

BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
COMMUNITY INPUT HEARING  
ASPIRE INTEGRATED ARTS INSTITUTE

July 20, 2020

8:51 a.m.

Via Video Teleconference

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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Page 2

1           A P P E A R A N C E S  
 2   COMMISSIONERS:  
 3   MS. PATRICIA GIPSON, Chair  
 4   MS. TRISH RUIZ, Vice Chair  
 5   MS. KARYL ANN ARMBRUSTER, Secretary  
 6   MR. R. CARLOS CABALLERO, Member  
 7   MR. MICHAEL CHAVEZ, Member  
 8   MR. TIM CRONE, Member  
 9   MS. GEORGINA DAVIS, Member  
 10   MS. M. SONIA RAFTERY, Member  
 11   MR. DAVID ROBBINS, Member  
 12   MS. GLENNA VOIGT, Member  
 13  
 14   PED STAFF:  
 15   MS. KAREN WOERNER, Acting Director,  
 16            Charter School Division  
 17   MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN, PED Custodian of Record  
 18            and Liaison to the PEC  
 19  
 20   ALSO PRESENT:  
 21   MS. AMI JAEGER, Counsel to the PEC  
 22  
 23  
 24  
 25

Page 4

1           THE CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. I am  
 2   going to call to order this meeting of the Public  
 3   Education Commission for a Community Input hearing  
 4   for Aspire Integrated Arts Institute.  
 5            It is Monday, July 20th, and it is 8:51  
 6   a.m. And I am going to ask everyone attending to  
 7   join us first in the Pledge of Allegiance, and,  
 8   second, to Salute to the New Mexico Flag. And I'll  
 9   just lead us in them.  
 10           (Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to the  
 11            New Mexico flag conducted.)  
 12   THE CHAIR: Thank you. I get a little --  
 13   I'm not used to the feedback with the speakers. So  
 14   it's -- sorry if there was any wonkiness with this.  
 15            Commissioner Armbruster, will you do roll  
 16   call, please?  
 17   COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Certainly.  
 18   Commissioner Robbins?  
 19   COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Present.  
 20   COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  
 21   Voigt?  
 22   COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Here.  
 23   COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  
 24   Armbruster is here.  
 25            Commissioner Davis?

Page 3

1           I N D E X   T O   P R O C E E D I N G S  
 2   1   Call to Order, Roll Call,                   4  
 3       Pledge of Allegiance and  
 4   2   Community Input Hearing for               6  
 5       Aspire Integrated Arts Institute  
 6   3   Adjourn                                   110  
 7   REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE                   111  
 8  
 9   ATTACHMENTS:  
 10   1   Attendee Report  
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Page 5

1           COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Here.  
 2   COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  
 3   Chavez?  
 4   COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Present.  
 5   COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay.  
 6   Commissioner Gipson?  
 7   THE CHAIR: Yes. Here.  
 8   COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay.  
 9   Commissioner Raftery?  
 10   I've seen --  
 11   COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: Here. I'm here.  
 12   COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  
 13   Crone?  
 14            (No response.)  
 15   COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It seems like  
 16   he's not here.  
 17   THE CHAIR: No, I haven't seen him.  
 18   COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. It's hard  
 19   for me to see all this, so that's why I have to ask;  
 20   so, sorry.  
 21            Commissioner Ruiz?  
 22   COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Present.  
 23   THE CHAIR: Commissioner Caballero?  
 24   COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Présenté.  
 25   COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Oh, thank you.

1 We'll all learn Spanish yet, huh? So we have nine  
 2 Commissioners there, and a quorum.  
 3 THE CHAIR: Well, we don't need a quorum.  
 4 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: That's true; but  
 5 we have one.  
 6 THE CHAIR: We're not voting.  
 7 I want to remind Commissioners we're not  
 8 voting today; so -- but this has been publicly  
 9 noted, in case we did have a quorum present.  
 10 So, Karen, as you're bringing the folks  
 11 in, I'm going to go through the -- my script so that  
 12 we're ready.  
 13 This meeting is being conducted pursuant  
 14 to New Mexico Statutes Annotated Title 22 Section  
 15 8B-6J 2009.  
 16 The purpose of this community input  
 17 hearing that will be held on July 20th, 2020, is to  
 18 obtain information from the applicants and to  
 19 receive community input to assist the Public  
 20 Education Commission in its decision whether to  
 21 grant the proposed charter application.  
 22 According to this section of the law, the  
 23 Commission may appoint a subcommittee of no fewer  
 24 than three members to hold a public hearing.  
 25 According to law, these hearings are being

1 appropriate. The Commission will not accept any  
 2 written documentation from the applicant. But the  
 3 applicant may use exhibits to describe their school,  
 4 if necessary.  
 5 Following the applicant's presentation,  
 6 the local school district representatives, which  
 7 include the superintendent, administrators, and  
 8 board members, will be given ten minutes to comment.  
 9 Subsequently, the Commission will allow  
 10 20 minutes for public comment, as described above.  
 11 Finally, the Commission will ask  
 12 questions -- excuse me -- of the applicant.  
 13 So, Commissioners, we're all ready;  
 14 correct?  
 15 (Commissioners respond in the affirmative.)  
 16 THE CHAIR: Is everyone from Aspire in  
 17 now? No?  
 18 MS. KAREN WOERNER: No. Stephen, can you  
 19 tell me, besides Michelle, who else from the  
 20 attendees I should be adding for your school  
 21 presentation?  
 22 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Yes, Karen. We  
 23 have -- let me get the list, just to make sure we  
 24 are reaching everyone correctly.  
 25 We want to bring in Deborah Schoenbaum.

