BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

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REPORTED BY: Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219
Bean & Associates, Inc.
Professional Court Reporting Service
201 Third Street, NW, Suite 1630
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

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THE CHAIR: Let me bring out of recess this meeting of the Public Education Commission. It is Friday, the 13th, and it is 8:07 a.m.

Commissioner Armbruster, will you do roll call, please?

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Robbins?

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Present.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Voigt?

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Here.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Armbruster is here.

Commissioner Davis?

COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Here.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Chavez?

COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Present.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Gipson?

THE CHAIR: Here.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Raftery?

COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: Here.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Crone is not here.

Commissioner Ruiz is not here.

Commissioner Caballero is not yet here.

So we have eight at the moment.

[Verbatim.]

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Good morning.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning.

THE CHAIR: Thanks for coming up --

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Seven.

THE CHAIR: -- and appearing with us this morning as we get ourselves situated. We appreciate all the time and effort that you've put into this because we understand it takes quite a bit of time and also patience with the somewhat difficult issue we were in with not all the data available now.

Hopefully, everyone is in a comfortable place with that, and we can -- we'll be okay. But I do have a standard statement that I make about that before each school.

So I'll do that -- oh. Before I do that, if there is anyone that wishes to speak in regards to the school, there's a sign-up sheet right there by Ms. Friedman. So if you would sign there, we'd appreciate it.

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 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 conditions or take other action, such as a Corrective Action Plan, or possibly non-renew the charter.

At the future meeting, January or February 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 close out, 100 percent, finance and operational today. And that's not open for discussion when we're back in January or February with this.

And we close out 95 percent of the academic; so that the only areas that will be considered for talking points are those areas that are not available right now. And that's it.

So, hopefully, that's -- and, hopefully, we'll be good. And if everything -- if the motion indicates that -- as long as the school hasn't had a significant downward trend, the school will then just be on the Consent Agenda, okay?

So thanks. So we will start with CSD.

Then you folks will have your 15 minutes, if there's anyone that wishes to speak. And then we'll do Commission questions. So thanks.

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

I had two comments before I hand the mic over to Deputy Director Woerner to provide the CSD report.

As you all know, I started my role as the Director in March of 2019. Tierra Adentro was the first school that I visited -- that I never visited before, that I wasn't affiliated -- a school that I was not affiliated with or friends with up to this point.

And it just so happens that it's about a block-and-a-half from where I live in Old Town. And so I've gone by their school, at least since they've moved in, probably 300 or 400 times with my dog.

And when I first went in there, I was just really amazed to learn more about what was going on inside that building and how unique and innovative it is.

And so I just wanted to share that story and that appreciation of -- you know, when you look at an old post office building, you never know what's going to be inside and the beauty that really is happening in there and the work and magic that you're doing with your students.

The second story I wanted to share is at the time when Interim Secretary Bobroff was -- was the Acting, we had -- I had a chance to go with her to Tierra Adentro for an open house at the beginning of the year. And to see the energy with the families and the students -- you know. And I know that the school is known for, you know, their performing arts program.

But to see the -- the focus in on rigor of academics, along with the performance rigor and the engagement with families, was something that was truly moving to me and to Deputy Secretary Bobroff.

So I wanted to share that, that this is a school that I know I have learned a lot from at this point. And I think it's a great model, similar to what has been mentioned with some of our other schools. As we really think about innovations and we think about how we would be supporting our students' holistic interests, I think this is a school that has really accomplished that.

So with that, I'm going to pass the mic over to Karen.

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

So Tierra Adentro of New Mexico serves students in Grades 6 through 12, approximate enrollment of 273, with a focus on academics, art, artisanship, and the study of cultures.

I do want to point out that if you are looking at the printed materials, we had a correction on the sheet. The electronic version has it. But we've omitted -- and my apologies to...
Ms. Archuleta -- we had omitted Theresa's name. They are co-directors, Veronica and Theresa. So on the printed materials, it should have both names, and my apologies.

Moving on, the Part A of the school's data does show that there was a slight increase in the reading, but then a drop in the last assessment. Similarly with the math, there was a decline over the years.

Science proficiency rate was at 28 percent for the school. You remember the State average is 35.

The higher performing students' growth indices are showing that the students in the high performing group, in both reading and math, are around the as-expected growth; in the lowest performing students, similarly, showing right there at the zero mark across the subgroups in terms of expected growth.

You will note that, particularly in math, though that is an area where I just mentioned they had some decline, in the lowest performing students in math, you will see that they've improved over the years. In the first year of the contract term, they were significantly lower than expected growth. And over the years, it's become closer to as-expected growth for the lowest performing students in math.

Your subgroup proficiency rates sort of mimic the overall proficiency rates we just spoke about, where there was some decline in the last year with that last assessment.

Graduation rate is at 84 percent.

Mission goals, the school -- appears that there was some struggle either with the evidence or the results in 2017. But the school has exceeded both goals in 2018 and 2019.

Their membership chart is showing an upward trend with increase in membership over the course of the contract term. And their retention for students within the school year has been between 85 and 92 percent during the term of the contract, and, between school years, has been between 78 and 83 percent.

Their audit findings this last year were two, one of which was considered a material weakness. That is the reason for the one red indicator on their ratings chart.

So going back to the report, all areas of the school did have a "B", then "C," and "B" in the term of the contract. And you can see that their current standing in their lowest performing students' scores, those still had a "D" at the last report, but had increased from an "F".

Regarding the ratings chart that I just mentioned, the organizational performance framework, there were five indicators where the school had a repeat Workings to Meet or a Falls Far Below, and those were listed on Page 3.

Students with special needs, there was some concerns about some overdue IEPs and evaluations, and the school has been working to resolve that and has a plan in place.

Recurrent enrollment was below the goal of 85 percent, but it was at 81 percent. So as we mentioned with other schools, in the new contracts, you set the expectation at 75 percent. The school was at 81 percent recurrent enrollment.

The financial compliance and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles scores were around the audit findings.

And the facilities requirement was regarding missed drills, the emergency drills. They've resolved that problem, and we have a new schedule of required drills that the school is aware of and is following.

So 100 percent of their employees signed the petition; 77 percent of their households signed the petition. And 11.94 percent was their New Mexico Condition Index Score, well below the average. And, remember, lower is better.

And with that, I conclude the report on the school.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. Good morning once again. And if you would, just identify yourselves and anyone else who's going to speak for the school during this time for the record.

MS. VERONICA TORRES: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, good morning. My name is Veronica Torres, and I am co-director of Tierra Adentro Charter School.

MS. THERESA ARCHULETA: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, my name is Theresa Archuleta. I am also co-director of Tierra Adentro Charter School. And coming up at the end of our presentation, within our 15 minutes, is Dr. Diego Gallegos. He is our foundation president.

THE CHAIR: Thanks. So whenever you're ready.
MS. VERONICA TORRES: So good morning, members of the Commission, Madam Chair. I will be speaking about our finance programming.

Since 2016, or since our last renewal, therefore, we have added what's called our “focus classes.” So that means once students are in tenth through twelfth grade, they choose a focus in either visual art, artesanía, music, or dance, where they have an intense study of those art forms. So they will attend their academics and their dual-credit classes in the morning, eat lunch. And then in the afternoon, from anywhere from one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half hours, they are studying their art form with master teachers from the school that are professional artists in the community.

What has not changed is our sixth- through ninth-graders still have the arts, all four art forms, integrated into their academic schedule during the day.

Our dance focus students, our tenth- through twelfth-graders are now taking 200- and 300-level dance classes through the dual-credit program at the University of New Mexico, where they are taught by guest artists from Spain that UNM has brought in to work with the students.

Also, members of our dance focus student body have performed in UNM faculty dance concerts, which are their most elite concerts with their dance students.

Since 2016, we also added an artesanía focus, where students are not only studying woodworking and craftsmanship, but they are studying production sides of things; so they are now our backstage hands and are learning how to build flamenco floors and running sound and lighting for our production.

Also this year, current, we just added a percussion class, where students are able to study different types of percussion, from Cuban to African drumming, to flamenco drumming as well.

MS. THERESA ARCHULETA: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, we also focus highly on the academics. That is very important to us. And so one of the things we believe in is offering choice within our own mission. So of that choice, we created an online evening program for either credit recovery or to get ahead in our program. And so that is through the e2020 curriculum.

The other thing that we do offer, we begin recruiting at ninth grade, is students for dual credit. And we're very proud of that dual credit, and we'll talk about that in a little bit in our presentation.

But what we do offer is we have approximately 35 students enrolled either at CNM or UNM, and they are taking academic classes, such as their English, math, science, health classes. And Veronica mentioned the dance classes as well at UNM, because it fits within our mission.

That is something that we have really strived -- we want to make sure that our community knows that while the arts are embedded within our curriculum, academics are our number-one focus for our students, because our ultimate goal is graduation for each and every one of our kids.

What else we did during the last five years when we were renewed in 2014, is we created a block schedule within our instructional day. And that was aligned to support, also, the college pathway.

So we now have 85-minute blocks, Monday through Thursday. And then we have sort of what's called a "Fast Friday," so that all teachers can also meet with the students so that they can catch them up on whatever they may have missed during the week.

Another important factor we know is that relationship with students. And we knew that it was really hard for English teachers, math teachers, dance teachers, to build that into their daily instruction.

So we created an advisory period. So we have advisory every Monday through Thursday for 35 minutes, where they review their -- their grades. They can go and meet with teachers. They may be struggling and need some support.

And so that has really made a huge difference. And what's really exciting to us as we build in the arts, we had a Camino Real Trunk Show November 24th, a lot of the dance teachers and the music teachers collaborated, and they had their rehearsal that advisory period as well, so as not to interrupt academic instruction. So we feel that has made a huge difference for the students.

The other thing that we learned is really important for the academics and for teachers to be better teachers is teachers need to collaborate with one another, within the duty day; not on their lunch.
breaks, not after school, not on their own time. So we built that into our calendar with this block schedule. So we have weekly collaboration on-site. And what we're building in -- I don't know if you're familiar with "Lesson Study." The teachers are now becoming researchers in terms of how kids learn.

And so this year, it's been our push for creating Lesson Study teams to go in and observe and to collaborate with one another on a professional level to be better teachers. And that has seemed to really help our school as well.

MS. VERONICA TORRES: And since our last renewal, we have 69 percent of our students that qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch. And so we are a Title I school. And so we saw a need at our school, because many of our students are coming to us, as Ms. Woerner was saying, very low in math and reading; and for us to get that growth, it's very trying.

So because of that need of our school, we now have hired a full-time social worker. And because of our dual-credit numbers and the increase in our student body that is now applying to colleges, which is great, we have hired a full-time college-and-career counselor.

And that brings me to our bragging rights with that. So we’ve had many members of our dance and music alumni students have gone on to become members of the professional company, Yjastros, which is the premier flamenco dance company here in New Mexico.

Other student alumni. We had one of our student alumni just now, in fall 2019, she went and competed at the Flamenco Certamen USA in New York, and she won. So we're very proud of that student. She was also valedictorian last school year.

Members of our dance focus have performed at Tablao Flamenco in Albuquerque, which is the premier tablao place to perform in Albuquerque. So many of them are now performing with guest artists from Spain and members of Yjastros as well.

Since 2015, we have performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City, in Phoenix, Tucson, and Atlanta's Music in the Park with professional musicians, where we’ve also collaborated with Westlake High School where their drum corps played for our dancers, and we did a flamenco fusion piece with them at Atlanta's Music in the Park.

MS. THERESA ARCHULETA: So we'll continue...

with the bragging rights, which is evidence and data.

So in 2019, 100 percent graduated with a plan to continue their education, either training or work. 84 percent were admitted into UNM, New Mexico Highlands, and CNM. 63 percent took one or more dual-credit courses.

One student earned 39 credits. Another student earned 24 credits. Two students earned 21 credits.

One student was admitted to UNM's American Indian Summer Bridge Program, a four-week program, including eight college credits, plus room and board, all paid for by the University of New Mexico. The highest individual scholarship earned, plus financial aid, was $86,846 for over four years.

Total amount of scholarships that were awarded that year, $370,000 to 36 graduating students.

MS. VERONICA TORRES: And now as your class of 2020 is getting ready for their second semester, as of December 3rd of this year, 68 percent have completed the FAFSA. 67 percent of seniors have taken one or more dual-credit courses.

And 23 out of our 37 seniors this year have been admitted to UNM's fall semester, and now to, also, NMSU.

Our current tenth- through twelfth-graders, 39 students are taking dual-credit classes at UNM and CNM; so that’s 42 percent of those students.

We also added an after-school arts programming. We contract with the National Institute of Flamenco to intensively train dancers and musicians in their dance and music ensembles.

MS. THERESA ARCHULETA: Of course, the backbone of every school is our families. So without them, we're nothing.

So what we try to do to incorporate their busy lives and knowing that they have lots of hardship, maybe, because our population is 69 percent Free and Reduced, we want to respect what they come with and what they can bring.

We have moved away from a parent advisory council, because our attendance was always low and we tried to do many different things to increase that attendance.

So our social worker and one of our teachers who had background in family engagement created workshops for our families that we -- we
give. And we -- we surveyed our families and asked what is it that they would like support with.

So upon that, we have built in workshops during the school day, in the evenings, very -- all different ways to accommodate our busy -- our family's busy lives. So that is one thing that we have seen.

And we sent out a family newsletter now. We're finding we probably have to look at ways of technology to implement in order to communicate with families, because families may not be able to attend, but they will be present in their children's lives, and we want to honor and respect that.

The other thing we are working on is the academic advisory council and the teacher focus teams. Again, that was reconfigured through our weekly collaboration with our staff. And we feel very fortunate that we have that time built in to our duty day.

We also continue to have our parent orientation and open house, which Alan mentioned that he was able to attend with Dr. Bobroff.

And then the other thing is we have a teacher retention rate of -- four of our teachers -- we're such a small staff. We have 25 teachers total. Four last year were on maternity leave.

So don't drink the water at our school.

But we have several people here in the audience today. And we are very fortunate that we have such a strong team. We have four members out of six from our governance council board. We have our president, Sandy Martinez.

We also have former Representative Dan Silva. We have Professor Donna Jewell, who represents the arts on our board, from the University of New Mexico.

And we also have former Representative Dan Silva. So we have a pretty diverse group of people that support us.

And we also have really key staff that are here as well that you'll get to meet, as well we have Joaquin Encinias who is our curriculum director who was one of the founders of the school and continues -- he kind of has the mind of someone that is always -- how do we improve, and how do we get better?

And a lot of -- a lot of the arts that have evolved through the school have been because of

And, of course, we have our wonderful business manager, Michael Vigil, and Amber Peña, because they tell us, "You can do that," or, "You can't do that." And then we tell him, "Make it happen."

But at this time, we're really excited. We have some news that we'd like to -- it's not official. But we have our foundation president, Dr. Diego Gallegos, who would like to share a little bit about our facility process. So we're going to ask him to come up.

DR. DIEGO GALLEGOS: Good morning, Madam Chair, Commissioners. It's always good to be here. It's been over 20 years since I sat in that seat during my term as assistant -- as State Director of Special Education and Assistant Superintendent for Learning Services. So I had an opportunity to speak before --

THE CHAIR: I think you'll have to slow down just a little bit.
1. We've been working with a number of financial institutions over these years trying to come up with financing for the school. Yesterday I spoke to the gentleman who represents Clearinghouse CDFI here in New Mexico. He is in L.A. today. He expects today to get our final approval for our financing.
2. Our -- so they will finance 80 percent of the building, and the Charter School Development Corporation that you may have worked with in the past will do the rest.
3. So we are that close. As soon as we get signed on the bottom line, you will hear a scream come from all of us, a scream of happiness. So we are finally there.
4. THE CHAIR: Congratulations.
5. DR. DIEGO GALLEGOS: Thank you very much.
6. MS. VERONICA TORRES: And that concludes our 15-minute presentation. Thank you, Commissioners.
7. THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. And now that you've told us that sometimes Joaquin has to be reined in, Joaquin is first on the list for Public Comment.
8. FROM THE FLOOR: Thank you Madam Chair,
9. members of the Commission. It's an honor to be here this morning.
10. THE CHAIR: Could you just state your name for the record?
11. MR. JOAQUIN ENCINIAS: My name is Joaquin Encinias, and I direct the arts curriculum at the school. And I have the wonderful opportunity and job to work with young folks and try to figure out how to enhance their lives and their education through the infusion of arts and artisanship.
12. And so I just want to briefly speak a little bit about I think was a paradigm shift for our school was three years ago when we went to the block schedule, and we actually started doing the focus programs for the tenth- through twelfth-graders.
13. What we did at that moment, which is pivotal for us, was take children who are wonderful at trying to sort of scheme the system and have them really, for a year, say, "Look. I'm going to do nothing but dance this year and not be able to move from one focus to another, but stick to it through the year."
14. It really created a sense of culture and tenacity in our students. It was just very, very obvious. And so for me, at that moment, I was a breath of fresh air, because this had been already seven years of work, and we wanted this to work really well.
15. And so it has done that. I've seen an incredible, just, dynamic shift in our children.
16. And that's from the lowest performing to the highest performing children. That is across the board; more engagement, more love for the community, more love for the arts and the academic process. And so we feel good about that.
17. They've told you a little bit about all of the things that these wonderful children have accomplished through those focuses and through those after-school programs. I only see those getting better.
18. As they noted, that I have the opportunity, thankfully, because of my background, I get to teach around the country quite often. I'm out for a day or two once every six weeks or so, and I do teach in Atlanta quite a bit.
19. And, right away, I sort of noticed this wonderful thing happening in the South. They have a wonderful drum line and marching band tradition in the South of this country that is wonderful for the high school programs, but also very culturally based, very much a part of the culture, not necessarily separated from the culture but really part of the culture.
20. And so I was really engaged by that three or four years ago, and so I started to implement that. And that has become our percussion focus for the last two or three years that we are starting to evolve.
21. This year, we have three children in the pilot program just starting to figure out is this going to actually work, because one of the dangers of starting new programs in a school is taking away from existing ones. And our guitar program was doing really well. Our music program was doing really well, and I didn't want to pull from those kids and start something and tear that program down.
22. So we're piloting that this year. But it looks like it's going to take off in a wonderful way. That's, again, just sort of outlining what my job looks like.
23. I teach in the school. I teach artisanship for three blocks. And I also teach a percussion focus class for one block. But that's where we are right now.
Another thing that we're looking at doing here in February is I'm going to begin to go to Mexico and engage in Guadalajara and the community there, the flamenco community, and try to create some collaboration with some of our students from our charter school in the areas of Guadalajara and Mexico City.

We have a wonderful tradition in Mexico. We do wonderful things with flamenco, but also what's called Escuela Bolera, which is 18th and 19th Century classical dance, as well as jota, which is a form of Basque dancing from northern Spain.

People in Mexico, when they see what we do here in Albuquerque and New Mexico, they respect the product so much that they want us to begin to come down to the south and share what we do here with some of their people there.

So that's kind of some of the things that we're going to be looking at down the road.

I just want to say these two directors are incredible people, incredible directors, our board here as well, our governing council. Without that type of support, I don't believe the arts would be able to go as deeply into the community as it has in the last ten years, and I only see it doing more through this type of support.

So I appreciate your time, and thank you for letting me speak with you this morning.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. And last is Donna Jewell.

MS. DONNA JEWELL: Thanks. Good morning. And thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. My name is Donna Jewell. I'm a professor of dance at the University of New Mexico, and I'm currently the chair of the Department of Theater and Dance.

I'm here to share with you, the commitment and attention to detail of the directors of the school is exemplary.

I've been on the governing council for six years. And they also have the knowledge and awareness of who their students are, collectively and as individuals. In addition, the expertise and dedication of the faculty providing an understanding of true rigor in the classroom is clearly evident when you see the work and engagement of the students.

In addition, creating good citizens with a sense of responsibility to the community and to each other can be seen, not only in their level of artistic output and how they engage in the community, but when you talk directly with them as individuals.

I'm -- I'm one of the professors on the panel, the adjudication panel for the dance audition to become a dance major at the University of New Mexico. And I can share with you that the students from TANM, when they audition, are not only far and above the typical level of performing arts students from other schools in Albuquerque, as performers, but we also individually interview them.

And that level of maturity and accountability and their ability to talk about themselves and what they want to do in their career, both as a scholar or as -- and/or as a performer, is far above the level of the other students that audition for the University of New Mexico. It's very -- it's very impressive.

I think in this era of screen life, where young people, and all of us, really, spend a lot of time interacting with the world through a media screen, this school provides priceless face-to-face interactions with other humans in realtime that teaches them accountability, empathy, and self-reliance.

Thank you for allowing me to speak.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. So thanks once again. As I said this morning, we should have had them come last and celebrate the end of this week and have a presentation by their students. That would have been the perfect way to end the week, because many of us have had the incredible opportunity to see the school perform. And it's -- it's more than inspiring to see the students, and also to see that it's not just what you perceive as the typical high performing. There are special needs students with multiple exceptions that are out there doing incredible dancing.

So it's a testament to what the school truly does, that you're not just focusing on those that have innate talent; you are tapping into that everyone -- everyone can shine in some form. And that's -- that's the celebration of the human spirit.

So we appreciate that time and time again.

So let's -- what's your timeline now, if things go well today? Because I know the one expression that came out from students and parents, the only negative, was, "We don't have enough room," you know.
So celebrate that. But we all know that you haven't had enough room, and, yeah, you got off of Central, where it was life-threatening to be there; so it was a good move. But it still -- it wasn't ideal. So what's your -- what's your time frame look like?

MS. THERESA ARCHULETA: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, we probably have about 12 students full-time in that program. And then what we also offer is sort of a hybrid, where some students want to be part of our focus, either in dance, music. And then what they'll do is they'll come for that part of it.

Because of our block scheduling, we're able to accommodate them, and then they just stay for the online portion. So we really try to accommodate the students and really try -- we really believe in building individualized plans for every kid at our school so that we don't lose them. We want to keep them engaged.

That's what we're always trying -- like Joaquin mentioned, we're always trying to keep up with the changing society and their needs.

THE CHAIR: I remember when you came to talk about starting that program, talked about that hybrid. Have you had any students that started there and transitioned into the full-time day? Has that happened at all? Or have -- do you know?

MS. VERONICA TORRES: It's been more of the other way around. There are students that had a need to move out of their homes and work during the day, support themselves. So like Ms. Archuleta was saying, it's the hybrid the other way, where they go focus into night school.

But out of our full-time night-school students, we're going to have our first graduate this year from that program. A student very much in a crisis that came to us wanting to graduate is now going to accomplish his goal. So we're very proud of that.

THE CHAIR: You also mentioned that there's a fast track with that? So how does that -- how is that working?

MS. VERONICA TORRES: So the students that are on a fast track -- actually, it's -- one of my family members just did it. I have four cousins that go to the school. So he was doing his junior classes during the normal day program, taking his regular eleventh-grade classes. And he's in the artesania focus with Joaquin in the afternoon.

But he wanted to get ahead. So he would either stay for the night school, or just go online on his own, because we could trust him to do it at his own home. And he, during his junior year, not only completed his junior year classes, but also his twelfth-grade classes as well.

Now, he's choosing to stay on for twelfth grade, but he only comes for focus, because he's completely done with his academics. But he's going to enter the electrician program in spring at CNM and got accepted into the mechanics program in Phoenix, Arizona, for fall of 2020. So he's an example of how that fast track could work for a student to their benefit.

THE CHAIR: Great. Because I think that's...
MR. MICHAEL VIGIL: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, I'll report to you on the 2018 audit, which has been released. 2019 is going to look better.

There was one material weakness on the 2018 audit. It was related to the classification of assets. We had listed -- the expenditure for the planning of the new facility is listed as an expenditure. It's really the auditors' -- and we discussed it with them -- they wanted to list it as an asset and capitalize it when the building was going to be built.

Under the new standards, the accounting standards, that discussion becomes a finding.

So that was the finding. That was the material weakness.

The other two findings were compliance issues, the cash receipts. We talked about it, the 24-hour rule. We have put in processes to try to date-stamp and time-stamp every one of those cash receipts. The second was a purchase order issued after the invoice was -- was incurred.

