out. As we
discussed previously, close to zero in either
direction is pretty good, meaning they're at the
expected growth for those students.

And that's true pretty much across the
board on their indices.

Their -- their student proficiency by
subgroup, I will leave that to you to analyze,
because, to me, it's kind of up and down.

Their math subgroup proficiency does show
a slight downward trend, as does some of the
reading. And the reading is the only thing
influenced by Istation, not the math.

As far as their mission goals, they have
Met or Exceeded the goals each of the years of the contract term.

Membership is showing an upward increase.

Their retention within the school year has
been 95 percent or above every year, and, between
school years, 83 percent or above each of the years.

In their teacher retention rate, it seemed
to take a dip in 2018. Then I'll leave that to the
school to address. This is influenced also by the
number of teachers being -- I'm not sure how many
that actually means. But it showed 67 percent
teacher retention in 2018.

Audit findings are -- as you can see, one
audit finding in the last year, none in the prior.
And the one that was a finding was a non-compliance -- other non-compliance issue. So something to pay attention to, but not a serious offense.

And if you look at the first few pages of our report, you see that this -- the school met the standards in many of the indicators. The academic indicator received a Failing to Demonstrate Substantial Progress. And that's primarily around the lowest performing students and the fact that the school grade was decreasing.

But still the school had a "C" in the last report card that we had, which would be considered a Meets Standard, just with the "C" grade. But with the trend down in the lowest performing grades, the CSD rated that as Failing to Demonstrate Substantial Progress.

And then on the Demonstrates Substantial Progress was around the organizational performance framework. There were two indicators that the school had to respond to in terms of Falls Far Below or were repeat Workings to Meet. Those were the English Language Learners and health-and-safety requirements.

So regarding the English Language Learners, some of it was the same thing you've heard me say all week about identifying students. But there were added concerns regarding ELB services and letters to parents, all of which I think the school is addressing.

And the health-and-safety requirements was around the emergency drills. Again, I think the school has responded in a way that shows they're demonstrating Substantial Progress in those areas.

The employees, they received -- 100 percent of the employees signed their petition. 97 percent of their households signed the petition. Their New Mexico Condition Index score was 37.87. That is above the average of 23. Remember, lower is better. So there may be some concerns about why that score is so high.

And with that, I conclude my report.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. And good morning once again. And if you would, please identify everyone who's going to speak for the record, and then you can proceed.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: Oh, I made a mistake.

THE CHAIR: Oh, I'm sorry. Did you want to say something?

MS. KAREN WOERNER: I made an error. My apologies to the school and to Chairwoman Gipson.

The health-and-safety issue, I was thinking of another school. It was not the drills; that was not correct. My apologies.

It was around the master immunization log for the students. And there was repeated back-and-forth. The school did provide detailed immunization logs for each student, but not the master immunization log, which is required by the Department of Health, that helps to identify quickly if there are students that are not covered.

So the health-and-safety issue was not emergency drills; it was that log. My apologies.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Thanks.

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: Good morning. I'm Mary Jane Besante, and I'm the Principal/Director at the Montessori Elementary and Middle School. This is Stan Albrycht, our business manager and human resources, and Ms. Jill Riester, our president of the governing council.

THE CHAIR: Welcome.

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: Good morning, Madam Chair and Commissioners. On behalf of the entire Montessori Elementary and Middle School community, I want to thank the Public Education Commission and the Public Education Department for all the work that you do for the students of New Mexico.

I would also like to welcome you to stop by the school for a visit next time you're in Albuquerque.

We represent the Montessori Elementary and Middle School. We chartered in 2005 under APS with 153 students serving grades K through 6. In 2009, we rechartered under PEC and added Grades 7 and 8. We've now grown to 428 students.

This school year we received 530 lottery applications so far, and we continue to maintain a large wait pool.

The Montessori Elementary and Middle School is strong and stable with the same administrator and business manager since our opening in 2005. We have 45 hardworking, dedicated staff members, and a large community of Montessori students and families.

As you walk into our school, you immediately notice the halls and classrooms are quiet and peaceful. Peace is an important part of the Montessori method and our culture. Each
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<td>classroom contains a peace table that is used for problem-solving and conflict resolution through peaceful and respectful communication. Many of our families also --</td>
<td>In middle school, our students focus on cultural discovery, first exploring New Mexico, where they challenge themselves as they climb, explore, hike, and become stewards of the land. Sixth- and seventh-graders build up to the international travel in their eighth-grade year. Our eighth-grade students participate annually in a Polish-American exchange program that we developed.</td>
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<td>Fine arts is a core element of our mission. Each year our students perform at multiple events, including a string concert at the Roundhouse Rotunda during the Legislative Session. The choir performs for the Senate. And during the Christmas season, they carol at area nursing homes. Our fourth-graders just performed a musical for veterans. In spring, all of our students perform at the gala, which is held at the Convention Center. And we have to hold it at the Convention Center because it was the only place with enough seats. We have quite the turnout. Another important aspect of our school are going-out trips. Our students take meaningful field trips to connect classroom learning to the real world. In addition, each field trip contains a community service component. As students mature and display appropriate levels of responsibility, our trips into the community expand. Our youngest students in pre-K and kindergarten learn through in-house community experiences. In Grades 1 through 3, students begin to explore outside of campus. And in Grades 4 and 5, students focus on community building adventures.</td>
<td>students. Our first and most important action taken was to refocus on the short-cycle assessment data. As a staff, we looked at our data and have implemented an internal Corrective Action Plan to target and ensure that we meet the needs of all of our students. We have allocated resources to hire a new SAT chair/interventionist. We are in the process of refocusing the SAT team to further assist the teachers with interventions. We continually review our short-cycle assessment data to help us drive both instruction and interventions. We are focusing on data-driven results, implementing research-based Tier 2 interventions to our lowest 25 percent of students. For the students who need extra support and intervention beyond this, we are meeting as a Student Assessment Team every eight weeks. During this meeting, we assess and modify the interventions by looking at data points taken biweekly. This SAT team includes our SAT chair, the student's teacher, grade-level teacher, the parents of the student, administration, any auxiliary staff, as needed, and, if appropriate, the student. This team of individuals works as a</td>
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cohesive group to help each student meet his or her full potential. In looking to the future, we are already revisiting our daily schedule to ensure the three-hour uninterrupted work cycle and to block time for interventions. Our team of administrators and educators hold weekly management meetings to discuss procedures, policies, program, and progress. Our lead teachers meet with their grade levels each week in Professional Learning Communities to address the needs of individual students, track progress, and discuss curriculum implementation. Our teachers also include students in the review of their assessment data to develop attainable goals. We continually revisit our scope and sequence and modify it as needed to ensure we meet the Common Core standards and State mandates while maintaining fidelity to the Montessori methodology. We believe that learning is best achieved within a positive social atmosphere that supports each individual's unique development. The school offers an accelerated program by providing a strong Montessori academic curriculum, combined with a unique fine arts program, including Suzuki method, general music, and visual arts. The mission of the school is to encourage students, Grades K through 8, to become responsible citizens who have the ability and desire to fulfill lifelong educational and social goals. Thank you.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. I'm going to shorten my speech since I have less time. The Montessori Elementary School has provided a stellar education for each of my children whom have very different personalities as well as learning styles. Examples I'd like to give in how the school has positively impacted my children are, when Lannon was in first grade and had difficulty getting his words on paper swiftly and legibly, his teacher noticed his frustration. So he was taught to write in cursive. When Sawyer had a tough time with a difference with another student, his teacher used the tools of Montessori peace table to give each child the opportunity to solve the conflict together. Quincy's SLD has created obstacles; yet the school has given her the tools, encouragement, and nurturing environment to allow her to self-advocate when she needs specific help in accomplishing her goals. The Suzuki strings program has provided something that we could not otherwise afford. The sole opportunity of learning string instruments has led my children to appreciate the art of music and to have extended their experience and are currently playing in Albuquerque Youth Symphony. Our visual arts program has taught my kids another creative outlet and appreciation. We're in a time where art and music programs have been yanked from public schools. Montessori School is giving my children these opportunities several times a week. Quincy's art piece was recently recognized and chosen by UNM's youth art exhibit and is currently on display at the art gallery on campus. The administration and teachers of the Montessori have gone above -- have gone above and beyond to create an environment of lifelong learners. This school expands the learning opportunities outside of the classroom to camping trips, road trips, and, internationally, all the way to Poland. Just the other day, Quincy said to me that when she grows up and has children of her own, she intends to send them to the Montessori School. Therefore, we will need the renewal of our charter at least five more times to meet her dream.
Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Next is Logan Parks.

FROM THE FLOOR: Madam Chair, Commissioners, good morning. I am Logan Parks. I'm an eighth-grade student at the Montessori Elementary and Middle School. I spoke with other students about -- in the middle school about their classes and how they're being educated. I found the students felt like their teachers would help students if they were struggling with work or needed advance work.

The Montessori Method teaches students of different levels and lets students go beyond their normal work based off of grade level. It also strongly works with gifted students to ensure they receive the same education as others. It also works with advanced students who they believe need to be -- to excel to fulfill their educational needs.

I believe the education at this school is much better than other -- than public schools. This school teaches their students in many different ways. In many situations, students are working with small groups of other students at grade level. We also work in groups of other students to complete small projects. In few cases, teachers will be able to work one-on-one with struggling or advanced students.

This school taught me many things that I wouldn't learn in a public school. It teaches you how to solve problems peacefully and avoid hostile conflicts, which most public schools do not teach. This school also got me to math and reading goals I would not reach in middle school. I've grown as a student and as a person because of this school.

One of the strong curricular projects eighth-grade students conduct are out-of-school internships. Students write their own internships cover letters and even conduct interviews. Once completed, students will spend one week working at the job of their choice.

I hope you take into consideration my thoughts and feelings when evaluating my school. Thank you for your time.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

FROM THE FLOOR: I stand for questions.

MS. FRIEDMAN: You have four minutes left.

THE CHAIR: Next is Jaycee Tarter.

FROM THE FLOOR: Madam Chair and Commissioners, good morning. I am Jaycee Tarter, and I am also an eighth-grader at the Montessori Elementary and Middle School. I spoke with my peers and teachers about our conflict resolution curriculum. In our school, we use a peace table.

It's the table that what use to resolve conflicts at all grade levels.

People who aren't familiar with Montessori methods often don't know what a peace table is. In elementary levels, the peace table is used for settling problems, such as a student grabbing something from another student's hands, or a student saying something along the lines of, "You aren't my friend anymore."

If a situation like this occurs at the elementary level, the student who feels another students or students were in the wrong will ask them if they would go to the peace table. The students being asked would have to go unless it conflicted with work time or scheduling.

The students would then use "I" statements to express how they felt. Only one student can talk at a time to make sure everyone is heard. The students would shake hands whether or not the problem was solved.

If the problem was not solved, then the teachers would set a later time to help intervene and help try to solve the problem.

Teachers rarely had to step in to solve a problem because we understand how to solve them on our own.

The Montessori curriculum teaches us conflict resolution very early, as early as preschool or kindergarten. But for middle school, this idea has to be revised to work with the problems that come up in middle school.

Problems such as bullying and harassment would not be solved if we used the same elementary method. If something like this occurs, the teachers would have the students come into their classroom either one at a time or all together and sit us down. The teachers would ask what happened and get all sides of the story.

We cannot talk over each other, and we are not allowed to speak negatively about each other. If the problem is not solved on our own by talking to each other, the teachers can ask questions and try to help solve the problem that way.

From my personal experience, of all the times I've had to talk to another student because of a disagreement or argument, the problem is solved within 10 to 20 minutes of talking and explaining
and no teachers intervening.
I believe the -- the view on education as a whole is negative, when there are many great teachers and administrators doing a great job. I feel the need to highlight our peace curriculum because it sets us on a path to success when dealing with difficult situations in the future. Thank you.
I stand for questions.
THE CHAIR: Thank you.
(Commissioner Crone has entered meeting.)
THE CHAIR: Next is Allyssa Wagner.
MS. FRIEDMAN: You have a total of two minutes left.
FROM THE FLOOR: Madam Chair and Commissioners, good morning. My name is Allyssa Wagner. I am a seventh-grader from the Montessori Elementary and Middle School. My fellow peers have spoken before me with the intent to identify the positive practices concerning academic and problem-solving curriculums.
I would also like to illustrate positive statements that our school [inaudible].
(Reporter cautions.)
FROM THE FLOOR: Our school puts social and emotional health at immense importance. This is something extremely important and fundamental in our school.
We are offered programs, such as a second step health class which teaches us how to manage and deal with emotions that may come up in our lives, especially in our adolescent years. It also teaches skills in problem-solving which is extremely important in our day-to-day middle-school setting.
In the middle-school atmosphere, large-scale problems that concern mental health and bullying can be present. Teachers are aware of this and intend to create multiple strategies in aiding to the solving of these problems.
As an example, most classrooms have Monday checkerboards. These are a discreet way to communicate with the teacher about how you're feeling and allow them to help quickly. We also have an advisory, which is introduced as a way for students to connect with teachers and become more comfortable around them so that they confide in and receive help if needed.
Student, teacher, and parent communication is very fundamental in our school and has always been exercised and approved when necessary. Students and parents are expected to attend conferences with their teacher and share their academic and social successes and struggles. This allows everyone to be in the loop with grave social situations and any problems that may arise in the classroom. Students are trusted to communicate and gain independence in our school.
Big trips are offered at the end of each year. Big trips are field trips that are multiple nights and days that students have a part in planning. These give students a learning opportunity as to how to earn money and become more independent as they prepare for high school and even the real world.
I ask that you please take into consideration the words of students when deciding whether or not to renew our school. This school and learning environment has allowed me to accomplish as I wish and grow as a person. Thank you.
I stand for questions.
MS. FRIEDMAN: They're out of time.
THE CHAIR: Thank you. Excuse me? They didn't use all their 15 minutes, did they?
MS. FRIEDMAN: No, they did not.
THE CHAIR: I'm going to yield Ms. Matthews' time back to the school. And next is Alissa Sanchez.
FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is Alissa Sanchez, and I am the level head teacher for Grades 6 through 8 at the Montessori Elementary and Middle School. I'm going to make mine super-short. My -- what I would like to share with everybody is how proud I am of the opportunities that our students have at our school.
You've heard from several of our students already. They mentioned internships and big trips. And this is only made possible through the support of our administration. Whether that's helping us with field trips, showing up for parent meetings, they take a very active role. And it's through them that we're able to accomplish all the things that we do at the middle school and elementary levels.
THE CHAIR: The rest are teachers. So we're done. No offense to the teachers. We've extended the time.
Thanks. And thank everyone who came to speak. We -- we say this all the time. We don't hear from students enough, and it continually reminds us of why we do what we do.
And I wish we could spend more time dedicated in our meetings to truly hear from -- from
the students and what they're doing. And I think we need to really do better at trying to carve out that time so that people do get an opportunity to truly see the great things that are going on out there.

So, once again, thank you for all the work you did with the packet. I know it's -- it's time-consuming, hopefully, a little reflective, so that it's -- and that's part of the intention of it.

I want to, first off, thank you, because your performance framework chart looks, I think, better than any school I think we've seen so far, without a doubt. One minor glitch this year. And I think as long as you had the immunizations -- but I understand the need for the log.

But thank you so much. Because as we've said before, this is an indication of how the school is truly functioning, that this only happens because there's good communication from the administration to the governance council to the staff, and that you're all working together. Because this is a team family effort, and this truly shows that that exists in the environment of your school. And we appreciate that.

And I think we all -- I guess a little self-reporting. I went to a very structured Catholic elementary school, which I did not fit into, without a -- you know, without a doubt. So to have had the opportunity to be able to go to maybe an unstructured environment wouldn't have been the best for me, either. But -- but I -- I applaud and appreciate this model and admire folks that have the fortitude to buy into the system.

Because it is a system. And it's not easy for some folks to fit into it. And I can only imagine, if you're -- especially if you're getting a student who hasn't started with you, but is coming in in the middle, that kind of adjustment takes a lot of patience and effort to work that through, especially when we're talking middle-school students.

So it's -- you know, I -- I applaud and support the model. So I want to thank you for this. And I appreciate the fact that there was the identification with the potential issue with Istation. So, hopefully, when we get that new data in a month or so, that things will -- things will look better from that. And every time we go into a new assessment cycle, there are adjustments that -- that need to be made. And some schools, for whatever reason, adjust better than others. So it's -- hopefully, we'll see that.

So I'll -- Commissioners, any questions?

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: On the facilities score, it's an above-average number from the State average. Is -- do you own the facility, or are you leasing it?

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Madam Chair, Commissioner Robbins, we are leasing the building right now and are in the process of getting ready to buy it.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Have any of the -- I guess below standard, because it's -- the number is significantly higher than the State average for school facilities.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: It's mainly the roof.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: A roof can drive the score tremendously. Okay. But you said you're in the process of purchasing?

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: We're getting ready to start that in January through a bonding process.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: And you're going to be getting a fair market appraisal on the --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Yeah. They're getting ready to start that right now.

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Ruiz?

COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Good morning. Thank you for coming and all the work you do. Thank you again, Karen, for clarifying the Istation and the discrepancy in the scores. I appreciate that.

So I had a question on your student enrollment in comparison to the State. So your disability -- your students with disabilities and your EL learners, you're at 2 percent while the State is 16.

For disability, you're at 6 percent while the State is at 17 percent.

So my question is what are you-all doing, or what can you do to -- to make sure that we're reaching out to all students across all levels?

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Basically, for our lottery, we advertise.

THE CHAIR: I'm sorry. Is the green light on?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Yeah, it's on. A little bit closer. Is that better? I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Basically, the lottery process. We reach
out with the Kids Magazine. We do Facebook. We hand fliers out where all the kids go on their community service trips. We reach out through -- yeah, through social media a lot and through our parents. And -- yeah, the Storehouse is one of the places that we put a flier up every year, different places like that. That's how we're reaching out. We put a lot out. So...

COMMISSIONER RUIZ: And I understand the lottery process. Those numbers are very, very low compared to --

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: We really reach out quite a bit; so...

THE CHAIR: So I have a question on that line. And I understand the concept of the community table. There's -- there continues to be an expressed concern over schools -- our charter schools that don't provide food services. And I think there is a possibility, through legislation, that that waiver may no longer be available.

But I'm just wondering if there is any correlation with the small numbers of economically disadvantaged that aren't coming to your -- that come to your school. Because you have a small number. Is that -- is that not directly related to the fact that food services aren't offered there, so your -- it's -- it's a -- you know, it's a subliminal message that -- you know. 'Cause if parents can't afford to send their child to school with some sort of food, they're not going to send their child to the school.

So I'm wondering if you'd had any thought about that.

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: It could be.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Yeah, we've never really --

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: We've never -- I've never thought of that. But it could be. We don't have a kitchen. And our students eat family-style within their classrooms. It's part of the curriculum. That's where they practice their grace and courtesy.

So it's worked for us all along. But you're right, and that is something to consider.

THE CHAIR: Right. And I understand. And that's -- the lack of a kitchen is certainly a problem that many of our charters face. But I think there's -- there are opportunities to contract with food service providers. We have charters that contract with local school districts when the food is delivered. We have food trucks that come to the school.

There's a variety of ways that many of the schools deal with the fact that they have the lack of facilities to -- to to make the food. So that -- but that concerns me that that could potentially be a message that's being sent out there, and that's why you're not seeing the great -- a greater diversity in the school, because of that.

So I'm -- you know, I just had that question out there. So...

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: Thank you for that. We'll definitely take it into consideration.

THE CHAIR: Thanks. So let's get into a continuation of the conversation we had a couple of weeks -- a couple of months ago. Because we still have a concern about the -- the mixing of the private pre-K program with the publicly funded students. Because we understand that you've got staff -- and correct me if I'm -- correct me if I'm wrong here.

From what I saw on the website, the casita that you have houses all of the three-year-olds, some of the four-year-olds and some of the Ks.

So how do you mix privately funded students with publicly funded students and keep that clean? That's the -- that's the overarching concern that we have with this.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Madam Chair, "clean" in how? I'm not sure. The money? You are talking the money, right?

THE CHAIR: You've got children that are part of the Ks that are being mixed in with the privately funded program. So there's -- and you've got -- I would -- I would presume you've got staff then. You've got staff that works both with the pre's and the Ks.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Right. Uh-huh.

THE CHAIR: Not -- I mean, not -- not separate staff.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Not separate, no.

THE CHAIR: You've got staff that works with both.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: With both. Uh-huh.

THE CHAIR: So you've got SEG-funded staff working with kids that are privately funded. So it's that mixing of the private and public that we have a concern with.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Okay. You know, like
we said the last time, we received all the money into the operational account. And once the funds become -- once we receive the funds, it's all accounted for through the budget that we present to the, you know, PED.

It's all received into activity accounts, and the money is distributed that way to pay for all the services that we're providing for those kids. So once the money is received by the school, it becomes State funds.

THE CHAIR: I don't think privately -- I could be wrong. But I don't think privately funded money can become State funds.

MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: Yes. It is. It is, yeah. Once the State organization receives those funds, it becomes State funds. And we have to account for it in some way.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: I think the question is how can you be assured -- you know, if private funds are helping subsidize the public, that's one thing. How can you assure this Commission that no SEG funds are subsidizing your pre-K program when they are not identified for that program? That's the issue.

If you have a specific -- if you have a class that has ten students, and you have a teacher, and that teacher -- or you have two teachers. And you have six of those students that are four-year-olds -- or -- you know, maybe five, you know, and they're technically kindergarten, and you have four-year-olds and kindergarten students, how are you segregating and identifying the time allocated of the individuals to that?

Because if you just say, "We're going to put all the money in one pot," you're commingling funds. And by commingling the funds, you cannot identify what SEG funds -- that they are only being used for the K-through-8 program and that no SEG funds are subsidizing your pre-K program at this point. That's the issue.

And I think if I was paying for a pre-K program, I'd want to be sure that none of those funds are subsidizing your State program.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Right. Right.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: So how are you going about in terms of segregating the allocation of the time and the effort -- the money is a separate issue. But you have to be able to allocate and identify the time and effort that's being -- and clearly say, "This is pre-K time and effort. This is K-through-8 time and effort," so you are not then commingling those funds.

You know, once they put them in the bank, I understand they're commingled. On an accounting system, you can track them separately.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: We track it three different ways. I track every -- every penny that comes to the school we receive to whatever that program is, okay? So I know exactly how much money is coming in for every program we do, all the field trips, whatever it may be.

When we assign that in the budget, I know exactly by the budget line items what program is getting paid for that. Does that make sense?

What teacher is being paid out of what line item and all that kind of stuff. I see what you're saying. So I can tell you exactly what, where, how, and when.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: But if you have students that are kindergarten students mixed in with your four-year-olds in your pre-K program, you can show that. But how is the time allocation being handled?

Just to say, "Well, I'm taking this money, and I'm paying for this teacher with these funds," you know, that doesn't really give assurance to the State that you aren't commingling and you aren't subsidizing one program with funds from another program.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Okay.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: You have to have a separate set of books or separate accounts for the individuals. If you just use a single account line or payroll for the teacher, you haven't segregated.

MR. ALBRIGHT: I can segregate them out in our system. I know this is my pre-K teacher that is teaching our three- and four-year-olds. And it's a separate line item for them. Is that what you're asking? I can do that, yes.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Well, for the three- and four-year-olds. But we --

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: The Ks are a different one, right.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: But we were told that some of the Ks and four-year-olds are commingled with students.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: The students are together in the same class, right.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: So that's the
issue. You may say, "We're doing this over here. We're doing..." -- but once you put them in the same room, who's paying for that room? Is it the SEG funds or pre-K funds?

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: It's both. The pre-K pays for itself above and beyond, okay? I have to put it into the public funds, according to the budget. Okay? Does that make sense, kind of, sort of? I have to put it that way according to the budget.

MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: Commissioner Robbins and Commissioner Gibson. And I understand where you're going, Commissioner Robbins and Commissioner Gibson. I think the problem is that the Public Education Department is telling the school to put the private pre-K funding into their public school budget.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: I understand.

MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: And so -- and I don't -- I think that probably the correct accounting method would be to keep the private pre-K funding separate and then state, between an MOU or some sort of a contract between the private nonprofit and the charter, to say, "We're going to pay you $20,000 per year to pay for services of your pre-K -- or your kindergarten teacher to pay for the pre-K program."

Does that seem like more of a --

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: That would be cleaner.

The other thing is you can sit there and say if you have a class that has four- and five-year-olds -- so pre-K and kindergarten -- and they're in the same class, and you have six of one and four of the other, well, that would be 60 percent, 40 percent. But if you allocate --

(COMmissioner Caballero enters meeting.)

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: -- if you identify that 60 percent of this cost is coming in here and 40 percent is coming there -- but you have to have a policy and a methodology written down that will identify that.