1 transcribed by a professional court reporter.  
 2 The total time allocated to each  
 3 application is 90 minutes, which will be timed to  
 4 ensure an equitable opportunity to present an  
 5 application.  
 6 During the hearing, the Commission will  
 7 allow for community input about the charter  
 8 application. The time for public comments will be  
 9 limited to 20 minutes. If you wish to speak  
 10 regarding the application -- and that time has  
 11 already expired. Sorry. Please be sure that you  
 12 did indicate on the sign-up sheet whether you are  
 13 here in opposition or support of the charter school.  
 14 The Commission Chair, based on the number  
 15 of requests for comment, will allocate time to those  
 16 wishing to speak. If there are a large number of  
 17 supporters or opponents, they are asked to select a  
 18 speaker to represent common opinions. We will try  
 19 to allocate an equitable amount of time to represent  
 20 the community accurately.  
 21 The Commission will follow this process  
 22 for each Community Input hearing:  
 23 The Commission will ask each applicant or  
 24 group to present. They will be given 20 minutes to  
 25 present their application in the manner they deem

1 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Yes.  
 2 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Donna Michelle Warren.  
 3 Megan Garrigan. Randy DeHoff.  
 4 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Randy. Hold on one  
 5 second.  
 6 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Rosa Martha --  
 7 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I'm sorry. After  
 8 Randy, who did you say?  
 9 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: After Randy is Rosa  
 10 Martha Celorio.  
 11 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Okay.  
 12 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: And Nina Farrow.  
 13 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I have one "Nina," so  
 14 I'm going to assume that's her last name.  
 15 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Thank you.  
 16 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Thank you.  
 17 THE CHAIR: So is that now everyone?  
 18 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I believe so.  
 19 THE CHAIR: Before we get started, Karen,  
 20 Stephen had put in the chat that he would like to  
 21 show some slides. So we're -- are we set with that?  
 22 Or is there something that he needs to do to be able  
 23 to do that?  
 24 MS. KAREN WOERNER: The settings allow him  
 25 to share when he's ready. He would just go to the