So -- but other than that, the school has -- you know, we took it over -- we came in --


THE CHAIR: Thanks. So I guess my next question is more to Mike; because the -- the performance framework chart looks pretty good, except there's that consistent, across-the-board performance framework chart looks pretty good, So what we like to do and walk them through that.

Then we feel we have a much better success rate for those students. Because once you're in that college world, you're on your own. And we feel if you want to get ahead, fine; but stay with us so we can support you in your dual credit. So that's the other option as well.

THE CHAIR: Thanks. So I guess my next question is more to Mike; because the -- the performance framework chart looks pretty good, except there's that consistent, across-the-board performance framework chart looks pretty good, and falls far below with the financial issues; so...

THE CHAIR: Okay. Thanks. Thanks. So I hope, as the build-out comes, maybe this will help to generate conversations and opportunities with your equity council to involve the neighborhood and truly help -- because I'm sure, in some cases, it's also, for families, a reengagement of the culture as well. So that's -- you know, we're looking forward to see what happens.

And I guess my last thing is a curiosity. How do you afford all these trips? You know, that's -- you know, when we -- so -- you know, I've got an overarching -- you know, what are the financial struggles? You're still relatively small. So, you know, what are those struggles?

MS. VERONICA TORRES: So every school year, Madam Chair, members of the Commission, we perform around 49 times around the community. And when we're at those performances, many of them either donate or pay us to be there. So that definitely helps the students pay for their trips.

And we usually send the students that are going to be traveling that year -- they're the ones performing, so the money can go directly back to them.

Obviously, our foundation does a lot of fundraising on their own as well. We'll host community events for our students to perform at, again, to raise money and have donors in the audience that will donate to the students to help them take those trips.

And then we have our annual, what's our form of a jog-a-thon; it's called flamenco-a-thon every April, where our students perform for the Sawmill community. We have tents -- you're all invited -- and we perform throughout the day for hours upon hours, hence the "a-thon"; and we raise money and ask for donations, too. And each kid has their envelope asking for, "Hey, I'm going to do a quarter for every hour I dance," or however we do it, and we've changed it over the years.

And each student, if they raise between 50 to 100 bucks, we can make 10 to 20 grand in any one...
flamenco-a-thon. The most we've made is 10; the lowest we've made is 5. So that goes to the student traveling as well.

THE CHAIR: What about through the school funding formula? What challenges have you had with the school?

MS. THERESA ARCHULETA: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, are you saying the current funding formula?

THE CHAIR: Right.

MS. THERESA ARCHULETA: This coming year?

Well, this year was much better than years previous. So what we do is we really prioritize with our staff and with our governance council, and we just have to look at what the need is.

And so when I first came on board 2014, the community and the staff felt it was the building that was our priority. So that is why we have saved -- we have cash savings right now to go toward our facility, because that is our number one.

Now, our foundation has worked very closely and very hard at just looking at facilities. But now we're pushing them to start working on fundraising, because we do need more for support and the after-school. I think we never look at budget as a deficit, because we don't own it. We work with what we have.

And so we have -- like Joaquin mentioned, several of our staff are professional artists; so the fact that they know how to make something from nothing. So we are very good. And I know all of the folks in the audience here that are educators, we're good at that. That is just something -- we don't have time to complain and worry.

And so that question was a little -- it stumped me a little bit. Because I don't think that we've -- our staff has complained about not having the money. We look at what we have, and we do something with it. Would we want more? All the time. If we can find a million dollars towards our building, we'll take it.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Commissioner Voigt?

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, it's really great to see a school so rooted in the arts, but emphasizing the academics and bridging that and balancing that so successfully. So congratulations on that.

It's also great to see both of you in this capacity being so creative and living this dream.

I've had the privilege of seeing Mr. Encinias perform, and Ms. Torres. And so these students are learning from some of the best as far as their craft.

And I'm curious about the -- the percussion program. Is that going to be more in the genre of the artisanship that is being taught at Tierra Adentro -- I'm sure it is -- versus the southern style.

MR. JOAQUIN ENCINIAS: Members of the Commission, Madam Chair. That is actually the challenge, right? Because you want to figure out how do you hold onto what you have and how do you grow into something that is going to engage the kids to what's next?

They start with a Peruvian instrument we play in flamenco. It's called the "cajon." They learn basically hand skills; those are hand percussion skills. They then incorporate congas from -- obviously, Afro Cuban, Cuban music, Caribbean music. And those are slightly different techniques that they use with their wrists.

And the nice thing about that is those two instruments -- a cajon now, if you look on -- on YouTube or a lot of music groups, they're in many pop bands now. The cajon. They play them almost like a drum set.

The conga is a different technique and brings something to light that incorporates Afro-Cuban music and can be played with Mexican folk music, can be played with pop music, can be played with all of that.

And, finally, the last instrument that we begin to incorporate is the snare and marching drums. The idea eventually will be to create sort of our own hybrid type of drum line experience and percussion ensemble that would have cultural roots that explore cultural music, whether it be Northern Mexican music or music from here in New Mexico, flamenco music from Spain, but then also allow the children to have a sort of outlet to identify with their sort of pop music roots -- I don't know if
you're familiar with drum lines. But there's big
bass drums, there's tom drums; there's other -- so
it allows them that capability to sort of move off
into other genres.

The other thing it brings is in music
notation and reading music, which I truly believe
in. It's a wonderful skill for young minds to
engage in. And so through the snare drum, we begin
reading rhythmic notation as a way for them to begin
to engage in that whole world of literature.

I see -- so I don't know if that -- might not have answered your question.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: No, it did.

MR. JOAQUIN ENCINIAS: It's rooted in some
sort of cultural drumming that moves -- not that
drum lines aren't cultural. They're very cultural;
that's what drew me to them. It engages to a little
bit more of the popular culture as well. How we do
that and balance it is kind of what my study is.

But I see it really going to be able to
take root.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Beautiful. I look
forward to seeing that new level of energy added to
student performances, which are nothing short of
professional. I've had many opportunities to see

the students from Tierra Adentro perform in many
different venues. They're just exceptional and
professional, and congratulations on all those great
awards that you've received. Just phenomenal work.
Thank you.

MR. JOAQUIN ENCINIAS: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thanks.

Commissioner Robbins?

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Well, I want to
thank you, and also congratulate you, on the success
of your program and the success of your students,
and also the governance council. You have a very, I
think, engaged governance council. And the fact
that they're all up to date on their training and
everything is an indication of their dedication,
because, you know, we -- many councils, they do
struggle with maintaining that training. And I
think that's very important.

With regard to Mr. Vigil's reference on
the audit finding, I think, as you get into this
building and you start doing that, I think it's
going to be very important to track that and work
with your auditors and Mr. Vigil to make sure that
everything is accounted for properly. Because at
the end of the day, basically, the State needs to
ensure that the funds are being not only properly
spent, but properly accounted for. And, you know,
charters have tended to have some issues in that
area.

With your current enrollment, about
270-280 students -- but your cap is 550 -- what are
the plans? I mean, do you have a wait list in given
grades? Or what are the plans for growth and
expansion?

MS. THERESA ARCHULETA: Commissioner
Robbins, members of the Commission. So we've had
that conversation. We started this, as Dr. Diego
Gallegos mentioned, earlier about, what, eight, nine
years ago, this journey. So we thought we needed to
have a larger building with a larger number of kids
to be able to sustain the financing.

So since then, what we have learned is we
are actually going to move toward -- and we've had
this discussion with our board. And the board
members have urged us, because we're able to give
such individual support to all the students, we're
going to move to bring down that cap.

And so we haven't -- we need -- we're
moving towards 350. Now, our financiers understand
that. And they're going with those numbers in terms

of giving us financing. So we haven't done anything
official.

This isn't an official request or anything
like that. We know we have to go through the
amendment process. But that is the conversation
that we've been having is that we're not moving to
have -- we don't want to be a large school, per se.
We want to keep it, because that's how we're able to
give that individualized attention.

And so, yes, we definitely -- we're
working with the National Institute of Flamenco. We
had our board meeting last night. Our board is
pushing us to maybe hire someone to market our
school, you know, because none of us are in
marketing; we're in education. So we need to
probably hire an outside consultant to help us, how
do we market.

We don't want to grow too big. Do we want
a wait list? Of course. It would be great to have
a wait list.

So that's what we're working towards.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Okay. And related
to the size, the Legislature, this last session, did
put in place a cut -- a phased cut in reduction in
elimination of the Small School size. How is that
impacting you, and how do you think that's going to
impact you going forward? Is it going to force you
to put more of your SEG toward lease assistance and
things like that?

MS. THERESA ARCHULETA: Commissioner
Robbins, members of the Commission, most definitely,
yes. Because we are pretty -- wanting to stay at a
small number. And it'll definitely hurt us without
the Small School Size Adjustment, for sure.

We're working with the Coalition and --
excuse me -- Matt Pahl -- excuse me, I don't know
the new name of the Coalition.

THE CHAIR: Matt's back there.

MS. THERESA ARCHULETA: I saw him. That's
why I said that. But, definitely, we're working
with him as well and with the organization, with our
colleagues in the other charter schools, because
we'll work with -- we'll continue to work with our
legislators.

We don't want the Small School Size to go
away, clearly. But we know that we'll do what we
can. Again, as Commissioner Gipson asked us the
question, "What will we do?" That would be one we
don't want to lose and that we would fight for as

well. But it may be not within our -- our purview,
and we'll do what we need to do to sustain the
program that we've started.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Good. The last
thing -- and you talked about how the students are
engaged and things like that. But I noted in the
report that we have a very high truancy rate
comparable to APS, which, okay, that's fine. But
genewed students tend to have lower truancy.

So I'm curious as to why it's so high and
what are the steps that the school is taking to try
to reduce that.

MS. THERESA ARCHULETA: So, Commissioner
Robbins, members of the Commission. When you create
other venues for students to learn, as in the online
program and the dual credit, those students are
truly committed, right?

So the students that are still within our
regular program, those are the students that are
more in crisis. So that's also why our data also
dipped for math and for reading as well.

And it's not -- and so what we do is we're
working -- those kids are more in crisis. So that
was what Ms. Torres had talked about adding a
full-time social worker; because that was big for

our school. It's just recognizing where our
students are.

We have a pretty high mobility rate as
well. So within the year, anywhere from -- just
yesterday, we received a new lottery for sixth
grade. And I'm sure you see it just statewide, the
mobility.

Now that there's choice in our state, you
know, there's more movement, right? So that's --
and that's an interesting -- and that's what we're
studying as well. Why are these families moving?

So we work a lot with -- Dr. Diego
Gallegos is the CEO of YDI. So he's in the business
of supporting families. We work with one of the
programs through YDI to support our families as
well, because we know they come -- you can't just
support the student; you have to support the family.

So, I mean, it makes it really difficult,
the truancy rate, right? It's -- it's a whole
education of the family. It's not always the
student's fault why the students are -- are late or
truant. And a lot of the truancy is they're mostly
late. They're there, but they come maybe second
period, or they come half-an-hour late. So that's
why it tends to add up.

It's not that they don't come or they're
not there. We have maybe 2 or 3 percent that we
have a -- the ones that are truly truant, and we
follow the truancy regulation. But the one -- they
always come. They just come late. So that's why
our truancy rate looks like that as well, too.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Well, you know,
just to end the idea of cutting back on funding and
restricting funding Small School size, lease
assistance, things like that, it hurts the small
schools, and small charter schools, especially. And
I think, you know, that -- that's the wrong
direction that the Legislature has taken, especially
in response to the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit. We're
kind of going in the wrong direction there.

And salaries are nice. But that's not
going to address your other fundamental issues that
you have with funding in support of the students.

So thank you very much.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Commissioners,
anyone else?

Commissioner Chavez?

COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Thank you,
Madam Chair. Gosh. I think -- I had several
questions. But I think some of them were already
answered by questions from other Commissioners.

But I just want to say -- and you may have already touched on this. But I was looking at your scores, your proficiency scores. And believe me, I know that proficiency doesn't always tell the story of the success of the school. And so I'm aware of that.

And I'm a huge proponent of the arts or CTE and that sort of thing, because I believe that that provides motivation for kids and relevancy in many ways. Because a lot of times kids go to school, and, you know, how many times do you hear kids say, "Why do we need to know this? There's no relevancy tied to that."

And so, however, on the other side of that, we do have an accountability measure that we have to live up to. And so looking at your scores since 2016, both in reading and math, they've been stagnant; they've leveled off. And do you attribute that to some of the things that you've already mentioned, such as your mobility rate and some of the social-emotional issues that are going on with your kids?

MS. VERONICA TORRES: Yes. Commissioner Chavez, members of the Commission, we obviously use the NWEA MAPs for baseline at the beginning of the year. They take it three times a year. This year alone, our sixth-graders are coming in low -- as low as preschool and first-grade-level readers.

So those proficiency rates, yes, they're going to be low.

And then we're asking these students to take, you know, annual exams, such as the "new PARCC," we call it, that are not geared towards the culture of our state and our students. So, therefore, those scores are going to look the way they look.

However, when you look at our NWEA MAPs growth scores, we're in one of the highest percentiles. Ms. Archuleta can speak more to this.

But we're in the 90th percentile for growth.

We're showing a trend. If students can stay with us from sixth through twelfth grade, we can get them proficient by twelfth grade.

MS. THERESA ARCHULETA: Commissioner Chavez, members of the Commission, she hit the nail on the head. And we do want you to know that we're not -- we're not happy with those proficiency rates, either. Because the other thing is in their lifetime, they will take tests, no matter what. You have to take the ACT, the SAT.

We're really glad that the State is moving toward a proficiency being something that is meaningful to a student. SAT is something that will be meaningful for our students. So we do work hard at making sure.

One of the things you do have to know, though, the reason -- another reason why our scores are low, is our dual-credit students do not take the PARCC. We -- they're not able to, only because they're taking classes at the university already.

So we do not want those classes to be interrupted.

So our highest performing students are not reflected in that data you're looking at. So -- which is okay. And so we're willing to take the ding for the academics so that we don't want to hold back any students from furthering their college experience and their college academic career or pathway.

COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: I just want to touch on something that you said that I think -- I don't know that a lot of people are truly aware of. But I think any secondary school faces the same kind of challenges that you just mentioned when you first started talking as far as receiving kids that maybe are not at grade level and are far below, making it really, really difficult for a secondary school to -- to cut that gap, that achievement gap.

And I would think that for a charter school, a secondary charter school, it's even that much more difficult, because you're receiving kids -- you have no control over the kids that you're receiving as far as where they're coming from academically.

And so that's something that I think more attention needs to be given to.

But if I could just share just a personal story, because my son was very musically inclined. And I've got to say that this is the kind of school that I think he would have just done really well.

I have a son and a daughter. And my daughter did really well in traditional school, but my son was very much driven musically and in the arts.

And so one year, he came, and he mentioned the cajon. And he came to us, and he said, "You know, I really -- I've seen this box, you know. I think it's called a 'cajun' [ph]. And I'd really like a 'cajun' [ph] for Christmas."

I thought, "What the heck is a 'cajun'"
I looked. "You mean a cajon." Okay. And to this day, it's beautiful. We bought him a beautiful beechwood cajon that he still uses today -- this is, like, 12 years ago -- that he still uses today. I needed to share that.

MR. JOAQUIN ENCINIAS: Is it possible for me to comment on that real quick? Is that okay for me to comment?

COMMISSIONER CRONE: I've certainly contributed to the truancy rate at PEC. But I have a good excuse. I apologize for being late. I have vision problems, and I don't like to drive into the sun.

And on the flamenco issue, I kept hearing "capron." So I'm glad to hear that it's "cajon" and not "capron."

I taught at Northern New Mexico College for many years. We once had a thriving flamenco program. Unfortunately, that's gone. Vicente Griego was a student at Northern. I know Vicente. La Emi was a student of mine at Northern. And I'm young enough to have witnessed Maria Benitez perform. That's all the good news.

Now, unfortunately, I have to become Timmy Downer. Another student I had in 2016, the fall of 2016, was on the front page of the newspapers with his mug shot and his inmate number. He was, I believe, on a temporary certificate.

He was pursuing -- he's a sexual predator. He was pursuing some of your students at Tierra Adentro. I learned the other day from Dr. Woerner that a lot of the responsibility for background checks is now on the schools. So I know that you weren't directly involved with that situation.

Another role that I have in the State of New Mexico is I'm on the NMPSIA board as the AFT, New Mexico representative. As you well know, a problem that we used to not have very much, or at least we weren't as aware of as we are now, are sexual predators like this person.

We, currently, NMPSIA and Poms & Associates and CCMSI are in the process and in a lot of litigation and paying out a lot of dollars, which results in us -- we're sort of an insurance broker, I suppose you'd say. So we're in a lot of discussions with what they call "extra carriers."

So we have a certain liability with our insurance. And then if -- excess carriers. I'm sorry, if it goes over that. And then a lot of times, they just don't want to pay.
up in a collegiate manner, which means that the classes are owned by the students and not by the teachers or by the staff. So that means that there is really no teacher ever alone with a group of students. There's always another adult in the classroom. And that's for the safety not only of students, but for the safety of the staff as well. So we feel that that extra added monitoring and vigilance has made a huge difference. I can tell you since I've been at Tierra Adentro that we have not had any reports of misconduct by anybody on staff or by substitutes that come to our school. So that is one thing that we take very seriously is making sure that the adults -- of course, the first check is the background check. And then afterward is the behavior of the adults in the building. So, yeah, we very much respect that.

**COMMISSIONER CRONE:** Yeah. This could add an extra burden to an already overburdened workforce. But social media is a way to detect some of these things. And I believe that this individual, his means of -- sexting was essentially what he was doing. And so we just have to become more careful and more diligent. And within -- even though I'm a higher ed teacher -- within our own profession, we need to be more -- we need to become whistleblowers, quite frankly. And I need to apologize to Representative Silva. I heard "Foley." So I deeply apologize to you. Dan Foley. That's --

**THE CHAIR:** Make the motion?

**COMMISSIONER VOIGT:** Madam Chair, thank you.

**COMMISSIONER ROBBINS:** I would like to move that the Public Education Commission renew the charter for Tierra Adentro of New Mexico for five years, that the New Mexico System of School Support and Accountability Report prepared by PED shows a 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; educational climate, and growth in four-year graduation rate, with no statistically significant decrease in performance.
THE CHAIR: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Voigt?
COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Armbruster votes "Yes."
Commissioner Davis?
COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Chavez?
COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Caballero?
COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Raftery?
COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: That is a --
THE CHAIR: Nine-zero?
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Want to make sure I got everybody. Yes.
THE CHAIR: Motion passes, nine-zero.
Congratulations.
(Appause.)
THE CHAIR: Commissioners, let's take a short break, please.
(Recess taken, 9:20 a.m. to 9:39 a.m.)

THE CHAIR: Before we start, I'm going to recognize Commissioner Crone.
COMMISSIONER CRONE: I would like the minutes to reflect that I made a profound mistake.
The school -- the person I was talking about was Tierra Encantada, not Tierra Adentro. So I apologize profusely to everyone from the school that I interacted with.
No excuses. But I got my -- I had forgotten which school this was. So I went back to the archive in the Santa Fe New Mexican, and it clearly said Tierra Adentro; so I apologize for that in the record.
COMMISSIONER VOIGT: You said "Tierra Adentro."
COMMISSIONER CRONE: Yeah. Tierra Encantada, not Tierra Adentro. Let me be clear.
THE CHAIR: I'd like to publicly congratulate the school for professionally just handling that, and, you know, going with the flow.
COMMISSIONER CRONE: If you want to see flamenco and Vicente Griego, he performs at El Farol on Canyon Road. And La Emi performs in this area as well.
THE CHAIR: Good morning.
FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning.
THE CHAIR: Thanks for traveling up and putting up with us this morning so far. We appreciate it.
I will remind anyone who has recently come in that if anyone wishes to speak in regards to the school, there is a sign-up sheet here by Ms. Friedman. So please make sure that you sign up if you wish to speak.
So, once again, if you were here earlier, I have a stock statement that I make before each school in regards to the lack of the complete data that's available right now; so the renewing of the charters with conditions.
The PED has not provided a report or a 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 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 actions, 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, 100 percent, all operational and financial concerns and 95 percent of the academic concerns. So that if the school gets the conditional renewal, that renewal with conditions, that you just have to show there's no downward dip, then you'd be on the Consent Agenda. So thank you.
So we will, once again, start with CSD. You folks will then have your 15 minutes. And then there's the eight minutes of the Public Comment. Thanks.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: Madam Chair, Commissioners, school representatives. Before you, Aldo Leopold Charter School, serving Grades 6 through 12 in Silver City, with a current enrollment of approximately 172 students. The school's mission emphasizes direct experience, inquiry learning, stimulation of the creative process, and stewardship of our community and natural environment.

And I know the school brought some pictures that displayed those key topics of their mission. May not be available for you now here on the floor; we couldn't find a place to put it. But it will be available in the back of the room after the meeting if you want to take a break after the school and want to look at it more closely. You know, it's not really easy to provide you a place for you to see it. So going to the report, the proficiency data is where I'd like to start, Part A.

On the math and reading proficiency, as you can see, the reading proficiency took quite a jump, increased. The math, on the other hand, took a bit of a dip from the prior year. Again, though, I do want to point out that the -- despite the dip, it is still just slightly above the State average of 20 percent proficiency in math.

Their science proficiency rate is extremely high at 76 percent. As you know, the State average is 35 percent. Their growth indices are all showing close to, with their lowest -- with their higher performing students in both reading and math, pretty close to the as-expected or the zero mark on those charts with a slight -- and I can't really tell here which group -- but a slight -- one group that's slightly up, going greater than expected. The indices in the -- the growth indices for the subgroups in reading, again, appear to be a little bit below the line, but, again, not over negative .55, which is, again, within the expected growth range. Same with the subgroups for math. The proficiencies, of course, reflect what you saw in the chart for the overall proficiency for the school, where there was sort of a decline the first three years and then a jump, even by subgroups in reading, in both sets of subgroups.

Economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities and English Learners also showing a jump in their reading proficiency over the last year. The subgroups in math reflect what you saw in the overall chart as well, with a dip this last year, a slight decline in their performance in math. Graduation rate was at 67 percent in the last available data.

And the mission goals, for the last couple of years, the school has Met or Exceeded all four of their goals. They did have some, in 2017, where it was rated as Falls Far Below or Does Not Meet. In '18-'19, they have Exceeded or Met all four.

The membership has had a slight increase over the years of the contract term. And the retention within the school year has been between 89 and 92 percent. It has declined a little; but 89 to 92 is pretty high. And then in the -- between the school years, that has improved from 83 up to 91 percent. Teacher retention rate is high, 85 to 94 percent over the course of the contract term.

And in the audit findings, this last year that we have data for, there were four findings, two of which were repeat findings. And one of those repeat findings was a material weakness. And that, Commissioners, is the reason for the Failing to Demonstrate Progress that was rated on the report and the red mark that you see on their chart for the last year.

Going back to the report itself regarding the progress report, or Part B ratings, the school has demonstrated or met standards in all areas other than the one I just mentioned. And the area under the organizational performance framework where the school had to provide a response due to repeat Workings to Meet or Falls Far Below were both in the financial areas, the financial compliance and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, because those are the areas where we rate the audit. So you see it again there. Affidavits. 100 percent of the employees signed the petition for the school's renewal.

80 percent of the households signed the petition. And the index letter provided showed a score of 28.53, which is slightly above the 23.07 percent. And, remember, lower is better; so that's not quite where we'd like it to be for a...
And I think that takes into effect the one facility -- as you know, the school has come before you. They also have students on the campus of Western New Mexico. And I don't think that's reflected in this index.

THE CHAIR: Right.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: And with that, I conclude my report.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. And good morning once again.

If you would just introduce yourselves and everyone from the school that's going to speak on the record right now. Thanks.

MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair, Commissioners. My name is Wayne Sherwood. I'm the director of Aldo Leopold Charter School. I was going to let all of our speakers introduce themselves, but I will introduce them now.

This is Catalina Claussen, Jennifer Lepisko, Harry Browne, Fiona Bailey, and A.J. Sandoval. And I will let them explain what part they are going to be speaking.