I dealt with federal funds, where when you're paying for something -- they can be paid from multiple federal funds. But the feds want to know how much of those federal funds -- what percentage from this fund, what percentage from this fund. And that's the problem is, is there's not a clean method. Once it all goes into one pot, unless you're allocating in a fair way, which also means you have to have some method of observation to say -- and of checking it periodically to ensure that that number is accurate, because it can change over time.

One year, it may be 60/40; another year, it may be 70/30. That can change once or twice a year. And we -- I think you have to have a policy and a procedure for ensuring that is done.

And that's part of what I think the governance council should establish as a policy for governance purposes on your finances.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Okay.

THE CHAIR: And I'm -- I think that's a great idea, the MOU. I really do. I think that would just make it a whole lot cleaner.

MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: And in defense of the school, they've been getting different signals from the auditors, from the State. And so if we are having a directive from our authorizer to do it in a manner, then we could work with you to structure that.

THE CHAIR: I think that would be great.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for that.

Commissioner Ruiz?

COMMISSIONER RUIZ: And I was just going to say the same thing, that I think that's an excellent idea. It keeps it very clean, very separate, and then there's not that picture or that image that those funds that are generated from the SEG are being used for the other. So I think that's an excellent, excellent idea.

THE CHAIR: Yeah.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Madam Chair, Commissioner Voigt?

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Voigt?

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning. It's so wonderful to see student advocates here this morning speaking up for the school. Thank you so much for getting up and making the drive.

So I just have a question regarding your enrollment lottery. The private pre-K kids, are they automatically enrolled into the kindergarten elementary grades, or do they have to go through the lottery?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Madam Chair, Commissioner Voigt, the way we do it is we lottery them in, like,
two years in advance.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: To what grade?

THE CHAIR: Say that again.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Two years in advance or one year in advance. So if they're a four-year-old -- or a three-year-old, we would lottery them in for the kindergarten two years in advance -- two years ahead.

THE CHAIR: I honestly don't think you can do that. That's like saying -- because then other schools would be able to lottery out two years in the advance to their kindergartens or their first grades. That, we can't do. Nice thought; but --

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Especially when you have a 300-student waiting list.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Madam Chair, the federal law lets us do that.

THE CHAIR: But we're dealing with State law with the lottery system.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: And that's the way we were directed by PED to do it, when we first set it up.

THE CHAIR: What?

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Yes, I'm serious. When we put in the program. That was 2008.

THE CHAIR: We need that in writing, because you can't do that. Because, honestly, that would allow every other school to lottery out two years out to their kindergartens.

We would need a rule for that. But if you have got a letter that goes back I don't know how long -- but there would have to be a PED rule-making about that lottery that would allow -- because that opens up Pandora's Box for any school to start -- you know, we could start lotterying at birth, you know.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Advanced lotterying.

MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, there isn't anything in the statute, 22-8B-4.1 that when a lottery has to be held for any particular grade.

So what I understand that the school is doing is that they open a lottery for kindergarten two years in advance. It's not as if the pre-K kiddos are selected to go into the lottery. They just hold a lottery two years in advance.

So, again, this is a gray area. Apparently, you don't agree with our interpretation of the statute. The statute is absolutely silent as to how lotteries are to be held. And this is the method the school uses.

THE CHAIR: And I'm going to tell you -- and I appreciate that creativity. However, I think that opens up potentials for so many other schools that I'm going to -- I'm going to say, personally, I don't support that. And I think we'll have to have a further discussion about it.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yeah. Madam Chair, I would think that we would need to -- we need to get with the Public Education Department and see what needs to be looked at as far as rule-making. If there is no definitive instructions within lottery guidelines, well, there needs to be. So that's something we need to go back on.

THE CHAIR: But I think -- either now or at contract negotiations time, this have to be addressed, for this school right now; but going forward.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Going forward, correct.

THE CHAIR: Yeah. Okay. So you learn something new every day.

MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, absolutely willing to talk about an issue or a solution at contract negotiations.

THE CHAIR: I think that gives us all a little more time to look at things.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Madam Chair. Could I just ask a quick question on your enrollment? The cap is 500, and last year, the numbers were 426; so...

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Between 426 and 430, we have now.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Okay. 430. So you have a greater cap. What is your going occupancy?

MR. ALBRIGHT: It's about 450. Right now it's 430 and pushing it. It's pretty full.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: So you're pushing the building occupancy with what you have. So you do have to limit the number of students based on the number of applications.

What is the waiting list you currently have?

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Currently, I'd say it's about 200, something in that range.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: And I think that's the issue. We have schools that -- they don't have -- conduct a lottery because they have -- they
I don't have as many students as their cap allows. But when you come into either an E-Occupancy cap or an enrollment cap, and you're pushing that, and you have this large waiting list, I think doing a pre-lottery kind of -- you know, as we've said here, it may not be disallowed. But I don't believe that was the intent of requiring a lottery for the charters.

And I think, you know, we just have to have a discussion about that. Because it does open up a whole thing of -- you know, I know some private pre-Ks, you have to enroll them at birth, basically. But I think, you know, that's going beyond what we're looking at when we're dealing with a public institution that is supposed to be open to all students. So thank you.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Commissioner Armbruster?

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I have a number of things. First of all -- and I think I've said this, but I will say it again. In California, my daughter went to Montessori from age 4 until sixth grade. So we're all about that.

But I do have some questions and concerns about some things. Now, what you're doing with students are magnificent. I applaud you on that. But I do want to say one thing, and everybody is going to be really proud of me to say this. I do want you to know that charter schools are the same as public schools. We just call them traditional public schools, TPs. And charter schools are also public schools. I'm just -- it's just a little learning thing for today. It was. It was a very minor thing. It's a very minor thing. Just wanted to say that.

So what is the cost of preschool? Is it the same for three-year-olds and four-year-olds? And how much is that?

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: It's $715.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And that's for a five-day?

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Five days a week.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So do you just a regular school year, not in the summer?

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: Yes.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And do you have -- so there's no disadvantaged -- discount --

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4:00. The school day itself is 9:00 to 3:30. But we give them a half-hour on each side to drop off and pick up.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And what is the general class sizes? Maybe it changes from three, four --

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: In the three-year-old class, there's about 22 students. And in the four- and five-year-old classes -- we call them 4- to- 6; it's the pre-K and K -- there's 26, 27.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And is there -- are there two teachers?

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: That's a teacher and an EA in each 4- to-6 class, our kindergarten class. And in the three-year-old class, there's one teacher and two EAs.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And for the -- I know this is going to be another one. So the law -- New Mexico law is that five-year-olds do not have to be potty trained. So with your conditions that three-year-olds have to be potty-trained, I'm not sure how that works.

Then -- I mean, you can do whatever you want for your private part, of course, three- and
four-year-olds. But when you get to five-year-olds and kindergarten, they really do not have to be potty-trained.

And I will tell you that I checked the law. And I will also tell you that I was astounded.

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: I didn't know that.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Nor did I. And it came from a kindergarten teacher at a traditional public school who told me she has students who are not potty-trained. So that's why I checked with PED.

And so it may be something you need to look at. I was actually astounded, because as I said, when -- when my daughter went to preschool, you had to be potty-trained. And she didn't go until she was four.

So I find it pretty amazing. other than students with disabilities, because that's another whole issue; that's not going to be considered. So I think you might just need to check into that. Because now you're sort of -- I don't know. The three- and four-year-olds, you can do what you want with. But the five-year-olds, you can't have those conditions, which sound like they're a condition, because all the other kids are.

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: Thank you for letting us know. That's the first I've heard of that. I'm surprised by it.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I knew about this about two months ago; so I'm not much ahead of you.

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: I taught kindergarten for a long time. That's the first I heard of that.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: When the kindergarten teacher told me that, I said, "You must be kidding." I just want you to be with the law in the right way so you can look at that in whatever manner you want to do that.

So the teachers in -- who are teaching three- and four-year-olds who have some five-year-olds at the casita, do those have -- I know they're Montessori-trained. Do they also have a New Mexico credential?

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: So teachers that have kindergarten students in the classroom have the State certification as well as Montessori certification. Our three-year-old teacher is a Montessori-certified teacher, but she does not have State certification.

COMMISSIONER ARMSTRUSTER: Nor does she need to. So -- that's why when they are mixed --

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: We have a lead teacher at each level. Ms. Melody is the lead teacher. She oversees the three-year-old class also. She's certified, yes.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I think I read the website right. But maybe not. So you have some kindergarteners with the three- and four-year-olds at one site, the other site; and then some kindergarteners are at the other site.

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: Yes.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Do you decide by age or --

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: Well, there's different reasons why you'd want to be at one campus or the other. Our little campus is really sweet and intimate, and, you know, a lot of parents want that. It might be by their work or by their homes. Or maybe they don't want their child in a larger environment yet.

So we have requests for that campus. We kind of work through it that way.

If the students have siblings, all three-year-olds have to be at that campus, because we don't have three-year-olds at the main campus.

When they become a four-year-old, if they have siblings, we try our best -- and we've been able to do it so far -- to get them over to the main campus. But a lot of times once they get over there, and the teachers included, once they get over there, they want to stay. It really is a very sweet little place.

THE CHAIR: So can I just ask a question? We have the NMCI for the main campus. Why don't we have an NMCI for the casita?

MS. KAREN WOERNER: I will have to check if we did submit one.

THE CHAIR: I don't think we do, do we?

Is that all included in --

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: That's included, yeah. That's what they gave us, yeah.

THE CHAIR: Oh, okay.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: I'm in the process of trying to get them to -- they're going to revisit the school in January before we buy it to make sure that we -- what we need. So when we get ready to buy it, we'll have that all ready.

THE CHAIR: So you're buying both piece --
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<td>1 or just the --</td>
<td>1 MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: A couple of</td>
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<td>2 MR. ALBRIGHT: The little one, we own. We</td>
<td>3 charter renewals.</td>
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<td>3 bought that many years ago.</td>
<td>4 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Does this affect</td>
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<td>4 THE CHAIR: I'm sorry.</td>
<td>5 future decisions?</td>
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<td>5 MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: The little campus, the</td>
<td>6 THE CHAIR: No, no, no.</td>
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<td>6 casita campus, the school owns that.</td>
<td>7 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: No? Okay. Thank</td>
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<td>7 THE CHAIR: So they give you an overall</td>
<td>8 you.</td>
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<td>8 NMCI.</td>
<td>9 THE CHAIR: No.</td>
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<td>9 MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: I tried to get them to</td>
<td>10 Commissioner Armbruster, I'm sorry we</td>
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<td>10 split that up, and I've been struggling with that.</td>
<td>11 interrupted you.</td>
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<td>11 THE CHAIR: It's kind of odd, I think,</td>
<td>12 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Well, it's fine,</td>
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<td>12 isn't it?</td>
<td>13 because we're on -- staying on subject. So I'm on a</td>
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<td>13 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Generally, they</td>
<td>14 different one now.</td>
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<td>14 only do one for the whole campus.</td>
<td>15 THE CHAIR: Okay.</td>
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<td>15 THE CHAIR: But the campus -- but the</td>
<td>16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So on -- two</td>
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<td>16 campus is separated.</td>
<td>17 different questions, and they may have same or</td>
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<td>17 MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: We're separated. I</td>
<td>18 different answers. So I love the Suzuki, of course.</td>
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<td>18 don't know.</td>
<td>19 So do you provide the instruments and -- or is there</td>
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<td>19 THE CHAIR: So it's really two separate</td>
<td>20 an extra charge for that?</td>
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<td>20 facilities.</td>
<td>21 And I'm going to give you two questions,</td>
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<td>21 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Many schools have</td>
<td>22 so there may be the same answer, or not. So for</td>
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<td>22 multiple buildings on their campus.</td>
<td>23 this phenomenal trip to Poland, how does that -- how</td>
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<td>23 THE CHAIR: But this building isn't on</td>
<td>24 is that paid?</td>
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<td>24 their campus.</td>
<td>25 MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: So as far as the</td>
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<td>25 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Well, that should</td>
<td>26 Suzuki, we do have school violins that people can</td>
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<td>1 be something -- if it's physically a different</td>
<td>1 borrow or rent for a low price, $5 a month. A lot</td>
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<td>2 address and everything, it should be a different --</td>
<td>3 of students rent them themselves or buy them. And</td>
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<td>3 THE CHAIR: That's why I thought it was on</td>
<td>4 we have a closet of parent violins, so they can also</td>
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<td>4 the same property.</td>
<td>5 take classes to help their student at home.</td>
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<td>5 MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: We've been trying to</td>
<td>6 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And so the -- I</td>
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<td>6 get them to separate.</td>
<td>7 think you had cello and viola as well.</td>
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<td>7 THE CHAIR: In one NMCI.</td>
<td>8 MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: We don't have</td>
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<td>8 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: I will raise that</td>
<td>9 cellos and violas.</td>
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<td>9 this afternoon. This afternoon, I have a</td>
<td>10 MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Yes, we do.</td>
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<td>10 subcommittee meeting. I'll raise that with the</td>
<td>11 MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: We've increased</td>
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<td>11 director of the --</td>
<td>12 now from violins to violas. But we don't have</td>
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<td>12 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: And I have a</td>
<td>13 cellos yet. We look for donations. We ask</td>
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<td>13 question.</td>
<td>14 Robertson's. Sometimes people will leave the</td>
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<td>14 THE CHAIR: Okay. Commissioner Davis?</td>
<td>15 school, graduate, and leave their instrument behind.</td>
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<td>15 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: So if there are two</td>
<td>16 So we have instruments.</td>
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<td>16 facilities at two different addresses, they have</td>
<td>17 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: If I hear about</td>
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<td>17 only one charter?</td>
<td>18 some, I'll be calling you.</td>
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<td>18 THE CHAIR: They do.</td>
<td>19 What about the trips to Poland?</td>
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<td>19 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: And --</td>
<td>20 MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: I'd love for the</td>
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<td>20 THE CHAIR: And how long have you had</td>
<td>21 kids to speak to that, because they are amazing at</td>
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<td>21 those two separate facilities?</td>
<td>22 fundraising. We have lots of opportunities, and</td>
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<td>22 MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Wow. A long time.</td>
<td>23 they work on it years in advance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Yeah.</td>
<td>24 We have my grandson who is in fifth grade</td>
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<td>24 THE CHAIR: A long time. This goes way</td>
<td>25 who is already starting to earn money because an</td>
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<td>25 back, to way, way back.</td>
<td>26 eighth-grade wants to go to Poland. And so there's</td>
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lots of fundraising opportunities.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Are there -- how do I say this?

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: Scholarships?

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: -- scholarships?

If someone can't raise this money, that would not prevent some child from going? So, basically, every eighth-grader gets there somehow. Either you all are subsidizing it, or I don't care how you do it. But it's not excluding people? That's a great thing.

And the other thing -- and this is just an unusual thing. And Commissioner Ruiz touched on it on the students with disabilities. It's kind of an interesting thing because of all the other schools that we have been working with on renewal, that their special ed population, students with disability population, has expanded, tripled in often cases, and yours has not.

And I find that -- I'm not faulting you. I'm just saying how unusual that would be. Because I would think that some of the -- we're talking about 24 percent, 30 percent. And, again -- and the same number of schools. I mean, you're a big school. You're not a school of 75 children.

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Currently, this year, our numbers have gone up. We've got 16 gifted. We've got 13 speech. And we've got 12 -- sort of right around 36, 38 kids. We're about 30 percent probably. It's going up quite a bit. We've got a lot in line now that are getting ready to go into the process.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Of course, when I talk about students with disabilities, I'm not talking about your gifted kids, unless they're dually exceptional, and that's quite possible as well.

Let me just see one second. Let me let someone else speak for a minute, and then I'll come back.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Madam Chair, I just have a question to echo Commissioner Armbruster.

What was it? Now I just forgot.

Oh, okay. So is Poland the only country that you have an exchange program with?

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: Well, we certainly don't over-identify. We have a lot of things in place that help kids when they -- when they need help. And it's the lottery -- Stan, can you speak to the numbers that we have?

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: Uh-huh.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Because within the Suzuki Method of stringed instrument instruction, Japan would be a great country to coordinate with. There's a -- there's a nonprofit in town called Global One-to-One. And they facilitate student letter-writing. And they also facilitate student exchange programs. Global One-to-One. Sarah Wilkinson is the director of that. It's a great organization.

As a former Montessori instructor in Japan and a Suzuki violin method student when I was young, it's a great method to learn. I'm glad that there's some stringed instrument players out there.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: We'll look into that. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: You're welcome.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I have one more.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Sure.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And this is just a -- sorry. I'm thinking about this because, of course, New Mexico is different in having the GATE program with IEPs and all of that.

But one comment a student made in the interview for your renewal was that -- I don't even know if it's a "he" or a "she" -- but thought she -- will say that -- could go ahead in math, but was kind of capped out, maybe wasn't in the GATE program, gifted program.

And so I just wondered, because my experience with Montessori many years ago was that it didn't really matter who you are -- she was in a class of three, four -- third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade kids, so it really didn't matter, and they just went ahead in math.

But I don't know. Because now we're in New Mexico, and we have these laws, and you're a public school and blah-blah-blah; and I was doing it in a private school. So.

What do you do with students in math?

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: That part of the report was really difficult for my students and my math teacher to read. It was incorrect. It was a misunderstanding. And Miss Alissa, who is one of our math teachers, I'm sure would love to speak to that. Because when she read the -- and the kids took a lot of time writing, saying, "I know that's wrong, because I'm not in the gifted program, but I'm in the advanced math classroom."

So that was absolutely a misunderstanding.
COMMISSIONER ARMSTRUBSTER: It just happened to be one of these things, since I'm a Montessori parent, that I thought, "Really." That seems so unusual.

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: I did request that to be removed; but it wasn't.

COMMISSIONER ARMSTRUBSTER: That's fine. It's kids' perceptions, and that's actually why I questioned it.

MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: It mobilized our students.

COMMISSIONER ARMSTRUBSTER: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Any other questions?

(No response.)

THE CHAIR: Okay.

I have a question before I make the motion, so -- I need to know --

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: No, no, no. Go ahead. Finish.

THE CHAIR: The -- when you were referring to the MOU, is it the Foundation that -- so -- well, I was asking -- sort of him and you. If it was the Foundation that operated the pre-K, then the -- so who would the MOU be between?

MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, I think it would be appropriately between the Foundation and the charter school. The Foundation is currently in your charter contract; correct? It's not?

MR. STAN ALBRYCHT: No.

THE CHAIR: Oh. Because we didn't do that.

MS. AMI JAEGER: Because it's an old contract.

THE CHAIR: It's the old contract. It will be in the new contract. We didn't in the old contracts. We didn't have that disclosed in the old contracts, I don't believe. I don't even think there was a little check -- I think it was only a check box, "We have a foundation." But I don't think, beyond that, there was anything in there.

MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: Madam Chair, I think in the current contract form and in the old contract form, the concept of a supporting partnership is the question. Now, whether or not they have a foundation or not that supports the school is a separate question.

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THE CHAIR: We include the foundation documents in the contract. We do. Yeah, we do.

Have you not done any contracts with us?

MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: Yes. But the question -- I just want to be clear that it's the -- we'll identify the foundation. We'll talk about the partnership issue at discussion.

THE CHAIR: Got you. Okay.

Commissioner Caballero?

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yes. And I know I was a little late today, and I don't know if we talked about the -- the ethnicity.

THE CHAIR: We did.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: We did? Okay. Then I'll skip mine.

THE CHAIR: You were here in spirit.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yes. And I'm beginning to see it often. And a lot is very little progression in the English Learners in this proficiency. And I wonder why. And looking at the -- at your percentages, I don't know if there is a correlation.

What are you doing to -- to promote that?

Are we losing Hispanic students? The gap is pretty wide.
1 location of the -- of the school.
2 And at 46, when the school district is at
3 60-something percentage, that's a big disparity.
4 APS is at 66, and you guys are at 46 percent
5 Hispanic. So where are you located?
6 MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: We're located on
7 Montaño between Fourth Street and Coors. But we
8 have students from Belen all the way to Placitas and
9 Bernalillo. We draw from a pretty large area.
10 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Uh-huh. All the
11 schools say that. And so are there no Hispanic
12 neighbors close by?
13 MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: Oh, I'm sure there
14 is.
15 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: So, specifically,
16 what are you doing to inform and do outreach to
17 these communities to let them know your school
18 exists, at least? And it is a hard population to
19 reach. And you have to get to the parents.
20 So what is it that you're doing?
21 MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: You have to repeat
22 your answer, because he wasn't here.
23 MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: Oh, okay. I'm
24 sorry. We put up fliers in different areas,
25 especially where the kids volunteer, such as The

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<tr>
<td>1 Not everybody's going to go Montessori. I</td>
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<td>2 understand that. Not everybody wants or understands</td>
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<td>3 enough to send their kids to Montessori.</td>
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<td>4 When I was -- when my children were very,</td>
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<td>5 very young, I didn't understand it either. And I</td>
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<td>6 refused to do anything other than public schools.</td>
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<td>7 Once I understood what it was, then I was all for</td>
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<td>8 it.</td>
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<td>9 But -- so the outreach to Hispanic parents</td>
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<td>10 is different. And I don't think, with your</td>
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<td>11 percentages -- I'm sorry, but I don't think you're</td>
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<td>12 doing enough. The well-educated, high-income will</td>
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<td>13 understand and go to your school.</td>
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<td>14 I remind you, this is a public school, and</td>
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<td>15 the outreach has to be not just, &quot;Well, we're</td>
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<td>16 following the rules.&quot; It --</td>
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<td>17 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Madam Chair?</td>
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<td>18 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: We're more than a</td>
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<td>19 public school.</td>
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<td>20 Go ahead. That's it, Madam --</td>
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<td>21 THE CHAIR: Okay. Karen, did you want to</td>
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<td>22 say something?</td>
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<td>23 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Madam Chair, I had a</td>
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<td>24 question. Our staff has obtained some more detailed</td>
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<td>25 data around the proficiency rates that I started</td>
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<td>1 Storehouse. We do Albuquerque Kids Magazine and a</td>
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<td>2 lot of social media.</td>
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<td>3 We send out fliers to our families and ask</td>
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<td>4 them to hang them at work and at other schools, and,</td>
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<td>5 you know, send it out to their contact list.</td>
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<td>6 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Okay. Now, you</td>
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<td>7 mention areas within the school. So that's not an</td>
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<td>8 outreach. And there's a -- an insistence on doing</td>
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<td>9 social media only. And that cuts out a lot of</td>
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<td>10 Hispanic families that --</td>
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<td>11 MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: When I say I send</td>
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<td>12 it out via social media, I'll send it to you and</td>
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<td>13 say, &quot;Can you hang this up at Mabry Hall?&quot;</td>
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<td>14 So our parents hang it up at their places</td>
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<td>15 of employment and different places that they</td>
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<td>16 frequent. So our parents do a lot of that for us.</td>
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<td>17 And they are not within the school. They're all</td>
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<td>18 over the state, really.</td>
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<td>19 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Right. So I</td>
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<td>20 understand you have students from all over the</td>
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<td>21 state. But -- so I'm getting at the details.</td>
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<td>22 If you have a Hispanic community close by,</td>
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<td>23 it seems to me you're not doing affirmative work to</td>
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<td>24 do outreach within your immediate community. And it</td>
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<td>25 shows on your percentage.</td>
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with about Istation. I didn't know if you wanted me |
to share that now or if that's something we wait for |
the report, the academic pieces. |
THE CHAIR: Okay. I need a little bit of |
clarification on that. Is that data the school |
already has? Or is that data that's going to be |
populated out? |
MS. KAREN WOERNER: Good question. It is |
data that's already available publicly, but we had |
not broken down -- I only learned this week about |
the Istation changes. And so we had not yet broken |
down by grade level. But I have -- the staff has |
done that now. So it is available publicly. I just |
have broken it out K-to-2 and 3-to-8. |
THE CHAIR: My only concern is we haven't |
done this with other schools. So I think maybe it's |
best to -- at negotiations, if we need to address |
it, I think that'll just be easier. But I |
appreciate it. |
Commissioner Voigt? |
COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Thank you. Real |
quick, I just want to respond to Commissioner |
Caballero's accusations and just let you know -- |
COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: I'm sorry. There |
were no accusations.
COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Statement.
Statement. Sorry.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: I'm concerned, and that every school gets a grilling from me.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: So just responding to Commissioner Caballero's statement is that New Mexico Kids Magazine is a statewide publication, and that to specifically target any ethnicity, I don't think any charter school really does that.
And with an open lottery and open enrollment system, it's just -- there's -- I think they are doing the best they can with their open lottery to enroll all demographics of kids.