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 10</p> <p>1 Share Screen and do so when it's time.  2 THE CHAIR: Okay. All right. I just  3 wanted to make sure we were good with that. So.  4 MS. MICHELLE BOUTROS: Good morning.  5 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Looks like Michelle  6 has a question as well. Michelle, you're muted.  7 MS. MICHELLE BOUTROS: I was just wanting  8 to be clear. So, actually, Megan is going to be  9 presenting, and Stephen and I are going to be  10 reading and speaking to the slides. So she has to  11 be able to present, not Stephen.  12 MS. KAREN WOERNER: She should be able to.  13 Megan, if we have a problem when it's time, you  14 should be able to.  15 She's giving a thumbs-up. Thank you.  16 THE CHAIR: Thank you, all. And welcome  17 to our world. So -- and we appreciate your patience  18 with this. This is obviously the first time that  19 we've had to do this virtually, and it's also only a  20 month into our -- our having our own Zoom account.  21 So there's been some hiccups, as you've  22 witnessed. So we appreciate your patience. And,  23 hopefully, we can move forward seamlessly. But, of  24 course, we wanted to make sure that anyone that did  25 want to speak in the public comment had the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 12</p> <p>1 MS. KAREN WOERNER: When she shares her  2 screen, it will look like it did with the flags  3 earlier, where the document takes up most of the  4 screen and all of the participants are in thumbnails  5 off to the side, like that.  6 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Oh, okay. Perfect.  7 Yeah. I just wanted to make sure. Okay.  8 THE CHAIR: I thought you wanted something  9 different than that. So that's why I was -- didn't  10 think I could answer that question. So -- all  11 right. So we're good -- we're good to go?  12 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: We are good to go.  13 Thank you.  14 So, ladies and gentlemen of PEC, PEC  15 Chairperson, Patricia Gipson, Rio Rancho Public  16 School representative and attending community  17 members, the Aspire Integrated Arts Institute  18 applicant team wishes everyone a very good Monday  19 morning. We are honored to be here and are ready to  20 work and learn. Thank you.  21 The Aspire Integrated Arts Institute  22 applicant team will explain why our education model  23 that includes a robust arts curriculum requires an  24 Education Management Organization. We will also  25 respond to concerns we received from PED's</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 11</p> <p>1 opportunity to -- to sign up with that little  2 glitch.  3 So I think we're -- we are good to go now.  4 So, once again, good morning. And I'm  5 going to ask you that, for the record, please state  6 the name of your school, the names of the founders  7 of the school, and any other person who is here  8 today on behalf of your school.  9 And then after you do that, your  10 20 minutes will begin. And Beverly's on screen.  11 MS. FRIEDMAN: Yes, I'm here.  12 THE CHAIR: I thought. And Beverly has  13 cards with times. So she'll keep you posted as to  14 how much time is left for your presentation.  15 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Thank you.  16 THE CHAIR: So whenever you're ready.  17 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Just, Madam Chair, I  18 would like to mention that if Megan, who will be  19 presenting the slides, that her screen would have  20 the opportunity to not only share, but to be a full  21 screen, as opposed to this, so that the -- the PEC  22 Commissioners are able to read what's on the screen.  23 Is that possible?  24 THE CHAIR: I'm going to have to yield to  25 Karen with that.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 13</p> <p>1 independent review panel.  2 Let us begin.  3 Art is expensive. It's expensive to  4 purchase; it's expensive to consume; it is expensive  5 to teach. In most cases, art is the first subject  6 matter to drop off the radar when school budgets are  7 being balanced.  8 Art in education is not only vital when  9 educators seek to cultivate a child's intellectual  10 curiosity, it ultimately leads the way forward in  11 developing the whole child and offers a platform for  12 all children to find meaningful community.  13 Aspire Integrated Arts Institute has  14 created an affordable education model that includes  15 a robust arts program. Our model brings art  16 education to everyone, despite the limitations of a  17 public school budget.  18 Aspire's learning model offer's children  19 three hours of art education per day. During those  20 three hours, we are cultivating academic curiosity  21 through a challenging and unique arts education  22 program, which is at the core of our mission.  23 Furthermore, students are guided by their  24 on-site enrichment life coach teachers to  25 enthusiastically engage their self-paced online</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 14</p> <p>1 academics for four hours each day.  2 How does Aspire's model afford such a  3 robust arts program? This is possible because  4 Aspire's model is built on a services collaboration  5 with an Education Management Organization, or an  6 EMO. Otherwise, it would not be financially  7 possible.  8 Simply put, Aspire's model allows the  9 governing board and upper administration to remain  10 fully focused on the well-being of our students and  11 staff, the success of our mission, and assuring that  12 all students are learning and processing at their  13 own pace.  14 And I will let Michelle Boutros continue  15 with Slide No. 9.  16 MS. MICHELLE BOUTROS: Okay.  17 THE CHAIR: Stephen, before you -- before  18 we all continue, could we please, for the record,  19 introduce all the founders and anyone else that's  20 here that's going to be introducing, so that our --  21 the court reporter can get it?  22 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Yes. So the --  23 Stephen -- the name of the school is Aspire  24 Integrated Arts Institute. The founders are Stephen  25 Wynne and Michelle Boutros.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 16</p> <p>1 While the applicant team focused on the  2 aspects of the application, GlobalEd Solutions was  3 exploring the exact limitations in the definition of  4 "management," as seen in 22-8B-1I, and how to  5 structure the contract to meet those limits, but  6 still provide the school with the necessary  7 services.  8 NMSA 22-8B-4R prohibits a charter school  9 from contracting with a for-profit management  10 company for the management of the school.  11 NMSA 22-8B-1I defines "management" as  12 authority over the hiring, termination, and  13 day-to-day direction of a school's employees or  14 contractors, whether they are licensed or not.  15 "Management" does not include back-office services  16 such as finance, HR, technology, data collection and  17 reporting, et cetera.  18 Aspire's challenge is how to utilize  19 GlobalEd Solutions's services without violating  20 statute.  21 The generally accepted definition is that  22 a Charter Management Organization, or CMO, is a  23 nonprofit, and an Education Management Organization,  24 or EMO, is a for-profit.  25 National statistics from 2013 to 2018</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 15</p> <p>1 And the -- what we would call our group,  2 we call ourselves the "applicant team." And that  3 consists of Randy -- no. Sorry. Randy is not in  4 the applicant team. Nina Farrow, Tim Wells, Rosa  5 Martha Celorio, Michelle Boutros, who I already  6 mentioned, Megan Garrigan, Donna Michelle Warren,  7 Deborah Schoenbaum, and Kurt Rivadeneira.  8 I couldn't spell that. I just butchered  9 his last name. It's R-I-V-A-D-E-N-E-I-R-A.  10 Team, did I miss anyone?  11 MS. MICHELLE BOUTROS: Did you mention Tim  12 Wells?  13 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Yes.  14 MS. MICHELLE BOUTROS: Okay.  15 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Madam Chairperson,  16 does that suffice?  17 THE CHAIR: It does. Thank you.  18 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Thank you. Michelle,  19 would you like to continue?  20 MS. MICHELLE BOUTROS: Sure. Our EMO  21 partner, GlobalEd Solutions, has always been aware  22 of the prohibition in New Mexico statute, Section  23 22-8B-4R, regarding a charter school contracting  24 with a for-profit management company for the  25 management of the school.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 17</p> <p>1 states that 61 percent of new charter school  2 applications that were approved were associated with  3 management organizations. About one-third of these  4 charter schools were contracting with for-profit  5 Education Management Organizations, or EMOs.  6 Starting a successful charter school is  7 difficult. Prior experience greatly improves the  8 likelihood of success. And charter authorizers  9 nationally recognize this fact.  10 There are no restrictions and statutes  11 prohibiting a charter school from contracting with a  12 nonprofit management organization for the management  13 of the charter school. That management may include  14 all the activities in the Attorney General note,  15 22-8B4, without limitation, including the hiring,  16 termination, and day-to-day direction of school  17 personnel.  18 Likewise, there are also no limitations on  19 a nonprofit CMO to, in turn, contract with a  20 for-profit organization for specific services.  21 Nonprofit public school districts, public  22 schools and public charter schools regularly and  23 routinely contract with for-profit agencies for  24 services, including transportation, food services,  25 textbooks, legal and financial services, HR,</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 18</p> <p>1 technology, data collection and reporting, and even 2 online curriculum and teachers. 3 A charter school that contracts with a 4 nonprofit organization for all of those services, 5 including hiring and providing school staff and 6 teachers, is in full compliance with the law. 7 GlobalEd Solutions and the Aspire 8 applicant team have been exploring various ways to 9 comply with the limits and the definition of 10 "management." 11 In 22-8B-1I, by forming a nonprofit 12 management organization to contract with Aspire for 13 the management of the school and by restructuring 14 the draft contract to meet those limits by keeping 15 all staffing responsibilities with the governing 16 board, we will be in compliance. 17 Florida has similar restrictions as 18 New Mexico on for-profit management organizations 19 contracting with charter schools. As a solution in 20 Florida, GES formed Career Academies of 21 America-Florida as a nonprofit organization to 22 provide educational services to charter schools in 23 Florida. GES has also formed Career Academies of 24 America-Colorado P-TECH as a potential charter 25 school in Colorado. A similar approach would be</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 20</p> <p>1 nonprofit or for-profit. 2 And, Stephen, you may continue. 3 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Over the past five 4 months, as our applicant team worked passionately to 5 create an inspirational learning model to present to 6 PED and PEC, we've remained focused on our mission 7 and objectives. Our objective is to offer students 8 the very best possible core content curriculum that 9 is flexible and customizable and taught by 10 New Mexico licensed teachers who are highly trained 11 in the online teaching environment. 12 Furthermore, our objective is to offer a 13 high-end learning community for the arts, using an 14 arts-integrated approach, and to offer one-on-one 15 life coaching to all our students. 16 Those key objectives in building our model 17 would serve any children who would flourish in an 18 eventive [ph], innovative, and creative learning 19 community. 