So I just want to give you a little bit of history -- or not really history, but just where we're located, because we are the only school in Grant County, which is a small county of about 30,000 people, in a town of about 10,000 people.

And as most of you know, traveling up here to Santa Fe, it can be -- it's a long drive. It took us, like, six hours yesterday, and some of us are pretty tired. I know you guys are doing the same thing coming from all over the state. And I appreciate you guys doing your job all week long for all of the schools.

So Aldo Leopold is a small charter school. And what we focus on is experiential education in the outdoors. And I just wanted to give you one example of what we did just this week.

Our junior class is studying birds in their science class. And we don't live along the Rio Grande Corridor. So we don't really have a lot of large migratory birds or a large group of migratory birds.

So they planned a trip to Bosque del Apache. And as all of you know that have been to Bosque del Apache, there's tens of thousands of Canadian snow geese there. There's Sandhill cranes and many, many other birds.

And I actually anticipate a little bump in our student growth next year at our high school, just because of our location on the WNMU campus. It has been very nice for the students be able to just walk to the classes.

It has eliminated a lot of the transportation problems. The reasons kids couldn't take dual enrollment is because we were off -- too far away from the campus, and if they didn't have a vehicle, they had to provide their own transportation. And now they can just walk to school. So that is really beneficial.

We also are working on career-technical education. And we're working with WNMU also in their outdoor education program. And we're going to continue to build our program and WNMU's program in that way and start offering CTE classes for our students.

So at this time, I'd like to turn it over to Harry Browne, our business manager.

MR. HARRY BROWNE: As Wayne mentioned, I am the business manager. I've also been a teacher, primarily of math, but also of economics, government, business, and, briefly, Spanish.

And my job is to talk a little bit about...
our history and, very briefly, our fiscal condition.

Aldo Leopold opened its doors in August of 2005 with 41 ninth- and tenth-graders, who, like those of us who founded the school, were willing to take a risk in order to experience a new way to teach and learn.

2005 was also the year that Richard Louv published his groundbreaking book called "Last Child in the Woods, Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder."

Aldo Leopold's founders believed, along with Mr. Louv, that all humans need contact with nature, but especially children as they develop.

Mr. Louv wrote that, quote, "The future will belong to the nature-smart, those individuals, families, businesses, and political leaders who develop a deeper understanding of the transformative power of nature and who balance the virtual with the real. The more high-tech we become," he wrote, "the more nature we need."

That very much informed our creation of the school.

Back in the day, charter applications were enormous. I don't know how many of you were around back then, but ours was no exception. It was 786 pages. Contained therein were curricula that shared a theme. They all connected our students and what they studied with the place where they were growing up. We very much believed in place-based education.

That meant two things: First, connecting them with the natural environment. You may know Silver City is the gateway community to the Gila Forest and the nation's first wilderness area, the Gila Wilderness Area, which was created by Aldo Leopold, our name sake. It was created by his efforts. Of course, it was created by Congress; but he was the one who pushed.

Second, connecting the students to the human communities in which they live, Silver City, the mining district and rural surroundings. We set aside Fridays for exploring those environments, as you'll hear more from Ms. Claussen.

And we set one week a year aside to take students out. They go on four-day backpacks. We've done this from the beginning. It's an amazing transformative experience for them. It's the one thing we most often hear about when students give their graduation speeches.

Our goal was to do what we -- all of us teachers had been taught we were supposed to do, which was teach to the whole child. We believe we're able to do that. The fact that we meet academic standards is crucial. The rest is a bonus, I guess. But we believe we're teaching to the whole child.

All of this does cost some extra money.

But, fortunately, we have a very frugal staff and a highly dedicated staff, and we're able to make it work.

Our fiscal condition has been sound since our first two years. We were scraping the bottom of the barrel at the end of the first two years. But since then, we've maintained a very healthy fiscal position.

We've had at least a month and a half of cash carryover every year since those first two years, and sometimes even more than that. We're very cautious with spending.

And I anticipate more questions about the audit. I look forward to those. But as far as budgeting and managing our money, I think we've done an excellent job.

Thank you.

MS. FIONA BAILEY: Hello, Commissioners.
very self-directed project, which they've worked on for a full semester under the mentorship of the high school teachers.

So each year, through high school, they do that project.

How do we prepare them for such a self-directed program?

Well, starting in sixth grade, we really show our students that we have -- are holding them to a high academic standard. We consider a passing grade a "C"; a 70 percent or above is passing. We do not give "D"s at all. So we really, you know, hold them to that standard right from the beginning.

And we provide lots of homework help; we provide lots of academic support in lots of different ways.

We have an amazing continuum of education through -- especially in our sciences, I think. As the test scores really show, that continuum from sixth grade through high school is really amazing. But even in an area where we really feel like we excel, we're looking to add a capstone senior science class. And we think that would really kind of heighten our program even more.

We do recognize that math is an area that we do need to show some growth. And ways that we've been doing that, as we have recognized middle-schoolers coming in with a lot of holes, a lot of deficiencies in some of the basic skills, we've implemented 15 minutes a week of what we call our RTI program, our Response to Intervention, where we group students and really hone in on those missing skills as they continue to work on curriculum.

We're also looking to add a math club for those with huge math anxiety. And that's something that I hope to start next semester.

Meanwhile, we also are very proud of our elective courses. We offer PE and health. They have three semesters of each of those throughout their time with us.

But then we also offer drama, music, culinary arts, Spanish, primitive skills, creative writing, journalism, keyboarding -- and the list goes on. And we really pull from the community to help supplement those programs.

So now I'm going to pass it on to Jennifer, one of our middle-school teachers.

MS. JENNIFER LEPISKO: Good morning.

appreciate the opportunity to talk about our school.

I teach eighth-grade language arts and social studies. What I'm going to focus on and talk to you about is our Friday program; that's our designated day when we take the kids out. As I'm talking to you, 75 kids are out in our community.

And they went out in two different groups.

One group walked down to look at the art show. So we have an excellent art teacher in the high school and the middle school. And those kids have been working really hard to create a beautiful show that's put up at the coffee shop every year -- twice a year, actually. So the kids will go through that.

Once they're done with that, they're going to go across the street, and they're going to work with this man that's come from Brazil; he's an Artist In Residence. He's got this big project that he's working on. And that includes making all these little figurines. So the kids are each going to make a clay figurine that's going to be part of this big huge art installation.

And each one of the students is going to get a chance to make their figurine.

They also make cards for the senior citizens in the senior residence in our town.

And then the other group is over at the high school campus at the University and they're going to be working on creating a whole new garden in a space that was once a garden that has now been fallow, and they're going to design with the YCC Garden Group Program, working on creating and designing and implementing that.

And it's right in town. And so many of their neighbors, when I mentioned it to one of their neighbors, "That is so awesome, so excited that that land is going to be used and we're going to have a garden close by." So that's what's happening right now.

I did also want to tell you, I asked my eighth-graders, "What do you think about the Friday programs?" Most of them have been through this for three years.

I said, "What do you think that the Commissioners should know about that?"

And what most of them said was it allows them to connect to one another, and it allows them to connect to their community. And in the connecting to one another, is we mix sixth, seventh, and eighth-graders in groups every time we go out.
So I don't have my same group of kids every time. I'm with a whole different group of kids. So I get to know them; they get to know me. And for these students, they all said it helps to create a safe community for them.

Several of them said, "If I'm having a bad day, or if I look down, or people know that something is going on for me, then I know somebody is going to say, 'Hey, are you okay today? What's going on?'"

They feel cared about. And when that comes into the classroom, which is my other question to them: "How do the Friday experiences -- how do you bring that into the classroom? Where do you see us using that Monday through Thursday?"

They say, "Because I feel cared about. I'm part of a community. That makes my learning a lot easier. I'm working with people. I'm more comfortable working with other people. I know I can go to any teacher and ask for help. I know that I can go to other students for help."

They also said it gives them social skills. A couple of them said they really appreciate learning how to communicate with other adults in their community, and they really appreciate -- one kid said -- he said, "How to be a well-behaved person in important places."

And then another -- another one said -- which I thought was really great. And they do. It's -- we hear from community members -- the Aldo -- thank you.

We hear from the Aldo members that they -- community members -- that Aldo students represent themselves well out in the community, and they really appreciate whenever we come by.

MS. CATALINA CLAUSSEN: Good morning, Madam Chair and Commissioners. My name is Catalina Clausen. I'm the co-founder of Aldo Leopold Charter School. I'm also a former teacher of English, history, and physical education, and currently serve as the internship coordinator in our school.

So as you can tell from the very lively Fridays that we have out in the community for our middle-schoolers, those experiences are built upon in the high school with a program that is headed by my colleague, Pete Rankin. He runs what we call "Community Orientation."

And Community Orientation is a program where students are exposed to various opportunities in our community. And then -- or internship opportunities in our community.

And then for tenth through twelfth grade, our students have six semesters of internship in our community. They have a choice between Youth Conservation Corps placements in archeology, murals crew, eco-monitoring crew, gardening crew -- so sorry. And then -- or they can be placed in the community with -- we have a wide variety of business partners that we work with.

Thank you for your time.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. While Beverly is doing this, I just have a piece of housekeeping. Wayne, is your legal name Gary?

MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: Gary Wayne Sherwood, yes.

THE CHAIR: Because it says "Gary" here, and I'm, "What? Gary?"

And there are three people that have signed up for Public Comment. And the first one is Ava --

FROM THE FLOOR: Bjornstad.

THE CHAIR: Bjornstad?

FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning, Commissioners. My name is Ava Bjornstad. I'm a high school senior at Aldo. And I have been going to Aldo since I was in seventh grade.

And when I first started attending Aldo, I was terrified to stand up in front of my own classmates and speak. And now, thanks to Aldo, I have the confidence and the ability to stand in front of you and stand in front of my own school and speak.

And I have learned how to push myself academically, and I have learned how to push myself in my internship program.

As a junior, I worked to plan our San Diego trip that our whole junior class takes and with several of my other classmates. And that's because I was given the tools, starting in seventh grade. I was given the tools to learn how to plan those trips, and I was given the leadership skills to do that.

And I also took on an internship junior year planning my own Grand Canyon trip. It didn't end up working out, but I learned so much from doing something like that. This internship program made it so that I was able to go into something that I was really interested in.
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<td>1. I'm interested in being on the 2 Grand Canyon. And so I was able to dive into that, and I was able to learn a lot more about that because of our internship program and because of the skills that Aldo has given me. 3 And I've been able to take on other roles in my community. Whether that be in school and outside of school, I've been able to take on other roles. I was able to go to Washington, D.C., and speak about protecting the Gila River, which is something close to home for all of us. And that's only because I was able to attend Aldo, and I was able to learn about the importance of community and working together. 4 And so I am so grateful that Aldo exists, and I'm so grateful that I've had the opportunity to attend, and I hope that other students in the future also have the opportunity to attend such an incredible school like Aldo Leopold Charter School. Thank you. 5 THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. Well said. 6 Next speaker is Ajalaa Claussen.</td>
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<td>1. THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. Finally, 2 Katrina Estrada. 3 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning, Chairman and the council. I am Katrina Estrada. I am the student body president of Aldo Leopold Charter School. 4 I got into Aldo my sixth-grade year. I was only eleven years old. I am now 18 years old and a senior in high school. 5 I can confidently say Aldo Leopold Charter School changed my life for the better. I grew up with low -- low and close to failing grades, and now I am thriving through my educational success. I cannot be more happy to be where I am today in my life because of this school. 6 From the plant identification in the Gila Wilderness at the beginning of every year to the AP exams at the end of the year, I am now the best version of myself that I could ever be. 7 My education at Aldo Leopold Charter School has transcended upon more than just good grades and high scores. I have gained social skills, public speaking skills, experience in activism and so much more. 8 Aldo Leopold Charter School shows today's youth that they can accomplish their wildest dreams. It shows students to sustain determination through their educational career. 9 Aldo Leopold Charter School is one small part of New Mexico, but it creates powerful impacts on New Mexico students. 10 Aldo Leopold Charter School is part of what makes New Mexico so great, and this is why I ask for us to keep our Aldo Leopold Charter School charter and have it be renewed this year. Thank you. 11 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Thanks once again. Just as a personal note, this was actually the first school I did contract negotiations with. We were down in J. Paul Taylor right after our term started. So it was an interesting experience for me, because it was the first one; but also fascinating because, also personally, I backpacked the Appalachian Trail from Maine to Georgia. So I certainly understand. And backpacked most of the East Coast throughout my years and did a lot of time training with the National Audubon Society. So it was a concept that, certainly, I embraced. And also the service learning that is embedded in the school and the projects that they go</td>
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<td>1. Aldo Leopold Charter School is an experiential educational program that is vital for our rural community. Through the internship program and YCC, I have been able -- 2 THE CHAIR: You just need to slow down just a little bit so she can keep up with you. 3 FROM THE FLOOR: I have been able to tailor my curriculum to pursue career paths that I am interested in. 4 I was able to work with professionals in photography, entrepreneurship, and to help beautify my community by installing murals and building trails. 5 Aldo Leopold Charter School extends above and beyond resume building, experiential education, and traditional classroom education. It has given us incredible, unforgettable life experiences. 6 Last year, our class organized a trip to San Diego. We studied different cultures, American history, and marine biology. However, the most memorable moment I had was witnessing three of our classmates see the ocean for the very first time in their lives. See, Aldo isn't just a place we go to school. It's four walls we call home and students we call mentors.</td>
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| 1. THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. Finally, 2 Katrina Estrada. 3 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning, Chairman and the council. I am Katrina Estrada. I am the student body president of Aldo Leopold Charter School. 4 I got into Aldo my sixth-grade year. I was only eleven years old. I am now 18 years old and a senior in high school. 5 I can confidently say Aldo Leopold Charter School changed my life for the better. I grew up with low -- low and close to failing grades, and now I am thriving through my educational success. I cannot be more happy to be where I am today in my life because of this school. 6 From the plant identification in the Gila Wilderness at the beginning of every year to the AP exams at the end of the year, I am now the best version of myself that I could ever be. 7 My education at Aldo Leopold Charter School has transcended upon more than just good grades and high scores. I have gained social skills, public speaking skills, experience in activism and so much more. 8 Aldo Leopold Charter School shows today's youth that they can accomplish their wildest dreams. It shows students to sustain determination through their educational career. 9 Aldo Leopold Charter School is one small part of New Mexico, but it creates powerful impacts on New Mexico students. 10 Aldo Leopold Charter School is part of what makes New Mexico so great, and this is why I ask for us to keep our Aldo Leopold Charter School charter and have it be renewed this year. Thank you. 11 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Thanks once again. Just as a personal note, this was actually the first school I did contract negotiations with. We were down in J. Paul Taylor right after our term started. So it was an interesting experience for me, because it was the first one; but also fascinating because, also personally, I backpacked the Appalachian Trail from Maine to Georgia. So I certainly understand. And backpacked most of the East Coast throughout my years and did a lot of time training with the National Audubon Society. So it was a concept that, certainly, I embraced. And also the service learning that is embedded in the school and the projects that they go
out on Fridays with. I guess I also admired anyone
that will take middle-school kids out into the
woods, because, as you all know, I probably would be
very apt to leave quite a few of them behind.

So it's -- I was quite impressed that
someone's willing to take that risk. But it --
without a doubt, this is just another one of those
schools -- we've had a lot of schools that embrace
arts that have come before us this week in
particular.

But this entire expeditionary and
exploring model and how it helps to encourage
self-reliance, team building, without a doubt. So I
truly do appreciate that you -- in a community that
is a struggling community. I mean, Silver City is
small and really doesn't have much in the near
future that looks like it's going to have it expand.

So a school that can maintain any student
population really is a testament to those folks that
want to go to the school; because it's -- you know,
I'm sure Silver is having declining enrollment.

MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: Yes.

THE CHAIR: And the struggles that the
school has had for years with the facility. So the
fact that they're able to land in a really good
place and create that great partnership is exciting,
and, hopefully -- because the one student said they
wanted a football field or a soccer field; so,
hopefully, there will be space. You know, that was
the one negative: "We want a field." So,
hopefully, you'll have that space as well.

So I appreciate that. And the fact that
the -- you know, the evaluation of the performance
framework over the years also shows that there's
that constant communication between the governance
council and the school and that it's a really good
and hard-working partnership that you have. And you
have those -- and I'm sure -- really tough
conversations at times.

I'll just let Harry address the one,
because it's unusual for someone to go from
exceeding to now you're Falling Far Below on the
audit finding.

MR. HARRY BROWNE: So I do believe you
have written management's response; is that correct?

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Uh-huh.

THE CHAIR: We do and --

MR. HARRY BROWNE: I'm happy to talk about
it and to answer specific questions as well. I'm
also happy to throw the auditors under the bus.

reconciliations, where, again, the General Ledger
had an issue. The reconciliations come up perfect
every month; but the General Ledger had these swings
that the auditors didn't understand and frankly I
didn't understand until quite recently, when I
figured out that the bank reconciliation report that
they were looking at was only current fiscal year
transactions. It did not include previous fiscal
year transactions.

When those were incorporated into the
General Ledger portion of the bank reconciliation,
everything is perfect, and everything matches to the
dime.

So I've fortunately finally figured that
out. I realize we are not allowed to talk about the
current year audit. I hope I am able to give a
subjective prediction, based on excellent knowledge,
that there will not be any material weaknesses in
the current year audit. Thank you for allowing me
to say that.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. And, Wayne, I know
you did address in the narrative the fact that your
graduation rate is perhaps off because of that "C,"
the requirement for the "C," in order to get a
passing.
MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: Yes, that is correct. So a lot of our students at Aldo -- and I think it's not really a very stable population. It's still testing the waters, and they like to go to the other middle school or, they'll go somewhere else.

But the high school kids pretty much stay at our school or they leave the community altogether. As you mentioned, Grant County is a -- it's not really a very stable population. It's actually declining a little bit. And if it's not declining in numbers, it's declining in parents moving into the community with school-age children. So it's becoming more a retirement community. So we don't have those kids coming into the community. So Silver Schools and Cobre Schools are -- within ten miles of our school, are both losing students, and 50 to 100 students a year. And Aldo Leopold has stayed stable throughout those years.

THE CHAIR: Right. Thanks. And, hopefully, maybe the new Office of Outdoor Reclamation, I think it's being referred to -- and I saw where they just put in place for the first time in eight or nine years a Director of Natural Resources.

So that, hopefully, with those offices building out and up, that'll also -- I mean, that area is just a great area for exploration and maybe some job opportunities and internship opportunities for the kids. So that's -- that's hopefully exciting to see what happens there.

Commissioner Robbins?

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Well, you probably know I'm going to talk about the audit. But I do appreciate -- I do appreciate your explanation.

How many years has this auditor worked with you? Was this the first year that they had --

MR. HARRY BROWNE: That was the first year they worked for us, Pattillo, Brown & Hill. They only worked for us for two years. We don't work with them now. They were subcontractors. Not the normal three-year cycle. So we're currently with CLA, Clifton, Larson & Associates. [Verbatim.]

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Okay. That can be an issue. When you have a new auditor, sometimes they don't understand. I was at the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions. They had 26 federal grants. We had about five different sources of State funding and five fund balances that were non-reverting.

For the typical state government auditor, it was difficult for them to understand, because many states, they have one fund. They have a general fund, and that's it. They may have one small grant. When I was at Tax & Rev, you had General Fund. Motor Vehicle had a small amount, and then you had a small CDL grant, basically, from the federal government, Commercial Driver's License, to handle those types of things.

So, you know, 95 percent of their funding was General Fund, so it was fairly simple; whereas, with that one, it was, you know, 75 percent of it was these federal grants, which didn't all follow the federal fiscal year, which even if they did, is different from the state fiscal year, so it always caused problems and people's heads were always exploding when they came in.

And, you know, when you changed auditors, it's like you had to educate them on the way things are done. So I do appreciate that and your explanation.

And I think your explanation, in the notes, it's not wrong to challenge what the auditor says, and especially when an auditor is not familiar. And I appreciate that. So that's fine.

I'm a math person. I enjoy science. I'm not a scientist. I have an older brother who is.

So I see a disconnect between high reading
proficiency, high science and very low math scores.
And I'm like, that, to me, just doesn't seem to --
MS. FIONA BAILEY: Yeah, it is. And I -- my -- the majority of my educational career, which
is coming up to 30 years now, has been in
elementary. And I have seen a trend that is very
worrisome to me, where the scope of math that is
being taught in the elementary schools is so broad
that it doesn't ever go deep enough, so that every
year in elementary school, it feels as if students
are learning anew. They're never -- they're never
concrete in any one skill.
Those who have a natural aptitude towards
math, you know, they -- they get through that, and
they come out looking really good. But we have more
and more students who -- and in our location, in
particular -- who just -- they have true math
phobia.
And it's because they have had a little
bit of this, a little bit of that, a little bit of
this, a little bit of that, all -- every year. And
they never fully immerse in any skill.
So by the time we get to middle school,
and they don't -- they're not competent with adding
and subtracting double-digit numbers. They're not
confident with their multiplication facts.
And so when you're trying to make up those
skills and learn the huge breadth of math that is
being tested at the middle and high school, it's
really, really challenging.
But some -- we use -- and I heard the
previous school say the same thing. We use the MAPs
to help us keep track of our students throughout the
year, and from year to year.
So when we look at our MAPs data, our
current eighth-graders, when they were in sixth
d grade, just -- they had a -- we had a very small
percentage that were competent in -- in math. It
was -- I -- I'm sorry. I put it on a different
sheet of paper.
It was just -- just a handful of students,
like two or three. And now they're at -- like,
64 percent of them are -- are proficient and above,
according to the MAPs data.
And so I think that -- the good thing
about that test, as opposed to just the State test,
is they take it three times through the year.
Our current eleventh -- our current
eleventh- and twelfth-graders, we have 68 percent
advanced in math. And so that's starting at about
that same low -- you know, low -- I think it was --
I can't find the number right now -- but it was,
like, 20 percent to begin with. And we're getting
them up to 68, almost 70 percent. All of our
students show really good growth through the math.
And -- but it just -- we really are
turning to, and our middle school just adopted, a
real hands-on math program, a real inquiry-based and
hands-on math program. So, hopefully, we'll
continue to see some growth.
MR. HARRY BROWNE: I just wanted to
address the disconnect, because I found it
fascinating also. And I think it's really because
what's tested in science isn't math for the most
part. There is a math component, and that math
component is really a strong math program. It's
data analysis. That's the part of math that fits
into the science curriculum.
And the rest of the science testing is
about process and critical thinking, and those are
areas we're very strong in. So I think that
explains the disconnect.
COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: And I understand
that. One thing I've said -- and I've heard this
from educators also -- that most elementary
schoolteachers are not comfortable with math
themselfs. And that's going to transfer into their
teaching, because in most elementary students, you
have one teacher, and they teach all the subjects
all the way up through fifth grade.
If you're not comfortable in the subject,
you're probably not going to teach it well. And
like you said, they're not going in depth.
When I was on the APS School Board, I had
some charter school principals come to me. One of
their husbands worked at Sandia and collaborated
with people at MIT.
And they said, "I wish high schools would
stop teaching trig and calc, because I get people
who were getting 'A's in trig and calc coming to me,
and they get 'C's and 'D's because they weren't
taught the depth. They were taught surface levels
of things."
And I think that's -- part of the thing of
what our Legislature has done by requiring so many
years of math, we don't get into the depth. We give
them many years of surface, and we don't get them
into the depth of really understanding. And I would
rather have fewer years and more depth.
So -- especially with the basics. If you
cannot add, subtract and multiplication and
division, those are the fundamentals of going on to
anything else in math. You know, I was a
statistician. I loved quantitative analysis and
differential calculus. I loved those things.

However, you have to know the
fundamentals. That's so -- it's even important for
someone going into accounting. I had accountants
that couldn't add and subtract, literally, without a
calculator. They could not do it in their head.

And I would sit and look at, you know,
million dollar numbers and look at it and just say,
"These numbers are wrong. I'm not going to take the
time to add it up. Go back and add it up."
"What do you mean it's wrong?"
"It's wrong. I'm not going to take the
time."

They'd come back and say, "You're right." It was wrong. They didn't see conceptually that it
was off.

The enrollment, obviously, I would imagine
you can't have any wait list or anything like that
at your school. But maybe by certain grades, you
do?  

MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: Well, we actually
do have a wait list in sixth grade.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Okay.

MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: This year,
since -- it wasn't last-minute. We weren't sure the
Western facility was going to be finished at the
beginning of the school year. And we were able to
get it finished in the second or third week of
August.

And we had about 24 kids on a wait list in
sixth grade. But we only have one sixth-grade
class. So next year, we will have more space. We
are looking at bringing in another sixth-grade
teacher and adding another sixth grade to our -- but
we don't have a waiting list in any of the other
grades.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: One of the things
to follow up on the math, your idea of the math
club, a lot of students may still be, "What is that
supposed to be?!"

But if you make it fun, math games, you
focus it more on math games and teaching math
through fun games and everything, that will really
engage the students, I think. And it will get them
to understand, you know, this building wasn't built
by just people; it was built and designed by people
understanding math.

And I think that's a very important -- you
know, if they get into higher levels of science --
we have some wonderful scientific facilities here.
When you get into nuclear science, you get into some
of the things that they're doing, and engineering
and things like that, that does require basic
fundamental math that is so essential. And we want
push that.

People want to become, you know, aerospace
scientists and engineers. And it's, like, "Well, if
you're going to be a physicist, guess what? You're
going to have to know a lot of math, because a lot
of computer programming when you get into some of
those areas, it's basically just math."

So thank you very much. And I encourage
you to continue with those efforts in improving the
math. I understand the disconnect of what you're
saying, that they're coming into the school with
very low levels of math skills; but I think it's
something that, statewide, we need to work on.

And I challenged some individuals and even
schools, saying, "You need to maybe get a teacher,
an elementary teacher, to float -- who really likes
math -- to float and teach the math in the schools
rather than having someone who's not comfortable

It would be like someone who doesn't like
music trying to teach music to your students, and,
you know, either -- even if they can't sing. But if
they don't like music, they're not going to teach
music well.

And music and math kind of go together a
little bit. My father was a dual major in math and
music. So I appreciate that. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Voigt?

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Thank you. I know
some people even hate singing "Happy Birthday."

So I just wanted to commend the school on
the student choice and voice that you provide with
the student presentations of learning, and their
choice in being able to choose their research topic.
That's like master-level work, right, being able to
choose a research topic, do the research and stand
up and present, like, the thesis or the defense of
their research.

Is that done within a public venue in
front of judges?

MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: Yeah.

Commissioner Voigt. Thank you. Yes, it is. We
We did have shining examples of students able to be freed up and pursue their passion. We also struggled with kids becoming engaged. That's something we're going to have to look at for the future. If they don't know what they want to do, how do they take care of that? So that's something -- that's a way we can grow.

MS. FIONA BAILEY: If I may, I'd like to tell one student story. We have one student -- I think last year, he was a sophomore. And he is about as ADHD as he come; I mean, just all over the place, really, really struggles with focusing and getting homework done, really tough family life, that kind of thing, where he chose -- well, he was passionate about wolves. And he chose wolves as his project.

And, I mean, every time I saw him in the hall, he had new data, new information that he'd learned, new things that -- and I, unfortunately, didn't get to see his end project. But he was just over the moon about it the whole time he was working on it.

And I think that's where -- you know, it's so important to really pull kids in in that way.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: That's very cool. I'm a firm believer in student presentations of learning, because they demonstrate so much more what a student knows and is able to do, right, than simply taking a standardized test. So I'm all about presentations of learning.

I have a question about the capstone project that you're going to be bringing in for seniors. Is that going to be kind of a graduation requirement?

MS. FIONA BAILEY: We're still talking about it.

MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: That's in the works right now. And, really, that's a student-driven class that the students would like to see to have a senior capstone project and take a senior capstone trip.

Right now, we still -- we do offer a senior trip. So just let me go back a little bit.

Starting in ninth grade, they -- all the ninth-graders -- they all go backpacking, all ninth through twelfth. But the ninth-graders will have their own trip with just the ninth-graders, the tenth-graders, just the tenth-graders, eleventh -- and so on, and the twelfth-graders.
And the twelfth-graders do have two trips. We've tried to get all of our twelfth-graders into New Mexico history. So when they teach New Mexico history, it's not just like one semester of teaching it out of the textbook.

We actually take seven days -- or five to seven days -- and we tour all of New Mexico, and they get to see some amazing. I'm born and raised in Silver City. And some of the places I've got to go to on these trips is just amazing. I've never been there. And I've been a lot of places.

So the students want a senior capstone trip. And some of the things that have been talked about is this school in the past has gone to Mexico and gone down to San Carlos, and maybe putting that as the senior capstone trip.

They've gone to Costa Rica.

These are the kind of ideas that are -- we're still working on.

And, of course, there is that financial aspect to all of this, too. Right now, we -- Harry was mentioning earlier, we work on a shoestring budget. Our kids, when we go out somewhere, we buy the food upfront. We cook our own food on the trips. We camp either in campgrounds, state parks, and Hispanic students. And so it's a significant achievement gap. That's the first thing that stood out; that's in reading and in math.

So then the next thing I did is I looked over to see subgroup data. And I was noticing that you don't have any English Learners that are reported on that.

And so being somebody that was born and raised in Luna County and has family members in Grant County and Hidalgo County, I'm quite aware of the Hispanic community in all three of those counties. And I'm always amazed when -- when we have -- you know -- and Grant County is very unique in many ways. There seems to be a divide between Hurley and Bayard and Silver City itself and some of the differences that go on demographically there.

However, there is a large Hispanic population in that county. And so I started to just think about, well, what does that look like when we look at comparisons in enrollment?

So as I was looking at your data for that and comparing it to Silver City Consolidated Schools, it's -- it's almost the flip. Your demographics are almost the exact opposite of Silver City Public Schools. And so -- to the point of Aldo has a 68 percent white population and a...
27 percent Hispanic; whereas, Silver City Public Schools has a 33 percent white population and 63 percent Hispanic.

And so I'm just wondering, why is there such a disparity and such an opposite of -- you know, from the Silver City Public Schools to Aldo, and what's going on with that?

MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: Okay. Thank you, Commissioner Chavez.

Yes, we've looked at this, too. And we've noticed this. And I -- I asked around. I asked some of my teachers, what did they think? Why is this -- why is this disparity there?

And there are several answers that came up. But I'm not sure that they are the whole answer.

But one of the things, Aldo being a charter school, is some people in the community still don't realize that we are a public school, and they think they have to pay to come to our school.

And I think that is one of the things that we've worked on. We have -- when we do advertise -- which we don't advertise much. But when we do advertise, we advertise as public schools.

And I think that's something the Charter School Division is trying to work on is saying that these are -- these are public schools first. Put that word "public" out there first, because it's the parents believe that it's a private school.

And I catch that all the time. I even caught one of our new representatives in our community was saying, "Well, the private school" -- it's, like, no, we're not a private school; we're a public school. And we need to be public first, and people need to understand that.

But for some reason, that's not being conveyed. And we're not doing a good enough job conveying that in our community also.

There's also another reason that came up. And when Aldo started, it was considered the "hippie school." And so we had this image of being this "hippie school." So people didn't want to send their kids to this "hippie school."

If you're familiar with Grant County, it's a very strong hunting -- there's a lot of hunters that are outdoors people. But they're not the same type of outdoors people that were being attracted to Aldo.
COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: I would just like to see something that's more reflective of the community and the demographics of that community; because as you guys know, the whole Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit and the whole equity, when you see achievement gaps like this, and then you see the demographics of your school, it sends up a red flag in many ways.

MS. CATALINA CLAUSSEN: I think something also, to add to it, is that our school has a higher special education population than our neighboring schools as well. And so the word seems to be getting out to students who have special needs, because we -- we can create smaller and more personalized education, like, in that smaller environment.

But we still have to -- I agree with you, Commissioner, that we still need to bridge that gap and let people know more about the opportunities in our community.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Madam Chair?

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Caballero?

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Commissioner Clausen?

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Commissioner Chavez, thank you for the questions. They were my questions. But you represent that area, and I'm glad you brought it up. I will second him.

I -- I -- I don't accept the -- these glaring differences. I don't suppose you just have these differences this year; you've had them for quite some time. And if -- what's your breakdown in the entering students that come in? It's sixth grade?

MS. CATALINA CLAUSSEN: Yes, sixth grade.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: What's your breakdown? The same breakdown that you have here?

MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: I'm not sure what the current sixth-grade class is as far as ethnicity, what the breakdown is there. But I would say it's very close to what the stats are that you have.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: And so I bring it up because if that's your breakdown of your entering students, that's going to continue your breakdown. And if you don't do -- by high school, it's very hard to bring in.

And I will tell you, you would have to talk to parents; and not at the schools, because -- and what I heard was a lot of theories and a lot of excuses.

If your charter is depending on you coming to equity in the population of the students in the area, I'm sure you would hustle it. You have to do more -- there's a difference between when people do outright things to do this, and when things -- say, "Well, they're just -- this is just a fact, de facto, de facto breakdown. This is just the way it breaks down. But we follow the rules. We have open enrollments and all this stuff."

But there's got to be more -- if -- from the very beginning, you started out with a high population of -- of White Anglo, and you failed to do more to educate parents.

And the Hispanic parents are hard to educate. And you have to hustle it. It's not going to happen at the schools; it's not going to happen at the high schools. You've got to go to the communities. You've got to -- and if you don't know how to penetrate the community, you look for help, people that are very into the community.

All you have to do is explain to parents what is it that you do. And you get them. You just have -- all parents, especially immigration -- immigrant parents, they came to this country for the education of their children. And all you have to do is give them that message.

And so, also, if you're not doing enough to help out the -- the -- those students that are in your -- in your school to thrive and to succeed, and your scores show it, then they're going to abandon you. They're going to say, "Well, there was no difference there."

Talk to their neighbors, "No, there's no difference there. Might as well leave him where he's at. He eats better. His friends are there."

And I would hate to see this beautiful program not being taken advantage with a higher percentage of Hispanics; because they really need it. They need this stuff. And to be -- and not to have that opportunity because their parents didn't learn about it, because somebody couldn't speak to them in English when they answered the phone -- I don't know what it is.

But you've got to look at everything, because this is -- this is glaring. This is embarrassing in the community of Silver. And I've been there a lot of times, and I talk to folks from there. And they're super-excited about their community.
24           THE CHAIR: Thank you.
23           MR. A.J. SANDOVAL: Commissioner Caballero, I appreciate your comments
22           on this issue. I was born and raised in Silver City.
21           THE CHAIR: I'm sorry. Could you just
20           identify yourself?
19           MR. A.J. SANDOVAL: Yes. I am the
18           governing council chair for Aldo Leopold Charter
17           School. A.J. Sandoval. I missed my introduction in
16           our 15 minutes.
15           But growing up and seeing this school
14           develop, I did believe that it was a school that
13           served White privileged students in our area. It
12           wasn't until I got to work alongside the students at
11           Aldo Leopold Charter School that I saw the great
10           power the school has to educate all students that
9            are willing to attend our school.
8            There's a great cultural divide, like
7            Wayne mentioned, between the ranching community and
6            the hunting community and the Anglo and the Hispanic
5            community. Our school is often used in political
4            campaigns as something negatively associated with
3            our school. People running for office and have run
2            for office associated with our school have been
1            attacked for having an association with our school.

1            The issue of the protecting the Gila

and I grew up in that area, I could probably help.
But I'm just looking at the statistics.
And my position is, no, no. You've got to -- I'm
going to be here for a while. I've got to see some
changes, some movement here.
And I can tell you. There's a lot of
whispering at the Legislature about the nature of
the private school for charter schools, that that's
all it is. Charter schools are private schools
financed by public money.
And we have -- and that's also my job, to
prevent that little talk that happens there. I want
to brag about charter schools and say, "No, it's
not. Look at the diversity of..." -- yeah,
sometimes schools have more of this and less of
that, but not glaring.
And, guys, eeho. And I know why my
colleague, Mr. Chavez, that's his personality, and
he's got to live there. I don't. I'm not going
to live in Silver, guys. But I feel for my Chicanitos
in that area. There's a lot of poverty. My God,
there's a lot of poverty.
Thank you, Madam Chair.
THE CHAIR: Thank you.
MR. A.J. SANDOVAL: Commissioner Chavez,
governing council member, to address those issues. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MS. FIONA BAILEY: Commissioners, would it be okay if Katrina spoke to the issue? The question?

THE CHAIR: Sure.

MS. FIONA BAILEY: Yeah?

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello once again. I'm Katrina Estrada. I'm the student body president of Aldo Leopold Charter School.

I completely understand the frustration of the topics and the issue. But I will say that this whole issue goes so much more than beyond just Aldo Leopold as a school. It -- this whole issue contributes to Silver City's community, just because the Silver City community and Grant County community, we are mostly Hispanic and Latino. But for our Anglo and White population in Silver City, New Mexico, there is a separation between the two ethnicities, and that shows throughout both Silver Consolidated Schools and definitely our school.

And I just wanted to address that to show that the separation between Mexican students and Anglo students is -- how do I say? -- is contributed towards the amount of separation that is created through our own community.

And coming from the perspective of a second generation -- generation American, I will say that people who grew up in Silver City, they went to Silver High. And because of that, they -- they have this idea in their mind that they have to put their children through the same course and cycle.

And since Aldo Leopold Charter School barely came into play as an educational area where people could come and learn about ecology and science and so much more than what Silver Consolidated Schools provide, and considering that it's a much newer school than the more public basic schools that are provided within our community, the -- the separation between White people and Mexican people within our community definitely shows.

I will -- since the majority of our community is Mexican, and since those people went through that cycle of going through Silver High and other schools in the community, they send their children to those schools.

And a lot of the people who -- and students who come to our school, they're fairly new to our community, I will say. We have some from Socorro in the Silver -- not in the Silver -- in the senior class. And we just have students from all over. We have students from Colorado and some from California. It's just very diverse.

And that -- what my point is, is just that the majority of people that live in our community are primarily Hispanic and Latino. And they went to certain schools, and they grew up in this community. And they have no contact with Aldo Leopold Charter School.

They never did, not even growing up. And it is because our school is fairly new to our community.

And I would just like to say that contributes to why that -- that gap is there and why that predicament and that issue is there.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Just real fast, Madam Chair. And I get it. I was told. I was told in Silver about all of that, because I had those questions. Politically, I went -- I've gone there for political events and -- and legislative hearings.

And I know some people in Silver.

Dr. Ortego, who taught at the University, was my professor at UTEP and became a lifelong friend. And so we had those discussions. And I understand that.

But if I were to ask what have you done specifically to -- to bring in parents and talk to parents, it's going to be very difficult for you to tell me what program or approach you've taken, other than, "Well, we did the -- we published -- we have a web site, and we" -- the digital world is not going to work in the Hispanic community.

You've got to do the old-style approach. If you're not talking to parents and talking to them and bringing them in, and if you can't go to the schools, then have an open house way in advance to show what you have.

And my point, why, even though generations have been separate, and everybody -- "If the Anglos are there, we're going to be here"; and so the point is they've had generations of going to the same school, and the kids want to continue that, well, it goes for both -- both ethnic groups.

And so the final point, Madam Chair -- and Aldo Leopold -- is that if we don't break those
continued disparities of generations, being separate
and apart, and, "I'm better, and you're not --
you're not good"; or maybe that's not the idea.
But, "I want to be over here because you guys are
over there," and -- that has to get broken.
And the school, when you -- when you make
an effort to have a mixed ethnic group population,
that breaks down. My son, I took him from a
99 percent Hispanic to Grants. And my house was
filled with all types of people. And his friends
are diverse. And he still has those same friends.
And he's -- he told me, "Dad, we don't
look at -- at ethnicity anymore. You may have, but
we don't. We don't see skin color."
And I thought, "Man, that is -- that is a
gorgeous thing to grow up in."
And so I'm -- my effort is to give
Hispanic students the same opportunity, but also
everybody should work together and live together and
understand that, and break that -- that generational
thing that's there, if it's there.
I'm not from the community, so I don't
know. I'm just throwing it out there. I would -- I
would stand corrected if I'm wrong. But that's all
I'm trying to say.

But, again, it's public money. You have
to make a move on it. I'm not going to tell you how
do it. But you guys are very, very capable,
because you made something from nothing. And you're
getting it better and better. And I'm sure you can
address this problem.
It's a problem that needs to be addressed
critically. Because Caballero is going to be around
for a long time.
Thank you, Madam Chair.
FROM THE FLOOR: Commissioner Caballero
and members of the Commission, I'm Siah Correa
Hemphill, and I am the special ed director. I'm the
school psychologist, and I'm also a parent at Aldo
Leopold.
And I'm from the mining district. And
what I see as being the solution is recruiting more
teachers and staff from the mining district, which
we were able to accomplish this year.
We were in need of a special ed teacher at
the high school, and I spoke with a special ed
teacher that I knew from the mining district, and we
were able to hire her.
She's been there just a few weeks. But I
think the key is attracting children -- more
children who are Hispanic is going to be having the
staff that they can identify with.
And so we are -- I know that that's the
solution. That's my priority.
We were also able to hire an instructional
assistant today -- this year -- who's also Hispanic.
And so growing our staff, increasing the numbers of
Hispanic staff, I think, is going to be a solution
there.
THE CHAIR: Thank you.
COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: Thank you. You
know, when you're trying to bring people in and you
have to have people in that are in, bring them. So,
you know, you have a lot of ambassadors already,
your students. You know, they -- they're the ones
that can bring those other kids in.
I'll tell you, if you have ambassadors
going out there and talking to kids about your
school, inviting them to come in, and the pressure
is put on them, everybody's going to want to come to
that school.
So, you know, maybe perhaps starting -- or
thinking about an ambassadorship program with your
students to be the people who go out there and talk
to the other students, that might help a little bit.
I know that in Southeastern New Mexico, we
have a lot of oppression as well. So a lot of our
workers, they don't go to "that" school, because
they don't belong in "that" school, or they
shouldn't go to "that" church, because nobody goes
to "that" church except these other people.
You know, there's oppression everywhere.
And the only way to break it, I think, is having
inclusion and having these ambassadors and having
these people talk to other people and say, "It's
okay. We're just like you. We're not any
different."
But, you know, you have that power right
now. You just have to develop it.
Thank you.
THE CHAIR: Thank you.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I'm on a
different subject, a little bit.
So I think that I heard this, but I've
heard so much, my brain is full. I think you said
that you're moving -- and I know via amendment -- to
a new facility, and you're looking at an additional
sixth-grade class. Did I hear that correctly?
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| MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: That is correct. | outstanding, I mean, just stellar, but not in math and reading. And they would go on these trips. And they were the best -- the best, bar none. | info@litsupport.com  
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| 2 If we do move the middle school up to Western, we are hoping to add an additional sixth-grade class. | 2 and reading. And they would go on these trips. And they were the best -- the best, bar none. Our kids in California, we -- I don't think they do this anymore. But we took them to Toyon Bay, which is on Catalina Island. And they went there for three days. They had bunkbeds; they weren't tenting. | BEAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.  
505-843-9494 |
| 3 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So eventually, you'll be adding seventh. | 3 But they were -- Toyon Bay was kind of like the Los Alamos Ranch School that was taken over by the Army during the war. So then some people who were biologists took it over, and they took the kids on hiking and snorkeling and different laboratories and things. | info@litsupport.com  
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201 Third St. NW, Ste. 1630, Albuquerque NM 87102  
505-843-9494 |
| 4 MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: We only have one sixth grade, but we have two seventh and two eighth-grade. | 4 And the kids -- there was no separation. Everybody did a great thing. And it's one of the things that I've always told my kids. "Everyone is not good at everything." So I really liked that part of the program. I wonder if, just -- you may not actually know this number. But on your special ed, which is like -- here, I said 20 percent? Sounds about right to you? |  
| 5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So you do have an opportunity here. Just wanted to clarify in my mind what you're saying. | 5 I'm really happy to hear that you have a "C" grade as the lowest grade that you can get. I just happen to have been with the president of Northern last evening, and I said to him, "So you've been getting a number of kids from...," in this case charter schools, because that's all I know about here. And I said, "They're having such low proficiencies. Tell me how they're making it at Northern." And they're doing programs like plumbing and IT and those kinds of things. |  
| 6 I had a number of things I just wanted to say to you. | 6 I said, "But, still, you have to know how to read and do math." And he said, "Because we have remedial programs for them." So I'm hoping -- and not that I think that your kids would probably go to Northern -- that would help that -- them in college, because now you're paying for college, and you're taking high school classes. So that's one of the reasons the kids drop out, as we all know. Second of all, I wanted to say -- I don't know. Maybe you-all know this. But I did teach special education in middle school. I just forgot my crown today; but -- for 39 years. So I do want to talk about a couple of comments. One is I wrote down your comment about the "behavior in important places." I'm going to actually make a little T-shirt of that, because that's exactly right. But I will say that I taught 22 years in California and 17 years in Los Alamos at the middle school. And what you were saying is exactly right, which is why I love to see kids going places and doing things. Because we would have children who were outstanding, I mean, just stellar, but not in math and reading. And they would go on these trips. And they were the best -- the best, bar none. Our kids in California, we -- I don't think they do this anymore. But we took them to Toyon Bay, which is on Catalina Island. And they went there for three days. They had bunkbeds; they weren't tenting. But they were -- Toyon Bay was kind of like the Los Alamos Ranch School that was taken over by the Army during the war. So then some people who were biologists took it over, and they took the kids on hiking and snorkeling and different laboratories and things. And the kids -- there was no separation. Everybody did a great thing. And it's one of the things that I've always told my kids. "Everyone is not good at everything." So I really liked that part of the program. I wonder if, just -- you may not actually know this number. But on your special ed, which is like -- here, I said 20 percent? Sounds about right to you? |  
| 7 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Yes. | 7 MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD:  
8 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Are they a majority Hispanic? |  
| 8 to read and do math." | 8 MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: Do you know that answer? I don't know. |  
| 9 And he said, "Because we have remedial programs for them." | 9 MS. SIAH CORREA HEMPHILL: I'm not sure. I haven't looked at that data. |  
| 10 So I'm hoping -- and not that I think that your kids would probably go to Northern -- that would help that -- them in college, because now you're paying for college, and you're taking high school classes. So that's one of the reasons the kids drop out, as we all know. Second of all, I wanted to say -- I don't know. Maybe you-all know this. But I did teach special education in middle school. I just forgot my crown today; but -- for 39 years. So I do want to talk about a couple of comments. One is I wrote down your comment about the "behavior in important places." I'm going to actually make a little T-shirt of that, because that's exactly right. But I will say that I taught 22 years in California and 17 years in Los Alamos at the middle school. And what you were saying is exactly right, which is why I love to see kids going places and doing things. Because we would have children who were outstanding, I mean, just stellar, but not in math and reading. And they would go on these trips. And they were the best -- the best, bar none. Our kids in California, we -- I don't think they do this anymore. But we took them to Toyon Bay, which is on Catalina Island. And they went there for three days. They had bunkbeds; they weren't tenting. But they were -- Toyon Bay was kind of like the Los Alamos Ranch School that was taken over by the Army during the war. So then some people who were biologists took it over, and they took the kids on hiking and snorkeling and different laboratories and things. And the kids -- there was no separation. Everybody did a great thing. And it's one of the things that I've always told my kids. "Everyone is not good at everything." So I really liked that part of the program. I wonder if, just -- you may not actually know this number. But on your special ed, which is like -- here, I said 20 percent? Sounds about right to you? |  
| 11 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It's not glaring. | 11 MS. SIAH CORREA HEMPHILL: It's not glaring. |  
| 12 MS. SIAH CORREA HEMPHILL: It's not glaring. | 12 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So it's probably not. That's good. That's a really positive comment. And on your lowest quartile, I was hearing, I think, about you having 50 minutes on a transition, sort of an RTI thing, on Fridays? |  
| 13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It's every day. | 13 MS. FIONA BAILEY: No. That's through the week. |  
| 14 MS. FIONA BAILEY: It's 25 minutes twice a week, where our middle school are grouped by what skills that they need for math interventions. | 14 MS. FIONA BAILEY: Right. So as the Title I reading instructor, I have some small groups that |  
| 15 MS. FIONA BAILEY: No. That's through the week. | 15 MS. FIONA BAILEY: Right. So as the Title I reading instructor, I have some small groups that |  
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| 17 MS. FIONA BAILEY: Right. So as the Title I reading instructor, I have some small groups that | 17 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So it's only math and not reading them. |  
| 18 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So it's only math and not reading them. | 18 MS. FIONA BAILEY: Right. So as the Title I reading instructor, I have some small groups that |  
| 19 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It's every day. | 19 MS. FIONA BAILEY: It's 25 minutes twice a week, where our middle school are grouped by what skills that they need for math interventions. |  
| 20 MS. FIONA BAILEY: Right. So as the Title I reading instructor, I have some small groups that | 20 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So it's only math and not reading them. |  
| 21 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It's every day. | 21 MS. FIONA BAILEY: It's 25 minutes twice a week, where our middle school are grouped by what skills that they need for math interventions. |  
| 22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So it's only math and not reading them. | 22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So it's only math and not reading them. |  
| 23 MS. FIONA BAILEY: Right. So as the Title I reading instructor, I have some small groups that | 23 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So it's only math and not reading them. |  
| 24 MS. FIONA BAILEY: Right. So as the Title I reading instructor, I have some small groups that | 24 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So it's only math and not reading them. |  
| 25 MS. FIONA BAILEY: Right. So as the Title I reading instructor, I have some small groups that | 25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So it's only math and not reading them. |  


I work with who are showing signs of dyslexia, whether they've been diagnosed or not, and really work hard with the multi-sensory, Orton-Gillingham-based reading program with them. And then I also push into the classroom, when it's necessary for assistance within the classroom, for reading strategies and -- and work there.