And New Mexico Kids, if you haven't seen that magazine, it is a statewide publication.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Well, Madam Chair, we have to understand -- and we're in the wake of a court lawsuit that says that we have to educate the at-risk children. And so the standards are different now. And we have to understand that.
Otherwise, we're going to get the big hammer. The Legislature is going to have to face the hammer, this legislature, because they failed.

I am sorry. There has to be a proactive approach to recruitment. Otherwise, we're going to see the same thing -- years ago, the feeling was that charter schools were going to be for the well-to-do. It was the same feeling in El Paso County, where I'm from. And it bears out that way.

Now there's all kinds of changes or squabbling. I don't want that. I want us to -- to begin to be more proactive.

I can tell you that a school that is well-mixed of all kinds of people, it is better for everybody. I did not grow until I went out of state to -- to graduate school. And I didn't -- I really didn't know other folks.

And I was glad I did. And it -- that's why I insist that schools should be an integrator.

And schools in the communities, the Hispanic community, should have other kinds of kids, very, very wealthy kids or very, very smart kids in their classroom also, so they can learn from them.

But we cannot -- we have a lottery, and we bring in kids from all over the state. And how many kids do you have from your neighborhood? You don't even know. You don't know.

And everybody says, "Well, we put it in the internet."
Well, my kind of parent is not going to be in the internet looking for that. "Well, we'll do it in social media."

No, it's not going to cut it.

And so we have to -- I have to tell you that that doesn't help. I have to tell you that you have to look at the old-style methods of reaching out to community, old, old-style, door-to-door, or small gatherings, or people that are entrenched in that community to bring -- church.

So I bring out issues where it is glaring, or -- to me, 10 percent is glaring. And this is even more glaring.

So I ask the questions: What are you doing -- if you have a community in front of you and you're counting on Belen and Los Lunas, because we're Montessori, it's not going to cut it with me.

And I don't think it's going to cut it with the Legislature, and I don't think it's going to cut it with the courts.

I am sorry. There has to be a proactive approach to recruitment. Otherwise, we're going to see the same thing -- years ago, the feeling was that charter schools were going to be for the well-to-do. It was the same feeling in El Paso County, where I'm from. And it bears out that way.

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MS. MARY JANE BESANTE: We do have open house every year, too. And I guess I didn't mention that, "Meet TMES," where the students are playing the instruments, and people come in from all over the neighborhood, too.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. And I want to thank Karen, because she sent the NMCI for this school. So I did see that. And the NMCI only lists that Montaño address.

So I'd appreciate it if you could get that straightened out; because that's why -- I'm even thinking that it's all one big piece of property, because there's only one street address listed on the NMCI.
So I think it would be helpful if -- because how do you do insurance with the two separate building --

**MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS:** They're not connected. You insure separate buildings.

**THE CHAIR:** Yeah. But -- I guess you don't need the NMCI for the insurance. No? Okay. Is there any further discussion?

So I move that the Public Education Commission renew the charter for Montessori Elementary and Middle School Albuquerque -- "Albuquerque" is in your official name, correct? -- Albuquerque -- for five years.

**COMMISSIONER VOIGT:** No, it's not.

**MS. MARY JANE BESANTE:** It's not.

**MR. STAN ALBRYCHT:** Just the Montessori Elementary and Middle School.

**THE CHAIR:** Sorry. I move that the Public Education Commission renew the charter for the Montessori Elementary and Middle School for five years, with the conditions that the foundation and school enter into an MOU that delineates the allocation of private tuition and SEG funding for pre-K and kindergarten programs, and that the New Mexico System of School Support and Accountability Report prepared by PED shows similar performance for SY 2018-'19 in the student growth, highest quartile; student growth, middle quartile; student growth, lowest quartile; English Learner progress, chronic absenteeism, college-and-career readiness, education climate, with no statistically significant decrease in performance.

**COMMISSIONER RUIZ:** Second.

**THE CHAIR:** Motion by Commissioner Gipson, a second by Commissioner Ruiz.

Any further discussion? If not, roll call, please.

**COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER:** Commissioner Ruiz?

**COMMISSIONER RUIZ:** Yes.

**COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER:** Commissioner Robbins?

**COMMISSIONER ROBBINS:** Yes.

**COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER:** Commissioner Caballero?

**COMMISSIONER CABALLERO:** Yes.

**COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER:** Commissioner Voigt?

**COMMISSIONER VOIGT:** Yes.

**COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER:** Commissioner Crone?

**COMMISSIONER CRONE:** Yes.

**COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER:** Commissioner Armstrong votes "Yes."

**Commissioner Raftery.**

**COMMISSIONER RAFTERY:** Yes.

**COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER:** Commissioner Davis?

**COMMISSIONER DAVIS:** Yes.

**COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER:** Commissioner Gipson?

**THE CHAIR:** Yes.

**COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER:** Nine-to-zero vote.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. The motion passes, nine-zero. Thank you so much. And we're going to take a short break.

(Recess taken, 10:59 a.m. to 11:25 a.m.)

**THE CHAIR:** Good morning. **MR. RAFAE MARTINEZ:** Good morning. **THE CHAIR:** Thank you for traveling up, and thank you for your patience waiting for us. We got a little delayed this morning, and we start chatting amongst ourselves, and we lose sight -- we're having fun. We lose sight of why we're here.

Thank you once again. And I just have my brief little script that I have to say before we start, and it is regarding the renewal with conditions.

So the PED has not provided a report or review of the data for School Year '18-'19 Accountability. It is important for schools to have the complete academic data as part of its renewal information for this renewal and future years.

The PEC needs complete State Accountability Reports to make the best decision on school renewal applications.

The PEC will review financial and operational performance, because the data is complete at this meeting, December 2019.

If the PEC decides to issue a renewal with conditions, the PEC will clearly state what Accountability information it will review from the PED Accountability Report.

When the Accountability data is prepared by PED, and the school has had an opportunity to review the data -- no less than ten days -- the PEC will review the data and remove the condition or possibly non-renew the charter.
At the future meeting, January or February of 2020, the PEC will only consider the issues related to the reason for the conditions and will not consider any other issues related to the renewal.

So thank you.

And, once again, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to raise them, because we want people to be as comfortable as they can with what is going on.

So I'm guessing there's no one here to speak. But in case there is, there is a sign-up sheet there. So please -- so we'll do the CSD report. You'll have your 15 minutes. And then we'll move on from there. So thanks once again.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: Thank you, Madam Chair, Commissioners, school representatives. Good morning.

Albuquerque Sign Language Academy, as you know, serves Grades K through 12. They've added 12 this last year, I think.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Transitioning this year to 12.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: With 103 current -- approximately 103 students enrolled, at least at the time of the Part A report. They serve deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing students, and are rather a unique school in several ways, as indicated in the foreward of our Part A, which I'm sure you've seen. But I just want to reference that.

Page 2 of the Part A describes a little bit about the school and their uniqueness in terms of the population they serve.

Unlike many of the other schools, their percentage of students with disabilities is extremely high. And, as a result, you know that their school report card was not to be considered in their evaluation. In fact, they do not technically -- are not assigned a school report card, per the PED, because of their uniqueness.

However, we did share some data from -- the Part A does show some data from the components of the school grade, though, showing that despite all of that, the school is doing really well.

Even if you look at their proficiency rate in science, they scored a 31 percent, and the State average is 35.

All of their growth indices do show that maybe in the first year there was some less-than-expected growth. But as we move along through the term of the contract, you can see that everything is right close or above the zero, which means growing as expected, in math and reading.

The proficiencies by subgroups and those sort of things are provided. But, again, remember that the components of the school grade are not really applicable, given the nature of the school.

The mission goals were -- apparently, in the first couple of years of the contract, the ratings indicate that they were struggling with those goals or maybe not able to provide adequate evidence of them, but, in the last two years, have exceeded or met each of those goals of their charter school contract.

And this is really important, because they have -- I forget -- one, two, three, four -- nine or ten of them. So a lot of goals, in lieu of the school report card pieces.

Moving on, the retention within the school year has always been 95 percent or above. Between school years is in the 80 percents, 81 to 85 -- 87. Teacher retention has increased steadily, showing an upward trend. And I suspect that Mr. Martinez may speak to some of the difficulties the school has experienced in the initial stages with teachers and the programs they've implemented since.

Their -- regarding their financial compliance, they have zero findings in the last year. So kudos to the school for that.

Going back to our analysis pages, the school Met the Standard or Demonstrated Substantial Progress in each of the areas as reviewed by the CSD.

In the organizational performance framework category, there was one -- only one indicator that received a Workings to Meet two years in a row. And that was around the emergency drills.

The school, however -- and those are a one-year lag. So we always look at a full year the prior year when we do our visit. But I will tell you that at this renewal site visit, the school had completed all of their emergency drills as required, and, in fact, had done more than required in terms of they had done three lockdown drills. So they're obviously showing substantial progress in that area.

83 percent of their employees signed the petition; 80 percent of their households signed the petition. And the NMCI index score for the facility was 15.63, significantly below the 23, which is the State average. And lower is better.
Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thanks.

ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: Madam Chair? If I could just add one thing, Madam Chair and Commission -- Commissioners. The organizational performance framework document, the colorful document, I just wanted to make note that from 2016 to current, I think, that this actually may be the best looking version so far.

THE CHAIR: We're having a contest here to see who went from the most reds to the fewest reds. So I think you're on track.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: That's us? That's good.

ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: And I do want to share that this is one of my most favorite schools to go to and visit with and collaborate with. And I think there is a deep partnership with CSD and the Albuquerque Sign Language Academy, and that's been there for many years, for sure.

One last thing I wanted to make note of, and Mr. Martinez might refer to this as well, I handed out a short document that really shares all the shining elements of Albuquerque Sign Language Academy as a nationally renowned model that I think many of our schools here in the nation -- or, sorry -- here in the state can learn from, but also schools across the nation, in working with, you know, student populations that may have hearing loss or full hearing loss could really learn from, for sure.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Good morning. And if you would just identify the folks that are going to speak for the record.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, good morning. My name is Raphael Martinez, R-A-P-H-A-E-L. I'm the director and cofounder of Albuquerque Sign Language Academy. To my left is Kim Silva, co-founder and president of -- I'm sorry -- Kim Moya, co-founder and governing board president. And to my right is Andrew Faber, governing board member. So I could talk for a long time. So...

THE CHAIR: I know.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: So I want to petition for the eight minutes that we didn't use, maybe come over here -- but, anyway. Just, I want to say before I get going on just talking about some of the -- the neat things we're doing at the school and with the school, is in comment to -- to the data piece. I think that's worth an explanation. I want to defer that into the space where there's questions, because I think a history backfill of why we were the only non-graded school is appropriate. But I don't want to take up the time talking about the cool things we're doing on a national level. So I just want to throw that out there.

I also want to acknowledge the CSD for their support and professionalism during this whole process. That team is amazing, and they were really -- they stepped to us and really took the time to understand what makes us a nationally unique program. So kudos to that group. Awesome.

I do want to reference the article I handed out. So last year, we were picked up by an organization called The Century Foundation through a lot of kind of fortuitous circumstance. They -- they identified us. They found out about us. And so we started talking to them, under this umbrella of articles that they write under -- entitled "Different By Design."

And so The Century Foundation is an educational research group that works nationally to -- to seek out best practices in the educational -- in the educational environment nationally. They came -- they came upon us.

So then as we were talking, they said, "Send us your data. We want to look at what you're doing. We know what you proclaim. But let us figure this out if it's for true."

So as a result, they sent out a professor, an unbiased professor out of Gallaudet University last year. And she conducted a weeklong deep dive into our practices, looking at our data, observing, talking to our parents, our teachers, our students, all that.

And so this is the result of that weeklong study. So I think it gives you -- there is some data in there, but there's also kind of the quality to pieces of the school that's captured through her article. So I encourage you to read that. I think it's cool.

But it also exemplifies what we're doing nationally. And so I want to focus on three specific partnerships that we're involved in right now which I think address why we've been successful and what the gap was on the educational front before we existed.

So the world of deaf ed before we were
around, there was really two dichotomies existing.

Educational pedagogies; right? There was the deaf

ed, big "D" deaf, deaf culture, and heavy sign

language piece represented by the New Mexico School

for the Deaf.

And on the other side there was an oral

def approach of education represented by the

Presbyterian Ear Institute. They were at war for

years.

This group, the School for the Deaf group,

really embraces that whole idea of deaf culture and

sign language.

The other side is -- is -- doesn't embrace

that at all. In fact, they view sign language as a

crutch that keeps kids from being able to speak and

act accordingly in the hearing world.

So those two -- those were our only

choices before we existed.

What we created is this hybrid model that

really does pay attention to the abilities, the

needs of kids and families, and their desires and

how they leverage those resources in a world that's

ever-changing.

And so that's where we plant our pole,

right, is this idea that our program is built on the

needs of real human beings, real kids and their

families.

So to that end, we've -- again, over

serendipitous circumstances, we've come in contact

and are now working formally with the Penn State

University -- Penn State and the University of

Minnesota -- in developing -- they -- we were their

only -- we were the beta test site for a

never-before-created reading progress monitoring

tool normed to deaf kids.

That's a mouthful; right?

So we -- three years ago, through just

crazy circumstance, we got in contact with these

folks. They came around and they said, "We want to

use you as the only site to test this tool that

we've created."

It was out of Penn State in partnership

with the University of Minnesota, never before

created. And so we, of course, jumped on board with

that.

The year after that, they invited the Iowa

School for the Deaf and the Minneapolis School

District. So we were in -- that was their test

site. And then since then, it's grown.

So, in September, we met with Secretary

Warniment and Director Lynn Vasquez, and we now have

that test approved for use with us and to be used

statewide for all kids where it can be used

appropriately.

So -- and that speaks to our ideal of

being a lab school and being a test market -- not a

test market -- a place to develop, reform, and

refine educational practices for our kids; all kids,

by the way.

Another partnership I wanted to talk to

you real quickly about is our -- we've -- again,

due to our work on some national consultants, we

are now connected to Harvard University and McLean

Hospital in developing and seeking out ways to

really embed social emotional learning in a school

construct. Not as an add-on, by the way. It is

something that is developed within the fabric of the

program.

And so the reasons we were able to attract

Harvard and McLean Hospital was through a program

that they actually have already. It's called

Prepare Initiative, and it's something you see out

of the East Coast used with -- mostly with middle

schools. It's a social emotional assessment that is

student-based.

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that they actually have already. It's called

Prepare Initiative, and it's something you see out

of the East Coast used with -- mostly with middle

schools. It's a social emotional assessment that is

student-based.
So, as a result, we've had to --
initially, when we started the school, we were
hiring people from all over the country to come and
work in a deaf ed program. And zero success. We
were like 0 for 26 on that one, the reason being was
two things, I believe. One was New Mexico, we're
just a little different breed of cat, and I think
people coming from other places didn't -- didn't get
the state. And so they ran, hair-on-fire, right?
Partly.

The other one is the school itself is a
different breed of cat. We are not deaf ed. We're
a language school, because we have hearing kids and
defaf kids in the same mix, and a whole lot of
special needs kids who need sign language as their
primary receptive and expressive language.

So we were this model that didn't fit any
training for people coming out of deaf ed programs;
right?

And so it -- I think it's beautiful in the
story of it, in that it really did cause us to have
to dig in and reflect on what we were and how we do
what we do; right?

And I think, as a result of that, we
reached out to the University of New Mexico and

we've been in partnership with them for the last
probably five or six years in developing what's
called the CIRE program. The CIRE program stands
for the Consortium of Interdisciplinary Resident
Educators.

It's where we identify prospective
teaching -- college students as they're entering
the -- their training in the University, after their
sophomore year, after they enter into the dual
license program; so SpEd and reg licensure program
at UNM. And we give then an internship by
Bernalillo County Workforce Connections, a paid
internship. While they're going to school, they're
actually getting real classroom experience for two
years leading up into their student teaching.

And upon -- and they're taking sign
language.

After graduation, we pay for the TESOL
derendorsement as well.

But as a result, we're turning out some
amazing young teachers that just -- they don't
look -- they don't look new, like when they do their
student teaching. They're seasoned vets already.

They're working with a hard population of kids and
getting the right mentorship through this program.
1 absolutely right. What you do for charters
2 exemplifies what charters are all about.
3 And, once again, one of those schools that
4 we don't do enough to truly get out there and shine
5 and get people to understand truly what the school
6 does. And I absolutely understand, because I know
7 when I am at LCPS, one of the difficulties they have
8 is all of the hearing difficulty students have to go
9 to just one school, because there's -- they only
10 have one teacher that can -- and part of that is
11 licensing, because Texas is easier to license.
12 So they have teachers certified in Texas,
13 but it's more difficult to get -- so I think maybe
14 that's something that needs to get looked in -- at
15 least that's what they told me, that it's easier to
16 get certified in Texas. So El Paso is getting
17 the -- El Paso and Canutillo are getting the
18 teachers, and LCPS can't keep them.
19 And it's a shame that NMSU has that
dormant program; it really is. So I can't say thank
20 you enough. And thank you for getting rid of all
21 those red lines, too.
22 Commissioner Voigt?
23 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Thank you,
24 Madam Chair. Just to echo Chairwoman Gipson, I

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1 mean, the work that you're doing is not just
2 reforming, it's, like -- it's break-through work.
3 And the partnerships that you've been able to
4 establish with this work, whether they sought you
5 out or -- how that works. But it's -- it's notable,
6 and I hope internationally so. Because the work
7 that you're doing is just -- it's huge, and it's
8 affecting so many lives.
9 And it's definitely a great model to be
10 looked at and shared. So thank you so much.
11 And I love your mascot.
12 THE CHAIR: So can I just ask you? Going
13 forward -- because you haven't had the report card
14 grade. So with the incredible strides you've made
15 with being able to create some of these assessments,
16 is there an anticipation that you're going to get --
17 you're going to be on the State Accountability
18 system?
19 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Madam Chair, members
20 of the Commission, that's a great question.
21 So -- so -- unknown right now. But I do
22 think, with the adoption of this new test that does
23 give us some -- some assessment that is actually
24 normed to our kids, that then it starts the
25 discussion of how this aligns with larger

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1 standardized tests; right?
2 And so I was part of the New Mexico Task
3 Force Commission that was -- or I'm sorry. The New
4 Mexico --
5 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Student Success Task

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1 Force.
2 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: There. Yeah. I was
3 part of that. And even in that space, we didn't
4 fit; right? And that group was very respectful
5 about hearing my concerns and taking my comments.
6 But the reality is we are -- we are just small in
7 comparison to the large public school population,
8 right, of the whole state.
9 So, really, it is -- it has become -- and
10 we fight hard not to be a niche school, because we
11 proclaim that we serve all kids to their abilities.
12 So we don't want to be a niche school. But we do
13 actually -- the reality is we -- I think we are the
14 best at serving a certain type of kid, and we work
15 to do that.
16 So in answer to your question, I think
17 that is part of the negotiation process, where we
18 would look to see how this new test could align and
19 be part of our accountability system.
20 THE CHAIR: Sure.
21 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: And just to comment on
22 that as a whole grade thing, Karen had mentioned
23 that we had ten indicators. That's really connected
24 to cohorts.
25 So our -- so -- and I think I need to make
26 that distinction. Because we have so many different
27 kids in our population. So we have high flying reg
28 Gifted kids, all the way down to kids that really
29 need some significant one-on-one support and
30 everything in between.
31 And so in order for us to be held
32 accountable for working with every kid in our
33 population, we had to break down our goals and try
34 to kind of group them in a way that -- that was more
35 fairly accurate to the -- to the -- their peers, if
36 that makes sense; right?
37 And so that's where the ten -- the ten
38 goals, how they accordion out, is because of we're
39 taking into account the different needs of our
40 population.
41 So -- so -- while I'm on the topic, let's
42 just talk grades. Because there was a reason we
43 were the only non-graded school for most of our
44 existence until the very end of the last
45 administration. And that's because of the actual
math numbers around our test scores; right?

So when you're looking at test scores --
I'm sorry -- at a -- the grand cohort, where the majority of your kids are special ed and a significant number are special needs, meaning they take the alternative assessment, it shrinks down the number of kids in each cohort that are actually well tested by State standardized testing.

We had cohorts of three kids, four kids, right, in each group. And so back in the day when we met with Pete Goldschmidt and Cindy Gregory, they acknowledged -- they said, "Mathematically, you cannot be given a grade."

It's not fair; right? And so that's why it was determined way back when that we just -- we didn't fit the formula. And that's why we went down the path finding out different ways of seeing how we could be accountable for our population, for our work and how we're serving them.

So it wasn't because we were serving those kids, and, "Oh, what a neat school." It was because mathematically it made no sense that we were a graded school, okay?

So I think that just does inform the next conversation when it comes to negotiation around how we take this test that is normed for our kids and apply it to an accountability system that really works to capture the prowess of the entire organization, the entire school.

I hope I answered your question.

THE CHAIR: Yeah. And you know what? I certainly appreciate it, because this school stands out as well because they wanted to make sure that everyone was accounted for, when too often when we're going into contract negotiations, schools only want this small group to be counted.

And that's why we did populate all those goals. And appreciate that, that it's important for you to continue to be able to tell that story and show that. And that's -- that's, once again, a tribute to you.

So where are we with a building?

MR. RAFe MARTINEZ: Good question. So we -- I don't know where people are -- so we're working with the County to try to get a chunk of land that they -- so they own an 18-ish-acre plot of land. They're willing to sell us four acres of it to build.

And then we -- and then through the work with the PSFA and PSCOC -- and Commissioner Robbins...
most ambitious.

THE CHAIR: That would be great. That really would. And I wish I could give you some sage advice about working with neighborhood associations. But...

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: They're grumpy.

Sorry.

THE CHAIR: Yeah. I'm saying if you can't do it, no one can do it.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Well -- so --

THE CHAIR: So Commissioner --

Commissioner Robbins?

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Mr. Martinez and the others, thank you very much for coming here. And you know my background and everything. I have a son who's profoundly hard of hearing, both ears, and has multiple disabilities also. And I wish this program had been available to him when he was younger.

How is the Small School Size funding cut going to impact your operations and your ability to continue at the level of service that you're providing now, especially since you provide transportation for all your students?

How is that going to affect you over the coming years, and what can I do to help you to alleviate funding cuts?

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, Commissioner Robbins, great question. And it's going to hurt, yeah.

So even -- even in our population, where we don't receive Small School Size Adjustment for our special ed population. That's not how the formula works. All our regs, it still constitutes a pretty significant budget hit.

We went backwards in our budget. Even with the 20 percent cut in this past year, we took more money and had to give out more because of mandated raises this year.

Now, we are working with the Special Ed Department to rectify how IDEA B is allocated. So with our -- and you know our significant special ed population. We receive one of the lowest IDEA B calculations in the entire state. And we've gone back and forth. I'm not sure why.

It does seem to point to a -- I won't call it a flaw -- but an issue in the federal formula based on top-end enrollment, which is kind of weird to me. However, it's hard to get an answer that's really clear.

What we then are doing is working with the Special Ed Department to access the Puente Para Los Niños Grant. It's also a federal grant, but it's designated specifically for high-needs kids, which we have. Like I said, that's 25 percent of our population.

So we are hopeful that that's going to -- that that will help alleviate some of the financial pressure. But that's not official yet.

So in answer to your question, Small School Size Adjustment, if ripped away in its entirety, would significantly impact us, but not to the point that it would the entire charter movement. Because, again, our special ed population shields us from the full brunt of that. But it's still to the tune of about $200,000 a year.

THE CHAIR: Yeah. And it's -- it's unfortunate and significant.

(Commissioner Ruiz leaves meeting.)

THE CHAIR: And I know you're not the first school that has expressed the concern about that, whatever that wonkiness is in that formula by the feds -- that I think that's something -- I don't know what the State can do to help with that. But it -- it seems to be across the board with schools.

Hopefully, the at-risk index change will help some.

Some.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Yeah.

THE CHAIR: You know, not -- it's not the -- it's not the fix. But I appreciate this.

Commissioner Caballero?

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Just a few questions. Hello, sir.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Hello.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: How's it going?

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Good.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: My son went to school in El Paso. And they had hard-of-hearing students and other kids in one elementary school. My oldest son went there. And he met a young lady. And I thought that once they got to college, they would eventually get married. It didn't happen.

(Indicates.)

But it was -- it was really nice seeing her grow, learning to speak and speak well, getting a job, becoming a professional. And that was awesome.

My youngest son went there, too. And I asked him if he had hard-of-hearing students in his class, and -- and he said, "No, they're in a
different area of the school."
And I knew that the -- there was a
challenge. But I thought -- when they described the
elementary school, I thought they were more -- more
together. They would see each other -- I think my
son would only see those students and be with those
students and mix with them in the -- either recess
or before school or after school.
And he had a young -- he said, "My new
friend, but he hits me."
And -- "What do you mean?"
And so he describes his new friend as
hard-of-hearing and would always hit him.
And so I plugged his ears, and, "Let's
play."
He had a hard time playing with not being
able to listen.
And so I said, "He probably -- can you
understand when he speaks?"
He says, "Most of the time. Most of the
time."
"So he's hitting you to catch your
attention so you can turn around."
And he thought about it and says, "You're
probably right."