20 The only way to reach our objectives and 21 remain within a public school budget so we can offer 22 this model to all students is by contracting with an 23 experienced EMO who has developed and successfully 24 proven this model. 25 Aspire Integrated Arts Institute would</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 19</p> <p>1 Career Academies of America-New Mexico, which would 2 be the management organization that contracts with 3 Aspire. 4 The simplest most straightforward and 5 legal solution is for Aspire to contract with a 6 nonprofit organization for the management of the 7 school. GES will create Career Academies of 8 New Mexico as a nonprofit organization to provide 9 educational services to Aspire. This nonprofit 10 organization, Career Academies of 11 America-New Mexico, could then procure educational 12 services, including curriculum, licensed and 13 non-licensed staff, and back-office services from 14 GlobalEd Solutions. 15 The governing board must be responsible, 16 even if in cooperation with the management 17 organization, for the hiring, evaluation, 18 termination, and direction of the key leaders, who 19 are the head administrator, chief creative officer, 20 and operations coordinator. 21 The governing board must also have input 22 on the evaluation of other personnel, such as 23 academic teachers, arts teachers, ELCTs, special 24 education teachers, counselors, et cetera, who may 25 be employees of the management organization</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 21</p> <p>1 like to confirm to the PEC our understanding of 2 conflict of interest as it pertains to our governing 3 board. No Aspire Integrated Arts Institute 4 governing board member will benefit in any way from 5 the school doing business. Governing board members, 6 their families, relatives, acquaintances, shall not 7 be employed by or offer services to the school, or 8 in any way direct or indirectly do business with the 9 school, or in any way benefit financially or 10 materially from the school. 11 The following slides will offer insight 12 into our key model components that generate the 13 unique and innovative characteristics of Aspire 14 Integrated Arts Institute. 15 The Edmentum online curriculum covering 16 all core content courses and elective courses, and 17 is taught by New Mexican licensed teachers trained 18 in the online environment. [Verbatim.] The 19 curriculum is flexible, customizable, and offers 20 students a personalized pacing option. 21 Aspire offers a arts-integrated curriculum 22 and professional skill-set courses in the arts 23 taught by our on-site community artist contributors. 24 Also, our offsite enrichment life coach teachers 25 certified by GlobalEd Solutions guide students daily</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 22</p> <p>1 in navigating their customized curriculum to meet 2 their semester goals and remain -- and the 3 recommended course pacing. 4 Some of the benefits of our -- our 5 approach, that it cultivates multiculturalism and 6 diversity, it offers the opportunity to build 7 community through shared experience. Our approach 8 offers a tried-and-true solid academic curriculum 9 from Edmentum, individual career paths guided by our 10 community artist contributors, and preparedness for 11 modern society, and flexibility through our industry 12 connections and standards. 13 Our approach educates the whole child via 14 quality art education, the pursuit of passion and 15 dreams, and the opportunity for real life 16 experience. 17 The key advantages of art in education 18 generates superior academic results, targeted 19 workforce opportunities, and meaningful civic 20 engagement. 21 Students involved in a robust arts 22 education are 26 percent less likely to be arrested. 23 Each additional year of arts coursework is 24 associated with a 9 percent reduction in the risk of 25 being arrested.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 24</p> <p>1 digest and express their anxiety, aspirations, and 2 dreams. Having the means for self-expression is not 3 only essential for their overall well-being and 4 sense of self, it is the means to stay on track and 5 aspire towards a brighter tomorrow. 6 At the risk of sounding somewhat cliché, 7 young people are our future. And that is more 8 tangible now than ever. When we see the groundswell 9 of youth protesting and speaking out around the 10 globe, it is impossible not to be moved and inspired 11 by their demands for a better and brighter future, a 12 future in which we not only acknowledge, but 13 celebrate, our differences. 14 In these challenging times, parents are 15 also looking for ways to help their children cope 16 and thrive during all the turbulence in their young 17 lives. Nothing has been business as usual. Yet the 18 need to help them move forward in a supportive 19 educational environment has not diminished. 20 Art expresses the emotions and struggles 21 of the society it exists within. It builds bridges 22 between cultures and serves as our collective 23 memory. An art-focused environment not only fosters 24 the human need for self-expression and fulfillment; 25 it creates a stronger sense of community.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 23</p> <p>1 Students who study the arts appreciate a 2 better sense of self and boast cognitive, social, 3 and behavioral advantages throughout the 4 individual's life span. 5 At this time, I would like Deborah to 6 offer our closing statement. 7 MS. DEBORAH SCHOENBAUM: Thank you, 8 Stephen. 9 Good morning. I'm very grateful to be 10 wrapping up our opening presentation. And I want to 11 offer you some perspective regarding the 12 significance and relevancy of our efforts to 13 establish this charter school, particularly under 14 the circumstances we find ourselves in today. 15 An integrated art approach that blends 16 strong academics with the rigorous study of the arts 17 has never been more vital than it is right now. 18 Being a young person in the formative years of 19 middle and high school has always been a critical 20 stage of development. However, in today's world of 21 a global pandemic, social unrest, and a spotlight 22 being directed towards the systemic racism and 23 inequities that exist here in the United States, the 24 stakes are higher than ever. 25 Young people are looking for ways to</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 25</p> <p>1 The arts are one of the few areas in our 2 society where people can come together to share and 3 experience, even if they see the world in very 4 different ways. Sharing the experience is more 5 important than agreeing on it; therefore, 6 disagreement is not only accepted, but embraced as 7 an essential ingredient of the experience itself. 8 Applying this principle to education can 9 be particularly useful in New Mexico's multicultural 10 environment. 11 In a report published by the National 12 Endowment for the Arts, titled "The Arts and 13 Achievement in At-Risk Youth," findings from four 14 longitudinal studies' data revealed that at-risk 15 students who have access to the arts in or out of 16 school also tend to have better academic results, 17 better workforce opportunities, and more civic 18 engagement. 19 As mentioned earlier, in another study led 20 by Professor Kenneth Elpus from the University of 21 Maryland, adults who had taken arts coursework in 22 high school were 26 percent less likely than those 23 without to have ever been arrested. Each additional 24 year of arts coursework was associated with a 25 9 percent reduction in the risk of being arrested.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 26</p> <p>1 For some students, a traditional school 2 environment is adequate. However, we know that for 3 many youth, traditional models are not enough to 4 thrive and be the successful, productive, and 5 confident adults they aspire to become. This 6 includes populations of young people that are often 7 marginalized, including, but not limited to youth of 8 color, youth with disabilities, LGBTQ youth, youth 9 in the foster-care system, and youth who have been 10 entangled in the juvenile-justice system. 11 There is also a population of more 12 privileged youth allies who are examining and 13 questioning how they can be in solidarity with those 14 who have not been afforded the same opportunities. 15 One of my favorite quotes is by the poet 16 William Butler Yeats. "Education should not be the 17 filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." 18 That is where Aspire Integrated Arts 19 Institute comes in. Aspire will serve as an 20 educational sanctuary for young, middle- and 21 high-school-age students. It will serve as a 22 resource not currently available in Rio Rancho, a 23 diverse community with diverse needs. 24 Aspire will focus on individual academic 25 needs and self-expression through art.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 28</p> <p>1 know. 2 There are about -- there are several staff 3 from our division in the attendees list, and then 4 about six or so others. But I'm not seeing anyone 5 raise their hand if they're from Rio Rancho Public 6 Schools. 7 THE CHAIR: Okay. I didn't see anyone 8 when I went through a while ago that identified 9 themselves. So I'm going to now, at this point in 10 time, assume that there is no one from Rio Rancho 11 here to speak. 12 So we will move on to the Public Comment. 13 So how many folks do we have signed up? 14 MS. FRIEDMAN: We have four people who are 15 signed up. 16 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Are they all in favor 17 or opposed? 18 MS. FRIEDMAN: There are three who stated 19 they were in favor, and one person did not identify. 20 Karen -- 21 THE CHAIR: That's okay. Because there's 22 so much time, we don't have to worry about making 23 sure that we're not -- we're giving each side 24 equitable time. Everyone is going to have the same 25 amount of time; so it -- that's not -- you know, if</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 27</p> <p>1 This is exactly the time for a school like 2 Aspire, a time when young people and their families 3 need an alternative approach in education. 4 Oxford Dictionary's definition of the word 5 "aspire" is to have a strong desire to achieve or to 6 become something. The Aspire application team 7 believes every child has an inherent right to an 8 education that feeds and nurtures this desire. 9 We want to thank everyone here this 10 morning for their time and consideration. We look 11 forward to continuing through the process of 12 community input and evaluation, and we welcome your 13 feedback. 14 Thank you. 15 THE CHAIR: That was perfect timing. So, 16 thank you. 17 So, next, is if there is anyone from 18 Rio Rancho School District here? 19 (No response.) 20 THE CHAIR: So, Karen, do we know if 21 there's anyone? 22 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Madam Chair, I don't 23 recognize any names in the attendees as being from 24 Rio Rancho Public Schools, but I would ask that if 25 there are, that they raise their hand so I would</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 29</p> <p>1 40 people had signed up, we would have had a little 2 bit of an issue. 3 So there's actually -- everyone has five 4 minutes. You certainly don't have to take the five 5 minutes. But, Karen, you can call in the first 6 person. 7 And I will ask, as people come in, if you 8 would please identify yourself for the record, spell 9 your last name, and indicate, just for the record, 10 up front, if you're speaking in favor or not in 11 favor. 12 Thank you. 13 MS. KAREN WOERNER: So, Bev, what's the 14 first name? 15 MS. FRIEDMAN: The first person I have is 16 Lucy Kozikowski. But I no longer see her on the 17 list. 18 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I don't see her in the 19 attendees list, either. 20 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: I can -- I did receive 21 a couple of text messages from people that we were 22 anticipating. And they unfortunately had to go 23 because of their later -- because of the technical 24 difficulties which sort of expanded that. And, Lucy 25 was one of them.</p>