So -- so, yes, our RTI is just in math. And we decided that's what the focus needed to be for that time in our schedule.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Are the special ed-identified students getting the advantage of that as well?

MS. FIONA BAILEY: Correct, yeah. So our special ed teacher has some student -- some of our students with math IEPs go to her during that time. Others, if their needs aren't as great, coming -- and you, depending on what their needs are. So we look at -- we look at special ed and general ed across the board based on skills and skill deficits.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And my last comment is -- it's kind of relating to the young lady's talk. Well, I know that we have two, like, famous in our State, people who I do believe went to Silver City High School: Lieutenant Governor Howie Morales and Stephanie Garcia Richard, our first woman and Hispanic Land Commissioner. So they -- so that's a big thing to break. They made it. Just saying.

COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Don't forget Harrison Schmidt.

COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: And Jeff Bingaman.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I happen to know these two.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: He's got another one.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Madam Chair?

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Crone?

COMMISSIONER CRONE: I promise to do my very best to not represent you incorrectly. And in your case, it's all good news. So you mentioned that you've traveled all around the state. Have you been to the Aldo Leopold cabin in Tres Piedras?

MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: No, I have not been there.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Well, you're close, so...

MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: Sounds like we need to go there.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Yeah. It was in the Carson. He hadn't written A Sand County Almanac yet, but it's where he killed the wolf, the famous line, "a fierce green fire dying in her eyes." And it was that experience that motivated him to become an American hero and a fierce ecologist and write A Sand County Almanac, if there's anyone in here well-versed about Aldo Leopold. I encourage you to do that. He's a wonderful man.

Also I learned something, that there's actually an Aldo Leopold Wilderness within the Gila Wilderness.

MR. HARRY BROWNE: It's within the Gila Forest.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: The Gila Forest. Okay.

My parents retired to Reserve. So I spent a quite of bit of time in that area. And my wife attended Western back in the '70s. And so for both of us, my wife and I, our two favorite cities in New Mexico are Santa Fe and Silver City.

And so every time we're even anywhere near there, when we spend the night -- and we do come to the little blues festival in June -- or May. I'll yield my time to Ava. I think I said to her, "Save the Gila."

But I heard someone else -- before I go there, though, I heard the two of you use the term "hippie." I represent that remark. And my wife is Hispanic. All of her best friends in Silver were hippies; so -- so, anyway, would you come up, Ava?

FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. I -- when it comes to the Gila Wild and Scenic designation, me and, actually, Commissioner Browne and Jamie Crockett, who's also here, we traveled to Washington, D.C., about a month ago to represent our community with the "Wild and Scenic."

And I was chosen to do that, not because I necessarily go to the hippie school that, you know, fully supports that. Not everyone at the school -- we are open to everyone's perspective and beliefs about that.

But I was able to do that because of my internship that I do. And my internship this semester was with the director of Western's Outdoor Program. And the New Mexico Wild and Scenic Wilderness -- New Mexico Wild and Wilderness
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Alliance approached the director of the Outdoor Program and asked if she had any students that would be interested in going to Washington, D.C., with them to talk to our senators and one of our representatives about the "Wild and Scenic" designation.

And she suggested me, because I have a connection with both Western and Aldo Leopold. And I strongly agree with protecting the Gila, because it's a place that has so much significance for me personally -- I grew up along the Gila River -- and also because it has also been such a big part of my education. It's the reason I know what I want to do after I graduate high school.

And part of that is because of the experiences I've had in the Gila with Aldo on our backpacking trips, you know. My freshman senior backpacking trip was a really big introduction with me with Aldo. It really -- it kind of caused my "ah-ha" moment.

I realized why I was at Aldo was when I was on my freshman senior backpacking trip my freshman year, and we were sitting near the campfire next to the river. And it was one of those moments that I realized how lucky I am, that not only do I live in a place where I am so close to such an incredible resource; but I was there on a school trip, and I was getting school credit to learn about this incredible place.

So I really support the "Wild and Scenic" designation. That's not just because of the education I've received; but it's also because of my background before then.

And so that's something that I was able to do because of Aldo. And I am so grateful for that opportunity. It opened my eyes up so much. I was able to kind of see, you know, politics happening right in front of me walking around Washington, D.C., and that was all because of Aldo. And so I owe so much to them, and I am so grateful for that opportunity.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Weren't there some attempts to dam the Gila?

FROM THE FLOOR: Yes. There were several attempts. I can't speak a lot to them. I don't know all of the details about that. But the "Wild and Scenic" designation doesn't have a huge effect on that. And I don't know that that's up for discussion as much anymore. I really can't speak to that.

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But I do know that there -- is designating the Gila as "Wild and Scenic" would not affect -- it wouldn't affect the way that we get to use the Gila. It simply protects it for future generations.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Thank you very much, Ava.

THE CHAIR: They were looking to dam it, yeah.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Madam Chair?

COMMISSIONER CRONE: I just -- let me --

THE CHAIR: I'm sorry.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: I think it's appropriate that the attempt to reintroduce wolves to New Mexico is centered in your area. So thank you.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Just to add on the damming in the water, there is a lot of discussion by the feds and the State Legislature and people in the area, because there's -- there's a position by downstream, southern New Mexico, that the water is theirs.

And folks in the north said, "No, we -- we -- we are -- this is some of our water, and we've got to keep that water."

And as we started getting less and less water, then the northern part, Silver area, all that area, started demanding their portion.

So there's going to be -- and so the fight is over how much damming and where and how and who pays for it. And downstream, they still demand that it's their water, because they helped build the dam.

Don't tell me how that translates. But there is a lot of give-and-take.

And maybe the students can get into that discussion; also, the discussion of saving the Spotted Owl versus cutting more -- more of the forests down.

I mean, I spent three days listening to testimony that it was just too much for me. I'm sure it's a goldmine for students to get into.

But it -- Commissioner, it's a lot of stuff. And I hope they don't put a lot of the area under water.

But those folks in that area have got to save their water that's theirs and save that environment. Because it cannot exist without enough water.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR: Thanks. Commissioners?

No other questions?
(No response.)

THE CHAIR: Okay.

MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: Madam Chair, really quickly.

THE CHAIR: Oh, sorry.

MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: I failed to introduce some very, very important people to Aldo Leopold Charter School. And that is -- two of our other governing council members that came along too. And that is Jamie Crockett there and Hannah Wecks. She also came. And also some of our middle-school students, they have been sitting there, very well-behaved.

THE CHAIR: They know how to behave in public places.

MR. G. WAYNE SHERWOOD: There you go. That's what we teach them. So thank you for giving me that time.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. And thank you all for coming.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Madam Chair, I will add, one of the students was asleep. And so we have -- so we have continued to entertain our audience.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. And thank you all for coming.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Madam Chair, I will add, one of the students was asleep. And so we have -- so we have continued to entertain our audience.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I move that the Public Education Commission renew the charter for Aldo Leopold Charter School for five years, with the conditions that the New Mexico System of School Support and Accountability Report prepared by PED shows 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 CABALLERO: Yes.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Robbins?

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Crone?

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Yes.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Armbruster votes "Yes."

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Second.

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

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Madam Chair, I will add, one of the students was asleep. And so we have -- so we have continued to entertain our audience.

THE CHAIR: The motion passes, nine-zero.

Congratulations.

Thank you all for everything you do every day. And thank you all for your time.

(Applause.)

THE CHAIR: So here's the question. Do you want a lunch break? If you want a lunch break, then we should do it now, because it makes no sense to do it after the next school, because it will be 1:30, and -- we're going to break for lunch for -- we're going to break for lunch for 40 minutes.

(A recess was taken at 11:24 a.m., and reconvened at 12:25 p.m., as follows:)

The Commissioners Davis and Caballero not present.

THE CHAIR: So thank you for being our last school. So there's -- many causes for celebration here. And just so the Commissioners are reminded, this is Taos Integrated School of the Arts. So thank you.

And as I know you've been hearing, I've got my stock little statement that I have to make about renewals with conditions. And it's the last time.

PED has not provided a report or review of data from 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 -- 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 2020, the PEC will only consider the issue
related to the reason for the conditions and will
not consider any other issues related to renewal.

So we'll close out operational and
financial today, and the only academic areas that
will be up for discussion are any that we do not
have the information for right now.

So, once again, if you have any concerns
or questions, please don't hesitate to ask so that
everyone's as comfortable as we can be with this.

So thank you.

And, once again, I'm guessing there isn't
anyone. But in case there is someone that -- oh, did you sign up?

Okay.

I figured there was a reason you moved a
little closer. So -- I don't think there's anyone
else.

But we do have the sign-up sheet there.
So we'll do the CSD report; you'll have your
15 minutes; and then Ms. Matthews will have eight
minutes.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: Madam Chair,
Commissioners, school representatives, happy to give
the report for our last school for the week.
So Taos Integrated School for the Arts,
serving Grades K through 8. It's in Taos. There is
a blank in both your electronic and printed
versions. So my apologies. But the current
enrollment, as of 40th day, was 173.

It's not -- it's not in your packet.
The school's mission is based on an arts
innovative curriculum that is multicultural and
meets all Common Core State standards, with their
students becoming artistically minded, lifelong
learners.

From your packet, you have -- I always
like to start with the Part A data. And if you turn
to your reading and proficiency chart, you will see
that the school has shown a steady increase in its
math proficiency rate, reaching just over 31 percent
in the last reported year.

You will see that they also had, overall,
a good trend in their reading scores with that dip
in the last year. Again, I remind you the school
serves K through 8. Therefore, the dip is likely,
in part at least, attributable to their K-to-2
Istation scores.

Remember the -- we mentioned this with the
other schools, that the K-to-2 scores, to score
proficiency in the '18-'19 school year was much more
stringent than the '17-'18 school year. And the
Accountability Bureau reports that three-quarters of
the students who scored proficient in '17-'18, would
not, with that same score, be considered proficient
in the following year. So that does account for why
that reading dip is in the chart.

If you look at their science proficiency
rate, they were at 67 percent, significantly higher
than the State average of 35.

Also their current standing and school
improvement points are worth mentioning as well,
because those both show an upward trend, pretty
drastic over the last few years.

On their high performing students in
reading, they are at or significantly above the
expected growth, as you see in your -- by subgroup,
on Page 11 of 66.

Higher performing students in math in
nearly all subgroups, ethnicity groups, were up
greater than expected.

Lowest performing students in reading were
pretty level at the zero, which means as expected.

Lowest performing students in math show significant
amount above the zero, in the last year, meaning
that they're growing better than expected.

(Commissioners Caballero and Davis
enter meeting.)

MS. KAREN WOERNER: On the proficiency
charts, again, I remind you that the -- the subgroup
proficiencies are also influenced by the K-to-2 dip in that last year. However, on the math scores, you can see that -- pretty steady incline, or increase, in the course of the contract term.

As for mission goals, they've had varied success in the three goals; two were in reading, one in math. In the last year, they met two of them and did not meet one of them.

Membership took a dip in the 2017 year, but seems to be inclining since that time. And retaining students within the school year has been very high, 97 to 98 percent; and then between school years, 87 to 95 percent, both showing great retention of students.

Their teacher retention rate has drastically increased over the course of the last few years from 54 all the way to 93 percent.

There was one audit finding in the last year that we have data. It was an other non-compliance issue, but it is a reason for a mention of the financial compliance concern in the progress report ratings.

So going back to those, the school has Demonstrated or Met standard in all of the areas. You can see in their school grade, it went from "D" to "B" to "A."

Their lowest performing students scores were an "F" in -- in School Year '16, a "D" in '17, and now are above "C" or above in all areas.

So great improvement in their school -- what was the school grade.

Of course on the organizational performance framework, as you know, the school is required to respond when there are two repeat Workings to Meet or any Falls Far Below. And those are on Page 3 of 66, that show that the -- there were five indicators listed there. And I want to speak to those.

The Applicable Education Requirements had to do, if you recall, perhaps they were short in hours in their kindergarten -- they exceeded hours in all their Grades 1 through 8; but they were short some hours in their kindergarten, which they did resolve with a calendar change.

Their English Language Learners, they have similar struggles with their identification, as other schools have had, also with reporting and serving and some of the documents in the file. But at the renewal site visit, I am happy to report that all the files that we reviewed -- or the team reviewed; I was not actually there -- but the team documents being filed appropriately.

The financial compliance was around the audit finding as well as some concerns about official transcripts and verifications of employment, which are important, because those drive the salary schedules and confirmation of those.

The school has resolved all of those concerns as well.

Facilities requirements was around emergency drills, which the school demonstrated they have followed the -- not only followed the drill procedure, but it did change this year, so they are following the new procedures, as evidenced at the renewal site visit, at least thus far this year.

And the health-and-safety requirements was around a master log that they were developing, but wasn't ready in the -- during the '18-'19 school visit. But at the last visit, that was available and complete as it -- requested.

The school, I think, earns the prize for petitions, since they got 100 percent of employees and 100 percent of households to sign the petition. So kudos to the school on that.

And then the facilities index didn't quite get the prize, because we had a zero. But 1.4 percent, significantly below the NMCI score, 1.4 percent significantly below the 23 percent State average, meaning that the facility is in good shape. So lower is better.

And with that, I conclude the report on this school.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. And welcome once again.

MR. RICH GREYWOLF: My name is Rich Greywolf. I'm the director. This is Julee LaMure. She is the president of the governing council. We have Linda Seto, who's also a governing council member and founder. We have Pam Harris, who is our vice president of the governing council. We have Andrea Nicholson, who is also on the governing council. And to my right, we have Nicole Abeyta, and we have Dr. Kinney, who is our special ed coordinator.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR. RICH GREYWOLF: So I just wanted to
say, just about the school itself, is that it's --

our motto has been "Continual improvement," that

that's really what we've tried to strive for is

looking at, hey, what are the issues that we have,

how do we address those as best we can.

This school was my first school as an
administrator. I was here when they came for the
renewal, and you were here for that. And it was --
there was a lot of -- it was a big learning curve.

My first year there, I noticed that the
school did not have Common Core math, as they didn't
have a math program. They didn't have a reading
program -- well, we had a math, but it wasn't
aligned to Everyday Math; it wasn't aligned to
Common Core.

And then we also had -- there were some
difficulties with -- as far as they didn't have --
they didn't have lunches or breakfast, and we didn't
have transportation.

And we have a -- we're a Title I school.
You know, my philosophy is, is with working with
students that are at-risk -- and I've done that for
25 years I've been in education -- is that one of
the mitigating factors, what makes students that are
coming from low income, is the ability to have
things outside of school.

So many parents will go ahead and take
their kids to tae kwon do; they'll take them to a
library; they take them to a zoo; they take them to
these things. And not having these opportunities
for those kids is really one of the contributing
factors of what happens.

The second thing that we addressed is --
is aftercare. So one of the things, when I first
came there, is that you have parents that are
working some two or three jobs. We offer free
aftercare for our parents so that they're able to go
till at least 5:00 before they come pick up our
students. That's been a help.

We also have tutoring at our school after
school. And one of the things we do with tutoring
is that we do a rotation. And one of the reasons is
because those students are in a classroom with that
teacher. We don't have a variety of different
second grades or places to go through. So we wanted
to make sure that those students had opportunities
to see other teachers and how they approach those --
those issues.

Now, our first year that I was there, that
was the year the school went from a "C" to a "D."

We knew we had to redouble our efforts in order to
do things.

In that year, I do want to note we were
working out of somebody's -- it was partially
somebody's house, and the other one was a -- was
the -- it was an industrial park that we would have
to move out of the next year, because they were
moving in a marijuana distribution plant next door.

So that was -- that was -- that was
difficult.

So we came before you to go ahead and move
our facility. We actually had to move it into
another industrial park outside of a plumbing
facility, to go ahead and move. And we moved our --
our other school into a crowded one -- or sort of --
I believe there was like three room -- or four rooms
for four classes, and they were truly rooms.

We -- during that year, we made sure that
we were implementing our alignment to Common Core
standards, both for reading -- we used the
Lucy Calkins approach for reading-writing. We went
and made sure that Common Core in the Everyday Math
was being aligned and that teachers had training
for.

We had -- like I said, we changed our
grade system. Originally, the grade system was
more -- it was less stringent, and they did not have
an A-B-C-D-F for grades. And so we went there -- I
changed the grades so that they had the A-B-C-D-F
system, so the parents were able to be aware of,
hey, how's the child progressing. And it was a
letter-grade system that I do like -- it's sad to
see it go for the schools.

But it was something that was easily
understood. We moved to -- we made it more
stringent. So instead of a 10-point scale, we moved
to a 7-point scale.

We also made sure that we had added clubs.
So students have opportunities after school three
days a week to go to clubs. And those varied,
everything from Running Club, Chess Club, Arts and
Crafts --

FROM THE FLOOR: Stilt Walking.

MR. RICH GREYWOLF: Stilt Walking,
Spanish. And it was an opportunity for those kids
to kind of have those extra learning activities that
they wouldn't normally have in, particularly, a
schoolday that perhaps parents would bring them to
that don't have that opportunity.

We also added, during that time, a
breakfast and lunch program that we work with Farmhouse Cafe that provides organic lunches and breakfasts to the students. We offer that every day of our school year. We started breakfast this year. We also purchased a bus for the first time, which is nice, because we’re no longer having to pay the money for the single bus service that they have in Española to come up to Taos, which cut -- they charge us for the drive up and the drive back.

So we -- like I said, we've tried to, in a way, really focus on just continual progress in all areas, whether it be our students with ELL or our regular students.

We do offer other things, too, during our time. We've moved our campus onto a piece of land we own. We have a -- we have a -- with facilities that are on that campus now. It was originally -- there was an acequia that was running through there that had not been -- had not been run for over 50 years.

And we got together with Taos Land Trust and with Mayordomo Miguel Santistevan, who helped us -- who came to the kids, taught them about what it meant to be a "parciante" and helped them move the trash and make that acequia once again flowing.

So the acequia that hadn't been there for 50 years is now flowing through our property and is being used down the way by the Taos Land Trust where they are able to use it for some of the activities they do there.

We do outreach into the Pueblo. We do outreach by getting local artists coming in to come into our facilities. We've worked with Agnes Chavez, who is a local artist who hooked the students up with both the Paseo event, which is a new event we have in Taos for artists from all over the world, as well as meeting up with them at the CERN.

And CERN -- the CERN, the Large Hadron Collider, where students got to talk to physicists from the CERN. And they actually wrote poetry from everything about the idea of quarks to what is dark matter and their ideas about dark matter.

We then worked with a -- at the time, a Lakota who had been a part of the water rights issues. And he came in, taught students how to create a teepee.

They went ahead and learned from an individual from South America who had designed a Tagtool. And that Tagtool is where you do light graffiti. They used light graffiti to express both stories -- Native American stories and their ideas about science, as well as western science, and tying those two things together and then brought those into Taos Pueblo and taught students how to use the Tagtool so that they could do it on their own.

And that's just a couple of the things that we've done.

Anything you'd like to add?

MS. JULEE LaMURE: That was outstanding. Excuse me. Madame Commissioner, members of the Commission, thank you so much for your time. I can't even imagine having to go through this all week. So I appreciate the applause that we're the last one. I'll try not to take it personal. I'm Julee LaMure, governing council president. This is a late addendum to your packet. And I apologize for getting it to you late, but it's pretty concise.

And I appreciate Commissioner Caballero talking about the demographics and the performance gaps and the demographic gaps, and, also, Commissioner Chavez as well.

And all of you, I've heard it in here a number of times. And this is where the solution happens, because we have to shine a light on this, and it has to be talked about. And you have to hold us accountable.

And that's why we have to -- that's why we're expected to take steps to remedy these problems, you know, boots on the ground. That's what we have to do, and that's what you have to see to it that we do.

So, anyway, we just wanted to demonstrate to you with our graphic that there has been improvements. And we worked with that. That's a constant goal of ours.

I don't think any charter schools are doing ourselves any favors nationwide when our demographics don't mirror the demographics of our community. And so that is our goal and has been since the day that I started.

So we have seen growth in the Hispanic population of our school. We've also seen growth in the Native population of our school as well. We now have representation on our governing council from a Latina, yes, and also a gentleman from the Pueblo, Jeremy Lujan, who couldn't be with us today.
So we're moving in a direction. We're moving in a positive direction. Lots of ground needs to be gained. But we did want to at least demonstrate to you-all that we are making efforts and gaining some ground slowly.

MS. LINDA SETO: So my name is Linda Seto. Good afternoon to Chairwoman and all members of the Commission.

I am one of the founding members of this school. My idea with founding it was that we would integrate the arts to teach the Common Core or common academics.

I am also a teacher, a seasoned teacher of many years. I teach fifth grade. I also teach fourth and fifth math. And I will have to say our school, all of our elementary teachers know how to teach math very well, and it's one of my favorite subjects to teach.

And I do find that the curriculum that we're using goes deeply -- what it does is it spirals around. So if you do -- for example, in fifth grade, if you've done fractions, and now they connect that to decimals and decimal fractions, how those are related, and then they get into all the operations with them, they will come back around to deeper learning of fractions, bringing in the operations and various things, real-world problems and that kind of stuff.

So, anyway, I feel like we have found a really good math program that addresses the needs of kids at the moment, and we're always looking to improve that.

Since we are an integrated arts school, I do -- our staff does bring in the arts. That would be drama, music, visual arts, and dance into their classrooms, as well as we have a program where we bring in art specialists once a week to each class. So they also get those.

We are partners -- so part of the original mission of the school, and my thought, was that we would be in a downtown location so we would take advantage of the many resources that are in Taos. As you know, there are a lot of artists; there are a lot of all kinds of wonderful things there.

So we've been able to do that. The Harwood Museum is one place that has a grant, and we've been participating in their program for I don't know how many years here, almost ten years. And so we are at a location where we're able to walk -- we're about a mile -- we're about a mile from that museum, so we are able to do that.

You know, we take advantage of a lot of those kinds of things, as well as coming down to Santa Fe. I brought my class down to Santa Fe to the International Folk Art Museum last week, and we were able to do that sort of thing. So we do partner. We do environmental education. I heard that come up with some other schools.

I do camp with my kids twice a year; in fourth-grade camps, once a year. So we do like to get out and get the kids out as much as possible. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: So there --

MR. RICH GREYWOLF: Did you want to say something?

MS. PAMELA HARRIS: My name is Pamela Tennant-Harris. And I was a -- I'm a retired school psychologist from the state of Washington. And then I came down here and worked another eight -- was it nine years? -- first at Chama School District and then at Questa School District.

And I ended up going to a lot of the villages in Northern New Mexico, which I really enjoyed learning about and -- and working in. And one of the things that brought me to being interested in this board is that it's a very diverse board. The -- the school is diverse. I mean, the staff is diverse. I'm not looking at you. Anyway, it's --

MS. LINDA SETO: I'm diverse.