And so that was an experience. And I was
glad there was an integration of the kids, but kind
of disappointed that it wasn't totally integrated.
And, according to description, I thought
it was going to be an integration of all the kids.
MR. RAIFE MARTINEZ: Yeah. Madam Chair,
members of the Commission, Commissioner Caballero,
that -- so you just hit on what makes us nationally,
this whole idea that hearing kids are learning how
to sign and are purposefully integrated with deaf
kids so that they're -- everyone is working
together.
So there's different segments of our day
where kids are getting what they need academically,
from the most kind of -- pointed to their specific
needs and communication, to a place that's really
student-driven around project-based learning, where
we deliberately put a hearing child and a deaf child
together and have them build a robot or solve
problems together, so that we're creating a need for
them to communicate.
And that's -- the common language in our
place is sign language. So there's deliberate and
very specific ways that we've come to develop the
program that we have now, a lot of trial and error.

Right? This is an act of experimentation for sure.
But it's to that -- what you're talking
about. How do we truly create a need to know, along
with a need to sign, a need to communicate, where
all kids are integrated and connected to one
another.
Together we rise. Together we're better.
That's a common theme.
So as a result -- I know it's not a
standardized test component. But if you were to
measure empathy and caretaking, "I'm my brother's
caretaker," we'd be the A-plus school, you know.
And that's the thing. We deal with all
demographics, all sorts of economic demographics,
racial demographics, disability demographics. We
really -- I believe, and I'm proud to say that -- we
really are the exemplar when it comes to how we
serve all kids to their needs.
COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: And I looked at
your breakdown. And congratulations. You're
probably the only school that can truly say that
you're bringing in -- because by having different
types of kids, different backgrounds, different
ethnicities, you grow personally. And so you're
providing your students with the best growth that
ey can get in a school. Thank you.
MR. RAIFE MARTINEZ: Agreed. Thank you.
THE CHAIR: Commissioner Armbruster?
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Hi.
MR. RAIFE MARTINEZ: Hi.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: To just
reiterate some things, I was with Chairman Gipson on
that -- and I think we were brand new and knew
little. But I was a special education teacher for
39 years, so I sort of did get this.
And, finally, I said to your teacher. I
said, "So are you talking about living skills kinds
of disabilities?"
She said, "Yes."
"Okay. Got it."
Because it is. It's a spectrum disorder
just like anything else.
And I will just tell you one funny story.
I had taught one year and knew zero, truly
just getting by day to day. And the school
district -- it was in California -- called me and
said, "We really need a sub today. Can you come?
It's for a class of deaf children."
I said, "I don't know anything about deaf
children. I mean, what would I know?"
Well, they're the same as everybody else.

So, "Sit down." "No. Here."

But it is true. Because I never had any training with children with -- of hearing impairment. Because that's a spectrum.

But I did have several children in Los Alamos Middle School. And they were completely inclusion. And the only issue we had was their AM systems were on different frequencies. So they couldn't be together in the same class because one needed one -- I don't know. One needed one and one needed the other. Whatever. So I think that it really was good that they were doing this.

And also when I was getting my master's degree -- and this is going to talk about this bilingual certificate -- I was working with a woman who was a hearing child of deaf parents. And what her thesis was, that she should be considered bilingual because she spoke two languages. And, in fact, that is what's happening.

So do your kids graduate as bilingual -- do they get a bilingual certificate? Or is that only --

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, Commissioner Armbruster. So, no.

So, one -- so they are bilingual -- they are bilingual, for sure, that. But not a bilingual certification. So, one, it doesn't exist in ASL yet. That's actually -- in a previous meeting, I talked about our partnership with Presbyterian Hearing Institute and ACE Leadership. That's one of the goals of that, through the Circle Grant. That's one of the goals of that partnership is to have ASL acknowledged as a Bilingual Seal language. It hasn't happened yet, but we're working on that.

But the other thing, too, is -- so our high school, our 9-through-12 kids are not necessarily -- now the transition is different. But before, our 9-through-12 kids were our most of the kids with significant and multiple disabilities.

So if you were to -- to align what a Bilingual Seal means in either the Native languages or Spanish to an ASL construct with our population of kids, 9-12, probably not -- probably wouldn't happen.

But now that we have the transition kids and we're bringing back some of our higher -- our higher-level deaf kids into that space of 18-to-21-year-old education, that definitely is where we he want to hit. We want that path.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It would be hearing-impaired children who can communicate in, just say English, for the sake of this conversation, as well as hearing children who can sign, fluently sign.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Correct, yes. But as of right now, the hearing kids who can sign who are on a diploma pathway don't stay with us 9-through-12. And they wouldn't return to us through transition; right?

Does that make sense?

Yeah. We don't have the capacity, neither financial nor through teacher certification, to run a regular high school right now. And we don't have the space, obviously. Those are big bodies.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. So -- well, when they go to their other school and they can still sign, they should still be able to graduate -- but that's my -- the other part I want to say -- and I just want a clarification. This is really not a comment.

So your hearing children and children who are high-functioning hearing-disabled are taking these tests that the State is giving, but you're just not -- so they know what they're doing and how they're doing and what areas they need to improve in. Am I right?

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Correct. Yes.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So they're doing that. I thought it was an interesting comment, given that 70 percent of your students are special ed, that a comment made in the -- you know, the things that you-all send in -- was they didn't feel they were getting enough attention. I thought, "What are you? One of six?"

So I just didn't quite get that. That's why I wanted to just clarify that.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: That's an interesting -- I did. I saw that. One of the kids said that, right.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I feel like it was positive. It wasn't really a negative comment.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: It's an interesting observation. One of the things we do a lot in that world of social emotional learning, when you're dealing with a population of kids who have disabilities, and then, by extension, the family, there's a lot of things that come out around the disability that's not just specific for the kid with the disability.
It's the siblings and the parents, having to deal with what it is to have a child with disability and talking them off ledges, like, "You have a gift. Let us show you how to see how great what you have is"; right? That's the parents' side.

The other side of the scales is, "Yeah, your brother or sister is going to take a lot of attention sometimes, and you can't be mad every time they pull that attention away."

So it's a -- with a context of that -- knowing that, hearing -- seeing that comment and then -- but knowing, contextually, yeah, we have to work with our reg ed kids who are there who constantly see their special needs brother or sister pulling a lot of attention away from them.

And, you know, quite honestly, that's in our space, too. I have a son -- my younger son who goes to the school is eight, gifted, typically developing. My older son is 16 and multiple needs deaf, right? And so, yeah, it's a balancing act and very much deliberate coaching.

And Kim -- you might want to speak to that as well. She's a co-founder, and she has that same scenario.

MS. KIMBERLY MOYA: Thank you, members of the Commission. So, yes, I do have a 19-year-old, Thomas. He's the one that started this conversation with Rafe and I all these years ago about, "Where do we go?" Because he couldn't go to Santa Fe, you know. He's had multiple special needs. And so he's the reason, you know.

And then I have twins that are typically developing, high-flying. They went to the school as well through eighth grade. And even this week, we have these conversations of, "Okay. Yes, we have to do this for Thomas; but, you know, he's -- he's our purpose. He's part of what makes our family great. We're better because of him, and you guys are better, you know, and can help other people, too." So I think -- I always tell Rafe this.

That's what makes me the most proud of this school. These kids are great little citizens. They're good people. They care about each other. They see your disability. "Oh, okay. Fine. Well, you can help me with this, and I'll help you with that."

And it's a non- -- it doesn't even -- it's not a conversation about, "Oh, gosh. I don't want to shake their hand or talk to them," or anything.

It's like, "Hey, why don't I help you and you help me?"
And I really commend all that you are doing. I think you need to do more advertising. I don't know.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: That's good.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I guess I'm going to be fighting with the Legislature, like, "What are you going to do with a school of 126 children?"

I guess I have to look at this IDEA. I thought you got more money, like A, B, C, D funding.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: We should.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I thought you got more for "D" students than for "A" students.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: SEG, the State funding is that.

THE CHAIR: But not the federal.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Well, that's stupid.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: How about telling Trump?

THE CHAIR: But it's -- like I said, it's not the first school that has expressed that frustration at this point in time. And you're right. It doesn't make any sense.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I'm sorry. That was --

THE CHAIR: And I don't think the funds flow very quickly, either, do they?

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Through IDEA B?

THE CHAIR: Right.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: It's a federal fund.

You apply for it the end of the year, and you get it for the following year.

THE CHAIR: Yeah. 'Cause I know sometimes with schools, it's like we're still waiting for -- and that could also be, in part, on the school for when they filed.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Yeah. This year, it's a little -- the Puente para los Niños, the high-needs grant, that doesn't flow fast. That's an application process. We had to drop an application, describe the needs of our kids, go through a panel and be vetted and hopefully get awarded.

So we're hoping that it will hit. If it doesn't, well, I don't know. We'll figure it out, but --

THE CHAIR: Right. Okay. Any other --

COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: I have an off-the-wall question.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: I've never understood sign language. But if you have, like, a child who doesn't speak English and a child who doesn't -- speaks German or whatever, do they communicate -- how do they communicate? Or do you teach a different type of sign language for different languages?

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Are you talking about our school specifically?

COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: That's why I'm asking. I don't know how it works.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: So we are rooted in American Sign Language. There's different sign languages across the world. Even in countries -- and even in the United States, there's different dialects around the regions. So Mexican Sign Language is different than American Sign Language is different than Canadian Sign Language.

COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: So whenever you get a child that doesn't speak any English, you teach them the Mexican one?

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: You teach them the American one. Because they're here, like I said. Again, like I said, we just had a family from Chad come in, a refugee family. There's three of them.

And it's amazing to see how quickly they're picking up English by -- by using ASL as a bridge. I can tell you, there's something -- there's a doctoral thesis in there somewhere.

COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Are these hearing students?

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: These are hearing students. The reason they came to us, they have a youngest sib who has a pretty significant disability. So mom, in anticipation of having that child come our way, enrolled all her other ones.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Madam Chair, if I could add, when my son was young, one of the caretakers was a registered nurse. When she had her first child, she would bring her baby with her. And the first language that this child learned was sign language, because her mother used it extensively with my son.

And she was able to ask for food and water and tell her that she needed her diaper changed long before she could ever speak. It is actually very simple for a young child to learn sign language and to use it. Because a lot of the motions and everything are somewhat natural, if you think about
it, like, you know, sit, chair, [indicates], you
know, thank you.
Some of them they just -- if you speak
with your hands, it's going to be a lot easier to do
sign language. And if you can actually observe it,
and you start to see a lot of the words -- they'll
start with -- if you learn the alphabet, a lot of
the words will start with letters. So, you know,
I'll use a "K". "K" is "king," because the band
goes across the king; or "Q" for "Queen,"
little words like that.
And you start to say, "Okay. These make
sense." And for a small child, they really do. And
they can pick it up.
And I think people who speak a different
language will be able to pick it up. And, like you
said, Mr. Martinez, it's that bridge between their
language and English.

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Crone?
COMMISSIONER CRONE: I just wanted to
follow up with what you said. There have been a
number of programs in colleges in ape signing. Of
course, the most famous is probably Washoe. The
next one that's famous is Koko.
And, you know, one of my daughter's
favorite childhood books was -- excuse me -- "The
Conversation with Koko."
Unfortunately, Koko died last year. And
it was a sad moment. What they taught us -- and
they did learn language. And so any of your
students, had those apes been there, could have
communicated back and forth.
So it's -- and there is a theory in
linguistics that the first language was sign
language and that the verbal part of it came along
later.
So you're right. I mean, if you -- you're
having trouble communicating with your toddler, you
might switch to sign language.
MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: There's significant
research that backs, like, "terrible twos" and the
"crazy threes."

COMMISSIONER CRONE: The "worse threes"?
MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: "Worse threes." Yeah
it's minimized when sign language is used as a
language, because then kids are able to express
their needs and have them met. So it just takes
behavior way down. There's a lot of that out there.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: I wonder -- I saw a
documentary about a sign teacher that went to
Mesoamerica somewhere; I'm not sure what country,
Guatemala, or whatever the country was. And so she
was -- there were a lot of children who lived out in
the forest and had no access. They were poor
children. They were isolated children. They didn't
have the kind of early stimulation.
And so the teacher was trying to teach, I
believe, ASL. And it just wasn't working very well.
But what happened was the kids developed their own
language, their own signs. And they had to teach
the teacher what they were talking about.


THE CHAIR: Commissioners, if nothing
else --
COMMISSIONER CRONE: Didn't one of your
students get a scholarship to Northern?
MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: No. That's the
New Mexico School for the Deaf. They had almost a
seven-foot-tall basketball player that had a
scholarship.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: I have a question
about your team. Why the Honey Badgers?

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: I'm going to refer to
Kim, because her son came up with that.

MS. KIMBERLY MOYA: Members of the
Commission, thank you again.
So Thomas was in the hospital -- this is a
true story. He struggled for many years, in and out
of the hospital. One day -- this is when we were
sitting across tables creating the school. We've
always been the little guy against the big guy.
They called us, in the beginning, starry-eyed, naive
parents. They said it would never happen, never
open. Public record.

It's open. We're kind of small and
scrappy. And so the year we were opening, I'll
never forget. I was sitting in the hospital with
Thomas and his wife, Mr. Martinez' wife, and one of
our other founders. We were talking about, you
know, what was going to be our mascot, what were we
going to do, what were we going to choose?

And Thomas was fascinated with animals
with bad behavior. He's, like, "Oh, my gosh. These
animals are crazy. I don't want any otters, I don't
want any raccoons, nothing."
One of our interpreters, she sent us a
video, and it was a link to the honey badger. It
was named the "Bad" 'blank' of the Year" by
Guinness, because it will take on anyone, and it
will just destroy. Doesn't care. If a lion comes up, it's like, "Boom. I'll get your private parts."
Takes out a cobra, goes to sleep from the poison, and then wakes up and continues eating.
And he's, like, "I don't know, Mom. I think that's a pretty good mascot for your school."
So they sent it to us. And his wife created the -- I mean, just a mockup of this, you know, "Albuquerque Sign Language Academy, Home of the Honey Badgers."
And Thomas was, like, "I don't want to go to your school if you have a real honey badger there."
So small but scrappy.

"B"; right?
MR. RAFAE MARTINEZ: Correct. Yes.
ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: Didn't want to shortchange you. That was a celebration point over the last couple of years, being able to see that. So my big picture answer is yes. And it might be specific -- maybe specific to -- to the school.
But we are committed to making sure that ASL and other SAM schools are part of that system, for sure. But I'll get more information on what that will look like after the --
THE CHAIR: Because we're looking at what needs to be in the motion. Because if they weren't, it would have just been a straight with no conditions, because there's nothing that we're waiting for.
But if we put -- I'm not sure what conditions to put into the motion, because we don't know what we're waiting for.
The other schools, we know 100 percent what we're waiting for. But the concern is --
ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: Madam Chair, based on the motion, I would say you would be safe to put that in the motion.
THE CHAIR: Everything?
THE CHAIR: Commissioners, we're going to reconvened at 1:18 p.m., as follows:)

(A recess was taken at 12:27 p.m., and take about a 40-minute break, like we have. (A recess was taken at 12:27 p.m., and

THE CHAIR: Okay. Good afternoon, everyone. And thank you for traveling, and thank you for your patience and indulgence with our lunch break. We appreciate it.

And we appreciate everything that you've done to get yourselves ready, let alone everything that you do every day. And I think the room is a testament to everything that you do. So we -- we welcome everyone that came up with the school -- thank you very much -- and, hopefully, will be part of this celebration. So thank you.

So just, once again -- and I know we have had a short communication in regards to the e-mail that came out about the Accountability System. So I have been making just a stock statement before every school. If you have any questions about this going forward, please don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions or concerns, because we're trying to make people feel as comfortable about this as we can.

So let's -- so Renewal of Charters with Conditions: The PED has not provided a report or review of data for the School Year '18-'19 Accountability. It is important for schools to have the complete -- sorry. For some reason, I can't see right now -- the academic data as part of its renewal information for this renewal and also for future years. The PEC needs complete State Accountability reports to make its best decision on school renewal applications.

The PEC will review financial and operational performance because the data is complete at this meeting in December 2019. If the PEC decides to issue a renewal with conditions, the PEC will clearly state what Accountability information it will review from the PED Accountability Report. When the Accountability data is prepared by PED and the school has had an opportunity to review the data -- no less than ten days -- the PEC will review the data and remove the condition or take other action, such as a Corrective Action Plan, or possibly non-renew the charter.

At the future meeting, January or February of 2020, the PEC will only consider the issues related to the reason for the conditions and will not consider any other issues related to renewal.

So we will absolutely close out operational and financial today and 90 percent of the academic, that the only thing that will remain open is the data that is not yet available, so that if the -- the school will know today if it's -- if they're going to have to come back up and what they would have to speak about, or if they're going to be on the Consent Agenda, because you just have to show stability. All right?

So, hopefully, we're -- hopefully, we're good to go. So thank you once again.

And I will ask if anyone has not yet signed up to speak during the Public Comments and you wish to, there is a sign-up sheet there by Ms. Friedman. There is only eight minutes allotted; so that we will evenly divide the eight minutes up between the number of people that sign up to speak.

THE CHAIR: The motion passes, eight-zero. That will be an eight-zero vote.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Armbruster votes "Yes."

THE CHAIR: The motion passes, eight-zero.

MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Thank you.

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As you all know, I worked with Deputy Secretary Bobroff very closely around the state to support schools in developing their -- not only their equity teams at their schools, but also their multicultural, linguistically relevant or responsive frameworks.

I was at the Navajo Nation a few weeks ago with Ms. Begay and two students, Mikkel and Gabriel. And they had a chance to present the school's framework to the Navajo Nation leadership that was there, including the President's Office. And it was just a really wonderful experience to see the leadership that was coming from the school around a very important time period for our state.

And the Department has used, and will continue to use, DEAP's framework as -- as a model for other schools to really learn from and to figure out, how do you create a multicultural or culturally linguistically relevant framework that's really place-based and really coming from the community.

And so I just wanted to share those -- that big story with you-all so that you know that the school and the students are really leading in really important ways for all of our students across the state.

And I'll defer to Karen.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: Thank you, Director Brauer.

Madam Chair, Commissioners, school representatives, and guests, thank you for being here, all of you.

Of course, before you, I'm not even going to try to pronounce your school name, because I would not do it justice, and I apologize. Thankfully, we get to refer to it as "DEAP."

DEAP serves Grades 6 through 11, current enrollment of 40 students. And their mission is focused on cultural, vocational, and academic skills, transforming the community and their world, holistic wellness, and balancing the needs of the land and the needs of the people.

As you saw in your data analysis, the
Part A in your reports, Commissioners, you will see that there was a bit of an incline, an increase in their proficiency rates in math and reading, and then a drop on the last year. Of course, that was a bit different assessment; but, nevertheless, a drop in the proficiency rates for both reading and math.

The science proficiency rate was not 100 percent sure as to why their seventh-graders were not listed there, but they were not.

Their growth indices by subgroup, as you see in the charts before you for both reading and math, there was some, actually, significantly strong growth in the first year of this chart, and less so now; although, still at -- as expected at the zero mark in terms of growth for their subgroups in reading and math.

Regarding their student proficiency subgroup, again, it reflects the same thing you saw on the first chart, with a little bit of an incline, upward trend for the first three years, and then a drop with the last assessment last year.

The science proficiency rate was not listed on the SBA science spreadsheet. And I'm not 100 percent sure as to why their seventh-graders were not listed there, but they were not.

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Between school years has ranged from 62 to 71 percent.

Their teacher retention rate, as you see in the chart, took a drastic increase from '16 to '17 and is at 80 percent teacher retention now. Of course, they have very few teachers; so they're impacted greatly by any changes there.

On the audit findings, there were four audit findings this past year, three of which were repeat. In each of those cases, they were other non-compliance issues, not to be dismissed, but not serious -- truly serious issues.

Going back to the initial chart, you will see that -- the report on their grades. And then -- because they Met Standards in two areas and then Demonstrates Substantial Progress on the other areas based on the rubric in the application.

And looking at the organizational performance framework, as with all schools, the school had to report on any that were repeat Workings to Meet or Falls Far Below. And those are listed there on Page 3.

The first was Applicable Education Requirements. And that had to do with their Next Step Plans not being complete or containing
their -- all of the required elements, and as well
as filing their assessments in their cume folders,
which the school is working to resolve.

The Special Needs Indicator -- 1D,
Students with Special Needs, was around some IEP
issues and calculating service hours. They have a
contracted special education person who is -- I saw
a marked improvement from '18 to '19 in their --
their work around this -- these areas.

English Language Learners. Those had to
do with not only the identification, but more about
filing their assessment scores and sending parent
letters were the main points of concern.

Recurrent enrollment was at 65 percent.
So the current goal in the contract was 85 percent.
So their current enrollment was below the goal.

Financial compliance, we've mentioned the
findings. But also there were some concerns about
their audit and financial committee, Madam Chair,
not having the correct required members. The school
has been advised and corrected that.

The 3B was -- the governance one was about
holding management accountable. And this is the
reason that their governance responsibilities
received a Failing. We were not able to see a head
administrator evaluation for the last three years.

And so that was a concern.

Health and Safety requirements was related
to having visitors sign in and get a badge and be
identified -- I think they can tell when I'm on
campus -- and an immunization log issue that was
resolved.

100 percent of their employees signed the
petition. 81 percent of their households signed the
petition. And to Director Brauer's point regarding
the New Mexico Condition Index score, it was in your
packet. It's really high at 55.82 percent. That
was the letter we received from the PSFA. And the
letter that Mr. Brauer has handed out now is a
corrected report, I presume, from the PSFA, with a
just under 3 percent. So I don't know why --

THE CHAIR: A substantial difference.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: -- but suffice it to
say that 3 percent is -- lower is better, so that's
really good. And with that, I conclude my report.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. And welcome
once again, and please if you will just identify
yourself for the record, anyone who's going to speak
for the school.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning, Honorable
the 1960s, and it was a booming industry that brought so much infrastructure and resources to the community.

We had a lot of local economic development. Homes were built; churches were built; schools were built. We had a store. Navajo was one of the only communities on the Navajo Nation that even had a swimming pool.

And so people have fond memories of what Navajo looked like as this thriving community. It was this model community.

But in the 1990s, when NFPI closed, we lost a lot of those resources. And so this is what you see today. This is that same swimming pool. Our community currently is in a crisis from all of this.

This picture here was taken last Tuesday. I would say in the past year, we've had at least ten incidences of arson. This is what our students see every day. So, for us, sometimes it's a challenge to provide an education when our students struggle.

In addition, the Navajo Nation struggles with a lot of things. So these are just some of the statistics that exist out there.

MS. LOUELLA POBLANO: And despite these statistics, I believe that our school is a safe place for our students and families. But I want you to really look at some of the real statistics that we have to deal with on a daily basis.

43 percent of the people in -- on the Navajo Nation live in poverty, and the rate is probably higher in the small community of Navajo. And the suicide rate is 25 percent. And a lot of it impacts very, very young people, including some of our students.

And of the people who are 25 or older, only 56 percent have a high school degree. And our families are -- you know, the median income is at $20,000, and our median age is 24.

So we have a lot of young people in our community on the Navajo Reservation. And, you know, with what we are confronted with, with unemployment and all the -- the environmental issues that Kayla has presented, we look at those, and we tell our students, we tell our families, "The only way we can move is up. And we are here to support you, and we are here to help develop those student leadership skills."

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: I also just want to mention, too, that the Navajo Nation is what is considered a food desert. What this means is that we are roughly the size of these three states here, and we only have 13 grocery stores.

Our community used to have a community market, where we could buy meat and vegetables; but that closed in the past two years. And so how do we expect our students to be prepared for school when all they have access to is junk food?

So this is -- these are a couple of the issues that we face. In addition, due to, you know, just historical trauma, our people are losing their language and access to culture. So in 1980s, the percentage of fluent Navajo-speakers was 93 percent. In 2010, it's 51 percent. The new data for 2020, we're expected to be at 40 or below.

And so this -- the Navajo Nation has identified this as a priority area. And they're trying to figure out what institutions are going to combat this. And education, they feel, is the biggest key.

So in 2012, this was that recreation center that was once thriving. But due to no money to fix it, it's just an abandoned building.

During that time, our community really -- it was an eyesore. And so we did something about it. All kinds of different people came, grandparents with their grandkids, youth, elders, and they created this mural. And I think this provided us with some energy to start dreaming what else can we do in our community.