Page 30	Page 32
<p>1 But also there were people who did want to 2 sign in but had to go prior to the chat room being 3 opened. 4 So I just wanted to let you know. That's 5 no problem at all. 6 MS. FRIEDMAN: Okay. The next person is 7 Amy Hughes, who is speaking in favor. 8 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Amy, I'm going to 9 promote you into the panelist section so that you 10 can interact with the PEC. If you would unmute 11 yourself, we're ready for your comments. 12 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Hi. Can you guys hear 13 me? 14 THE CHAIR: Yes. 15 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Sorry. I get paranoid. 16 I'm Amy Hughes. That's H-U-G-H-E-S. I am 17 in favor of the charter school. 18 So I came into contact with this charter 19 school when I interviewed for a position with 20 Michelle for the summer program. It obviously did 21 not end up happening. 22 But what I love about the school, and one 23 of the things I had many conversations with Michelle 24 about, is that -- the idea of global citizenship, 25 that this school is going to be promoting empathetic</p>	<p>1 THE CHAIR: Can you -- 2 PUBLIC COMMENTER: My name is Sara Mazzie. 3 M-A-Z-Z-I-E. And what else did you need to know? 4 I'm in favor. Yes. 5 So I have taught at a performing arts 6 school -- actually, I'm an educator of 35-plus 7 years. And I don't teach performing arts; I teach 8 math to performing artists. 9 I recently retired from the Public Academy 10 for Performing Arts, which is in Albuquerque, where 11 I worked for 15 years, and retired from teaching 12 APS. 13 And I have seen tremendous growth amongst 14 kids who have the ability and the opportunities to, 15 you know, have art as their -- their, you know, 16 passion, aside from just going to school and doing 17 their academics and some of them having PE and 18 loving it and some of them having PE and hating it. 19 Our school, our performing arts, that was 20 in place of their PE. And the amount of growth I 21 saw academically from kids who were doing what they 22 are passionate at, and also the discipline involved 23 in performing arts, was absolutely amazing; because, 24 you know, teaching math is not easy to begin with. 25 And teaching middle-schoolers math is even</p>
Page 31	Page 33
<p>1 learners who care about the world and who are -- 2 they're going to be pushed to use art as a conduit 3 for change. 4 I myself am a drama teacher. And I feel 5 like drama, especially, is incredibly important in 6 developing social-emotional learning, encouraging 7 kids to be aware of other people's emotions and to 8 be aware of their own emotions. And that helps 9 create just amazing adults in the future. 10 THE CHAIR: Thank you. 11 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Amy, I'm going to put 12 you back as an attendee. So you'll be able to 13 continue to listen, but abruptly leave, our panel. 14 So bear with me. 15 MS. FRIEDMAN: The next person is Sara 16 Mazzie. 17 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Sara, you've been 18 promoted to the panelist view. So if you would 19 unmute yourself, you are welcome to make your 20 comments. 21 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Hi. Can you hear me? 22 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Yes, we can. 23 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Excellent. So I feel 24 like I'm a perfect candidate to talk about the 25 importance --</p>	<p>1 more difficult. And when they have something else 2 to help with that discipline and something else to 3 help with that motivation and to keep them out of 4 trouble, but also keep their self-esteem high, keep 5 them involved, is absolutely amazing. 6 And remember that, you know, performing 7 artists come in all different shapes, sizes, colors. 8 You know, go through the list of individuals. And 9 not all of them feel like they fit in. And so if 10 they're able to do something that they absolutely 11 love or learn something new, it affects all areas of 12 their lives. 13 With that being said, I also have a son 14 who is a performing artist who went to the School of 15 American Ballet, who started out at a -- well, he 16 started out with me at a regular, just public 17 school, where he was bullied, where he was ridiculed 18 for having an interest in art. And that was the 19 reason why I moved to a performing arts school when 20 I heard there was one. 21 And he thrived at PAPA, and, from there, 22 ended up at the most prestigious, or one of the most 23 prestigious, schools in New York City. And from 24 there, he ended up working in Kansas City Ballet and 25 doing other things.</p>