MS. PAMELA HARRIS: So am I. Anyway, it brings a lot to the community. Because my granddaughter, Olivia, was going to have to move to Wayne, Pennsylvania. And so she had grown up here, you know.

And so I talked to her about cultural differences. And we went all through them. But I also mentioned to her cultural differences aren't just cultural; it's also financial, you know, that there's a -- the higher you get in -- the higher you get in money, the more different it is, too.

She went to Wayne. And that's a 1 percent town. It's a very wealthy town. And she called me a month after she was there, and she said, "Grandma, remember when you talked about cultural differences?"

And I said, "Yeah."

She says, "It's not just cultural differences; it's cultural extreme."

And I had to laugh, because she finally
caught on that you -- and I said, "Just stand back
and see where you have some similarities," because
we can learn from every single culture.

And to -- I just believe that racism is
out of hand anymore. And so it's important that our
kids have a staff like this that's diverse, that
understands, you know, the differences --
appreciates the differences and honors those
differences.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. That forboding
sound was the 15 minutes are up.

MS. PAMELA HARRIS: Okay.

THE CHAIR: Beverly's changed the sound
from -- it was a pleasant sound at the beginning of
the week. It was the wind chimes. Now, it's --

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: And it's getting
louder and louder.

THE CHAIR: So thank you. So there were
two -- I believe two have already spoken. So which
is the one that has --

MS. LINDA SETO: Andrea.

THE CHAIR: Okay. So you haven't. So
that gives me one, two, three, four, five people
that have signed up for Public Comment. So about --

what -- a minute and a half apiece.

FROM THE FLOOR: Let me count my words.

That wouldn't count against me. Do you want me to
go ahead -- I'll just stand up here.

Good afternoon. Thank you for giving us
this opportunity to speak up.

My name is Andrea Nicholson. I am a
Taos -- well, I'm from South America originally. I
live in Taos. I'm a teacher. I'm a special ed
teacher.

And TISA has been the place I found --
even though I work in the district, my son goes to
TISA, and this is the place that is home for him.
It's the place where things happen. He's learning;
he's engaged; he's getting the support he needs.
And that is the difference. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Next is Linda Seto.

MS. LINDA SETO: That was me.

THE CHAIR: Oh, sorry. Okay. So am I
missing Julee LaMure?

MS. JULIEE LAMURE: That was me. We're
trying to keep it brief for you guys; so --

THE CHAIR: And we already heard -- okay,
because Linda didn't list as governing board. Said

"Founding Member." So got you. So then I've got
Patty Kinney.

DR. PATSY KINNEY: Yes. I'm Patsy Kinney.


DR. PATSY KINNEY: And I'm the special ed
coordinator, and I also work with the teacher
observation program, the NMTEACH in the school.

I also mentor some of our new teachers. I
used to be a college professor and a teacher of
education in special education. So my whole job now
at TISA has taken all these things that I've done, and
they've all come together in one place.

So I feel very lucky to be there. We
really try to promote inclusion in our school. And
we just found this consulting group that was
recommended -- we were recommended to them by the
State. And it's called the Autism Project. I don't
know if you've heard about it before.

But what they're going to be doing with us
is going into the classrooms, coaching -- coaching
teachers, not only children on the spectrum, but
also children who might have behavior issues, and
they'll be coaching and consulting with us. I'm
real excited about that, to get this level of
expertise.

And that's all I have to say.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Nicole Abeyta.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. Good afternoon.

My name is Nicole Abeyta. I've been with TISA for
nine years. I started as the office manager and
moved my way up to the assistant business manager.

This is my first year as full business manager
compliance officer.

I am also a parent of two students
enrolled at the school. I am very happy with the
school. I have to admit when I first applied for
the job, I was scared because I was the only
Hispanic in the school. And I did have my kids in
the district, because I felt like they were not
going to be happy or succeed at our school.

And it wasn't until two years ago that I
had seen a drastic change. Actually, I've been
through three different directors. And Richard
Greywolf, he is our third director. And it wasn't
until Mr. Greywolf came in that I actually saw a
change in the school as a whole for the better, for
the staff, for the students, and for the parents.

And we've jumped through a lot of hoops
throughout the years. Like I mentioned, we've had
three different campuses. We've dealt with
different landlords. We've had to deal with loss of
budget and still have to make ends meet for the
students. And I feel like we've done a really good
job with that.

Our diversity has grown, and I think it
doesn't show in the reports. And I'm happy to say that my
kids love TISA. And we've added the breakfast and
lunch program, and that has been a really huge
blessing for our community, for the students that
are hands-on learners through arts integration. And
I feel like we still have a lot to learn; but we
also have a lot of things planned for the future.

And I just want to be able to implement
that, not only for my kids, but for the rest of the
kids in our community.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. And, finally,

Ms. Matthews.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I want to really
pay attention.

COMMISSIONER DAVIS: I wonder what she'll
say.

MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: Madam Chair and
members of the Commission, Patricia Matthews on
behalf of TISA.

Just, for the record, 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 requirement in law -- and
that would be January 1st, 2020 -- and reserves all
of its rights to appeal under the New Mexico --
under New Mexico law.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MS. PATRICIA MATTHEWS: I should be able
to read it perfectly, have it memorized. But I did
not.

THE CHAIR: So thank you once again. And
thanks for hanging in there with us and being our
last. That can't be easy on your end, either. So
we appreciate -- we appreciate that as well.

And, you know, every -- I think almost
every school that comes up, you say, "And here's yet
one more shining example of how you integrate arts,
you are connecting with your community, and this is
what charter schools are all about."

I mean, it is obvious that you still have
some pretty glaring differences between Taos Public
and yourself. And I appreciate you addressing some
part of that.

Some Commissioners may have other
questions about that. But I am going to ask, do you
think that, at least with the addition of your own
bus, is -- will that help to maybe bring in students
from other areas?

MR. RICH GREYWOLF: So we're not using the
bus as transportation.

THE CHAIR: Oh. you're using it for,

like, trips.

MR. RICH GREYWOLF: It's an activity bus.

It does -- we're offering things that other schools
are offering.

I mean, one of the problems that you have
is many of the charter schools don't have to offer a
bus service. They don't have to offer breakfast or
lunch. And they don't have the services for that.

Many people in our community, they rely on
breakfast and lunch. They do rely on it from the
school. So offering those services is one more
thing that we're able to offer the community.

The other thing that we do that's helped
us, I believe, is offering free aftercare. That's
been a huge -- a huge push.

The other thing that's been a push is just
being able to have our own bus, is that we can go to

some of these places that, you know, the regular
schools go to that they have because they have those
services.

So it's just looking at it as, hey, how
are we going to bring individuals over to our school
and make sure that they know, hey, you're getting --
you're getting better than what you're getting over
at the regular school.

Hey -- if they say, "Hey, well, I don't
want to go to that school because my kid needs
breakfast," we don't just offer breakfast. We offer
an organic breakfast and they're farmed from local
communities. I mean, we actually -- the place we
use, Farmhouse Cafe, actually brings in the farming
land from the communities within a 20-mile radius.
So that's a huge boost.

And we do do a lot of outreach to make
sure that we're talking, and we're saying, "Hey,
what are the things -- what do we need to do" --
asking people, "What are the things we need to do to
bring you over to this school? What do we need to
do to provide the services that you feel you might
not be getting from either other charters or that
you're not getting from the regular public school
that you might be getting from us?"
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<td>THE CHAIR: Absolutely. One of my notes was, &quot;Great appreciation for the hot breakfast and lunch.&quot; I mean, that is, that's absolutely huge. And it does -- it does help, without a doubt, with those families that food is an issue.</td>
<td>that you have highlighted in your packet are beautiful, especially the running with llamas. Looks kind of risky, but it looks like fun. THE CHAIR: Better than bulls. COMMISSIONER VOIGT: I know. Right. Exactly. The fact that you're doing cross-curricular art with your core subjects is truly commendable. I appreciate that. I think it's one of the best ways to engage kids in the standard content, and especially math. You know, you can teach, drill-and-kill subjects, but that's not going to invite or engage or excite students. But if you're able to integrate something that's going to hook them, like art or media or outdoors or projects, you know, that's -- that's wonderful that you're doing that. Are you finding that that's a little more motivating for students? MS. LINDA SETO: Oh, totally. MR. RICH GREYWOLF: Find it very motivating, and we owe all of that to Linda. And giving her -- one of the things, too, is that I was able to do that perhaps previous administrations didn't do, was giving individuals that have those skills, those high skills, to work with our staff. And Linda gets that opportunity, and we -- I defer many times to her when I feel that, &quot;Hey, are we following along with the charter in the things that you -- that was your original vision. And what do you want to see differently, and what do we do to go ahead and continue that?&quot; And it's been a real blessing to go ahead and have someone on our staff who was a founder; so...</td>
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<td>MR. RICH GREYWOLF: And I think -- THE CHAIR: So I certainly do appreciate that. And I do want to say kudos, because I think there were a number of comments when they asked students, &quot;What do we need to do for the school,&quot; it's like, &quot;You need to keep Mr. Greywolf. Whatever you do, he needs to stay here.&quot; So that's a testament to the changes that you've helped to implement and the strength of this governance council that is here to speak for the school as well, that you, obviously, did some deep soul-searching to see what changes needed to be made. You brought on board someone that was able to, and took a risk with someone who's never been there before, but maybe a good thing, because he's willing to try a lot of things as well, you know? MR. RICH GREYWOLF: Yeah, I sing Happy Birthday to the kids and serve lunch and breakfast. So I'm the lunch guy with the beard that sings. So it's helpful.</td>
<td>COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Cool. Also, when you're integrating those types of arts and you're doing projects or thematic units, you don't have to just teach so narrowly to the standards, and you can create your project and integrate your arts. Then you can go back to your standards and say, &quot;Did that. Did that. Did that.&quot; That's something I find so disappointing with a lot of schools is they just look at the Common Core standards, and they choose those standards and that's what they teach, instead of doing something more big-picture. So great job on that. And then the student portfolios that you're using, Google Portfolio, are those being</td>
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<td>COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: You can start over there, Madam Chair. THE CHAIR: Commissioner Voigt? COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Thank you. Thank you. I just wrote down some pieces to -- to commend you on. I was really impressed that a student was doing a Pecha Kucha presentation. And that is awesome. And that's such a great presentation format. MR. RICH GREYWOLF: It wasn't just one. There was five that were talking that worked with that, yeah. And part of the Taos Poetry Dragons, as well as talking about &quot;Agua es vida.&quot; So -- COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Super. That's awesome. And I just recently discovered that, as I was reading about innovative ways to do presentations and really highlight with art and photos. And speaking of photos, the -- the photos</td>
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presented at the end of the school year?

MR. RICH GREYWOLF: That's our -- that's
our next goal, our next thing that we want to be
able to do. I mean, right now has been the -- it's
a hard transition to -- to do -- you know, making
sure -- teaching students how to use Google Docs,
making sure that everything is secure, having them
use Google Drive. We -- you know, making sure that
they have good pictures of uploading their
documents.

So we really have -- right now what we've
done, been able to do -- and as well as the
transition from year to year. So our hope is that
next year, we have that as a presentation.

But what's the -- what I find is really
rewarding is we're able to look at a kid with their
writing, their art, the tests that they think as
exemplars, from kindergarten all the way to eighth
grade.

So what's -- it's great for conversation
for -- piece for if a parent has difficulty saying,
"Hey, I don't think my kid is learning anything from
your class this year," a teacher is able to go to
that portfolio and go, "Well, let's look at what
their writing was like last year and what their
writing is like today."

And it's a great way to communicate with
parents, of saying, "Hey, can you see the
difference? Hey, they're -- perhaps they were --
your child never used a period in anything. And
they -- they were sans a period. Now they're able
to use punctuation."

We're able to understand the communication
in a very -- way.

So but that is our next step and utilizing
people on the governing council to go ahead and do
that for next year.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Awesome. That not
only informs your student growth, but also it's
going to give you a really good picture of your
graduate profile.

So this aftercare that you were talking
about, you mentioned that you had aftercare till
5:00. But then you also went on to say you have all
these great clubs and some tutoring.

So I presume of the students that are
staying till 5:00, they're not just sleeping, but
they're probably engaged in a club or doing
something.

MR. RICH GREYWOLF: The thing is aftercare

is limited to K through 5. And aftercare,
typically, the EAs run aftercare. They read books.
It's an opportunity for homework help during that
time.

When we have our Tuesday -- but Monday --
Mondays is really an opportunity for just that. We
also have our staff meeting on Monday after school.

But then Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday,
staff members are asked to give a day of tutoring,
and then they give a day of clubs.

So students can say, "Hey, you know what?
I want to go to" -- last year, Ms. Kinney and
Ms. Linda and myself had done a science club. So
one of the things that the kids wanted to do, one of
the activities I did was dissecting a cow heart and
teaching kids about dissection. And they could go
from that and go, "No, I don't want to go ahead and
do what they're doing in that. I'm going to go to
art."

And Ms. Linda has done lots of different
things, everything from crocheting to painting and
cooking, all sorts of things.

Then they say, "I really don't want to do
that this week." And then they can go to -- like,
what we have, running club, where they can go ahead
and -- we have three different sets, where kids can
go ahead and either run, they can jog, or walk for
their time.

Oh. And then we have, that we started
this past year, is Travel Club. So we've worked now
with EF Tours, which is a company. And students are
raising funds to go to Europe. And those are kids
fifth through eighth grade. And we're helping
them -- teaching them very basic things like, "Hey,
this is how you go ahead and blog. This is what you
do to communicate to your family. This is how
you're going to use social media in order to
communicate to those people that you haven't talked
to and let them know that those things are going so
that you're able to raise the funds."

Because they have to raise close to
$4,000. So -- and it's open to all the students.

We currently have 30 kids that are going to Europe
next year.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Are they going to
Pamplona?

Just kidding.

So that's awesome that you're dipping the
kids into lots of different experiences. That's
great.
MR. RICH GREYWOLF: It's something that I really truly believe that just -- that's one of the big differences that you see among students that come from wealthier backgrounds. And we see some of this disparity that goes on, is because those kids don't have that opportunity.

And it's not because parents don't want to give it to their kids. How do you have the time when you're working two jobs? How do you have the opportunity to go, "Okay, I'm going to do this," when, for many of them, when they're picking their kid up, it's, "Okay, I've got to go ahead and feed them, and then I've got to take them home, and I've got to go to my second job."

So we've taken it on as our passion, our need to go ahead and make that for the community.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: That's wonderful.

MR. RICH GREYWOLF: Correct.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: That's pretty significant.

MR. RICH GREYWOLF: It is. So that individual is no longer working for us.

MS. JULEE LaMURE: Period.

So that is why we have --

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: You don't have to say anything more on that. Attention to that is very, very important and everything, especially -- and this is the thing I'm getting into. You're a small school. Small School Size is going away. Two questions:

How is it going to impact you? And what plans are you putting in place in order to address it?

MR. RICH GREYWOLF: Well, not here at this meeting. But my hope is that if -- my hope was is that the PED was going to give us our grades earlier so that we would be able to go before the Commission and say, "Hey, we would like to go ahead and grow our school."

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Okay.

MR. RICH GREYWOLF: We do have waiting lists in all grades except for fourth and eighth.

Fourth grade was because, unfortunately, we had a teacher leave us the day before school started, which was difficult to find another teacher.

And we found somebody that was a former Waldorf teacher, also taught in Santa Fe, is working out. But that took some of the confidence from parents. Parents want to make sure they have a stable teacher. We do have one now.

And that's our hope is to grow. But, again, I did not want to go to the Commission when, it currently says in the rules that if you have a "D" within the three years that you have been working, that they wouldn't consider.

So my hope is is that those things go on and we're able to do that and come before you.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Okay. And I appreciate the fact that many schools, charter schools, operate on a shoestring budget and that staff sometime sacrifices themselves and their own finances to help the schools and everything. And the parents; the parents and the community are supporting. And I admire that.

In addition to the international trips, you're talking about going to Pamplona or something like that. A couple of years ago -- I have a disabled son. We took him -- he's in a wheelchair. But we took him to Yellowstone. People kind of looked at me and said, "You and your wife took your adult son to Yellowstone?"

And I said, "Yeah. Last time I was there, I was 13 years old."

It's changed a little bit, a couple of fires and things like that. One of the things he really enjoyed is driving around and seeing all the scenery. You go from -- literally, it was 75 degrees in one area to literally where it's snow. And this was the first week of June. They had just had snow the week before.

If you do have the ability -- and it's a lot less expensive than going to Spain. But, I mean, there's so many things in this country that you can go to and really exhibit and get back to nature. I mean, one of the things people talk about is getting back to nature and experiencing those things and everything.

And I know the community in Taos is very sensitive to that. You know, Yellowstone was the first National Park. And it's a fascinating thing, the diversity of vegetation, the diversity of animal life there, the diversity of the geography.
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1 I mean, you have small Grand Canyons there. You just want to be careful, because when I
2 was 13, I got in a tree. And if I had fallen, I
3 would have fallen into Yellowstone Falls. It
4 freaked my mother out.
5
6 This time I was much further away and got
7 some nice pictures of it. But you want to be
8 careful with students there. It is a fascinating
9 place.
10
11 I think my son's most exciting thing of
12 that was when we had to stop the vehicle and watch a
13 herd of buffalo walking up the road as they were
14 coming by.
15
16 And he saw these little baby calves
17 buffalo calves, that were probably hours or maybe
18 only a day or two old. They were wet. The other
19 ones weren't. So that's why I figure that these
20 were probably newborns, because they'll start
21 walking within an hour or two of being born.
22
23 He was just amazed at these animals, these
24 huge, huge animals walking by.
25 And, you know, a lot of -- a lot of our
26 children don't get to experience that. They go to a
27 zoo, and it's one thing. But when you see these
28 animals and things in their natural state, it is

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1 much more fascinating.
2 But I applaud the school, applaud the
3 success that you've had and the growth that I've
4 seen in the students, and continue to hope that you
5 will have that and continue that in the future.
6
7 Thank you.
8 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Caballero?
9 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Thank you,
10 Madam Chair. I -- I really applaud that you're
11 doing all -- a lot of the stuff that would support
12 low-income and Hispanic students. But you need to
13 bring up your percentage. It's fantastic to see the
14 progression through the years. But there's a lot
15 more work to be done.
16
17 And it takes -- takes a lot of challenge
18 to -- to do the outreach and teach parents, and all
19 that stuff. I know it's not easy. I know it's not
20 easy.
21
22 But 24 percent differential is -- is quite
23 a bit. Even though when we think about, okay, we're
24 even, pretty much. But I can tell you, with what
25 you have in support, one that I can think of for --
26 the number one is your support after school.
27 A lot of the families, the kids go home,
28 Hispanic students go home, and there is no support

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1 for homework. And I was very fortunate to have
2 older brothers. And my parents would say, "Go to
3 your brother," because they couldn't help.
4
5 And so homework was a big -- and if
6 they -- they had homework themselves, I had to
7 manage by myself. And it -- many times I was there,
8 but not all the time. And so what you're doing in
9 terms of the tutoring, the after-school, all of
10 that, is fantastic support.
11
12 The fact that you have food and all of
13 that, and you have a bus.
14
15 And I can tell you, you put it to work to
16 bring in a little bit more students, those hard to
17 bring in, just have to reach out to parents and
18 network to students and let them know what you have.
19 Hispanic parents want their kids to be
20 better than where they're at. And what you have is
21 a goldmine. And I'm sure they're going to
22 realize -- they may be a little hesitant. They may
23 just send their kids to see what would happen.
24 But I can tell you, those -- those
25 children are going to thrive. All you have to do is
26 bring them in.
27
28 And I know that you can get comfortable
29 with what you have. There's a lot to do. You're