I think we realized that if we want to change things, if we want to transform things, we have to do them ourselves, because we know what's best for us.

And so that pushed our community to start dreaming. And that's sort of how DEAP came into existence.

So we thought a lot about education. Education is the space where we're going to raise those leaders. So we looked at how our ancestors learned, how they lived, how they thrived. We looked at what other schools were doing serving indigenous students. We also looked at what kind of movements young people were leading, as far as environmentalism and water rights.

And then we started to engage with our community. We had almost weekly meetings. We went door-to-door. We talked to people of all
generations, and we asked them, "What do you -- what does this community need to be successful?"
And that's how we were able to identify our priority areas.

MS. LOUELLA POBLANO: And a lot of the -- a lot of the commonalities that came out of the community meetings is, "What are our needs?"
And the first priority is safety. And we want our families safe. We want our children safe, and how do we go about doing that.
Another critical area was access to culture. Intergenerational healing. There's been a lot of traumatic events, you know, starting with our grandparents, surviving boarding school, and all the way to our young children that are in our schools that are dealing with gang violence.
So in these conversations, we talked about what are the different pathways that we can create to rebuild our community, and as we're rebuilding our community, you know, what are the skills that are needed to help these students learn student leadership, how to speak, how to write, how to be, you know, in a position where they're able to be their leaders and showcase, "This is what we have. This is what we're going to do about it."

So we do our best at DEAP to make learning relevant and make learning fun at the same time, but, at the same time, adding serious real issues within our community.

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: This is our mission. And thank you, Karen, for sharing. It's a long mission. But, for us, it was very important for us to have a clear pathway, what are we really trying to do.
And so there's a lot of strong verbs in there that we have our students work towards. You know, our ultimate vision was we want to empower not just our students, but our community to do things that are going to help others.
So from all of that, this is how the DEAP curriculum was created. This is the framework that we've been presenting to the Navajo Nation. And there's a lot of things that we've learned; there's a lot of the things that we're innovative about.
But it's all rooted in who we are as Diné people. So our first focus area is empowerment through culture and relevancy.
In DEAP, we make culture the core of our curriculum; it's not just an elective. Here, our students are learning how to make a traditional food. And you can just see from this picture how engaged and excited they are. But even more so, they're learning STEAM concepts. They're learning how to measure. They're learning about volume. They're learning about heat. And they're learning how to connect to each other.
So we do a lot of these activities, and they're a lot of work. But I love seeing things like this, because everyone has an opportunity to be a teacher, no matter what age you are, and a learner.
We also try to really focus on building student identity. Sometimes it's -- it can be a frustrating experience to be a young Native person and not really understand who you are. And so we empower our students by giving them opportunities to learn their cultural arts, to learn their history.
We also have recently created a traditional learning structure called a hogan, and we've been inviting a lot of guests to share lessons with us. And our students really love being in that space.
I think one of the most beautiful things about our cultural curriculum is that it's not just for our students, you know. It's -- there -- it creates an opportunity for them to be leaders. They're passing on that culture to the next generation. And sometimes they're passing on that culture to their older family members, who didn't have access to it.
One of the projects that we led was the DEAP moccasin-making project, where our students learned how to make moccasins, and they made them for the younger people in the community. And I think in that way, we're redefining what does leadership look like for us.
In addition, elders are a big part of our community. I'm real honored to have one of our grandmas here. (Native language spoken.) You know, they come here, and they share their teachings. Even just having them there has a really positive effect on our students. And we try to give back. There, you have a couple of students chopping wood for the elders.
So I think for us, the reason why culture is so important is that it's the link that connects us to our ancestors and that's going to connect us to our grandchildren in the future. And so it's really important that we preserve that and that we continue those teachings.
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<td>Another thing we noticed about our cultural curriculum was for our young men. Many of them struggle in traditional schools. And what we noticed with our cultural programs is that it gives them purpose.</td>
<td>school, a lot of our elders stressed that they were worried what would happen to the land after they are gone, who would plant, who would take care of the sheep. And so land has been a big focus.</td>
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<td>Some of them might have struggled in math; but they sure can show us how much wood they can chop. They can contribute in that way. You know, they're excited to come to school. Some of them will come to school at 5:00 a.m. to start a fire for our cooking, or they'll stay the whole night and monitor it. And I think that's really exciting to see them take on that role. It is a leadership role in our community.</td>
<td>Our students, every year, they grow an acre of corn, and they're engaged in every single step of the process, from the planting, to the weeding in the summer, to the irrigating or water-hauling when there's a drought.</td>
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<td>Our next focus area is our wellness and perseverance philosophy.</td>
<td>And we host our annual community harvest, where we cook the traditional foods.</td>
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<td>So our young people face a lot of issues, from diabetes to suicide. And so we try to think about our children in a holistic way. This is the DEAP hózhó wheel. In Navajo culture, &quot;hózhó&quot; translates lights to balance, wellness. And so we really try to think deeply about all these different areas that are affecting our students and how do we provide support in those areas. We also created our core values based off of that.</td>
<td>And I'm really proud to say that we have a school seed library in our community that has all the seeds that we've grown over the years.</td>
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<td>So some of the activities we do around wellness are around physical wellness and bringing in those opportunities for them to engage in yoga. We go on weekly runs so they can push themselves to be resilient. We go on a lot of hikes. And these hikes are really empowering, because they, again, build leadership. Someone who might have a behavior issue will be the one stepping up and carrying extra water or helping someone if they fall. They love being with the land, and it just creates this community feel. We know our surroundings, and we know how to take care of them. We also try to think about other pathways. We bring in local people who have skills in the arts. We've had our students create their own music. We work with the Navajo Nation Fish and Wildlife Department to bring in some Hunters Ed for those students who are interested. We work with the National Indian Youth Project for Project Venture, where our students are using land-based techniques. Our next focus area is experiential learning through agriculture education. So when we were trying to create the</td>
<td>Students learn about the foods around us and the land. And they learn about their ecosystem. They learn how to make traditional tools from the things that we have around us and how to be self-sufficient.</td>
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| So this is the DEAP curriculum. This is what we do. This is who we are. And there have -- it's led us to a lot of really great things. MS. LOUELLA POBLANO: And, as Karen shared, New Mexico PED has some academic

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expectations. And DEAP School has met, pretty much, a lot of the expectations that are set out.

As you can see in our trend data, from the first year of DEAP School, they started out with a "B"; then they moved into a kind of like a low "B"; and then last year, we had a high "B."

This year with the transitional assessment, it will be interesting to see, you know, how we will move forward with that. But, irregardless, we continue to send that message that, you know, if you're a student here at DEAP School or you're an adult here at DEAP School, learning is very, very important, and setting those goals of what you can accomplish by the end of the year is also important.

And with our short-cycle assessment, using the NWEA assessment test, we have continued to perform really well in math. We do want at least the majority of our students to meet the proficiency levels. So math is one area that our students excel in. Math and science are the two areas that our students excel in.

They struggle with ELA. And the academic English language that we have to read about in our science classes, our students struggle with that academic language of English.

But we are continually looking for research-based instructional strategies that will help our students have access to those rigorous curriculum content areas. We want all our students to be very proficient in what they read and how they speak and how they present.

And a little bit about the strategy and planning. As we plan every year for DEAP School, we kind of have to look at everything from a holistic point of view. We look at our yearly calendar. We take into consideration, is there going to be an eclipse this year. When do we anticipate the first snow? And if we hear the first thunder, that also helps us drive and direct our curriculum in a -- in a responsive way; because we have reverence for those natural occurrences that happen throughout the year.

One of our big highlights is our Grandparents Day. And, you know, it's really a -- you know, Kayla mentioned the intergenerational learning. Our students are there to provide a lot of support for our parents. But it is also a day where our grandparents are sharing that knowledge.

I remember one session that I went, where, you know, I was teaching the families of how to map their family, you know, just their whole family. And, you know, in that mapping that we did of, you know, "Here's the mother, here's the father, here's the children, here's -- you know -- it was a day of enlightenment for me, because I was able to hear lots of honorable family stories during that time.

One of the things that we like to do is we like to push the boundaries of what traditional culture looks like. I know that, you know, there are -- there's a -- there's one perspective where culture and tradition should be taught at home. But what if our families and what if our students did not have exposure to that culture and that tradition?

So DEAP School is a way for us to present and expose that enriching opportunity for our students and families to engage in culture.

Kayla mentioned a -- sorry. Kayla mentioned a hózhó wheel. As our -- this is the one school -- as a school leader, I worked in lots of schools. And the -- the students at DEAP School, the staff at DEAP School, they practice lots of reflection. And those reflections are shared. It's a way we build culture. It a way we build our improvements for ourselves and also for creating solutions.

MS. FRIEDMAN: Your time is up.

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: Our time is up. Okay. And so, just, the rest of the presentation focuses on what we're challenging with, and then what we're doing to move forward.

So over the next five years, we hope to focus on these areas: Continuing pathways for wellness and learning through systems, looking at community leadership curriculum, thinking about some action research.

We're doing some great things, and we recognize that. But we don't have the research, so we're working on that.

And building more opportunities for our students to actually hold these positions of leadership.

Our college -- we're going to graduate our first class, hopefully, next year. And so just really focusing on that and continuing to build those pathways toward college and career and then growing our operations.

MS. LOUELLA POBLANO: And growing our
operations, you know, we've been blessed with a community school grant, and we've been blessed with, you know, several things, where it gives us that capacity -- excuse me -- it gives us that capacity to look at DEAP School and say, "We want to build a whole school of hogans, and this is what I would like.  This is what we would like DEAP School to look like."

So in growing our leaders and growing and supporting our current staff to go out and seek that pathway, you know, we have several AmeriCorps -- we have two AmeriCorps.  One wants to be our future counselor.  The other AmeriCorps wants to be our future English teacher.

So we talk to our families; we talk to our staff members in developing not only themselves as professional, you know, career-empowering people to help our school grow; but we also share, you know, what can our school look like, what kind of opportunities can we build with DEAP School.

One of our challenges is strengthening our school governance.  You know, I've been an administrator in a public school setting.  As a public school administrator, you don't have to think about recruiting students.  You don't have to think about recruiting GC members.  You don't have to think about student enrollment, recruiting students.

So those are really new for me.

But I think, for a charter school, it's very important.  So strengthening our school governance, strengthening our parent advisory, building the collaboration with the Navajo Nation with our local -- with our local Red Lake Chapter House and all the -- you know, we have -- we have CDC housing.  We need to connect with them and see what can we do to help better the housing situation in Navajo.

So we're looking at a lot of different pathways to move not just our school, but our community, forward.

And that is the end of our presentation.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:  Thank you so much.

MS. KAREN WOERNER:  Are you finished with the projector?

THE CHAIR:  Thank you.  Thank you.
systems.
THE CHAIR: You have to give us your name.

FROM THE FLOOR: In fact, because of DEAP's commitment to Navajo culture, we know how to prepare traditional foods, create cultural arts, and the importance of what it means to be an indigenous person. It has helped us to be competent and connected to ancestors.

At DEAP, Navajo culture is the core of our curriculum, not just an elective. The focus on culture has allowed many of us to grow academically, socially, spiritually, physically, and mentally.

DEAP is a supportive environment that challenges me to step outside my comfort zone to find new talents and new interests. Because of DEAP, I know who I am and what I want to accomplish.

FROM THE FLOOR: At DEAP, I am encouraged to be curious and explore what is important to me, like mocassin-making. DEAP has taught me how to be independent and that an indigenous woman can persevere through anything.

FROM THE FLOOR: DEAP -- DEAP has taught me how to build relationships with my peers, the land, and my culture.

FROM THE FLOOR: I believe in DEAP because it's -- I believe in DEAP because -- because the teachers always encourage students to complete assignments and stay on top of their academics. With that, my overall grades have drastically improved, in my math, writing, reading, and science skills.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good afternoon. My name is Maya Clark. DEAP staff supports me by helping me with whatever I need help with. DEAP is like my family, and I know the staff and students value me at DEAP. I am able to be myself.

We hope that DEAP is renewed so we can continue being part of an inspiring community that values our well-being and our future.

FROM THE FLOOR: DEAP is more than just a school. DEAP is a family. DEAP links generations through oral teachings and stories.
FROM THE FLOOR: We are prospering into something bigger. After we graduate from DEAP, we will continue to stay active at DEAP by assisting and leading in community events, sharing our knowledge and showcase the positive experience that DEAP has to offer.

We want to watch DEAP grow into a successful school that honors traditional practices and academic accomplishments.

IN UNISON: We are Rez Kids Rising. (Applause).

THE CHAIR: Thank you.
Next on the list is Tierra Bia.
FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Tierra Bia, and I am Mikkel's older sister.
Madam Chair, Commissioners, hello. Ya'a'teeh. My name is Tierra Bia, and I am here on behalf of the parents, families, and communities of Dzit Dit'ooi School of Empowerment, Action and Perseverance.

First and foremost, DEAP is one of the most encouraging, uplifting, and culturally empowering schools we have allowed our children to attend. There is a family feel at DEAP, and we have all felt welcome since our first experience with the school. It is noticed that our children wake up early, and they are excited to go to school. They want to be there.

As parents, it is great to be a part of a school that has the ability to build a connection with the students, families, and community. It's as if everyone knows one another. Help is offered, and many suggestions are given when our students begin to show slack.

Whether it be the extra tutoring or one-on-one time, we realize that the teachers take our children's education with major effort and diligence.

The students have shown great academic growth with grades turning to A's and B's and receiving honor roll certificates. The educators take the initiative and extra step to make sure our students' instructional needs are met.

We also appreciate that DEAP prioritizes Navajo traditions, culture, and language. It is amazing to hear that those teachings are being brought home with the students, as some families have not always had the same opportunity.

Our children all have had the chance to build their Navajo knowledge with various hands-on cultural activities. This includes learning to bake a traditional Navajo cake-in-the-ground, participating in the Navajo male coming-of-age ceremonies, and learning to use natural plants for the benefit of their health.

These are just a few teachings that are...
relatable to our children’s lives and identity as Navajo people.

Furthermore, diabetes is a very significant problem around the Navajo Reservation, and the families believe that it is important for DEAP to teach the students how to rise above this epidemic. DEAP practices good health by ensuring the students exercise during their school day, reducing their sugar and sodium intake, motivating them to drink water, and engaging the students in regular nature walks and hikes.

Not only does DEAP practice good physical health, but DEAP considers the students’ mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. They do this by guiding the students through a self-evaluation diagram, daily reflection, prayer, and even meditation. These techniques are used to guarantee that the students are completely present during their studies.

DEAP definitely had an impact on numerous families throughout the years of service and dedication towards our community. With all this being said, the parents, families, and community of DEAP respectfully urges the Public Education Commission to continue to support Dzil Dit’l’ooh School of Empowerment, Action and Perseverance, as our children are thriving and deserve the education that DEAP is providing.

School of Empowerment, Action and Perseverance, as our children are thriving and deserve the education that DEAP is providing.

Thank you. (Native language spoken.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Next on the list is Brett. And I don’t -- don’t know if -- oh, I’m sorry. Actually, it’s -- Jade Dennison is next. And I don’t know if Jade -- because there’s no indication whether they wanted to speak or not. So I don’t -- I do not know.

FROM THE FLOOR: Jade, do you want to speak? If you want to, you can. If you don’t, you don’t have to.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. I’m Jade Dennison. I have two daughters that attend the school. We were a military family. And my husband passed away, and we came home. And now my kids are getting the traditional teachings that they missed being far away. And this has helped us build a lot more friends and a lot closer connections.

We -- I’m very involved with the school. And I made -- all the students know me. And it’s really good to see what they’re teaching. And my daughter brings home stuff that I didn’t even know. And I was like, "Oh, that’s good to hear."
So I want to thank you for that.

I also think, Mr. Brauer, that this school may be the leader in getting rid of the red marks. It's close.

ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: Madam Chair, I didn't want to -- I know we buried the lede on that; but I thought you would say that I think this is a great example of a school that went from a certain spot to a place that really has --

THE CHAIR: Absolutely. So we want to -- and as I've told other schools, that is also a testament to how connected and well the school is operating.

And I know you've had your challenges with your governance council. And we've cycled around that a lot. But no matter who's been there, there's always been that connection in the conversation. And that continues in the school, and that shows how you've been able to move yourself out of those areas that were definitely problematic. And you're also just starting to.

So this school is in a little bit different place than some of the other schools that we've seen, because they've been around a while and moved out. But it's kind of understandable, as anyone who's been in the -- you know, in the groundbreaking of these schools, it's more than challenging.

And as you mentioned, when you come in as an administrator, being administrator at another public school pales in comparison to being a leader in a charter school, because you're asked to do so much more and to buy in with the community. And so we appreciate that continued hard work that you've done there.

So I hope we can spend more of our time today actually trying to talk about how do we help with the challenges, you know. Because they're identified. So, you know, what can we, as the community, help to do to see what we can do to help the challenges so that the school can grow.

So I guess one of your biggest challenges, without a doubt, is transportation.

MS. LOUELLA POBLANO: Yes.

THE CHAIR: And it's not for want of wanting to do it, but it's the lack of finding a service provider; right?

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Madam Chair. And also the restrictions of what can be used to transport students.

students to get certified.

And wouldn't it be a shame -- or isn't it a shame -- that there's not, like, seed money to start a small business in a rural community so that a bus could be purchased to help -- you know, to help this.

So maybe we can have that. Not here today, but that greater conver- -- why can't that happen, that, you know, you get some folks that are genuinely interested in doing this.

And there's all sorts of small business opportunities. And there's got to be even more funding that's available for a rural area. And why not help the school help to, you know, help themselves and their students and their -- you know, they've got -- they're going to have their first graduating class. And why can't we encourage a small business from starting?

You know, to me, that's -- that's part of what we should be doing.

So maybe that's something that we can look at. Because I know that's your growth challenge, without a doubt.

So, I'm putting if out there so that, hopefully, we can maybe find some help for this.
So...

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: You go first, and I'll go after.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I have a lot of questions, as usual. But one pretty simple one.

So you just go from sixth grade to eleventh grade? And then what? Either -- well, for sure, what happens? And then why is that?

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: So when we applied for our original charter, we applied for the five years. And we started with sixth and seventh, and so we're growing up. So within the five years, it would reach eleventh --

THE CHAIR: Next year they'll have their first twelfth-graders.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I was misreading that. It says sixth through eleventh. Why would you stop at eleventh? I'm sorry. My misunderstanding.

I wanted to -- I would come there anytime. And so I have questions. But I recall -- actually, I was in the audience when they approved you for --

THE CHAIR: You were, yeah.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: -- in 2014.

So what I'm recalling could be incorrect.

Your special ed is like a liaison who lives not on the -- on the -- in the Nation, but -- or -- is that person there all the time?

MS. LOUELLA POBLANO: Our contracted special ed teacher, through ACES, is present right now. And we do contract with her. And she does come out to provide services for our students with IEPs. And she also provides training for our teachers.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I see. And you probably don't -- you're certainly welcome to talk.

The reason I said that was, as a former special ed teacher, accommodations aren't as difficult as actually remediating the issues. And that's why I was trying to figure out how that would happen.

Didn't you have someone in Española or something at one time?

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: Yes. That's the same person.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Oh, wow. That was great. So you are setting up remediation programs with different materials for the students with disabilities; is that correct?

MS. LOUELLA POBLANO: And as an administrator, I'll also speak to that. We -- because teacher recruitment is another one of our challenges, we weren't able to recruit a math teacher or a science teacher. So what we had to do was we had to think outside the box, and we contracted with Edgenuity.

And when we contracted with Edgenuity, that was the one thing that we helped set up is, you know, how can we get -- this Tier 1 education that you're delivering to all our kids, how can you put in the accommodations for meeting IEP needs?

And they were a very willing partner to help me set that up. So we've have that embedded in our Edgenuity online program.

MS. CHRISTINA BACA: I'm Christina Baca, a, retired special ed director, and just about every other job in a school district, and special ed teacher.

And what we have done -- because we've not been able to procure the services of a special ed teacher -- excuse me -- we have -- we developed the IEPs. The teachers are very involved in that, and parents are involved.

We provide -- I provide whatever training in implementing the accommodations and modifications. I kind of assist in developing remediation programs.

But the school is really on top of that. And it has their own programs that are in place that are very sufficient and have been very effective.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Great. Because I was just kind of going off of what I'd heard from before. But I know it's quite a difficult thing, and thank you for coming to do that.

You know, you can get a job in, like, 100 places in less than two minutes. You do know that.

MS. CHRISTINA BACA: That's true. That's true. And it's been very difficult to find part-time special ed teachers who are willing to travel or who are even available on a part-time basis.

So I'm hoping this year that we'll get some online lessons in place. We're doing that at another school, and we'll -- we do also online IEPs and other online meetings, video meetings with parents. I'm also the school diagnostician.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Bless you.

MS. CHRISTINA BACA: Well, I'm going to
say this. And maybe I should have spoken earlier,
and I apologize if I'm speaking out of turn.
It's been very inspiring to me. Teachers
have been very responsive to suggestions about,
"Let's do this with accommodations and
modifications."
I have worked with DEAP for three years,
and it has been very inspiring. I've had them
say -- teachers say, "Well, what if I do this and
this? Is that an accommodation?"
And it's just right-on. Accommodations
and modifications are good instruction. And I see
that in place at this school.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: That's
wonderful. This is a school that one of the reasons
I admire the school is that they're willing to take
suggestions and willing to look at alternatives and
ways to do things better for their kids, which leads
me to my next two questions.
One is -- this was new to me, as well, by
the way. But where I live, they used to have, and
do not anymore, have a building trades class. And
what they did was they actually went out and built
very expensive homes. And so they weren't just like
little one-bedroom places; they were quite --

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unfortunately, it requires having contractors and
this type of thing.
But I would see that in your community,
because housing is an issue. I don't know how to do
that. I'm just throwing it out there for you to
figure it out.
But I have -- you know, I can see people
getting jobs as plumbers and carpenters and
electricians and things that go there. Because one
student said -- I've forgotten who at this moment.
They were talking about coming back, helping with
the school when they graduated.
But what I didn't hear and want to hear --
and may be there, anyway, and I just didn't get
it -- was I don't want them just to help your
school; I want them to help the community in terms
of being small entrepreneurs who would then hire
people or train people so that the whole
community -- because that's your focus -- would
benefit. Does that make sense what I'm saying?
MS. KAYLA BEGAY: Sure. So, actually, we
are actively pursuing those pathways. You mentioned
Action Research. Our students are gathering
community data on each neighborhood, how many
potholes are there, how many homes are abandoned or

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victims of arson, how many dogs are in each
neighborhood.
And from there, we're going to present
that to our local chapter. So I feel like, for us,
we're gathering that data for our community, and
we're going to have conversations on what needs to
happen, who's accountable for what.
In addition, we've partnered with Diné
College, and we have two of our students who are
involved in the Navajo Cultural Arts program. So
they're learning silversmithing, and they're
Teaching that to their families. We have one kid
who's wearing something he made.
So, you know, the cultural arts is a real
career pathway for our people.
And so we are doing that. You know, the
moccasin-making project is something that we're
doing around that area.
But we're continuing to do that. You
know, Mikkel is the one who mentioned that he wants
to come back and help DEAP.
I'll let him share, if he wants.
But he wants to be an entertainer. He
wants to bring joy to our community. And so he
wants to do that at DEAP. Because -- I don't know

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if you -- if we captured it well. But DEAP is
really that community hub. We don't anything else.
We have don't have a laundromat; we don't have a
store; we don't have a gathering space. DEAP is
that space.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I'm sorry, but I
apologize. I have to put in this one word that has
absolutely nothing to do with your school.
And I've been to a number
of census seminar kinds of things. And I hope that
because of the fact that you are the hub, is really
work at getting the census to be accurate there.
I know it doesn't have anything to do with
your school.
THE CHAIR: It does. It does.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And you-all are
oftentimes undercounted. And I've been to a number
of census seminar kinds of things. And I hope that
because you are so strong and -- and reach out and
you are family, as well as a community, that the
kids are -- again, I'm going to leave it up to
you -- but to get people to answer that census and
take it.
Because I think there are people in our
nation who probably don't want people counted. And
it costs New Mexico, millions -- millions -- of
1 dollars every year.
2 So I thought I would throw that in. And I
3 realize this has nothing to do with you.
4 MS. KAYLA BEGAY: It does, though.
5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It does. It's
6 not your school is why I would say, "Yes, renew."
7 MS. KAYLA BEGAY: So across Native
8 country, the idea of data sovereignty -- you know,
9 so many people study us, but they don't really do
10 anything helpful with this. And we need to be in
11 charge of that so we can make the change that's
12 going to help us the most.
13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: The kids can be
14 talking about this -- you know, whatever.
15 THE CHAIR: Sure. It does have a lot to
16 do with it.
17 Commissioner Voigt?
18 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Thank you,
19 Madam Chair. Thank you for being here today. And I
20 just wanted to say, I'm so moved by your work. All
21 your slides.
22 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Me, too.
23 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: On your slides, and
24 the project-based learning that you're doing, it was
25 great to see those students sitting behind a desk.