Page 34	Page 36
<p>1 And so this was a very shy, very -- a 2 person that just didn't fit in, who found his way in 3 a performing arts school that was free, right, 4 because where some parents can afford to send their 5 kids, other parents cannot, other families cannot. 6 And some of these kids would never have the 7 opportunity to take -- take an art. 8 And, you know, I'm speaking from a dance 9 perspective. But the school I worked at had -- has 10 an amazing film department, an amazing music 11 department. You know, you think about performing 12 arts, musical theater, these types of things, there 13 are so many niches for kids, and the opportunities 14 are endless. And you've got a lot of kids that just 15 don't fit in or feel like they fit in. 16 And so I think Rio Rancho, of all places 17 that has a lot of public schools and a lot of 18 private religious schools and charter schools, but 19 not a performing arts charter school, this would be 20 a perfect opportunity. 21 And I also know from working at PAPA that 22 there is a list every year, a waiting list that's 23 almost incredible. Some kids wait two years to try 24 and get into a performing arts school, because 25 they're coming from all over, from the</p>	<p>1 learning model for diverse learners. It offers 2 employment opportunities for art educators and art 3 professionals. It offers additional professional 4 development for New Mexico licensed teachers. And 5 we really do need more opportunities for educators, 6 arts educators. 7 Thank you. 8 THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. That's our 9 last one, then? 10 MS. FRIEDMAN: Yes, it is. Yes. 11 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thanks. So I'm going 12 to ask -- 13 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Madam Chair, I'm 14 sorry. There's someone raising their hand in the 15 attendees list, a Sara Mazzie. I just want to check 16 if that's a -- or did you want me to check if that's 17 someone from a school, or -- they've been in the 18 attendees list. But her hand is raised now. 19 MS. FRIEDMAN: Sara did speak. She just 20 got finished speaking. 21 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Okay. 22 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: I know there were two 23 Sarahs. What was her last name? 24 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Manthey, not Mazzie. 25 MS. FRIEDMAN: I'm sorry.</p>
<p>Page 35</p> <p>1 East Mountains; they're coming from Rio Rancho; 2 they're coming from everywhere, because PAPA is the 3 only school. 4 THE CHAIR: Thank you. 5 PUBLIC COMMENTER: So -- thank you. 6 THE CHAIR: Thank you. 7 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Thanks, Sara. 8 PUBLIC COMMENTER: You're welcome. And I 9 have to go, because my grandkids are coming over, 10 and they're two and four. 11 THE CHAIR: Enjoy. 12 MS. FRIEDMAN: Our next speaker is Karen 13 Price. 14 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Okay. Karen, you've 15 been added as a panelist. If you can unmute 16 yourself, you can make your comments to the 17 Commission. 18 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Can you hear me? 19 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Yes, we can. 20 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Okay. My name is Karen 21 Price, and I taught with Ms. Mazzie at the Public 22 Academy of Performing Arts. Dance educator. Twenty 23 years at the University of New Mexico in the dance 24 department. 25 And I am for Aspire. It's a very unique</p>	<p>Page 37</p> <p>1 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I don't know why she 2 signed up or why she's raising her hand. 3 Madam Chair, I defer to you. 4 THE CHAIR: Let's see. 5 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Karen, she was on the 6 expected list. 7 THE CHAIR: The expected to participate 8 with you? 9 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Yes. Yes. 10 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Can you hear me? This 11 is Sarah Manthey. 12 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Yes, Sarah. 13 PUBLIC COMMENTER: I'm sorry. I meant to 14 sign up and ask to speak. I didn't follow the right 15 clicking process, so I didn't click on the right 16 button to ask to speak. 17 May I go ahead now? 18 THE CHAIR: You may. If you'd just 19 identify yourself for the record, please? 20 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Yes. My name is Sarah 21 Manthey. That's M-A-N-T-H-E-Y. 22 I'm speaking for myself. I am in favor of 23 Aspire. I am a musician. I play instruments of the 24 viola da gamba family, which means I specialize in 25 the music of the 16- and 1700s.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 38</p> <p>1 For regular income, I taught English as a 2 Second Language in Spain and later in Germany. I 3 also developed a method for teaching ESL to 4 kindergarten and preschool children and taught in 5 kindergartens in my area in the north of Germany for 6 about ten years.</p> <p>7 It never occurred to me as I was growing 8 up that I might become a teacher myself. My own 9 experience was that school was excruciatingly 10 boring. All the years of public school -- and that 11 was here at Albuquerque -- it felt like nothing but 12 incarceration, and my only motivation for effort was 13 to make decent enough grades not to be held back a 14 year.</p> <p>15 As did many of my generation, I reentered 16 the educational system in my 30s with an altered 17 perception of how different it could be. It could 18 be so different. I wish I could have had the 19 benefit of an integrated approach as a school child. 20 It would have been so helpful in making sense of 21 what seemed a very fragmented world.</p> <p>22 Helping children to appreciate the 23 interconnectedness of everything is one of the most 24 important things we can do to equip young people to 25 navigate whatever the future holds.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 40</p> <p>1 input hearing. So this isn't a working meeting for 2 her. So she's not here to answer legal questions or 3 offer any advice. This is for her information, 4 because she's never been to a community input 5 hearing before.</p> <p>6 And she can do it from -- with her 7 sweatpants on if she wants to. So -- so just so 8 that folks know.</p> <p>9 So now that we're all back, thank you 10 for -- for the presentation. And above all else, we 11 know what time, effort and energy it takes to go 12 through this process.</p> <p>13 There's a reason for that. It shouldn't 14 be easy, because you're asking a lot to be able to 15 operate a school. So it shouldn't be the easiest 16 thing to do. And we understand that. So no matter 17 which way this all goes, we want to thank you for 18 all the thought and effort and energy that you -- 19 that you've put into this.</p> <p>20 So that being said as well, what we will 21 be voting on and what we are asking questions about 22 are what was presented in the application -- because 23 as was stated before, no new information in terms of 24 paper information is accepted, so that the only 25 thing that we can vote on is what was presented</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 39</p> <p>1 I believe there is generally an increasing 2 awareness of how essential the arts are in 3 children's overall development. I am looking 4 forward to following the success of this wonderful 5 project.</p> <p>6 Thank you.</p> <p>7 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Thank you, Sarah.</p> <p>8 THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. And can 9 the record please reflect that Commissioner Crone 10 has now joined us?</p> <p>11 Thank you. 12 (Commissioner Crone joins the Commission.)</p> <p>13 THE CHAIR: So, Commissioners, I'm going 14 to ask for a short break, because our questions 15 sometimes take up a length of time. So I think we 16 may need a quick -- everyone may need to have a 17 quick break and get some more coffee, and we'll come 18 back in about ten minutes. Okay?</p> <p>19 Thanks. 20 (Recess held, 9:39 a.m. to 9:59 a.m.)</p> <p>21 THE CHAIR: Okay. So I think we're all 22 back.</p> <p>23 So just for the Commissioners' information 24 and anyone else that's listening, I guess, Ami is 25 on -- she's never been able to hear a community</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 41</p> <p>1 through the June application. And that, of course, 2 is what we have spent our time going through and 3 asking questions and developing questions.</p> <p>4 So I'm going to start off. Because, as 5 you did identify in your presentation, there are 6 some serious reservations about the relationship 7 between GES and the school. And I've pulled out 8 quite a few.</p> <p>9 But I also wanted to spend some time -- we 10 are all very aware and very supportive of arts. We 11 have any number of schools, as you identified a 12 couple -- one of them, of course, is an Albuquerque 13 charter school. But we have a variety of schools 14 that do embrace the arts.</p> <p>15 I'm a humanities person. So as much as I 16 support STEM, I'm always a greater supporter of 17 STEAM; so that the importance of putting arts into 18 the classroom. And we all -- you are absolutely 19 right. We all struggle with the cuts that 20 unfortunately have come to arts, and also physical 21 education, in schools. So that, without a doubt, is 22 challenging, and it does profoundly affect children 23 because we know that everyone does not fit into the 24 same box.</p> <p>25 And as a public school, we should be</p>