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1 doing a lot of things. You're moving a lot of -- a
2 lot of elements in the school that needed to be
3 moved at the same time.
4
5 And it is not easy to have a charter
6 school. Those that were founders and, early on, big
7 dreams, and they thought it was -- oh, this is going
8 to be a cinch, you know. I can do whatever. It is
9 a devil. It is tough.
10
11 I didn't know, as a Commissioner. I
12 taught for many years. But doing a charter school?
13 I don't think I would attempt it, knowing what I
14 know, because it is hard. And you've got to have
15 good people around you in order to succeed.
16 And you're there. All you need to do is
17 bring some more folks in. And Taos kids need you.
18 They really do. And the 24 percent there -- out
19 there in the community that -- they don't even know
20 you exist. Or if they know you exist, they really
21 don't know what that means or what you -- "What is
22 at Taos something-or-other?"
23 And you need to let them know and bring
24 them in.
25
26 Sometimes, in political campaigns, I do
27 radio -- Hispanic radio. And I've done many
28 different things in campaigns, community organizing.
But, hell, that was decades ago.
You need to -- and there's folks in the community that are connected. You need to find a hook, either a person or persons or organization, and bring them in.
I know that my first inclination was organizations in church, the -- the religious folks and, they're really good at bringing them in. I used -- in one particular neighborhood, I used the gangs to bring in some youth. And it worked out.
And I even used the gang leaders to -- and it was an anti-drug campaign.
COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Leave your guns at home?
COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yeah. They were against the hard drugs. And they were okay with -- with pot. But they were trying to get rid of the -- the new arrivals, the new pushers. They didn't know what to do. So I managed to organize that.
But you will find ways. Just be creative.
Use people. Ask for help. You know, I just throw it out there. I don't have the answers. But I can tell you. I love the school. But more Hispanic students need to be in there also. They need you.
MR. RICH GREYWOLF: I can tell you, Commissioner Caballero, I agree with you 100 percent. And that's what we're going to do.
And I want to say that I don't look at this as my job, you know. This is not a job; this is a vocation. And there is a difference between that, that's -- that's my calling. And so that's why I do the things that I do.
And we're -- we will. No, this is not -- this is not what we're saying. "Hey, look how great we are." We're saying, "We still have a ways to go. But we're moving in the direction that we need to go ahead and do, and we still need to do more."
And I appreciate you and the comments.
Thank you.
THE CHAIR: And I'm going to say that we have to, I think, take ownership of some of this and help the school out, simply because right now, they only have nine students they can add before they hit their cap. So that to ask them to --
COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Increase.
THE CHAIR: -- become more diverse is very hard without kicking out some kids and saying, "Sorry, you have to go."
So I think that's something we have to look at. If we do have to modify those requirements for the amendments for schools so that they can then be more successful in diversifying their school, I think that also helps in compliance with Yazzie-Martinez as well, so that they're more representative of the community.
So I think that's something we need to put on our agenda for January for the Work Session is to look at that so that we can free that up. That was part of the conversation with Gallup-McKinley Early College High School, because the district -- when they were district-authorized, they were upset that they weren't that diverse. Yet they would never grant them an enrollment cap increase, so they never could become diverse. And we're kind of in that situation right now.
So it's -- this is a great time to have this conversation. So I think it's something we have to look at and allow the schools to be able to grow that can grow like that.
MR. RICH GREYWOLF: I agree with you, Commissioner Gipson. Because one of the things that perpetuates some of these things that go in the community that, "Hey, this is an exclusive school," is when we do have children of diversity come to our school. And we say, "Sorry, can't take you in because we're full."
And they don't understand -- it's hard for them to understand. They go, "Well, wait a second. You're a public school. I want to come to this school."
And you go, "Yeah, I know, but I'm not allowed to bring you in, because I'm only allowed to have 20 students."
I am sure that you would see this change if we were able to have that kind of opportunity, because I know that we turn away kids all the time that saddens me having to do that. But I don't know -- you know, what do you do?
MS. JULEE LaMURE: And some folks may take that personally, because they may not understand the rules around that. And so then we get to have this reputation of turning people away. And that is not -- that is not okay.
THE CHAIR: Yeah. And I absolutely agree. And then it gets out into the community. "We tried, and they wouldn't take our kids," you know. It becomes a personal thing. So absolutely. So I -- that's absolutely something we need to -- to look at and work on. So, hopefully -- hopefully, there's a -- we can be part of the solution.
MS. JULEE LaMURE: Thank you so much.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I think part of that issue is going to be you can't say, "We're only going to take 15 Hispanic children, because it's a lottery." And --
THE CHAIR: Correct. That's not the rule.
But right now, they can't take anyone, because --
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Right. But it will increase the way you want -- that you --
MR. RICH GREYWOLF: I agree. What the problem is, is you know how it is in a small community. You have a small community of individuals. And a person says, "Well, hey, my kid got into TISA."
And they say, "Hey, you should go ahead and bring your kid in."
They bring their kid in, and they say,
"Oh, yeah. Well, they turned us away. It must be because we're diverse. We" -- and it's not true.
Like I said, we constantly have to say, "We have a cap. It's right here in this contract we signed, and we can't go over that."
THE CHAIR: So remind me. What can your building hold? Because I don't know.
MR. RICH GREYWOLF: As many as we can put in there. Is that an appropriate -- I don't know.
Right now, we have 20 students in there.
I'm sure that we can go ahead and put four more students in each classroom.
MS. JULEE LaMURE: We've also had requests from community members that we expand into the high school grades as well. And that's something that we have in our strategic plan.
THE CHAIR: But if you did that, do -- you don't have the physical capacity to do that, do you?
MR. RICH GREYWOLF: We have five acres of land; so, basically, what we would do if we had to was a lease-to-own on a portable of some kind or go with a portable that's already done.
That's what we currently have. We have two portables that house just single grades. But, I mean, we have five acres to expand. We purposefully -- we were really lucky what we found.
We found five acres of land in the middle of Taos and found it for -- I think it was a little bit under $300,000 that we were able to buy it.
And at that time, it was $100,000 an acre.
And it just happened to be our -- the guy who took over our -- that was our landlord was also a Google executive or a Google programmer that owned the land, and said, "Hey, I got this land here. Would you guys be interested in buying it?"
So it's -- it was great to be able to be there. It's as center you could possibly get as far as activity; so...
THE CHAIR: Were you looking at pre-K?
MR. RICH GREYWOLF: You know, it's just about -- right now, it's about finances. I'm not sure -- the thing that stops me from pre-K is I go, "Okay, that sounds great that you guys are all excited about it. Can you tell me how much money you're going to give me so that I know we're able to -- that we're not going to put ourselves into debt?"
Because as of right now, we have -- a lot of our expenses go to the rent-to-own our buildings.
THE CHAIR: Right. Right.
MR. RICH GREYWOLF: But, I mean, yeah, we're -- I'm open to everything. Like I said is that I am not a person that shirks away work. I do the -- I'm trying to get -- everybody is trying to stop me. But I'm trying to get my bus license. I have a -- I'm the lunch lady. I go ahead and do breakfast and lunch. I go ahead and change out all the air filters for all the HVAC we have at the school. I do the plumbing. I did the gardening.
I mean, so there's -- as far as work is concerned, I'm not afraid of it. I'm not afraid of going into a class and tutoring if I have to.
I offer all our athletes that go to the middle school, the kids that -- because we don't have school on Friday. I tell them, "If you don't do well in your -- in the thing, I'll make a deal with you. You're going to have to be tutored by me on Friday."
And I come in on Fridays for those students that are not there.
So, like I said, this is not my -- this is not my job; this is my vocation; this is my calling.
And so that's what I'm -- what we're trying to do in trying to make the community better, because I really do believe that this is the way to make our future better is by working with those kids.
THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. I appreciate it.
Commissioners, are we ready?
COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yeah, I can do that.
THE CHAIR: Commissioner Voigt? Oh, I'm sorry.
COMMISSIONER CRONE: Wait. I'm not -- I thought Karyl Ann would ask --
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: No, that's fine.
COMMISSIONER CRONE: -- a bunch.
Good afternoon. So I was wondering what
your current enrollment was. But I heard --
MS. LINDA SETO: 173.
THE CHAIR: We're getting there.
COMMISSIONER CRONE: 173. What effect
does the day school at the Pueblo have on your
school?
MR. RICH GREYWOLF: It varies. I mean,
the thing is, is that the day school has had a -- is
slowly moving kids out, and kids are moving into --
into schools like ourselves.
I mean, we are trying to -- we do try to
push into the Pueblo community to go and let them
know that we're here. We've worked with them
before.
But, unfortunately for them, they have --
their enrollment is going down. And so that means
our enrollment is up.
COMMISSIONER CRONE: Well, you know, that
would help with diversity. But what you guys just
discussed is not room. So was it -- who was the
camper person?
MS. LINDA SETO: Oh, I'm the camper.
MR. RICH GREYWOLF: Linda.
MS. LINDA SETO: I enjoy it. Actually,
what I find camping with kids is so much better than
being in a closed classroom with them. So I love to
do that.
COMMISSIONER CRONE: Where do you go?
MS. LINDA SETO: We have a wonderful
retired doctor up in Taos. He has a beautiful
property up on Llama Mountain. And he is
philanthropic, and he has built I don't know how
many -- six to eight cabins with bunk beds, and he
lets schools go up there for free.
Not a lot of schools go, but I take
advantage of it every year. In the fall, I teach a
project that has to do with botany. So it feeds
right into my integrated arts approach. And so I go
up there for two days and a night with
fifth-graders, and we hike. We -- I find that it
really bonds the kids together. It really builds
the community at the beginning of the year. So we
go in the middle of September up there.
And then in the spring, we do tent
camping. In the last couple of years, what I've
done is I go to Ghost Ranch and Abiquiu Lake. And
they love that. And they find out about the
Coelophysis and where they found it there and
geology.
And they really enjoy themselves. That's
a nice thing to do at the end of the year to really
build their community and help them to really be a
cohesive group that way. Yeah.
COMMISSIONER CRONE: Which mountain did
you say?
MS. LINDA SETO: Llama.
COMMISSIONER CRONE: So north of town?
MS. LINDA SETO: Yeah, north towards
Questa.
COMMISSIONER CRONE: Okay. I'll wrap up
with my Yellowstone story. So my family is there.
This was in the mid '50s -- late '50s. So we were
at Yellowstone Falls. And so I have two brothers.
And my father and I went into the men's room and did
our business and came out. And we were looking at
the Falls.
And all of a sudden, all these women
coming running out of the women's room. And we
said, "What? What's going on?"
They said, "There's a bear in there."
And my mom comes strolling out.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Are we ready for a
motion?
THE CHAIR: We are.
COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Okay. Thank you.
Yeah, we need a motion.
THE CHAIR: Okay.
COMMISSIONER VOIGT: I move that the
Public Education Commission renew the charter for
the Taos Integrated School for the Arts for five
years, with conditions that the New Mexico System of
School Support and Accountability Report prepared by
PED shows a 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;
and education climate, with no statistically
significant decrease in performance.
COMMISSIONER CRONE: I'll second.
THE CHAIR: There's a motion by
Commissioner Voigt.
And I'm sorry. Who did the second?

And we said, "Didn't you see the bear?"
"What bear?"
THE CHAIR: Commissioner Voigt?
COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Are we ready for a
motion?
THE CHAIR: We are.
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and education climate, with no statistically
significant decrease in performance.
COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Commissioner Crone.
THE CHAIR: Commissioner Crone. Thank you.
Roll call, please.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Voigt?
COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Chavez?
COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Davis?
COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Robbins?
COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Caballero?
COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Crone?
COMMISSIONER CRONE: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner Armbruster votes "Yes."
Commissioner Gipson?
THE CHAIR: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. We have eight-to-zero.
THE CHAIR: The motion passes, eight-zero.
Congratulations, and thank you today and every day for what you do. Thank you.
MR. RICH GREYWOLF: Thank you very much.
(Commissioner Raflerty has departed.)
(REcess taken, 1:36 p.m. to 1:48 p.m.)
THE CHAIR: So after four-and-a-half days, we're on to Item No. 6 on the agenda. We've just been moving through this agenda so well.
All right.
And before we start off, in case I forget, because I don't want to in my comments, but after closing out this last school, I just want to thank everyone for hanging in there this week, the thoughtful questions, everyone, in terms of your preparation.
And I'm sure everyone is aware that it takes an army to get us to today. And there isn't an army; there's only a small troop that does the work. So there's no doubt about the fact that there are just countless hours between the training for the renewals, the collection of the data, the updating of the data, putting it all onto SharePoint. There's just so much that goes into getting us to here that I want to say thank you to everyone for getting us to here.
And, once again, thank everyone else, because it really was -- it was a good week. It was. And we walked out of here -- I think this is the most positive we're walking out of a week of renewals.
So that's -- that's important to acknowledge as well, that we were able to spend, with almost every school, just a great celebration of the good things that they do. And that is certainly better than those unfortunate times when we haven't been able to do that. And it's sad and distressing and takes a toll on you as well as you're digging through these weeks.
COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Madam Chair, just to segue from that, too, I think the PEC, it seems like we're moving from more of a merely transactional process to hopefully a more relational process as well. Just want to throw that out there.
THE CHAIR: Yes. And I appreciate that.
And I'm going to say that some of that was only because that was not as possible with what -- you know, the relationship. So that the relationship with CSD -- so it all helps to have that happen.
So thank everyone, just in case I forget later on in my comments.
So segueing to Item No. 6, we're on to Report from Options for Parents.

ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: Good afternoon, Madam Chair, members of the Commission. I know we've had a really long week. I will keep my comments to an hour at minimum. Commissioner Chavez, I was only kidding about that.

COMMISSIONER CRONE: Revoke the charter.
ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: I also want to express, in a similar fashion as Chairwoman Gipson just did, the gratitude to all the PEC members for the work that you-all did. It's such an extraordinary amount of work to support our schools through this process. And it's an extraordinary amount of work for you all to be prepared, to ask, like, really important questions related to our schools, to celebrate our schools.
You-all did all of that. You captured all of that throughout this process, and I just wanted to express my gratitude to you-all for all of the work that you've done this week.
Equally, I want to express extreme gratitude towards the Public Education Commission CSD team, which I think we have most of them in the room, maybe one or two folks that are not here. It really was a team effort. And they are the -- they are the army that put this together, and there are countless hours of time that go into this process. And I just really share the gratitude to them as well.

And then, finally, I wanted to express the gratitude to the schools. They are the important element of this whole process. And I do think that in the pre-work, in the prep for this -- for these five days, there was a lot of back-and-forth between the schools.

And there is -- you know, some schools, I will share, were a little bit more defensive at first. And I plugged in a little bit more with some and not as much for others.

But I think that our CSD team did a really awesome job in building partnerships with our schools. And when there was an area where maybe we don't get to "yes" for everyone involved, we provided them an opportunity to share and express that difference.

And I really do think that, you know, the -- the three-circle Venn diagram that we're all in, the PEC, the charter schools, and the Charter School Division, I felt today -- and this week has been a great example -- of how there is more overlap in those three circles of groups than I have seen in my short time here with you-all. And so I just wanted to thank you all and thank the CSD team for all the work there that went into this.

I want to start out with some really important staffing updates from our team. We are getting closer and closer to being fully staffed, which is such an important aspect of the work that we continue to do, and to follow up on our commitment to providing you with authorizing support as well as the technical assistance that all of our schools are really hungry for.

And so we have two additions. I know I mentioned this at the last meeting in November. But we have two new staff members. Valerie Cordova has joined us. She's going to be supporting the charter school program grant that's currently managed by Leslie Kelly. Valerie, if you don't mind standing up and giving us a good wave?

MS. VALERIE CORDOVA: Hi, guys.

ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: She's going to help us on our team, support around business operations, taking care of the requests for reimbursements that go along with the grant, and also supporting -- and site visits -- I believe they went to a site visit today, to really start to strengthen relationships with our CSD awardees.

Melissa Sanchez has also joined us. She's the Director of Data and Finance. And so she's coming from the Department of Finance and Administration. So she had to walk about 50 feet across the divide between our two buildings to join us.

We've been working on this for about five months to have her go through our process. And, thankfully, she has a lot of perseverance and persistence, and I'm really thankful that she's able to join us.

She's going to support us with our data analysis, with our financial analysis. One of the first projects that she's going to take on that's really tangible is to review the financial performance framework that -- the work has already started over the last few years.

But she is committed to reengaging business managers from across our charter world to really solidify what a financial framework could really look like in a New Mexico-centered way.

That's been the -- I think the -- the thorn in our side, that we've tried to create a few from external parties that have been contracted with us.

And there is some good work that came out of there. But there still was always that disconnect of how charters are financed here in this state, New Mexico compared to other states. And so I'm really thankful for Melissa to take that project and really run with it.

I also wanted to share that tomorrow I'm going to go to a PED Rapid Hire experience down at the EXPO New Mexico. And so we have, right now, just one position that is open. It's a charter school program position. It's an administrative coordinator position.

And so we're hoping to really meet some really great people tomorrow. And I still need to know, quite frankly, if I can make an official hire tomorrow, or if we need to go through another process. But, nevertheless, we're going to meet some really great people and hopefully find somebody
who finds us to be their new home to join us. We are in the final throes of the interview process for our other authorizing practices administrator who will join Megan Maestas. We've gone through multiple interview processes since -- during my tenure here.

So we are -- we are -- I'm hoping, knock on wood -- In January to introduce you to the next authorizing practices administrator. So we are -- we hope -- I'm hoping, knock on wood -- in January to introduce you to the next authorizing practices administrator.

THE CHAIR: We've heard that before.

ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: I am very aware of that, Chairwoman. But I'm hoping.

The last position I wanted to share, next week we are interviewing for Megan's former position, the specialist role. And we're really hopeful that we're going to find some really great people in that process and do our due diligence to get that paperwork flowing through our processes and hoping to be able to announce more good news on that position.

So once that happens, we are going to be fully -- fully staffed at that point with -- with one exception, which brings me to the -- my final comment around staffing.

Leslie -- I think many of you may have been on the call last Thursday with the charter school leaders. We are both super-happy for Leslie and also, you know, heavy-hearted, that she has applied to and was accepted to lead the efforts for the Public Education Department and the Safe and Healthy Schools Bureau to become a key director around behavior health for all students across New Mexico.

And so she's going to be -- and if you don't know this about Leslie, that's her -- that's what she's done for most of her career as a counselor and as a -- as an administrator at APS. And so we couldn't be happier for her to find this role. And it's a new role, and we know she's going to be just an awesome leader to take on this charge for sure.

That does come with the need for us to have another transition person on our team. But we have measures in place and staff to pick up the areas that need to happen. And I think Leslie won't fully, you know, exclude us from her life, and she'll continue to support us in the CSP grant within reason.

But we will be needing to fill that position at some point; so -- all right.

I wanted to also share, since I'm on the CSP point, our award letters for all of our awarded schools should be going out next week. And so they will have their official award letter coming from us next week, barring any -- any issue that we might experience from here. So we really are excited about that.

There is -- for the first time, a mix of PEC-authorized schools and local LEA, or district, authorized schools. And it wasn't really feasible before this year, after we made some amendments, that we could include district school partners in this process.

So we're excited to have -- to have that in the works, and that, you know, we always want to have more schools than what we have currently right now. And Leslie and I have worked -- with some schools who did apply who may not be receiving an award this time around, we're going to open up the process again and have them apply, provide technical assistance and really focused feedback, so that they can put their best foot forward and we can continue to ensure that the funding is going to be expanded across the state.

The -- the next thing I wanted to share is -- and this is great; I'm really excited about this -- the annual charter school conference. We have worked to set a tentative/official date for this, barring any changes that might happen between now and six months from now.

But our date from that -- and we'll make sure that we're working with Bev and you-all on this -- it's going to be Thursday, June 18th, through Friday, June 19th, 2020. It will be at the Berna Facio complex, or Professional Development Center, in APS.

And one of the reasons why we really wanted to select a place outside of a hotel is so we can have a little more autonomy with the programming, with the food, and really make this an opportunity for us to lift up student leadership in all ways, shapes, and forms.

I think we did that this last year, for those of you who joined. We saw a lot of performances and students really leaning into their leadership throughout. This year we would love to have our amazing schools that have a CTE program, especially culinary arts programs, to contract with us to provide the food.

We also want to see students facilitate
sessions and, really, you know, show their leadership in multiple ways, and not just being leaders in the performing arts, but in other ways as well. So we're really excited about that.

One other element that I'm looking forward to is to use this conference as an opportunity to -- to break down the barriers of exclusiveness between charters and traditional public schools, so we are -- you know, I don't have all the details in place here.

But we want to open it up to traditional public schools as well to join us, so that we can really put our money where our mouth is when we speak about bridging that divide or that abyss between our schools across the state.

I think the only way that we can do that is to start with breaking bread with schools and to have space together, where we can -- we can share how our students are really leading throughout the state and share best practices, you know, in our curricula.

And so we're really excited about that, and I think that's going to be a really positive aspect of this upcoming conference.

I will say that when I first came in, I don't think we had a date in March when I came in last year. So I am super-excited to have ample time to plan and to get your-all's feedback, too, around how can we continue to make it better, how can we just really make sure that we are doing right by all of our constituents.

COMMISSIONER DAVIS: A date and a location.

ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: Yes. Absolutely, Commissioner Davis.

The -- for now, I want to share just one final comment. And then I'm going to pass the mic over to Deputy Director Woerner for a minute.

We -- per statute, the Charter School Division is tasked to provide the Governor's Office, the LESC, and the LFC, an annual report.

To my knowledge, that hasn't been done for about four years in a row.

THE CHAIR: We did one last year.

ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: Got you. I -- to be -- to be clear, the Charter School Division is supposed to do that, and it has not done it --

MS. AMI JAEGER: There's a provision in the statute that says "authorizers to contribute."

It's just in a different part of the statute.

ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: Sure. I'm aware of where that is, Ami. I felt like we should also provide that, and that did not happen. And this year, we did provide that by the deadline. It's currently with the Governor's Office right now, and we're hoping to be able to provide that to the LESC and the LFC shortly.

I did want to share that this was a collaborative process. I have a -- an informal advisory group of head administrators across the state. The statute does share that each district or authorizer should send the Charter School Division information for this report.

And one thing that I did, starting in June, was to bring together different school leaders from across the state to get their thoughts around what we should include. Many of the leaders who supported the process of developing this report, we actually heard from this week. South Valley Prep and Charlotte helped us. Amy Biehl and Frank McCulloch supported the efforts. Albuquerque Sign Language Academy and Rafe Martinez from DEAP Charter School. Aldo Leopold and Wayne Sherwood also contributed. And then Corinna Chavez, who also works with NACA Inspired Schools, who was here with DEAP this week, also supported. Walatowa, J. Paul Taylor, and School of Dreams were part of that small group that helped us solidify some best practices.

I will absolutely send a copy of what we sent to you all once I get notification. I can do that. But I wanted to give a few points of what we provided in terms of successes and opportunities and plans for the future.

So a couple of the successes, we wanted to lift up, you know, the process that we train governing boards. That's something that when I first took this role, that probably is one of the top three things that people came to me about needing to change.

And so with the support of Missy Brown and the Technical Assistance Team, we provided an update and a success story on how we are providing additional opportunities for folks to be trained.

I think that is something that -- we even got feedback today from multiple board members that that's something they really appreciate. There's always more that we can do, but we feel that's something that we started to build some momentum behind.
We also believe that the Charter School Program Grant is a success. In being able to amend that after we went through our ESSA amendment process, Leslie Kelly and I worked with our USDE colleagues to provide amendments to the grant itself.

And once the PEC shifted some of their application processes, we wanted to make sure that the charter school grant was in alignment to that. And so, as a result, we had 13 applications this year, which were much more than we've had in the past. And we were able, as I said earlier, to provide more awards at this point.

And opportunities that we included in here, into our report, the implementation of Yazzie-Martinez and the four areas -- the four strategies that the PED has put effort in to take root. I think we heard this week, many of our schools are the frontline folks who are doing some really amazing things around equity and inclusiveness and the work that it takes to create frameworks that are really going to embody what each of our schools should be held account to.

And so I think that this week is just a beautiful example of how many of our schools are taking that lead. And, on the converse, many of our schools, I think, can learn from our other schools in how to get better faster, so that all of our students are receiving an equitable and responsive education.

I mentioned this before. But one of the efforts that the Secretary has shared with you-all, and that I think I've voiced to you-all and you-all have voiced back to us, is nurturing the collaboration and practice sharing between charters and traditional public schools. That's a recommendation, an opportunity that we wanted to make sure that was in our report and that we heard from across the state from everyone, including you-all.

And so I'm committed to that. I know that you-all are committed to that, and I think this is something we can really latch on to as a collective.

Areas for improvement and challenges.

Facilities, really creating a short-term and long-term plan for charter school facilities. That is something that we need to -- to really take stock in and to work on together as a -- as a collective.

Strengthening existing schools.

I think we've seen a lot of growth, but really making sure that, in this moment especially, when belts are being tightened, supporting schools and maintaining the quality of their programming, even when funding may not be as -- as helpful as it has been in the past.

This also I think involves ensuring that authorizers across the state and staff like myself who support authorizers, that we are finding that balance between technical assistance and compliance and accountability and making sure that we are doing that in a most effective way.

Defining what replication and expansion is. I think this is something that we have talked about quite a bit. And I don't think we have a solidified answer yet in statute. And that's something that we feel like we really want to make sure there is a statewide solution to that. And so that's something else that I did make mention to in this report.

And then, finally, one of the other things -- and this is something that came up from our processes in our new applications, as well as potentially within the renewal cycle -- thinking about community impact and district -- and impact on districts when new schools open.

And so, really, this -- I think this is an opportunity for us to think about how do we want to involve, you know, community input in the processes, not just during the first stage of opening a new school, but also -- also throughout.

And so I -- through the support of the folks who supported me in developing the final report, that's something else that we were thinking about that I think there's energy around and could really support the -- support all of our schools.

And then finally the last part, the report was about 24 pages, not including the table of contents and some of the -- the initial pages.

And then there's a 59-page appendix, which was the charter school report that came from CREDO, the Stanford study that came out over the summer.

And so I included that within this report as well, that you-all have it as well.

And then, finally, the last part that you'll get a chance to see is the comparison data between state charter schools, district-chartered schools, and then all other traditional public schools in the state.

On a short, small comment, I really wish
we did not have to set up the data that way, because
I think that not only does make it hard to bridge --
bridge the divide that we sometimes see when we're
always in a comparison of our different schools to
one another. But that is -- that's in statute, and
that's one of the requirements of the annual report
that we need to send in.
And so once I get confirmation that I can
provide this publicly, I will absolutely share that
with you-all, and it will be on our website as well.
And with that, I'm going to pass the mic
over to Karen and then speak with you all in a few
minutes here.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: Thank you, Alan,
Madam Chair, Commissioners. I first want to thank
you for your comments, Chairwoman Gipson, and
appreciate and underscore what Alan said -- or
Director Brauer said about the PEC. I think the
work you do is amazing, and that you have to read
all that stuff that we prepare for you and come here
with such great questions.
I also want to acknowledge that I have
never worked with such a hard-working team as the
Charter School Division team and really appreciate
the small and growing group that we have. So thank
you very much.

I would just -- letter B in the report is
about Albuquerque School of Excellence and Explore
Academy plans. And what this was is the CSD team
was asked to share and advise the entire Commission
that these two schools have contacted the division
regarding amendment requests to add an additional
building on-site, which we anticipate will be on an
upcoming agenda.

Albuquerque School of Excellence did share
some of those details with you that were here during
their renewal hearing this week. And you may recall
the school is working on constructing a second
building on their existing land so that they can
separate their elementary and secondary grades.
This school has mentioned that they hope
to add kindergarten. They are authorized by you for
K to 12, but are currently only serving Grade 1
through 12. They hope to add kindergarten when they
add this additional building.
As you know, they were recently before you
with an increased enrollment cap in anticipation of
this additional space.
Similarly, Explore Academy has shared an
opportunity that they have to acquire a building
that is adjacent to their current facility. And if
they are able to do that, they will separate the
middle and high school grades. And the school may
also want to seek an enrollment cap increase in
order to serve more students, in the event that
they're able to add that additional building.

So, again, those will be before you in an
upcoming agenda. Just wanted to share that with you
at this time.

Letter C under our report is about a
project to support charter schools with eRate
funding for technology. I want to be sure that the
Commission is aware that the Charter School Division
has been working with the PSFA, via the Broadband
Deficiencies Correction Program, and the Department
of IT, DOIT, and the New Mexico PED IT Department,
to support charter schools in the area of
technology, specifically leveraging eRate funding
and matching State funds to obtain higher bandwidth
at reduced costs.