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1 And the way that you've indigenized the
2 understanding by design. Kudos to that.
3 And the community here is just -- it's
4 beautiful that they all came out to support the
5 school.
6 I'm sorry. I apologize.
7 THE CHAIR: No. Don't apologize.
8 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: That's exactly the
9 way I feel.
10 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: But I'm just moved by
11 the work that you're doing. And great work. Thank
12 you.
13 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Crone?
14 COMMISSIONER CRONE: Remember that I was
15 crying about a gorilla.
16 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: He was.
17 COMMISSIONER CRONE: I wanted to add about
18 the gorilla’s thumb, even though their
19 hands are huge, the thumb is about the same size as
20 mine. And so they couldn't make some of the signs;
21 right?
22 So he talked about a dialect, a sign
23 language. There's now a GSL, Gorilla Sign Language.
24 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Raftery?
25 COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: I don't want to get

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1 real philosophical. But I do want to -- I do want
2 to acknowledge Mother Earth and how you all took
3 care, for thousands of years, the world and didn't
4 put a dent in it. And in the last 300 years, we've
5 kind of gone away from that.
6 And I've always said and told people that
7 I felt like the Native American way of living was
8 the right way, because, God forbid, something should
9 happen in this world, you're all self-sufficient
10 enough to be able to survive; whereas, we wouldn't.
11 You know, they can take away or try --
12 well, the European way of living came in and
13 destroyed a lot of your culture. But they can
14 probably try to take away your language, but they
15 can never take away your culture.
16 And this school and your presentation
17 proves that, that you will continue -- and maybe we
18 won't. But you're, for sure, on the right track as
19 far as I'm concerned.
20 I'm hoping that you'll continue teaching
21 the kids your culture, their way of life, their way
22 of thinking.
23 And your wheel is beautiful. I'm real
24 familiar with that. And I thank you for coming
25 today, all of you, young ones. Pay attention. This

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1 is your world.
2 Thank you.
3 THE CHAIR: Thanks.
4 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Madam Chair?
5 THE CHAIR: Certainly. Commissioner
6 Caballero?
7 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yes, just a few
8 questions.
9 How do you pronounce the walking --
10 MS. KAYLA BEGAY: (Native language
11 spoken.) And that means, "Walking for life." If
12 you like, I can share a little more about that
13 movement.
14 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yes, yes, please.
15 I do want -- and I was having a hard time because
16 all the accents are the same. And in some
17 languages -- or in Spanish, when they show the
18 pronunciation, there's different accents to show the
19 intonations if there's more than one accent close
20 together.
21 And so I tried to pronounce it. That's
22 too hard to use the different intonations. The
23 ay-ay or the ah-ah.
24 But, anyway, I am -- I do want to know
25 about this.
And what a difference from the times we saw each other here for the challenge you had for your school, and they were trying times. I am enjoying every minute of it.

And I saw that B-B. I hope to see an A. I know you’re there already, even if it doesn’t show. But let’s go for that “A” for the school. I think you can do it.

And you’re right. Food is medicine, and we have to remember that indigenous people survived without sugar and white flour and survived without a lot of red meat.

And Mexico’s indigenous people are having a hard time, because they’re consuming too much of it. And they’re now going back to traditional foods.

Thousands of years of evolution not consuming that builds our bodies not to be able to digest that. So we need to make an assessment and re- -- give another direction to the type of foods, how do we eat them, what do we do, how do we drain our corn, even going back to stonerground, and the type of pork and all of that. I think it -- once we get healthy, it makes a world of difference.

It’s just too much diabetes. And it didn’t exist prior to -- to the Conquest. And it’s here. And it’s here because the Europeans brought a lot of the stuff that wasn’t Native American diet. And I’m very glad for the presentation on food and getting back to agriculture. I’m very -- I know that the last times, we were just talking about grades. And I’m glad that everybody captures now that it’s beyond grades, that it’s also survival of spirit, not just this.

Because we’re -- you’re losing a lot of folks to -- to suicide and violence. And that shouldn’t happen in a community, the sense of desperation. But you’re bringing back hope. You’re bringing back that spirit. And I’m glad you’re in the right direction.

Thank you.

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: And you have new faculty. If they’re here, could you stand?

MS. LOUELLA POBLANO: We would like our DEAP staff to stand up and introduce themselves and what you teach.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good afternoon. My name is Doug Berrigan. And I’m a new hire here with DEAP. This is barely my fourth or fifth month. I’m coming out of California. I taught out there for eight or nine years, in charter schools mostly.

And I came out here just for this school in particular. I had my job in California and everything. Lucky for me I don’t have kids or married, so I can go around at will.

DEAP is a school that I had been tracking on my radar because of what DEAP is about and because of what they invest -- their investing in the culture, which, for Native people, is who we are. It’s not just a little selective thing that we might want to engage in. Culture is what makes us.

So that’s why I came to DEAP. And I’m happy to see that the people in New Mexico, regardless of what your background might be or culturally or in education, you’re recognizing that DEAP has that spirit, that gift that has survived for thousands of years and is showing right now, right here, with everything that’s happening.

So that’s my inspiration. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to be here as well.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

FROM THE FLOOR: Ya’a'teeh. My name is Dawnlei Ben. I am Diné also, and a recent graduate from Kansas University this past year, which was why I came home.

And before that, I worked at Diné College as a STEM coordinator in teaching Navajo philosophy and STEM.

So that’s how I got introduced to DEAP is they were one of the schools I worked with. And when I came back as an educator, in studying about indigenizing STEM, I fell into the school. Kayla found me, because I live ten miles in a canyon, no electricity, running water or service.

So she found me and asked me to be the indigenous-ized teacher over at STEM. [Verbatim.]

So I came home, and I’m loving my job teaching my community and my students and also indigenizing their curriculum. Thank you.

FROM THE FLOOR: Sorry. Did you want to ask us questions? We kind of sat down.

THE CHAIR: No. If someone has a question -- we’re good. Thank you.

MS. LOUELLA POBLANO: We have one teacher that is not present. And, currently, she is living in Oklahoma. And she is our ELA teacher, Kylee George. And she is also a full-time, you know, person that provides the -- the middle school and
THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: But I also want to recognize that, you know, these are our instructional leaders. But every single one of the people who is part of the DEAP community is a teacher.

I want to thank our families for being here and sharing their wisdom, and our students, too. I have learned so much from them.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. So let's just take a small moment and talk about the challenges with the governance council.

I hate to be "Debbie Downer" and burst the bubble. And we know that you've had challenges with it.

So I guess just want to talk a little bit about whether you're moving forward in a better place with that and the sustainability of that governance council.

MR. GAVIN SOSA: Madam Chair, Commissioners, it was interesting watching the presentation, listening to the students speak, knowing that the governing council is the weak point in our school in many ways. And so it's a bit embarrassing, to be honest, sitting here.

So maybe I'll just kind of share where I think we are and where I think our next steps are as a governing council.

So there's been reference to kind of where the school was in 2017. I came on to the governing council in the summer of 2017. And in that moment there was a revocation process unfolding. And in our very first governing council meeting, we talked about what is the evaluation system we have to look at our head administrator.

The school had gone through a couple of head administrators in its first few years of operation. We didn't have a head administrator evaluation process at that moment.

And so in that summer, the summer of 2017, we actually sat down with the school founders looking at the model that the school had been using with its students, this holistic model, this Diné philosophy that looks at how are the students evaluating their own growth and how can we utilize something similar with our administrator.

Ms. Poblano had just been hired at that moment. So we just brought on a full-time administrator who can be on site. I've known Louella from our days when we both worked in the Gallup-McKinley County Schools in the community of Navajo. She was an instructional support administrator, principal.

We spent that summer creating an authentic head administrator evaluation. We didn't apply it because we had just lost the head administrator who had been on contract. And so she stepped away, and so we kind of presented it to Louella. And that was, I think, that first step.

We looked back -- in 2018 and 2019, both of these summers -- it's strange. We actually conducted a head administrator evaluation. You can go look back at our governing council minutes. It was back in executive session.

We sat down with this authentic rubric, sat down with Louella. She actually guided us through it, the same way the students through their student-led conferences.

MS. LOUELLA POBLANO: I wanted to mention that. I'm glad Gavin mentioned it. So the head administrator evaluation process is very similar to what our students go through in their student-led conferences.

They talk about their goals; they talk about their accomplishments, their challenges, and what our next steps are.

That's what Gavin is referencing to with that student-led conference process.

MS. BEATA TSOSIE: And so this document, we actually went through the process both summers, in 2018 and 2019. Strengths -- Louella guided us through where her strengths were, where she needed to grow. I remember -- and there were specific areas. Being new to the charter school world, having to figure out this financial planning that is often not something a school administrator may be doing at the level a charter school leader would do, aligning some of the service work that the students were doing with the classroom lessons and things like that. So we identified these areas.

Then the ball was dropped on our part of actually literally finalizing it and putting it in a file.

So we actually have two head administrator evaluations from the last two summers identifying next steps for Louella and things like that. Why they didn't make it into a file, why they didn't make it to you all when the request was made is just a huge gap on our part. We're just dropping the
Part of that, I can say, might be -- yeah, well, when I think about the stability of our board, I think, when I came on in 2017 we still have two board members who were board members then -- actually, maybe three. So I am -- I've been on the board for two-and-a-half years now. And we have three board members who have more seniority than I do. So we have had one position that we've struggled to kind of keep filled at various times. It's currently filled. We have a fifth board member right now.

And I think some of it is our misunderstanding of the governance council, the roles and responsibilities that we have. So, for example, I think when we assign roles, oftentimes, we think the president of the governing council is really that central figure, without recognizing that it's often the secretary of the governing council who has so much of the responsibility of monitoring the progress and whether minutes are being posted, whether documents are being sent. And so I think there's just -- that's part of an old-world system that we're still, like, struggling with is, you know, there were a lot of folks who said -- we identified maybe one of our strongest members as our president. And that might have been better suited to say, "You should be secretary, because you're living close. You stop by the school a lot. And maybe that's that role that you can take on. You have that organizational skill."

So even thinking through that kind of process, that's part of where this school is at, you know. It's really just thinking through these titles that people have and what does that mean in the context of an indigenous education. Our board members, out of the five of us, I was the only board member that had any firsthand experience working in a charter school. So, really, there's just a learning curve. Kayla had been a classroom teacher and is now a leader at a charter school. And that's a learning process. And Louella has had the same learning. Our board is experiencing this same -- this process.

One of our school founders many of you know stepped away this last year. And it was wonderful. She carried so much of the weight of that kind of work. With her stepping away, we've kind of stumbled through the last couple of months. And I can't say anything except that we, in our -- two months ago at our board meeting, with the help of our school leadership here, we also laid out kind of an evaluation and an annual plan.

So it wasn't simply something we did at the end of the year as some compliance requirement, but that it really could help Louella identify her strengths, but her areas of growth, and that we could continue to support that throughout the year. And so that work is something that we created, we adopted. We have some timelines now laid out through the course of the year. Our intention is to follow that.

Why those evaluations -- those head administrator evaluations didn't get sent, I -- on behalf of all the folks sitting behind us, wondering, they're doing all the work, they're doing all the work day-to-day, the students, the staff are doing all the work. So why we didn't send the document, print it out, put it in Louella's file, why we didn't send it to the Public Education Commission and the PED, there's no excuse except we dropped the ball on that.

It has been done. It's not an area that we haven't been working with Louella. Every month at our governing council meeting, she provides her report, which is incredibly thorough. And it actually identifies many of the areas that she and we identified as her areas of growth. So we can kind of keep up on a monthly basis of where she's at.

But, yeah, in that 2017, the last two-and-a-half years, the school has been stabilized. They're bringing on a head administrator who's been with us, bringing on Michael Vigil and the Vigil Group as our business managers.

You know, our audit findings now -- four findings, non-compliance issues, some of them are repeat findings, and they really fall to us. But that is just the honest truth. We have a lot of work to do. And after hearing this presentation, I think, you know, we recognize who we answer to.

And we were sharing with the students before we came in here that although we face you and we speak to you, ultimately, we also answer to them.
and our community.

And so, you know, on behalf of the governing council, we have a lot of work to do, and I think in the last few months, we've really come to realize that.

So I don't know if that's -- without trying to throw any of our own work under the bus, that's -- we've got work to do, and that's our intention.

THE CHAIR: Well -- and I appreciate the honesty. And, like I said, it's obvious that no matter who's been on the governing council, it's obvious that the governance council is having those discussions, because you've been able to move out of the non-compliance areas, the Falling Far Below, to -- to really a good spot.

So we appreciate that. And I guess it just gets a little maybe niggling when, you know, you're getting an e-mail saying, you know, "We need this report."

And I know it's -- you've got bigger-picture things you're looking at.

But we all have to be just a little on top of -- and I appreciate the fact that at least now you know. So that's all we can say.

But I'm glad to hear that you've got the -- the four ongoing members. I mean, that's -- that's really good to know. And, hopefully, you've got -- because I know it's difficult everywhere to fill positions -- that you've got a good plan in place so that if someone unfortunately has to leave, it's not going to put you in a bad spot.

And it's -- it's also, I guess, part of the community growing as well. And you've got the equity council that you've got to also begin to build out, which I would guess might be a little easier to build out.

So -- and we look forward to seeing what that looks like as well. And I guess we're all excited about them and excited to see what's going to happen as a result of them.

So it'll be interesting to see over the next couple of years.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Madam Chair?

Within your project-based learning, which looks so rich and hands-on every day, and with the evidence that it's benefiting your academics, I've noticed just your school goals are centered around math and reading.

Is there any thought of future school goal design that's more mission-specific towards what you're doing with your cultural and linguistic relevancy or the community outreach and development?

THE CHAIR: I'll just remind you that that is the direction that they're given now. They're on the old contract. But now they're -- the direction is, "Please don't use math and reading. Please use" --

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: So that's something that's in the works; right?

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: Yeah. So I think we -- when we created DEAP, we weren't really sure, what is cultural curriculum -- what would it actually look like, what can we actually do. So now I think that's where we're heading. We want all our students to do cultural workshops for our community on everything that they've learned. All of them are gifted in all these different areas. And so creating opportunities for them to share that knowledge is what we're hoping for.

But in our original charter, we were required to include those goals. But we just love to indigenize them.

THE CHAIR: That's on us. And it's learning for us. And, hopefully, that discussion, through contract negotiations, is going to be more meaningful. Because we are asking the schools to reflect back on the mission. And the math and reading is on whatever PED does with their assessments.

And it's -- you know, we have -- we have a small number of schools that math and reading is what they need to focus on with their mission; but most schools not. And that's what we want to see is what you're fulfilling with your mission.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Especially with their rich curriculum.

THE CHAIR: Absolutely, yes. I think it's going to be hard finding out which is the best to use, because there's so many you can. And that's a nice position to be in.

Oh, certainly.

Commissioner Armbruster?

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So the director was talking about, "We have no science grade"? Is there a reason for that? Not that these --

THE CHAIR: There's a notation on the chart --

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Oh, I missed it.

THE CHAIR: -- about the science grade.
There's a notation on the chart. I don't remember exactly what it said, but I know I saw it. The school was not listed on the SBA science spreadsheet.

ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, Commissioner Armbruster. We can explore that. One thought that I had, the actual number of students may have been so small that in order to protect students' overall results, there may be a reason why that is. We can explore that. If we have that information, we can provide that to you all.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: That's probably true. If you have 40 children, probably most of them won't be seventh grade. I didn't want that little question on there, where it says, "Well, we couldn't find the list." That sounded bad. That's what I wanted to know.

And the other thing is -- two things. One is -- you're going to need to help me again. There's another council that every school is supposed to have on cultural diversity. THE CHAIR: Equity Council. COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Equity Council?

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Acting Director, to find difficulty finding a governing council, to find seven more people to do that as well. Isn't it seven?

ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, Commissioner Armbruster. This is an ongoing conversation that we're having within the Department, as well as with our schools, to really find the right size for specific schools. So we're working with individual schools who have unique circumstances, to make sure that the spirit of having an equity council, or team, isn't overcome by some process elements. And so we are absolutely working with each of our charter schools to make sure that we can problem-solve.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Oh, good. I think they've got the equity thing down. They've figured that out. And my other thing was, on your EL students, what language are they speaking? Or are they different languages?

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: So I would say -- you suggested, you know, how can you help us. With ELL students, it's unique for Native students, because they speak -- they don't speak Navajo at home. You saw the fluency. They're not fluent speakers. But they hear it at home; and so they're not fluent in either language. And so how do we create ELL policies, or even gather ELA data, is relevant to who we are.

Because I feel like if we just look at Spanish, you know, none of our students speak Spanish. But I feel like that's what many of the ELL strategies are focused on. We're looking to develop that, what sort of bilingual program is going to work. But we do use a lot of our language in our lessons. We have to.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Right. So that's kind of what the TESOL does is many languages. Because in a larger district -- not particularly for your school -- there might be 25 languages. So you don't have someone fluent in every one of those languages to teach it. So you have to use strategies, which is what you're looking for.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: May I please say something?

THE CHAIR: Well, Commissioner Crone first.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: I was first.

Yes. Speaking of language, do any of your students speak Diné?

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: So every single one of us is a learner. In fact, in the Navajo Nation, they're doing a lot of studies around language. And we're finding that people under the age of 25 have a fluency rate of at least 20 percent or less.

And so by bringing in the cultural activities -- I guess our language -- I want everyone to know -- you don't -- you can't learn it in a book or the way that a language class is created.

You learn it through song; you learn it through ceremony. And so for a long time, that has been separated from schools; that has been separated from communities.

And so we're trying to do it. So I would say 90 percent of our students can introduce themselves in Navajo. We require our students to learn a Navajo song.

So I think even how you measure, you know, what is fluency, that's a big topic on the Navajo Nation, and I can't -- I can't really summarize all
COMMISSIONER CRONE: Well, that leads to my next question, which is where do -- so you start at grade six; is that right?

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: We started with Grade 6 and 7 in 2015.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Where did children get their elementary education?

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: A lot of our students come from the Gallup-McKinley School District. A lot of our students come from the BIE schools as well. We're right on the state line, so we get a lot of students from Arizona.

So, again, thinking about how you help us, how do we navigate that? We're in a unique position on the Navajo Nation, where even places like UNM will allow in-state tuition for students in Arizona and Utah.

But charters were prohibited. We have a waiting list of at least 12 students who want to come to DEAP, but they're Arizona students. And so just thinking about things like that.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: You, fortunately, answered my third question, which, if I'm incorrect in this, please let me know. I believe Diné was not a written language until the 1960s?

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: That's absolutely correct. So our language is an oral tradition. And when, you know, colonization happened, it was written. And so there are many elders. They don't care about reading or writing Navajo. That's not what's important. It can you speak it and use it in a functional way.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: I watched a documentary on -- what is it -- the Navajo Nation princess -- queen?

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: Oh, Miss Navajo. That's what it is.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: One of the main requirements is fluency and traditional activities for females.

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: Yes. And then I don't know if you've heard. But in the last Navajo Nation presidential election, one candidate was eliminated because he wasn't deemed fluent.

So there are a lot of conversations and movements happening around language on the Navajo Nation.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: In your elementary schools, are they beginning to have a bilingual program for young people?

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: So Arizona, I would say, is leading that effort. There are two emergent schools. But they only ever go up to usually sixth or eighth grade.

And so how do you make that language transcend those -- and so I think there's just a lot of exploration on, you know, how do we learn language. And we're exploring that as well.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Yeah. So the literature really isn't that helpful?

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: No. But I think what's helping our students learn is, you know, when we're able to tell stories. One thing that we're gearing up for is next week, we're hosting our winter celebration. So our students, they reenact coyote stories, and they use the language and the humor. That's what makes it real. And so that's what we're trying to do with language.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Just one final comment. Threatened language and endangered language is a huge problem in the world. So they estimate that there were about 7,500 -- at least 7,500 languages, different languages. Half of them actually have literature, which is a big change from not too long ago.

But in the United States, even Spanish is an endangered language.

So good luck.

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: I hope you save your language.

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Raftery?

COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: A while back, I used to work with Title VII. And someone at that time developed a Navajo language program; it was like a boxed program. And I remember observing it. And I can't remember the name of the school. But it was between Cuba and Farmington. It was up there.

And the -- when I went to observe, the teachers were Navajo, and they were actually teaching the children the Navajo language, which I didn't understand. But it was -- it was developed under Title VII. So it is out there somewhere.

MS. KAYLA BEGAY: So that's the Rosetta Stone Diné design. But they only had funding for the first class. So the challenges. After you do the beginner class, there's nothing else after. And so I think that's where we're trying to think, how do we be creative around that and how does that make
COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: I was really impressed. That was my comment. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. All right.

So I move that the Public Education Commission renew the charter of DEAP for five years, with the condition that the New Mexico System of School Support and Accountability Report -- the School Support and Accountability Report prepared by PED shows similar performance for SY 2018-2019 in the student growth, highest quartile; student growth, middle quartile; student growth, lowest quartile; English Learner progress; chronic absenteeism; college-and-career readiness; education climate; and no statistically -- with no statistically significant decrease in performance.

COMMISSIONER DAVIS: I second.

THE CHAIR: So motion by Commissioner Gipson, a second by Commissioner Davis.

Any further discussion?

(No response.)

THE CHAIR: If not, roll call, please.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Caballero?

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Caballero: Yes.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Caballero: Commissioner Armbruster votes "Yes."

COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Commissioner Davis?

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Caballero: Commissioner Armbruster: Commissioner Crone?

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Commissioner Caballero: Commissioner Armbruster: Commissioner Raftery?

COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: Yes.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Armbruster: Seven-to-zero.

THE CHAIR: The motion passes, seven-zero.

Thank you so much. Congratulations.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR. GAVIN SOSA: Commissioners, if I can make just one final comment, maybe. You all have been incredibly complimentary to the founders of this school, the leaders of the school, the students and the families. And it's well-deserved.

And I just want to say, I sat before this Commission in 2013 next to two indigenous women. We remember this.

And this Commission denied a charter of a school that I think aligned with this work. And this Commission, the energy that you --

THE CHAIR: I don't think we denied --

MR. GAVIN SOSA: In 2013, another school, not this school.

THE CHAIR: Oh, before -- okay. Okay.

MR. GAVIN SOSA: Yes. I'm just reflecting on -- just, the tone and the energy of this Commission to support this kind of effort is incredible. And it really will change the dynamics of education in this state, that you-all, as elected leaders, are willing and wanting to see this kind of education for the students of this state.

And so I compliment you-all for what you shared today and for the tears and for just the love that you bring for the -- the families here, the students. And thank you all so much, on behalf of myself and the school.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We appreciate it.

(Appause.)

THE CHAIR: We're going to take a short break.

(Recess taken, 3:00 p.m. to 3:16 p.m.)

THE CHAIR: Good afternoon. And thank you for hanging in there all week with us.

FROM THE FLOOR: You saw me back there, did you?

THE CHAIR: Hopefully, it's been somewhat entertaining.

FROM THE FLOOR: It's educational is what it was.

THE CHAIR: So, once again, thank you for coming, and thank you for spending the time and the effort on the renewal packet and working every day as you do.

Once again, we had the slight challenge with the State reporting system. So I have my stock statement, which you could probably now repeat, you've heard it so often. But I'm putting it in the record.

So Renewal of Charters with Conditions.

PED has not provided a report or review of data for the School Year '18-'19 Accountability. It is important for schools to have the complete academic data as part of its renewal information for
this renewal and also for future years. The PEC needs complete State Accountability Reports to make the best decision on school renewal applications. The PEC will review financial and operational performance because the data is complete at this meeting in December of 2019.

If the PEC decides to issue a renewal with conditions, the PEC will clearly state what Accountability information it will review from the PED Accountability Report.

When the Accountability data is prepared by PED and the school has had an opportunity to review the data -- at least ten days -- the PEC will review the data and remove the condition or take other action, such as a Corrective Action Plan or possibly non-renew the charter.

At the future meeting, January or February of 2020, the PEC will only consider the issues related to the reason for the conditions and will not consider any other issues related to renewal.

So, once again, we will close out operational and financial today and have just those narrow areas of academic performance that we do not have the data right now for.

So -- and, once again, if you've got any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to bring them up so we can hopefully address them.

I do want to remind folks, if anyone does want to speak, please make sure that you sign up with Ms. Friedman, who has the sign-up sheet there.

Thank you.