1 trying to figure out as best we can how we can  
2 accommodate all of those boxes; because we're --  
3 it's not -- we gravitated for too many years to a  
4 "one size fits all." And that's -- that's not  
5 effective.

6 And I think, as we hopefully move out of  
7 the pandemic, whenever that is, we also know what  
8 we -- what we have -- the challenges we're going to  
9 have in trying to make up for the loss and damage  
10 that was done when everyone has been confined alone;  
11 so that we have a tremendous amount of challenges  
12 ahead of us.

13 So I also thank you for trying to step in  
14 during this very challenging time period as well.  
15 And I'll also -- I also publicly own -- anyone who's  
16 willing to work with middle-schoolers, you know,  
17 that is -- you know, middle school is my kryptonite.  
18 So I know the challenges too well, and that's why I  
19 didn't do it. So I -- I applaud anyone that's  
20 willing to step in and operate in that world as  
21 well.

22 So with that said, you know, we've all  
23 faced challenges now with schools having to go  
24 completely virtual. And we know that there's -- the  
25 LESC has identified some of the difficulties and the

1 were offering the other component, which happened to  
2 be an athletic component with that school. That was  
3 what was going to be done at the school.

4 We said absolutely no. And we froze their  
5 application, their charter, and they had to do  
6 another planning year to come back and show us how  
7 they were going to incorporate, once again, the  
8 blended learning.

9 So I'm challenged with that platform,  
10 because it's not something that we have ever  
11 supported before.

12 And you'll have plenty of time to be able  
13 to answer to any and all of this. But I think my  
14 overarching concern and questions right now are with  
15 GES, the -- the contract that you're proposing. And  
16 the application waffled between partnership and  
17 contracting. But it's clear that it's a  
18 partnership.

19 I was very concerned when you indicated  
20 that your first priority was going to be the hiring  
21 of the -- the arts head administrator -- I forget  
22 the term that you used -- your creative arts  
23 director, as opposed to the director of the -- the  
24 academic school.

25 It appeared, through this application,

1 challenges in that and the learning losses that are  
2 going to take place and the effect that only being  
3 virtual will have on students.

4 As a Commission -- or as a Commissioner,  
5 I'm kind of challenged with this platform that  
6 you're trying to create, because it's really not a  
7 virtual school, because you've got the arts  
8 component where you're live.

9 We have not -- this doesn't fit a model of  
10 blended learning as we've always identified blended  
11 learning. Blended learning, as we have identified,  
12 has always been students spend some time on  
13 computers and sometimes live with the teacher, and  
14 that the computer helps to offer resources that  
15 maybe aren't available at the school.

16 It allows them to practice; it allows them  
17 to work on remediation, but that it is in  
18 conjunction with a live, in-person teacher doing  
19 instruction, and the computer education part is  
20 supplemental and for enrichment and enforcement.

21 In fact, we had a school about three years  
22 ago that was authorized as a blended learning model.  
23 When they came before us for their Commencement of  
24 Operation vote, it had changed, and all of their  
25 instruction was going to be online. And then they

1 that you are absolutely abrogating all of the  
2 education to GES. And you have, starting with the  
3 year zero, \$134,000 going to a for-profit agency,  
4 and by year five, almost one and three-quarters  
5 million dollars going to a for-profit entity.

6 And I don't -- I don't see how that works  
7 in New Mexico and how -- you don't have a single  
8 full-time educator listed in your budget. You're  
9 giving that all to GES to hire the head  
10 administrators -- it's clear in the budget that that  
11 for-profit entity is operating that school and that  
12 the only live, in-person people are the arts  
13 individuals.

14 So I have concerns over compensatory  
15 services. I have concerns over any special ed and  
16 providing the services, because there's no  
17 individuals identified through that budget or in the  
18 application that will be there to help service  
19 students outside of what may be online.

20 And that is -- that is a significant  
21 challenge for me. And in one piece of the  
22 application, I think it was with the head  
23 administrator's qualifications, GES was even listed  
24 at the bottom, that the school and GES do not  
25 discriminate.