Schools across the state have been paying
way too much for way too slow connections, and that
that is changing across the state through the work
through the Broadband Deficiencies Correction
Program.

And our goal is to increase the number of
charter schools, both local and State-authorized,
that participate in the eRate program. And I'm not
sure if the Commissioners are all familiar with that
program. But it's a commonly used name for the
School and Libraries Program of the Universal
Service Fund funded by USAC and the FCC.

The program provides discounts on
broadband internet access, telecommunications, and
other services and equipment that are needed to
connect the classroom with the world.

The discount ranges from 20 to 90 percent,
with higher discounts for areas of high poverty or
the more rural schools.

So it really is a huge opportunity. I'm
very familiar with it. In my prior work in the IT
Department -- I was an IT director for a traditional
school district. And I will tell you that we were
able to secure 13 -- we paid 13 cents on the dollar
in that district for technology upgrades in the area
of network infrastructure.

Many charter schools have not
participated. Some have, but many have not for
several reasons. And I think the two main reasons
are a lack of technology expertise in-house at the
charter schools and the complicated process and application process and procurement process to comply with those requirements. The PSFA has funded a contracted person. Solix is the company that won that RFP. And so not only are they getting the support of the staff in those departments I mentioned, or agencies, but they are also getting a contracted person to actually help and do the eRate application and assess their needs.

As of this time, meetings have been held with, as far as State-chartered schools, Albuquerque Collegiate, Estancia Valley Classical Academy, Hózhó Academy, La Tierra Montessori, Las Montañas, Monte del Sol, and Turquoise Trail. More are being scheduled.

And if schools have not taken advantage despite our repeated e-mails and nagging, they should contact us at CSD or e-mail Ruth Bingham at PSFA to join in this project, and they can get this free support to actually apply and get funding.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yes. I just have a question. With the eRate -- because I'm somewhat familiar with it, if it hasn't changed much in the last five years.

But the schools that don't have a really strong IT person, it's going to be harder for them to lift that up. But is Xfinity -- there's an Xfinity rep locally, I think, that would work with that, since they're the monopoly for most broadband. I think there is an Xfinity rep that can be looped into that process statewide.

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MS. KAREN WOERNER: I would like to get that information and share that with the team, Commissioner Voigt. Thank you. I know we typically don't involve vendors in these conversations because they need to do the RFP process, and we have to be careful about procurement law.

But, certainly, I'm sure there's a way to loop them into some parts of it. I'm just thrilled because the folks from DOIT and PSFA are providing technical review of what's existing there and providing advice in terms of what's available and what they should be seeking.

And then the Solix contractor is adding to that and then helping them with the actual process. So there really is a lot of support for the schools.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Is that contractor in-state or out of the state? Solix.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: I'm going to have to check on that. I was not involved in the RFP process. They were the --

MR. MATT PAHL: In-state.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Matt says it's in-state.

MR. MATT PAHL: They do have someone here.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: They do have local reps. It was through a formal RFP process that they were selected.

THE CHAIR: I just have a question, because you said Las Montañas was on there. And they get their services through the school district.

So even if that's the case -- because I'm wondering, if schools aren't sure because they get their services through the district, can they participate?

MS. KAREN WOERNER: Madam Chair, thank you for the question.

Yes. Even if they are receiving their services through the district, there are needs within the school that can be funded through Category 2 of eRate, which is the equipment necessary to take advantage of the connections available.

So, yes, any school -- really, I would encourage all schools to participate and take advantage of this opportunity, because there certainly is some discounted availability.

And, in the past, it hasn't been worth the schools' efforts, because they don't have to pay those experts to do the work for the amount of reimbursement they might get; where, in this case, with it being free to them, then -- with the State support, then we can really help boost up their infrastructure as well as their connections, if necessary.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Madam Chair, the other thing with the eRate is with many schools in leased facilities, obviously, they can buy equipment that they can move. But any permanent installations they won't use that eRate money, they'll have to get the landlord to fund that. So that's one of the other caveats.

But if they're in owned, you know, permanent buildings, things like that, that's where they can go ahead and use these funds, or, you know, facilities. But if they're paying a lease rate, then they can't use the funds.
And that's one of the limiting factors also that some of the smaller schools, they're leasing facilities, so they can't really make -- avail themselves of the eRate and the funding that's available. Some of it goes unused from year to year.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

ACTING DIRECTOR BRAUER: Madam Chair, mention of the Commission, I -- I wanted to share -- just to put a little pin in the eRate. In my previous job with NACA Inspired Schools, this was a game-changer.

The reason you don't hear any of the NACA schools on there is we started a consortium with eRate a couple of years ago, where it was -- I got my education about how much it costs to put fiber optics into the ground and to get a school off the ground.

And it saved -- DEAP Charter School is a great example. It went from thousands of dollars a month for service to hundreds of dollars a month for service.

And a lot of the communities where our charters are, there are the public schools that have a certain type of fiber optics or style of -- of internet connectivity, and then when you bring in new buildings, especially our schools who are doing new builds, you can't just plug in on that.

And so there is inequity in the same community, where I'll use -- in my other current job with working with -- with the Indigenous Education Initiative, there's some communities across the state, especially on tribal lands, where the inequity is even stronger. Tohatchi, New Mexico in Gallup-McKinley County Schools, Tohatchi has an elementary, middle, and high school.

They -- GMCS has eRate, and they pay about $2,000 a month per school for internet service.

Chuska Community School, which is a Bureau of Indian Education school that's a mile away -- they're a completely different set of wires and tubes -- $20,000 a month is what they pay.

And so that is at a very extreme version of inequity. But this is, to Karen's point, it really is such a great opportunity, and it's worth the paperwork and the work that needs to go into this effort; because it really does make a difference, especially at this moment where we are with every dollar counting for our charters.

I wanted to give a quick update on Implementation Year training and submissions. We have one school, ACES Technical High School. Dr. Campbell has been very, very proactive on getting in information to us. He made the deadline on all the information that was expected, November the 15th.

Our team, Megan, especially, has reviewed and provided feedback to Dr. Campbell earlier this week. And so I just wanted to share that.

That's -- I'm really pleased to share that he's been on track, and I think that he probably would --

THE CHAIR: I'm not surprised.

MR. ALAN BRAUER: -- he probably would complete the entire Implementation Year Checklists before the holiday break if he could. We appreciate that. We appreciate his efforts, for sure.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: I just want to add a couple of things. One is he submits it quickly and wants us to renew it. But we are so short-staffed that we have to say -- we have to schedule a time when we can do that.

He did have it in early and wanted us to review it as early as possible. I also wanted to acknowledge that Missy Brown did help Megan Maestas read some of the review, too.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Confusion to some parts?

THE CHAIR: Yeah. Yeah.
COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Okay.

THE CHAIR: Because you know what it was? If you remember the Community Input hearing we had, and a number of us expressed that the school that presented themselves to us was not the school that we read, and what can we do to make sure that there's not that disconnect, that is there some confusion in what we're asking. And, therefore, he provided information that really didn't show the story that they absolutely showed us when they came to the Community Input. So what can we do to make sure that the process -- and he expressed frustration in answering when he filled out the application. So what might we do to make that whole process easier and clearer? So that's -- hopefully, they'll be able to -- some will be able to come.

MS. KAREN WOERNER: Madam Chair, yes. The invitations did go out to all that applied last year, per your instructions. And Dr. Campbell responded very quickly he plans to attend. And Dr. Cata expressed an interest in attending. But I have not heard from any of the others.

THE CHAIR: Okay, thank you. Interesting.

And I'll leave it at that. So I'm going to make this as quick as I can, so I'll probably forget things. But that's okay. We had a lot of conversations this past month to get us to today, simply because of the -- the concern over the data not being available. So I spent a lot of time on the phone with Ami, with Alan, texting Executive Committee, to get us to this place. And I think it was the best thing that we could do for what we had. So -- and I don't think, after a few early conversations, and we did have a conversation with Matthews Fox, because they did represent the largest number of schools. What was it? 15 of the 19, I think. So to get us hopefully to this good place. So -- and I -- we were at least at a halfway decent place. So I appreciate everyone's time and effort with that.

I had an opportunity to go to a meeting that was asked by parent -- concerned parents at Dolores Huerta. And it was an interesting meeting, also interesting because it was entirely in Spanish. So I have to tell you my head hurt at the end of the meeting, because it was many different people speaking.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Fast. THE CHAIR: Fast and -- but I will tell you, the one thing I really got out was they don't like the food, so -- because that was universal with everyone. But besides that -- and you did see in your Consent Agenda that there was the resignation by the head administrator. So that's not coincidental. So that being said, I also had an opportunity to go to a meeting that was between governance council members of Dolores Huerta and Las Montañas. So it was an interesting -- it was an interesting meeting, and I appreciate always having the opportunity to meet folks from those schools. So that's all I'm going to say about that right now.

This past Tuesday, I did have the opportunity -- an invite was extended by the Cabinet Secretary to speak about the budget. So that's where I went Tuesday morning when I left.

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Our budget?

THE CHAIR: Our budget. So we had, I think, a pretty decent conversation. I'm still cau- -- very cautious. But the lines of communication are open, and I want to thank the Director for helping to enable those lines of communication.

We had an opportunity to talk a little bit about -- related to the budget -- about what we would like to be able to do as a support system as the Commission. So I appreciate that. And I think we anticipate that the conversation is going to continue.

He had a couple of questions about the budget that I answered and provided him additional answers for. So we'll see where that goes from -- from there.

We're engaged in conversations over -- Explore Academy has applied to Albuquerque Public Schools for renewal. And you'll recall that we renewed their contract last year. So they're currently under contract. So there's a -- there's a concern that's been raised. So there's a conversation going on regarding that.

So I'll keep you updated on that as that goes along. And I think --

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And that's a definite, the --
THE CHAIR: The application went in in October, because it has to. Statute for renewals is October. So, yeah. Yeah, that's a definite. So I guess we're on to the Update from the Coalition, or that other organization, Matt Pahl's other organization.

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I think we should keep "Coalition," even though it's not its real name.

MR. MATT PAHL: Madam Chair, members of the Commission.

THE CHAIR: We're also at fault, because it continues on the agenda as "the Coalition," not Public Charters of New Mexico. So we are guilty of that as well. I apologize.

MR. MATT PAHL: I was just going to make that request, actually, in our, you know, medium term effort to fully change over to the new name. We did have a presentation earlier today that even just that fight for knowing that charter schools are public, that's part of the reason why the name is changing. It's to just make sure it's always associated with that. So it is important. But I am not --

THE CHAIR: Offended?

MR. MATT PAHL: Not offended and not -- I probably should be more rigid on this on making sure people call us that. But that's not my style.

THE CHAIR: May I just add in just a half a second? Because when we're looking at so many of the parents and other supportive people that came up to speak --

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Long, long week.

THE CHAIR: -- to speak, so often, or almost all the time, said, "My child went to the public school, but now they're going here."

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And I corrected them once, and then I --

THE CHAIR: And it's like -- you know, that's -- so when you said that, that's -- I -- it reminded me I wanted to say something about that.

Yeah.

MR. MATT PAHL: Yeah. And it's interesting to hear the parents just say what their perceptions of the schools were before they were able to engage. And so there's a lot of work to do even after 20 years of being charters.

The one thing that was real noticeable this week was just -- you know, I think everybody is upping their game. You can see it in the schools.

There were some redemptive stories: Las Montañas, Albuquerque Bilingual Academy.

Those are good stories. And having watched those for six, seven years and kind of watched them at the ashes stage, and now I feel like they're rising out from that -- there's a feeling that there's a couple of other schools that are in their trough period, and we'll be able to celebrate them much like we did, those couple of schools as well.

And that has to do with a lot of people, including yourselves, in setting the bar high for those schools and those schools responding to it.

I think a thank-you to the Commission is appropriate, and of course, Staff. It's a lot of work. I think it was well-managed.

You know, I don't see too many daggers in your eyes. And I'm the last person between you and your car. So I think most of the -- you guys manged your time well.

THE CHAIR: Joe Guillen actually is.

MR. MATT PAHL: Joe is being very gracious in allowing you to go. But, no, it was well-managed. And I gave the Chairwoman a call midweek just to note that I felt a lot of the conversation was focused on the performance framework.

And there were years that that wasn't true, you know. There were years where we were talking about rumor. We were -- the foundation for what we're talking about is really rooted in the contracts you have signed with our charter schools. And the more we stick to that, the better clarity and management of our schools we have.

So I just want to thank everybody.

Because everybody is involved in that. So I really appreciate all the work everybody has put in that.

Madam Chair, you mentioned that you were speaking with the Secretary about the budget. We -- I left for much of Tuesday morning to go see the budget presentation from PED. And that budget that was proposed was -- it was a good presentation.

However, it leaves some space for -- for new funding in it. It includes a 5.5 percent increase in above-the-line funding. But over half of that is taken by salary increases.

So we're looking at an SEG increase of about 2.3 percent. For our schools that are losing Small School Size Adjustment, that is going to be a major cut in funding next year. 2.3, 2.4 percent
1 will not help those schools, and certainly won't increase robust at-risk student funding the way it's intended to. And so that will be something we'll be highlighting throughout the Legislative Session. We'll also be asking, you know, for any salary increase for our educators, which is very appropriate. We really want to make sure that they're fully funded. Because if we have to take some of those at-risk funds to pay for salary increases again, that 2.3 percent increase turns into 1.9, 1.7, whatever it may be. And so we have to get into the nitty-gritty there, because that has to do with how they estimate the amount of money needed to make a salary increase that way. From what I understand, in years past, a percentage increase is a little easier to estimate than increasing the minimums for licensure levels. I think we've been closer to the mark, and everybody this year, LFC, LESC, and PED, are talking about percentage increases and not increasing the minimum licensure level salaries. That bodes well for the accuracy of the estimates of the funds. So, hopefully, that funding that is set aside outside of salaries is actually money that can be used for operations and for programmatic choices at the school level. We are finalizing our legislative platform. I'm actually running up to Taos after this to host a regional meeting with them. We have the schools come together and provide feedback to us. I want to highlight some of the things we're hearing, because we will present on this next week at LESC. And I'll be sure to send our legislative platform to Bev and to Alan so that can be distributed to you-all when it's done. But I just note -- I noted a little bit already. Small School Size Adjustment going away. Year one, our schools could manage. They were able to reach into their cash reserves. 20 percent of Small School Size Adjustment going away was something they could deal with. This next year, it will be 40 percent of that will be gone -- or -- sorry, 50 percent. We're on a five-year phase-out. But Year Five is zero. We're at 25 percent each year. So 50 percent of Small School Size, I don't know how many people just have cash that they can keep their programming going. So next year is really the first year where people will really feel the hurt on this and have to change program for, for the fact that that decision was made and the bill was signed. So we will be looking at that very closely, and we will be both advocating for additional above-the-line funds. We know that the LESC has proposed a budget that is a little closer to 10 percent in new above-the-line funding. We like that. We think that allows our administrators to make decisions to actually implement the necessary steps to fulfill the Yazzie-Martinez decisions. Without that, it will be very difficult. Another thing we'll be looking at, funds for facilities. We've been on this for a while. I've liked the conversations in the interim. I think we have a shot at really making some long-term changes in that to allow for more opportunities to receive long-term funding for facilities. One thing that has been interesting in the public narrative around Yazzie-Martinez is there's a group that doesn't get mentioned as much as some of the others. And that's students with disabilities. And it's been surprising that we haven't been talking about additional funding for our special education units in the funding formula. It's also been illuminative for us that some charter schools that are locally authorized by their district aren't receiving their full IDEA B funds. So when we talk about some of the practices of flowing through funds -- funds through a district, sometimes those practices mean that schools are only getting 80 to 85 percent of the funds they would otherwise generate if they were with the State. That's a problem. Those -- those dollars are meant for students, and students who were named in this lawsuit in which we found we weren't providing services for. Special education funding is something that we'd like to shine a light on as we move forward here, just to make sure we're covering all the parties in the lawsuit. The other thing I'll just note, the restrictions we've seen in charters in the past we have no interest in following through on, whether it's moratorium or statewide enrollment cap. There's a lot of creativity about how to restrict charters and how they operate.
If you are not convinced that the system can work as it is, I don't know where you were last week. Our schools have really been improving. Our authorizers have been improving. And I think the system is proving itself as one that is a good add-on to public education in New Mexico and really providing valuable services.

I think every day had more than a handful of stories about how schools are impacting students. And I'm just -- I can't get Tierra Adentro out of my head here today, when they noted when they dive into their data, "If a student sticks with us from sixth grade to twelfth grade, we get them to where they're supposed to be."

That's how long this takes. That's how far behind our students are.

So restrictions like enrollment caps, like moratoriums, we're not in favor of, and we will subversively work against those during the session.

I noted fully funded salary increases earlier. The last one I'll note -- and this is directly in line with the PED ask on this is the Realtime Data Pilot and making that a realtime data system. Four years ago, Kristi Martin was hired by the Thornburg Foundation to do an audit on our data systems.

Doesn't matter whether you're a school or here at PED, the 40th, 80th, and 120th days are taking so much administrative time from people that have other work to do. It takes time away from our schools, and it takes time away from staff here at PED.

The idea behind this is to get rid of those milestones in which we do those massive reviews and make the system live, so when changes are made, they're validated in a 45-second process instead of all of those piling together to be a many-hour process.

We think there's a lot of value in that for administrators of our charter schools that just have a lot going on. And eRate is a really good example of it. Alan brought up some really good examples of how big eRate can be, that funding. Oftentimes it's not that big. And our charter school leaders are like the kings and queens of cost-benefit analysis. And when they think, "I've got to learn a new federal form to get 8,000 bucks, I don't know."

There's always been just one missing capacity piece there. And that's where Solix comes into play. So kudos to the State for making that happen. That had been -- the conversations around that have been going on for years. I have been asked to do it at one point in my current role. I didn't have time to learn that process and provide that service.

So it just makes sense to have a contractor that this is what they do is provide that support. And, hopefully, we'll get more schools doing that work.

But the Realtime Data Pilot is something -- and I keep calling it a "pilot." The proposal is that it's not a pilot, and this is the standard operating procedure moving forward here.

But it stands that we could save a lot of administrative time that purely is administrative. And I think that would bode well for our charter leaders' capacity and their leadership teams as they move into spaces where they're talking about growing for the first time in 15 years, spaces where they're talking about how to work their budgets in a way that they haven't been in some time.

I think additional administrative capacity could really serve them well. So you'll receive a formulized document on what our legislative platform looks like. But those are some of the things we're hearing so far.

We have one more meeting in Taos and one more in Albuquerque. So we'll get some feedback there, and we'll move on and walk into the Legislative Session with a nice prioritized list.

We've really liked what we've got from our schools. So thank you, Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR: Thanks. And before you go, I want to publicly thank you for the conference, because, I know. It seems like --

MR. MATT PAHL: It seems like years ago.

THE CHAIR: Didn't we have a meeting in between then? But I don't think we have. You know, it's just like --

MR. MATT PAHL: Madam Chair, if you -- if I can, thank you to the PED. You guys showed up at our conference and were some of the best-attended sessions. You were open. People really liked them.

Thank you to the PEC. Thank all of you for being part of the conference. I had forgotten. That really feels like many months ago; so...

THE CHAIR: It does, yeah.

MR. MATT PAHL: But thank you. Really appreciate it.
THE CHAIR: Thank you. Because it gave us that opportunity, because we did have a packed house. And we appreciate -- always appreciate the side conversations. Just to be able to see the schools is just really nice. So thank you. I appreciate it.

MR. MATT PAHL: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thanks.

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Thanks, Matt.

MR. MATT PAHL: Thanks.

COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Thanks, Matt.

THE CHAIR: We are on to PEC Comments. Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: I'm glad she said that. Yes. Even though I've been here for a while, it seems like every time a school comes up, you learn more and more about them; it's seeing them and their stories. So I like that.

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Caballero?

COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: I'm glad she said that. Yes. Even though I've been here for a while, it seems like every time a school comes up, you learn more and more about it. They're changing. I'm glad a lot of them are changing for the best, sometimes not fast enough for me.

And that's just my character. But I do have a good feeling that they're making a positive move, because PEC has made a positive move with moving around from -- from "Gotcha," punishment phase, to, you know, things that are more transparent. They know what they need to accomplish. It's out in the open. We're willing to make changes if there's -- if they are confused, which was very hard to accomplish in the past. And it was a lot of frustration.

I am glad we have the staff that we have now, Madam Chair. And I hear stuff that they're proposing, and I get excited. That's what I can tell you today. I'm excited. Thank you, Alan. Some of this stuff is just awesome.

THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you.

Commissioner Armbruster?

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: There are six very quick, quick things. First of all, I want to remind people to put your -- any paper in this box, not in the blue bin, because a school wants it.

So -- okay. So that's a quicky.

And I want to thank, as well, CSD again.

And, Dylan, thank you for my parking, as always.

And this is really -- Tim wanted to know, but I actually don't know. Somebody gave us a blue box of candy.

(A discussion was held off the record.)

COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Maybe you should have placed the red candy from -- also, I don't know where I got this notepad from. But it was truly handy. This is not it, but it's somewhere. It was really handy. Do you have one of these? The little notepads?

So, anyway, it was really -- whoever gave it to me, thank you. Because it's always nice when you just want to have a sticky really quickly.

And, also, Alan, I believe, gave us all a card. Thank you. And I have Trish's, and I'm going to mail it to her.

And that's all I have to say.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Commissioner Crone?

COMMISSIONER CRONE: There's still cake in the conference room, a few pieces. So I don't want to see any squabbling over what's left.

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Robbins?

COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Just to let you all know that final -- REMAC [ph] changes will be finalized next Thursday on the 19th. I'll be back up here next Tuesday for a PSCOC meeting. So I'm back again my last time before the holidays.

And on that note, I want to wish everyone Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and it's been a pleasure serving with all the members this year. I hope your first year was as beneficial and educational as it was for me last year. So thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Commissioner Voigt?

COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Directly following the Public Charter School of New Mexico's conference, I was fortunate enough to attend the Independent Charter School Symposium, thanks to the Public Education Department for picking up my registration for that.

That -- that group is a really important group of educational leaders in the charter field sector in the country. It was really awesome that Albuquerque could hold that national conference here. And the whole focus was about social justice and democracy in education. What a concept.

And this was kind of a regurgitation of the former group called the Coalition of Essential Schools. And some of the original
thinkers behind community and small schools, like Deborah Meier, was here in Albuquerque. So it was really an honor for Albuquerque to host this. Plus, it was great to see a lot of our charter schools facilitating panels, performing at the breakouts, being keynote speakers. So the involvement from our charter schools really was a bright spot for the country to be part of that conference.

On January 10th, Future Focus Education is hosting a one-day conference. It's called "Educator Uprising." If anyone can make that, it's going to be a really -- it's going to be around policy and assessment, but it's also going to really talk about what do we want a graduate in New Mexico to look like, but also what types of alternative assessments can these graduates utilize to demonstrate proficiency.

So I am going to be attending that. And it's January 10th. It's in Albuquerque. It's called Educator Uprising, and it's Future-Focused Education that's putting that on.

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Chavez?

COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: I just want to echo some of the things that have already been said. But thank you, Cindy and Trish, for the candy. I'm going to enjoy it on the way back home. And I haven't opened my card. But whoever was responsible for the cards, thank you also. And I just want to say how impressed I was with the schools. And I guess I need to say I apologize I wasn't here for the whole week like some of you guys were. But I really enjoyed the time I was here, the three days that I was here, and listening to just the exciting things that are going on in our schools.

And, you know, we -- we have, for a long time, talked about, you know, proficiency and that sort of thing. And it's important. And I still believe in that. However, that's not the whole picture. And I think a lot of our charter schools are demonstrating success in other ways that we can assess, you know, how successful they're being. And so good -- those are good highlights that I think that story needs to be told more, especially as we continue to move forward; not just for charter schools, but for traditional schools as well.

And so thank you to everybody.
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 30, 2019.

Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219
BEAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.
201 Third Street, NW, Suite 1630
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