So CSD will do their report. You'll have your 15 minutes. Folks will have their eight minutes, and then we'll move on.

So thank you.

ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, before I defer my time to Deputy Director Woerner, I get the privilege of acknowledging the student leaders for the third time today. And I did notice that we didn't have enough space for all of the students at Tierra Encantada to be here at the same time as DEAP students. So we really appreciate you coming out to support.

I also wanted to acknowledge to the Commission that you received, during the passing period that we just had, some information from Tierra Encantada Charter School, as well, that they --

THE CHAIR: They were showing this. It's, like, I don't have that. I have this.

ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: I defer to Karen.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: Thank you, Director Brauer, Madam Chair, Commissioners, school representatives and students. The report from the Charter Schools Division, as you know, Tierra Encantada serves Grades 7 through 12, with approximately 311 students, with their mission being to empower students as citizen scholars in a dual-language environment for post-secondary success.

If I start with the Part A again, I need to share with the Commission that the -- the Part A on the proficiency rates in the packet does show that the first year was a little bit of a dip and then a trend upward. However, I do need to report that the 13.7 percent in reading did not include all of the assessments that we now have access to. And that has actually gone up to 19 percent when we counted the Spanish reading and the PARCC fall scores, as well as the TAMELA test.

So the reading is actually higher than indicated in your packet, at 19 percent.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Page?

MS. KAREN WOERNER: This is on Page 8 of the entire packet, Page 3 of the Part A, depending on how you're looking at the materials, Commissioner. Page 8 of 67 or Page 3 of 22.

So that 13.7 should be a 19 percent. On the proficiency rate for science, their school was at 20 percent. As you know, the State average is 35 percent.

Looking at the growth indices, regarding the higher performing students, the school, you can see, had a lot of Less Than Expected growth in the beginning of the contract; but, in 2018, are at the expected growth for almost all groups that were reported, with the economically disadvantaged group being greater than -- just a slight bit greater than expected in growth.

That's with the higher performing students in reading.

With the higher performing students in math, a little less success in terms of the amount of growth. Overall, you'll see it's still a little bit less than expected in the math area.

Lowest performing students in reading, again, similarly, the growth -- the students were not growing as expected in the first couple of years; but, in 2018, were at just -- just under
negative .5, which is negligible. They're very close to the zero, which is expected growth.

A similar issue with the lowest performing in math being the growth is not quite as good as in the reading.

Proficiency in reading, by ethnicity groups -- subgroups -- there was a slight decline over the first few years, but then quite a bit of a jump this last year -- in the last year reported, 2019 proficiencies.

Same with the -- in terms of the subgroups, particularly their -- the one with the economically disadvantaged students with disabilities and English Learner chart, which is Chart 13, there was a slight decline the first couple of years, then an -- quite a bit of a jump, and sort of leveled off those last two years.

There was a little bit of a dip in their students with disabilities and English Learners in proficiency. I think that may be attributed to increased enrollment in those areas or increased identification of students in those areas.

Graduation rate was at 70 percent.

College-and-career readiness points have been on an incline upward, improving their points earned in college-and-career-readiness points.

Regarding the mission goals, as you've seen, they have not been able to meet their goals as outlined in the charter.

There were four goals, one of which is not rated because it was an innovation indicator. But in the other three goals, they struggled to meet the expectations set in the contract in all years of the contract term.

Percentage of students remaining enrolled during the school year has been at between 86 and 93 percent during the term of the contract. And between school years has been between 71 and 84 percent.

Teacher retention rate has steadily declined over the years, and the school may want to speak to that if they wish.

The audit findings, the last year were two audit findings. Again, both were other non-compliance concerns. The prior year only had one, similarly a non-compliant -- other non-compliance, which as we've shared before, is not to be dismissed, but is not a serious level of concern.

We did have a governing board member who missed some of the hours.

Going back to the beginning of the report, you will see that, in some areas, the school has Demonstrated Substantial Progress and Met the Standards.

Failing to Demonstrate Substantial Progress was applied to the mission goals for the reasons I just said. They were not able to meet those goals.

And material terms, because I think, primarily, around the dual-language component, they were not able to meet those -- the goal of the material terms all three years, they received a Workings to Meet.

And regarding the other Organizational Performance Framework indicators, the material terms was one of those, right, with the dual language.

The other applicable education requirements had to do with their Next Step Plans and their NM DASH plan follow-up, which the school has since resolved, or is working to resolve.

English Language Learners was another area, again. As you've heard with other schools, the identification of their English Language Learners being that they served higher grades was a concern. And I did want to point out that the school did follow our advice from our visit in December last year through March and was able to identify 70 students that had not been identified as English Language Learners.

And they also were missing their ACCESS scores and annual parent letters in the files. But that has been corrected.

The financial compliance is around the audit concerns.

Employee rights had to do with salaries being mis- -- a discrepancy in the S.T.A.R.S. data. I'm not sure if that was a data entry issue or other issue. But those have been resolved.

And the facilities requirements had to do with the emergency drills, which it appears at the renewal site visit that the school has worked to resolve those as well, since, as we mentioned before, those are a year lag behind.

80 percent of the employees signed the petition. 100 percent of the households signed the petition, and which I think is the only school that had 100 percent.

THE CHAIR: They're the only school has
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<td>MS. KAREN WOERNER: So kudos to your households. The New Mexico Condition Index for the facility was 2.91, just under 3 percent, which is significantly lower than the average. And lower is better. With that, I conclude the CSD report.</td>
<td>our board president. Next to him are members of our administrative team. Cassandra Olivas is our counselor. Eva de Andres Presa our student achievement coordinator. And Kimberly Miera is our special ed coordinator. I would like to recognize other people here with us, members of our board. Melarie Gonzales, our vice president; Tanya Miller, our secretary; Nicholas Maestas, our treasurer; and Ms. Jamie Stevens, one of our board of members. Also with us -- you’ve met them already -- I’d like to introduce some of our school community coming from our crew classes, Tierra Encantada [Spanish spoken] back here. (Applause.)</td>
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<td>COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I was looking at affidavits for petitions on my computer. And it was saying it's 200 -- the number was 200, which was 80 percentage.</td>
<td>MR. DANNY PEÑA: So, thank you, Madam Chair and members of the Commission. I wanted to thank you -- I wanted to thank the CSD division, because they have been very helpful in my time. I was very new coming to Tierra Encantada, and I was very new to the charter world. And it's so amazing I can just call and get someone to answer the phone and answer my questions. I believe just about a week-and-a-half ago, I was talking to Ms. Woerner as she was on the train going home. So even then, she took my call. It was after 5:00. And they've been very helpful, and I wanted to state that for the record, because they have been helping us quite a bit, as I learn the charter world. Because I did come from a district, and the charter world is very new to me. I want to also thank you, Ms. Woerner, for sharing our vision. The vision of -- our mission of our school is the reason why I came to Tierra Encantada. I was working in a local district and I had a job. And I was doing well there, and I was happy there. I happened to send my daughter to Tierra Encantada, and what I saw in her was pretty amazing as she would come home from school. She was loving school. She was loving the hands-on approach at the Tierra Encantada. She was loving everything about Tierra Encantada, and I was, &quot;Well, what's going on at that school?&quot; So there was an opportunity. I applied, and I was blessed to be able to work at Tierra Encantada and be a part of that team. You know, I -- I felt I needed to be a</td>
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<td>THE CHAIR: Of teachers.</td>
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<td>THE CHAIR: I was, like, wow.</td>
<td>COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So then I went to look back at how many students.</td>
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<td>THE CHAIR: Is that about 20? So it's an extra zero.</td>
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<td>COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It's fine. I was just trying to wrap my head around it. I was counting zeros. That's all right. You don't have to -- MS. KAREN WOERNER: I bet Mr. Peña wished he had 200 employees. COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I'm sorry. All is good.</td>
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<td>THE CHAIR: Sorry. Are you done?</td>
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<td>MS. KAREN WOERNER: I am finished.</td>
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<td>THE CHAIR: Okay. Thanks. All right. Good.</td>
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<td>Good morning, once again -- good afternoon. Sorry.</td>
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<td>FROM THE FLOOR: Good afternoon.</td>
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<td>THE CHAIR: So if you would just introduce yourself and anyone that's going to speak for the school during this time period.</td>
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<td>MR. DANNY PEÑA: My name is Danny Peña. I'm the director of Tierra Encantada Charter School and have been there for two-and-a-half years. To my right is business manager, Mr. Steve Alarid. And my left is Angela Esquibel-Martinez, our principal. Here to my left is Joseph Salazar,</td>
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part of what was going on there. I do understand there was a lot of work to do there. A lot of work. And we've been working on that for the last two years with my administrative team. And so the mission is why I'm there. And I know Ms. Woerner has already read that to you, but I'd like to read it to you now.

The mission of Tierra Encantada Charter School is to empower students as citizen scholars through a rigorous learning curriculum which will prepare students for post-secondary success. Now, how do we do that at Tierra Encantada? Well, we have bilingual and dual language offerings. They have improved in the last two years. We've expanded and now offer the New Mexico Bilingual Seal of Excellence as well. We provide opportunities to explore projects and community opportunities in line with our -- with career interests. We focus on individual needs, interests, and future plans. We've also expanded our dual-credit program. In the fall of 2015, we had only five students enrolled in a dual-language class. In the fall of 2019, in fall, we had 62 students enrolled. Some were in three -- some in as many as three different classes in a total of nearly 100 total classes of enrollment at IAIA or Santa Fe Community College or, coming in the spring of 2020, Northern New Mexico Community College. At the midterm reporting, we had a success rate in college courses of 91.89 percent. We have had -- we already have more than 28 students enrolled in the spring and still have three weeks to go -- still have one week to go to continue registering students. How else are we achieving our mission? We have surpassed the local district with State graduation rates, with a current graduation rate this year of 86.2 percent. That's up from 50 percent in 2016. Currently, the State graduation rate, as you know, is 73.9 percent, and the local school district is at 73 percent. The vision of Tierra Encantada: We believe that a dual-language education should be active, challenging, meaningful, public and collaborative. The school uses the Expeditionary Learning model and other project-based curriculum as we use the world as our classroom through interdisciplinary learning, which allows our students to excel in a post-secondary environment.

How do we make that possible? In 2017, when I started at Tierra Encantada, I was accepted into the Principals Pursuing Excellence program, and I embraced that program. We brought -- and I included our principal in every possible professional development opportunity that the Principals Pursuing Excellence program had. And so what did we do with that training? We started to restructure Tierra Encantada. We did a complete restructuring of how we do things and how we operate at Tierra Encantada without changing our focus, without changing what we were there for. So how did we do this? Well, we had heavy concentration on data-driven instruction in 2017. And it's ongoing. The staff had PD every Friday on data-driven instruction, differentiation, Tier 1 interventions, special education, and project-based learning.

We did a complete master schedule redesign and our master schedule now is a rigorous 90 -- has 90-minute logs with opportunities for cross-content instruction. The 90-minute block has also helped us improve our graduation rates. It also -- having a 90-minute block and being a block school, we were allowed to administer PARCC in the fall, as Ms. Woerner had shared the data with you. And so our fall PARCC scores, we administered the ELA math to our high school students. Our ELA scores were 24.6 percent in the fall with our students who took it in the fall; but averaged out now, it's at 19 percent. It also allowed us to administer the transitional test, TAMELA, in the spring. Our TAMELA scores at that time were 13.7 percent. Our master schedule also allowed us to develop 45-minute intervention blocks to everybody at Tierra Encantada. Every student received a 45-minute intervention block no matter where they were. And all those intervention blocks were targeted. We used our data through our data-driven instruction or professional development to target
those students and identify where they needed to go
for those interventions.
Some of the intervention programs that we
use: Our Fast ForWord intervention. It's an
ELA-based -- they're assigned, in Fast ForWord,
based on data points.
We also used MidSchoolMath interventions,
because we know that our math scores were
struggling. A lot of our data is struggling, but
math, in particular, is an area that we struggle
with.
We also are finding that MidSchoolMath has
its challenges, so we are now moving to a program
calls ALEKS. It's an intervention program; it's
targeted; it's one-on-one. It works with the
student and it adjusts as the student moves forward.
And we've already seen some excellent data with some
of our pilot classes where we are using that.
We also included, within our 45-minute
intervention block, an ELD program -- we established
an ELD program for dedicated ELD instruction, and we
started 60-plus students in those classes.
We also identified the need for Spanish
Language Arts intervention. We currently have 15
students in that class as well.

We also provide extended learning program
at the end of our -- as part of our intervention
block for those students who need that enrichment
instruction.
We also did an administrative team
redesign. We added a counselor who had experience
in assessment, reading data, and dual-credit
experience.
We added a special ed coordinator, whose
focus was on IEP compliance, differentiated
instruction, and data-driven instruction.
We added a principal, whose primary
functions were to operate the day-to-day operations,
and also provide professional development and
differentiated instruction, and was an expert in
Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions, and knew the SAT
process and was able to train on the SAT process.
We added a student achievement coordinator whose
focus is to look at all those S-A-Ts, SATs,
504s, tracked attendance, kept up with our bilingual
programming.
And all of these individuals also serve as
mentors for the rest of our staff.
The administrative team, myself and
Ms. Esquibel-Martinez, participated in the EL
education, Leading for Deeper Instruction. It was a
three-part series provided by EL Education called
Leading for Deeper Instruction, a process of looking
at data-driven instruction and its relation to
project-based learning.
Our vision also has some key words that we
focused on. So one of the key words is "active and
interdisciplinary."
How do we do that?
We provide hands-on learning activities.
The teachers participated in EL
project-based professional development. Of course,
we also created that 90-minute block, that 90-minute
block schedule.
All tech students this year will be
assigned Apple MacBook Air laptops, so we can be
truly one-to-one with the opportunity to take those
home and have internet access at home provided by
Tierra Encantada as well.
We also have teachers who -- who work
interdisciplinary. We have programs -- like Mr. Z
back here has a class called "Art Rocks." You often
see him going to the arroyo to study rocks, brings
them back, incorporates art into that.
We have a teacher who, this semester, is
teaching reading and is going to be incorporating
movement into that.
We also have another teacher who is a
science teacher as well, who I observed do drama,
showing body systems, which was very interesting.
And I won't even try to explain that to you because
it was very interesting to see.
There's words in there like "challenging."
We have a bilingual environment. We offer content
in both English and Spanish.
This year, we offered -- last year, we
offered -- 31 students graduated, and, of those,
19 students earned the Bilingual Seal. This is
about 54 percent of that graduating class.
This year, for the 2019-'20, we have
31 students expected to graduate. 21 students are
candidates for the Bilingual Seal.
We have words in our vision that say --
like "meaningful."
At Tierra Encantada, students learn --
student -- I'm sorry. I'm really nervous today. I
apologize.
At Tierra Encantada, each student is known
well by at least one adult within the school.
How do we do that?
We have a concept called "crew." Crew allows students to build positive connections with their peers and with their crew leader. The crew leader stays with that student from seventh grade to graduation and is a point of contact for us as an administrative team and parents.

So the crew leader becomes the parents of that school, for that student. So if the parents have a question, they call the crew leader. If the -- if a teacher is having an issue with a student who is not passing a math class, that teacher will call -- rather than the parent, will call the crew teacher to start that intervention, and then the crew teacher calls the parents. So the crew teacher becomes that parent at Tierra Encantada, and there is that connection from seventh to twelfth grade. And I believe one of our students is going to talk about that today.

Students own their learning at Tierra Encantada, as evident by our student-led conferences. A student-led conference is a meeting with a student and his or her family or parents and the teachers during which the student shares his or her portfolio of work and discusses progress, challenges, data with their families. It's not the teacher anymore saying, "Here's where we're having some problems." It is now the students saying, "Here is where I am having challenges; here is where I am struggling." And so the student owns their learning.

And as a team, they start to discuss interventions and how can we move forward from here. There is also words in our vision, "post-secondary environment."

We now have MOUs with three colleges: IAIA, Santa Fe Community College, and we're reestablishing with Northern New Mexico College. We also work with the Army, National Guard, the Marine Corps, as they're on campus regularly visiting with students and recruiting students.

As of today, 97 percent of all of our seniors have already applied to at least three colleges.

Our students also participate in the UN Model in Albuquerque. It's an opportunity to work on a challenge to practice speech and debate, to improve on research skills. This learning program provides students with a forum to develop skills in diplomacy, negotiation, critical thinking, public speaking, writing, and research. These students travel to Albuquerque and participate in this UN Model with other schools -- I believe it's at UNM? At UNM.

Our students have also -- and our staff -- have also participated in La Cosecha. They have become leaders in the community by holding joint presentations with both students and teachers for State bilingual educators, and, recently, on closed reading strategies, by using the Martin Luther King speech, "I Have a Dream."

Students are also working towards earning an Associate's and a certificate at their local colleges. Right now, we have a number of students who are going to be going to Northern New Mexico College in Español, where they will be working on a IT certification in Microsoft Office Suite.

And that is directly tied to LANL. So LANL will be looking for these students as they start to look for jobs.

And Tierra Encantada will be providing transportation for their students on Fridays to participate. It's a program designed for our students to participate in.

Our students are also looking at the trades at these local colleges and enrolling in the trade programs. We have several students who are now enrolled in welding programs at the community college as well.

So why are students coming to Tierra Encantada?

Well, they're seeking a small school size and more individualized attention, which is what we've been giving them.

They may be struggling in their current district and they're looking for new opportunities. They like our college-and-career appeal. They like our project-based, where students can utilize the world as their classroom and get their hands dirty. They like our bilingual dual-language offerings and the option to earn the Bilingual Seal.

We have a reputation in the community where -- that we have a healthy and positive culture. We care about our students and their success and their well-being. They like the relationships between teachers and students, the family concept, as I explained, in crew.

Some of these students may be at risk of dropping out, and so they come to our school, where they thrive because we don't have students at risk;
we have students who thrive. They also like the opportunity to explore projects and community opportunities that they may be looking at.

So where do we thrive?

THE CHAIR: It's such a pleasant -- your time is up.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: Will I be allowed to finish? Can I request a couple of more minutes?

Madam Chair?

THE CHAIR: I really can't give you a couple more minutes. And we had this -- through e-mail. If you have a sentence or two sentences to finish, I'll let you finish that -- no, that looks like it's --

MR. DANNY PEÑA: I have eight points I can read for you.

THE CHAIR: It's a page.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: It's a section about this long.

THE CHAIR: About how long?

MR. DANNY PEÑA: About how long? Eight little points.

THE CHAIR: No, I don't -- COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: It'll come up in the questions. MR. DANNY PEÑA: Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Sorry. And I actually was hoping that you'd finish earlier. But thank you.

So we're on to the eight minutes. Unfortunately, I don't -- I don't know if your attorney is going to do it quite as quickly as the previous attorney. She did it in 30 seconds. But there's -- there were seven people who have signed up for comments; so you have just barely over a minute apiece.

MS. SUSAN FOX: I've got down my stock statement to one sentence.

The school objects to any bifurcation or extension of the charter renewal process that is intended to, or would result in, the PEC's decision not being a final decision until after the statutory deadline requirement in the Charter Schools Act and reserves all its appeal rights under New Mexico law.

THE CHAIR: That was a big sentence,

though.

And you used "bifurcation." I was so impressed with that.

The first up for public comment is Erin Wood.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good afternoon. My name is Erin Wood. I am a senior at Tierra Encantada Charter School, and this is my sixth year attending. I am getting ready to go off to college. And it would have been such a hard transition if it weren't for my school.

I have been given numerous opportunities and connections from Santa Fe Community College. And, although it will be an easier transition, it's really hard leaving the family that I've had for six years. Sorry.

They have pushed me and believed in me when I couldn't believe in myself. And I could not be more prepared for life if it weren't for them.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

(Applause.)

THE CHAIR: Next is Afifa Rashid.

FROM THE FLOOR: (Spanish spoken.) I transitioned from a bigger school, which is Capital High. And it was the best decision I've made.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

(Applause.)

THE CHAIR: Next is Jamie and Michael Stevens.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. I'm Jamie Stevens. I'm a new board member at Tierra. I was inspired to become so because of our experience there.

My son's an eighth-grader. He's a twice exceptional learner, which is a challenging situation. And he really struggled in the traditional public school setting to get his needs
And at Tierra, he has absolutely thrived. And having seen him struggle, watching him do so well here has just been -- I can't even describe it. And so it's a pleasure to serve on the board now. And I guess that's all I can say. I'll let him say the rest.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Michael Stevens. I'm an eighth-grader at the school. The reason why I think this is such a unique school that should stay open is because of all the opportunities it gives all its students, like -- for instance, like the dual credit. The fact that we do a class by semester makes it so that you can finish your classes quicker and you can get into the college and graduate with your Associate's degree. Then you can finish college faster and get your degree, you know? So that is really nice. And also just how much the school knows each kid. Like with crew -- like with crew, you know. The crew teacher knows you a lot, always. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Angelique LeRouge.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good afternoon, Commissioners. I am a parent. And I'm also an educator of the local school district. I have two daughters. One has already graduated from Tierra Encantada, and the other one is now attending Tierra Encantada. And I, too, have daughters on both ends of the spectrum in special ed.

So my oldest daughter, she didn't fit in. She had a hard time in the -- just the general public school. She found Tierra Encantada. It embraced her. It helped her to become a leader. She actually ended up graduating top ten of her class.

My youngest daughter, she's on the other opposite. She's a gifted student. And the rigor and support that Tierra Encantada provides our kids is the true definition of differentiation.

Tierra Encantada is a place where everyone fits. You don't have to be a certain race; you don't have to speak Spanish. You can be yourself. And my kids and my family were a true reflection of that, and we just have to thank the staff at Tierra Encantada. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. (Applause.)

THE CHAIR: Next is Deanne Brown.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Deanne, and I'm from Northern New Mexico College here to voice support in our new relationship and for any future dual-credit opportunities that we might work with to work together on.

Also, I'm going to abbreviate to my 30-second rendition. I also have a long history with students at Tierra Encantada in a completely different capacity from Santa Fe Art Institute. And what I've seen come out of that school for a student -- I had a student, one student, one year, one school. He struggled with homelessness. He did not have a parent in New Mexico. He did not have transportation.

He found a family in the staff at Tierra Encantada. He found a way to get to school every day. I -- he volunteered with me that year over 300 hours in our community. He taught classes in the Santa Fe Youth Shelter, a place he himself had resided.

He did workshops with me in the detention centers in Albuquerque. He offered community hip-hop workshops, tried to teach me to break-dance, but I wasn't a success -- but in the Hopewell Mann community.

This is the caliber of students that I have seen, creative, intelligent, outgoing. And so we are super-excited to have them up on our campus this spring every Friday. I'm sure they're going to add a ton of vibrancy and activity on our campus. And thank you for allowing me the opportunity to voice my support and the support of Northern New Mexico College.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. (Applause.)

THE CHAIR: the next up -- I don't have a last name -- Estefania and Alejandro.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. I am Alejandro Pastida [ph]. I'm an eighth-grade student here at Tierra Encantada. And ever since I began a year and a half ago, I have felt so comfortable, and I feel like they've created such an environment that feels so familiar and comfortable that I feel like I'm family with everyone at the school.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Stephanie Ramirez. I am Alejandro's mother. I am an educator. I have worked in universities in Spain and the United States. Alejandro was born in Spain,
and then we later came here to the United States.

And it's very important to me to express
how wonderful of an infrastructure of
social-emotional support that Tierra Encantada
provides for the students and parents.
Pathways for communication are open.
Responsiveness to inquiries to the staff or to the
crew leader or to the directors are immediate.
Bilingual education is phenomenal.

My son not only -- he speaks a perfect
Castillano. Now he's writing and reading an
excellent Castillano. He's also encouraged in all
of his different studies at the school. If he wants
to do a creative writing project, he can do that in
English and Spanish. And I'm thrilled about those
ideas.

He's encouraged to explore all of his
culture and to share that with his peers. And the
supportiveness and the encouragement that he
receives at this school is second to none.

So thank you very much for all the work
that you do at Tierra Encantada, and thank you for
your attention.
THE CHAIR: Thank you.
(Applause.)

THE CHAIR: And I apologize for someone
who signed it all the way down and signed at the
very bottom of the page, and I didn't count that.
So I'll allow them to speak, because I didn't count
it in.

And it's -- I can't read the last name at
all -- JaZeb, or JonZeb -- or I'm not exactly sure.
FROM THE FLOOR: Good afternoon. All
right. I've been called many things. My name is
Jon Zebrowski. I'm a second-generation Eastern
European and Welsh immigrant -- immigrant family.

I grew up military. Tierra is commonplace
to me because there's more than one tongue being
spoken. I grew up overseas.

I came to Tierra Encantada -- and I want
to say thank you for letting me speak, but I needed
to get that clear.

I came to Tierra Encantada. Right now,
I'm a 34-year teacher. In 2008, I got my national
boards. I'm a Wright Fellow through the University
of Idaho.

I am a committed, dedicated, lifelong
educator. I have had none of my own children, but
I've had hundreds.

I was teaching in the Santa Fe Public

Schools when I heard from Danny. I had worked with
Danny for approximately -- at least three years.

And he had been an administrator who was sincere,
authentic, and had helped me to be a part of a
school that turned things around in the light of
socioeconomic, linguistic challenges. Through the
insight, he left that school. That school is now
still in struggle. I think we can -- that's a
matter of public record.

What I came to when I talked to Danny was
that here was a school that there was no question,
as I walked through, it had some work to do. It was
a school that had a mission and a vision that
inspired this man, and it made me want to be a part
of it. I joined the team.

What I want to talk about is that school
to now, I believe some of you have that on public
record, that difference, okay?
There's been hard work. If there's been
turnover in our -- in our teachers, well, 'cause it
isn't easy being a teacher, okay?

I stand here today ready to perhaps lose
my job, because I invested in what I believe in.
And that's these young people back here.
Perhaps best example is what happened

yesterday. During the last four years while I have
worked at Tierra Encantada, I have had -- I had some
deep reflective -- and you may all laugh at this --


discussions with another Spanish-speaking scientist,
science teacher -- he's now doing his Ph.D. at UNM
about how to raise chemistry scores in the EOCA. We
were both frustrated.

MS. FRIEDMAN: Time is up.
FROM THE FLOOR: Put it down. Yesterday
50 percent passed the EOCA in chemistry. It's not
me; it's not the class. It's the fact that
Tierra Encantada is changing. The academic tenor is
there. Great things are happening. We are crossing
the gap that is education in the nation and
New Mexico, and I am looking forward to your
support, because great things are happening here.
We don't have great days. We make them.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.
(Applause.)
THE CHAIR: So thank you all once again.
We certainly appreciate all of your enthusiasm. We

truly do.

So the bad news is you don't qualify for a
prize today because you never had enough red marks.
MR. DANNY PEÑA: I was standing in the
THE CHAIR: You never had enough Falls Far Below to start to qualify. But the good news is that's because you didn't have -- you didn't have that many Falls Far Below to begin with.

But the great news is the school has certainly moved forward and have raised all but one of them, I believe. So, once again, that has to be a testament to the governance council that's having genuine conversations, whatever the school has been doing to dig in and do this turn-around.

I guess I have a question about the dual language. Because your mission says you're -- what's the word -- what is it? The dual language is --

MR. DANNY PEÑA: Empowers students as citizen scholars within a dual-language environment?

THE CHAIR: Within a dual-language environment. So your school is different if in -- because I think you said there is 60-some-odd percent that are enrolled in dual language?

MR. DANNY PEÑA: Dual credit.

THE CHAIR: Dual credit. Okay.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: I gave you an actual number. It wasn't a percent. It was 64 students enrolled in dual credit.

THE CHAIR: So what the Deputy Director indicated, there had been challenges with the dual language being done. So can you just walk us through a little bit on what has changed and what it looks like now?

MR. DANNY PEÑA: So when I got there, we had a different type of structure. Not every class was dual-language, bilingual. And that's a challenge to find bilingual teachers anywhere.

And, recently, I mean, we lost -- I talked about the turnaround. And so we lost some teachers. We -- either they left because they -- you know, for whatever reason, or we had a large number of teachers who were here -- what is the program? It's not "exchange." But it's the teachers who come from Spain, and they come from Mexico, and their three years were up, and they had to leave.

That was a year or two ago. We've been working to refill those positions. Each position we open up at Tierra Encantada now becomes a bilingual position. So we do offer a Spanish instruction class at almost every content right now, one or two Spanish instruction classes in every content.

Although we haven't met them, we're glad that we're going up in our data. This is why we implemented programs like Fast ForWord.

I'll turn this over to Ms. Esquibel-Martinez, and she'll talk a little more about Fast ForWord and what it does in our interventions.

We did a lot of data-driven instruction -- training and professional development at the beginning of the year two years ago, where we actually took the data of every student at Tierra Encantada, and we looked at each data piece, and we plotted it, and we had the entire student body and the staff just look at where we were and where the work had to be -- I'm sorry, Steve -- what was the work that we had to do.

Then we started to drill down and do some really hard work. And we started implementing more interventions. We had -- Tierra Encantada operates on a four-day week, and we use Fridays for interventions and professional development. We were finding that students were not really coming on Fridays as much as we would like them to come. So that's why we implemented the intervention model within our master schedule, to have every student...
participate in an intervention model, no matter where you land in that data.

So we had to drill down. And now we're drilling down even further in targeting and identifying so we can meet those goals.

I don't know if I'm answering your question. But I'm telling you the process of what we've been doing since I've been there to try and meet those goals.

THE CHAIR: Let me ask you. I don't know if you can answer this right now. But since you've been there and you've begun to execute these changes, at the very least, what kind of changes did you -- can you tell us what kind of changes you saw in that data from at least the year before last to last year, if any? So can you --

MR. DANNY PEÑA: I could tell you that the -- I shared a little bit of that when I said we were able to administer the PARCC in the fall. And the student --

THE CHAIR: But the PARCC isn't the mission-specific.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: Right. But it's showing progress. And I can tell you also that the -- we used MAPs, and we're showing movement out of the lower end of our MAP scores moving into the upper end of our MAP scores. Because now -- we were giving it twice a year. And then we started giving it three times a year, so we could get cleaner data. And now with our block schedule, we give it in the fall and we give it in December. And then when we come back in January, we give it in January for our spring block, and then we give it in May at the end of the spring block.

THE CHAIR: So has there -- let me just ask, 'cause the short-cycle assessment is the NWEA.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: Yes, MAPs.

THE CHAIR: I'm sorry. I'm just -- yeah, I got it. Yeah.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: NWEA is the company, and they called it Measures of Academic Progress.

THE CHAIR: It came out. And as soon as it did, I knew what I said. So sorry. Sorry.

Okay.

Commissioners, any questions?

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Okay. Are you going to do any classes at the Higher Education Center here in town?

MR. DANNY PEÑA: We're exploring that as well.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: And where is the school located? I'm not familiar with that road.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: Tierra Encantada.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: No. The road. I know where Northern is. I was there till 7:30 last night.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: So I did the same thing. I realized what I said once I said it.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: It's contagious.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: We're just down the road from the Santa Fe Community College. We leased the school at Light Mission Viejo. They have a school there, Governor Miles and Richards Avenue. There's that church kind of there, and we leased that building there.

THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: Love to have you all come out and visit.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: I drive by there
frequently.

THE CHAIR: So can you attribute anything
to the -- I think it's the student retention rate?
Because there seems to be a little bit of a
challenge with that.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: So the -- usually --
THE CHAIR: I'm sorry. Within the school
year. I'm sorry. It's not the from-year-to-year,
but within the year.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: So the challenge that we
have whenever I talk to students when they're
withdrawing -- I try to meet with every student
who's withdrawing. And the challenge we have is in
our geographical area where we're at right now is
about four -- four charter schools within about a
two- or three-mile radius. You've got Monte del
Sol. You've got ATC, the MASTERS Program, and
you've got Tierra Encantada.

So whenever I meet with the students, they
say, "Oh, I'm going to the MASTERS Program," or,
"I'm going to Monte del Sol."

And we -- we will eventually get them
back. We do get a lot of our students back.
But that's kind of what we've been
struggling. I share with our board and our team
here that it's what makes it also difficult is we
also share the same vendor who transports our kids
from school to school.

So it's just, you know, "I'll get off at
this school rather than at Tierra Encantada."

So, you know, I really want to say that we
do have conversations with students who come back,
either to visit or try to come back and reenroll.
We actually had one student who met with Ms.
Esquibel-Martinez -- if she doesn't mind me sharing
this story -- who said, "I really wish I was back at
Tierra Encantada, because it's so hard now."

Ms. Esquibel-Martinez was sharing this
story. I started thinking, "Are we too easy?"

And she said, "No. You guys really help
me. You guys really work with me when I'm having
some struggles in some areas, and so I really,
really miss that."

And so we've gotten lot of students back
who actually share those kinds of stories with us.
We've also had students who say, "I want
to go to the MASTERS Program because they offer the
dual-credit program, and I can graduate with an
Associate's."

And I love what our -- my colleague is
doing down there. So that is part of what we do as
well. So, like I said, we started implementing more
and more dual-credit to be able to, you know,
compete. And so we're seeing that a lot of our
students are now taking advantage of our dual-credit
program.

Ms. Olivas will also share with you, or
she has shared with us, that a year ago when she
started she had to chase kids down to get them
enrolled in dual credit, and now she has a line out
her door constantly, as early as ninth grade, trying
to enroll in dual-credit programs.

So we're hoping that that -- we won't see
that trend, Madam Chair, moving forward, because
we've started really focusing on some of those areas
that we were seeing that needed to be worked on, and
that was one of them.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. And that is a
challenge that most schools don't face, maybe
outside of Albuquerque. There may be a couple of
charters that are that closely, you know, located.

But it's -- it's odd for an area that's relatively
small to have the charters clustered that close.

So it does present -- especially when
you're -- it's not like it's a variety of
K-through-6, and it's -- so that it's -- you're
all -- yeah, you're all competing for --

MR. DANNY PEÑA: The same students,

uh-huh.

THE CHAIR: Yeah. Yeah. And often
they're great in also playing off who's got the
better deal right now.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: Yes.

THE CHAIR: The nature of kids.

Commissioners, any questions?

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: I have a
question.

THE CHAIR: Certainly.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yes. A couple of
questions.

Something was mentioned about La Cosecha.

Just real quick, what -- can you elaborate?

MR. DANNY PEÑA: La Cosecha is a national
bilingual conference for bilingual educators. They
come from all over the country to attend trainings
and professional development. It's put on by Dual
Language of New Mexico here in Albuquerque.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Oh. New Mexico
is the sponsor?

MR. DANNY PEÑA: So Ms. Eva de Andres
Presa here, our student achievement coordinator, has presented there several times and takes a team up there to present on strategies and whatnot for bilingual educators.

Last year, we had students who participated and were part of that presentation and taught bilingual educators about close reading.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: The other question -- I'm curious. I took Spanish 4. And it was hard. And my teacher in high school would brag about New Mexico, and they had "the Seal." And he would say, "You're lucky you're not in New Mexico."

Because I -- I had a "C" at the end of the year in 4. And the "A" guys ended up majoring in Spanish in the university. I mean, they were good.

I thought I was good; but these -- these young men and women were awesome. Awesome.

And so how hard is it for your students to get their seal?

MR. DANNY PEÑA: It's a process. And I believe -- I may call Afifa up here in just a bit, because she is one of our candidates who is right now working on the Bilingual Seal.

So our students have to -- I'm trying to remember our policy. We -- they have to be in --

they have to take so many years in Spanish or Spanish content. They have to pass the Spanish CLEP test at the -- you know, the -- the CLEP test.

And then they have to present before a board and write an essay, if you will, on why they deserve and why they should earn the seal. And then they present that to a board during what I was referring to, passages and student-led conferences; it's incorporated into that.

And the panel that they present to is made up of staff members and community members from Santa Fe. And it has to be presented in English and in Spanish.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Oh, okay. So truly bilingual.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: Truly bilingual, yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: But, anyway, that Spanish 4 that I took, we had to do, towards the end, spontaneous interpretation. And that -- that was a kicker.

And I did very well in that, even though I didn't do well at the end of the class. But I thought I was excellent. I mean, that was the --

MR. DANNY PEÑA: Trust me. I have --

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: I was the man, and, at the end of the year, was not the man.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: Trust me. Sometimes I go home, and I say, "I'm not the man today."

Sometimes I think my Spanish is excellent and -- so I don't know. If I --

THE CHAIR: I took Spanish 4. And I took all the way to Level 3 in college. When I had to do the research paper, it nearly killed me.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: Madam Chair, would it be okay if Afifa shares her experience about earning the seal?

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello, again. I'm currently preparing myself to take the Bilingual Seal with Ms. Eva as my teacher. It's really hard. I thought I was bilingual until I took the class, because it's really hard. It's a lot of technical stuff that you need to work on. And I'm not only working on my speaking, also my writing in Spanish.

And I love that the school is helping me towards that, because it's an opportunity that other schools don't have. Again, like I said, I came from Capital, and they don't have that there. So I'm really glad that the school offers that. It gives me that opportunity.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Madam Chair?

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Crone?

COMMISSIONER CRONE: I was just kidding when I said that a while ago.

I did want to mention that I got a private endorsement of your school from the provost at Northern. I was in a meeting with Dr. Lopez last night. So he encouraged me to vote for this school.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Let me just ask you. Because you mentioned that you're Expeditionary-inspired. Was the school ever -- we had a number of schools back years ago that were -- in their mission -- and they were an Expeditionary School, but then had to migrate out of that because it just became too expensive.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: Right.

THE CHAIR: So is that the case with this school? Or you just -- the school always embraced the model?

MR. DANNY PEÑA: We use their model, not -- not exclusively.

THE CHAIR: Right.

MR. DANNY PEÑA: But we use their model.
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| And, yes, it was a very expensive program. And I believe previous -- before I got there, there were ties cut with Expeditionary Learning, and I worked at bringing them back, and we brought them back to provide professional development with our staff and some coaches with me and whatnot. So that's kind of where we were at. But we still use -- we're allowed to use their components; we're allowed to use their principles. The Chair: Right. Is there anyone in New Mexico that is still trained? Because there used to be a woman on the -- actually, the board of Red River, who was an Expeditionary trainer. And I don't think -- I know she's not on the board any longer, and I don't know if she still lives here. Mr. Danny Peña: There was somebody local who would come and train who was part of Expeditionary Learning. But I can tell you that Expeditionary Learning only works now exclusively in Colorado. And they have trainers who go out. My understanding, they no longer have EL schools outside of Colorado. But they will send trainers, and we have trainers all over the country who provide that training. The Chair: Right. Interesting. Okay, thanks. I was just curious.

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| Commissioner Caballero: One more thing, Madam Chair? The Chair: Certainly. Commissioner Caballero: A little curious on the fact that you lost your teachers that were here from -- as guests teaching. How many of those left that were part of that program? And how long do they stay, according to -- if there are standards? Mr. Danny Peña: Sure. I'll let Ms. Eva answer that. Because she's -- Ms. Evan de Andres Presa: Good afternoon, everybody. I'm one of those. I came from Spain in 1999. So you're allowed to stay for three years. You can get a J-1 visa, and you can renew it for two more years. That's it, unless you -- you apply different visas. And that's why I'm still here.

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| So approximately 90 percent of your school is Hispanic. And I know that not every single one speaks Spanish. That's the way life is. But they do -- may start out with a little bit of an advantage to that, because you only have, like, 9 percent Anglo and 1 percent Native American, I think it is, and African American. So they're already starting out with an advantage. So is the emphasis then somewhere on the language, verbal language, but a lot more on reading and writing? Is that where you have to go? Mr. Danny Peña: We now do -- rather than Spanish as a Second Language, our students participate in Spanish Language Arts. So there's reading, writing. It's a -- it's language arts in Spanish.

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| Spanish language arts intervention as part of the intervention block as well. Commissioner Armbruster: Sort of the opposite of EL deal, the direction kind of thing. And my other concern is on these MAPs tests, which I am familiar with. The students were -- the goal was for them to meet one year's growth. And ideally, I'm going to say -- I'm going out on a limb here. But I'm going to say that most of your kids did not arrive on grade level. And one year's growth would be -- if you're testing at seventh grade, you're going to be teaching at eighth, but you should have been at tenth. So I don't know. What do -- what do you do to -- if you can't get them at one year -- and I think our new philosophy, maybe, is -- would be to say we want to see a year-and-a-half growth in math scores, because, otherwise, you're never any better than you were when you started, because -- Mr. Danny Peña: Correct. We're just moving that deficit up. Uh-huh.

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| Commissioner Armbruster: Exactly. So what -- I don't know how you answer these kinds of questions, if you see where I'm going. Mr. Danny Peña: I know exactly what
you're saying. We do use our MAPs data to target
students into our intervention classes. But I'm
going to let Ms. Esquibel-Martinez also talk to
that, because we do use specific programs in those
intervention classes to tackle what you're talking
about.

    MS. ANGELA ESQUIBEL-MARTINEZ: Thank you, Madam Chair. You hit the nail on the head when you said, "I suspect your kids don't come to you at grade level."

So considering the Response to Intervention model, what that affords us in terms of identifying kids who are struggling, we realized, in terms of our framework, that we couldn't just be, class by class, determining that specific individuals needed intervention. We realized that collectively, the majority of our kids need some type of intervention.

So we've built what we call Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions into the design of the school, which is what the 90-minute blocks allowed us to do.

We spend 45 minutes of every day targeting, for example, reading and writing delays.

We've implemented a program called Fast ForWord. It's scientific research-based. It's brain-based, in that scientists have proven that with practice and training the brain, you can close the gaps in difficulties in reading, listening, and speaking, including things like when you're a seventh- and eighth-grader who has a huge gap, three to four years' gap in reading or writing skills, we've got to figure out how do we immediately intervene in closing the gap on phonics, phonemic awareness, listening skills.

So you don't have the benefit and the opportunity to do that in content area classes like chemistry and biology. So you've got to target that specifically and retrain the brain to be able to develop skills to pick up rigorous content-specific academic language in those particular content areas.

So Fast ForWord data has been super-promising. I experienced it as a special education educator for that particular reason. We don't have the luxury of time to close the gap on reading and writing skills. So we had to find something in our previous districts. And Fast ForWord word was promising for districts overall.

In the totality of our implementation for Fast ForWord, we had 56 percent of our students show up to a half-a-year gain in their reading skills, with some showing 1.5 years' gain or greater.

20 percent of those kids were showing gains.

So we -- again, as Mr. Peña said, we are selective about the kids whose gaps are great. And you can tell, when you're introducing them to content vocabulary in particular content areas. You can see where the reading struggle is. Is it rooted in language? Is it rooted in vocabulary? Is it rooted in phonics and phonemic awareness skills?

The demands are high. We don't have the luxury of giving them the time to catch up in class, so we have to give them an opportunity to practice those skills outside of classrooms.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Sounds like a stupid question. So is this instruction in English?

MS. ANGELA ESQUIBEL-MARTINEZ: It is.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: The same difficulties?

MS. ANGELA ESQUIBEL-MARTINEZ: It serves a dual purpose for students who are struggling in general and students who are developing English as a Second Language. It's been shown promising for both.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: More, Madam Chair?

THE CHAIR: Sure, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Just two things to add to what my colleague has just talked about.

And I'm glad she brought the disparity in the percentage of white students. Every -- every school, really, has to make an effort, other than the open enrollment, to bridge that gap.

It should -- the school should reflect the percentage of students in the school district. And white students are at 24 percent. And they're only at 9.

There is a big plus when a student population is well-mixed and integrated. They learn from each other. I went to all-Hispanic schools all the way. And it was a shocker when I got to the university. Holy cow. I looked around. I was the only one there. And I couldn't turn and ask for help.

And -- and it wasn't the students that were around me; it was me. Because I grew up in an all-Hispanic, all-Spanish environment. And so for graduate school, I made it a point to go out. So I went all the way to Bloomington, Indiana.
And I am so glad I did go. Because, again
I was in a university of 52,000. There were only
45 students -- Hispanic students, and they were all
graduate students, primarily. And so we had to
interact with all kinds of people.
And that was fantastic. That was
fantastic. So I -- I -- you cannot believe how
students do well in learning how to cope and deal
with other when you have.
So we need to find a way to bring in -- I
have a good friend who's -- that grew up with us in
an Hispanic community, Jerry Smith. And he is truly
bilingual -- guy. And I'm glad I was a good friend
of his.
And so I think that you can recruit
students that want to learn and be bilingual.
Recently, about two months ago, I was in
El Paso Bank. And this is the bank that got sued by
us, because they forbid -- they told their employees
they couldn't speak Spanish.
So we took them to court, and they lost.
And I walked into that bank to cash a check. And
they spoke English, also. Because all the business
transactions were in Spanish, every transaction.
And I froze. And I looked around, said,
"Oh, God."
And people that walked in speaking English
only, and they were taken care of by -- I mean,
really bilingual. And that was a big eye-opener.
And I thought, "This is what we wanted, to be able
to transact either in Spanish or in English with
folks that can deal with it."
My brother refused and told his girls not
to speak Spanish so that they don't suffer in
schools. And they don't do well economically
because they're not bilingual. And so that was a
big mistake. And he admits that. That was a big
mistake.
So the -- my point is is that New Mexico
is going to become more and more bilingual,
English-Spanish, at least English-Spanish in the
future. And business will get transacted in that
language.
And you see El Paso getting into it now,
more and more in Las Cruces, and it's moving up, and
it's inching up.
And so the more we do here in Central and
Northern New Mexico to prepare our kids to be able
to -- and all our kids, Hispanic, Native American,
white, all of them should be as close to truly
bilingual; because that's going to maybe not so much
open doors, but secure the doors that they've
already opened up.
And so I'm glad you're doing the Seal. I
would -- I'm hoping that you guys bring up the
percentage of white students, because it is
important.
I go after schools that don't have enough
Hispanic, and I'm going to go after schools that
don't have enough of everything else also.
I want the schools to reflect how the
breakdown is in their school district.
And thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.
THE CHAIR: Thank you. Certainly.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It's
interesting, by the way. You know, I grew up in
Indianapolis.
But -- okay. So I'm finding this a little
odd that your Free and Reduced Lunches are at
4 percent?
MR. DANNY PEÑA: We do not participate in
the Free and Reduced Lunch program at
Tierra Encantada. We have our own meal program.
But the -- it's a -- it's a one-time fee
that the students pay at the beginning of the year,
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: That's why I was just --
THE CHAIR: Commissioner Voigt? I'm sorry. Are you done?
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Yeah.
COMMISSIONER VOIGT: So that just brought up a question for me then. How do you guide your nutritional values for the meals that you serve for lunch?
MR. DANNY PEÑA: They follow -- I mean, they -- that's a good question. But they do follow, you know, pretty much what every school should be doing.
We don't -- I mean, I don't dictate the menu. But I do -- you know, the food that is served is very similar for what you would see in the elementary school.
So I do follow the federal guidelines on what needs to be served. We get inspections regularly with our food program. But that's -- as far as monitoring that, I couldn't answer that for you. But I do know we follow federal guidelines.
COMMISSIONER VOIGT: You get the city health inspections?
MR. DANNY PEÑA: Yes.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: So it's because you don't have space for a kitchen? Is that why you don't provide a lunch service?
MR. DANNY PEÑA: So the lunch program was there when I got there. But I don't know why the school has moved into -- they used to use it at one point, the Free and Reduced Lunch program. But I don't know why they moved into what they're doing now. But it seems to be working for us.
Lunch pays for itself. There's ways you can feed your entire student body under the Free and Reduced Lunch program with a Title I school. And you have to make maybe 7 cents a lunch; so --
MR. DANNY PEÑA: I'm sure. I've had that conversation with the Title I bureau, you know, eventually moving into that type of program. But I can only tackle one thing at a time. That is one thing we've had conversations about with the board.
And as an administrative team, I'm moving forward, What is that going to look like moving forward?
COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Because there's also a certain amount of liability, I'm sure you understand too, with feeding the kids yourself.
THE CHAIR: Okay. Are we good?

FROM THE FLOOR: Okay.
THE CHAIR: Okay. I move that the Public Education Commission renew the charter for Tierra Encantada for five years, with the conditions that the New Mexico System of School Support and Accountability Report prepared by PED show the similar performance for School Year 2018-2019 in the student growth, highest quartile; student growth, middle quartile; student growth, lowest quartile; English Learner progress; chronic absenteeism; college-and-career readiness; education climate, and growth in four-year graduation rate, with no statistically significant decrease in performance.
COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: I second.
THE CHAIR: A motion by Commissioner Gipson, a second by Commissioner Raftery. Any further discussion?
(No response.)
THE CHAIR: If not, roll call, please.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Raftery?
COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: I'm sorry. Yes.
Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Gipson?
THE CHAIR: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Crone?
COMMISSIONER CRONE: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Motion passes, seven-zero.
THE CHAIR: Motion passes, seven-zero.
Now you can clap.
(Applause.)
THE CHAIR: We are in recess until 8:00 tomorrow morning.
(Proceedings in recess at 4:35 p.m.)
BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE
I, Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR, CCR #219, Certified Court Reporter in the State of New Mexico, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages constitute a true transcript of proceedings had before the said NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, held in the State of New Mexico, County of Santa Fe, in the matter therein stated.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand on December 19, 2019.

Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219
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Job No.: 2370N (CC)

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CASE CAPTION: In re: Public Meeting of the Public Education Commission

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