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 46</p> <p>1 So it is clear that this school is -- is 2 partnering to allow that outside entity. 3 We have specifically placed into contracts 4 of other schools, when there was an attempt for -- 5 far less than this, an MOU with a -- with an outside 6 agency, and specified that the school cannot do 7 that. 8 So I'm -- I am very challenged with how 9 this could go forward with this partnership. We're 10 stewards of the public monies. And there is no 11 delineation in that budget, even, of where the 12 resources to GES are going, their services. Outside 13 of the identification that the creative arts 14 director and the director of the school, there is a 15 separate line item that that money for those two 16 positions go to GES for -- for those two specified 17 salaries. But for everyone else, there's -- I'm 18 sorry. 19 Even with that there's no indication that 20 that's exactly what that person is going to be paid, 21 so that there is not a breakdown for us to see how 22 much of the -- you know, for year one, I came up 23 with about -- well, almost three-quarters of a 24 million dollars in year one going to GES. But 25 there's no breakdown as to how much of that is going</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 48</p> <p>1 With graduation requirements, to show 2 electives and to show us -- there was one small 3 mention of service projects. But the lost 4 opportunity when there was a discussion about 5 graduation requirements and those electives, and 6 possibly talking about those community partnerships 7 and opportunities for internships and what those 8 service learning projects might be, there was just 9 no, "These are the state graduation requirements, 10 here they are." 11 And there's no discussion about how the 12 school may modify that or what they're looking for 13 in those electives to show us that there's truly 14 been any discussion about this school, Edmentum, and 15 New Mexico. 16 And I think I'll leave it at that for now, 17 'cause I think I've chewed off a lot. So... 18 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Madam Chair? 19 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Ruiz? 20 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Good morning. And 21 thank you for the time you've invested in this. 22 A couple of things that I'd like for you 23 to clarify for me, please. And one of the things -- 24 I'll preface by saying that one of the things I 25 really liked was that you said that you were going</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 47</p> <p>1 to be salaries, how much of that is GES making out 2 of that contract. 3 And this is SEG money; this is public 4 money. And there's no accounting for it in that 5 budget so that we can be clear and comfortable as to 6 how the public money is being spent. 7 And I appreciate the -- the integration, 8 and I support it. I've got a school in my own 9 district that's an arts-integrated charter. And we 10 celebrate those opportunities for the schools to 11 show us. 12 My concern is, I see where you've talked 13 about how the academics are integrated into the 14 arts, and that -- I see that. But there is -- I 15 don't see where there's any attempt for the arts to 16 be integrated into the academics through Edmentum. 17 There's no discussion about that at all. 18 I was very concerned that there -- that 19 there was no identifying how that curriculum was 20 going to be modified in any way for the arts 21 integration or for New Mexico, except for comments 22 that it would be. 23 But this is where the school needed to 24 show us; more than just saying, "We're going to do 25 it," "How we're going to do it."</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 49</p> <p>1 to go out and try to make sure that you engaged our 2 Native American, our Hispanic, our African-American 3 populations. And I really think that that is 4 crucial. And so I do thank you for that. 5 Just a piggyback to what our Chairwoman 6 said, one of my concerns, too, is that the big focus 7 seems to be on the arts. And, again, I'm a big 8 supporter of the arts. One of the things that I can 9 tell is that you're allowing all your cores and 10 electives -- and I went back and read some stuff I 11 wasn't completely sure on -- you're allowing that to 12 be online. 13 And I'm going to tell you, as -- as an 14 educator -- I'm currently with the schools; I'm not 15 retired. And so a couple of things happened. Of 16 course, with COVID, you know, kids suffered 17 tremendously. 18 But besides the loss of learning, one of 19 the things that's really tragic, and we're trying to 20 compensate for that, is the loss to our kids with 21 special needs, i.e. our ELL kids, our SpEd kids. 22 Those kids, it was by no fault of ours, 23 right? This is unprecedented times, and so we could 24 not foresee. I can tell you firsthand something 25 that I have heard from students, because I know that</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 50</p> <p>1 you-all leave this -- I think you called it -- let 2 me see, I wrote notes here -- "personalized pacing," 3 where you allow the kids, and then your -- one of 4 your people that's employed to make up his or her 5 time on when they will actually specify their 6 learning pacing. 7 And I will tell you that one of the 8 biggest complaints that I got -- because I met with 9 kids via Zoom -- I'm their counselor and the test 10 coordinator, and so I'm still meeting with them. 11 I'm at work right now. 12 So one of the biggest complaints that the 13 kids had is that they -- you know, a lot of them 14 didn't get serviced. And I don't see that, even 15 though you said that you-all have a special ed 16 director, I don't see how those kids' needs are 17 truly going to be met. 18 I -- you know, an online component for our 19 students of special populations is never going to 20 fully address what those kids need. Those kids need 21 one-on-one. And I know even now, as we're preparing 22 for the school year to begin, you know, that's one 23 of the biggest things is how do we compensate? 24 How do we -- you know, most districts have 25 already determined if they're going to start online.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 52</p> <p>1 more that you can answer at that point. 2 But -- so I know that you said you-all 3 were going to reach out to those populations, those 4 underserved populations. But I want to know 5 specifically what that plan entails, okay? 6 Thank you. 7 THE CHAIR: Okay. I think we'll take from 8 Commissioner Voigt. And then we'll allow the school 9 to address some of this, because it's a lot. And 10 then we can pick up with other Commissioners' 11 concerns after that, to kind of break it up for the 12 school so they don't have this massive amount that 13 they have to address at one time. Thanks. 14 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Thank you, 15 Madam Chair. 16 Thank you, Aspire team, for your 17 presentation and for conveying your passion around 18 the mission of your school. 19 I really want to thank also Ms. Schoenbaum 20 for her speaking to how the arts can bring about 21 student voice. And that's something I've always 22 felt that the arts has the potential to do is to 23 give that platform to students, that palette that 24 they can choose how to express themselves in ways 25 that they might not otherwise be able to do, and</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 51</p> <p>1 I know the Commissioner's school district in 2 Las Cruces, they're going to start online. We in 3 Hobbs have not come to that point yet. 4 But one of the biggest discussions that we 5 have is how are we going to ensure that our kids 6 that need OT, PT, speech services, special needs, 7 who are IEP, who are bilingual, who are Native 8 American, how are we going to ensure that their 9 needs are met, just as much as if they were 10 online -- you know, in school face-to-face -- I'm 11 sorry -- in school. 12 And I'm sorry, but I just do not see how 13 even having a SpEd director there how those two are 14 going to work if the majority of your school is 15 provided by online services. 16 The other thing I had a question -- again, 17 I made that notation myself. But it seemed like the 18 first priority for you-all was going to be to go for 19 the arts. And I am not at all saying that I'm not 20 in support of that, because again, I do. But I do 21 think they need to have just as much focus on those 22 academics. I think it needs to be a 50/50 23 collaboration. 24 Let me go through real quickly here. 25 And the other -- and this is a question</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 53</p> <p>1 using that creativity to self-empower and to 2 definitely speak up about issues that are important 3 in their lives and for their future. So thank you 4 for that. 5 I also just really quickly want to 6 resonate with what Madam Chair expressed, the CMO 7 concern, I think also with Commissioner Ruiz 8 expressing her concerns for the special education 9 population. Both of those things resonated with me 10 very much. 11 But I think -- I wanted to just put out 12 some questions that might help refocus the school as 13 to their -- their "whys." The application was full 14 a lot of great "whats," but there was not very many 15 "hows" or "whys," okay? So the "hows," I think what 16 we really need to understand is the "hows." 17 And so in reading through the 300-and-so 18 pages of the application and the Charter School 19 Division feedback, there -- on Page 4 -- and I'm not 20 going to go through every single page. But I did 21 notice on Page 4 there was something mentioned about 22 a specific art form. It would be good to know 23 exactly, what is a "specific art form"? 24 And then there was something else stated 25 about high-end arts; so, like, a definition of what</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 54</p> <p>1 is "high-end arts," versus medium-end or 2 [incomprehensible due to connectivity] arts. 3       Something that was also resonating 4 throughout the application about innovation and 5 unique, I just want to say, as much as Aspire is 6 holding passion behind what you're doing and what 7 you're bringing forward, this is not a hugely unique 8 curriculum method or -- you know, it's just not. 9       There's a lot of schools already out there 10 in New Mexico that have integrated arts, that have 11 performing arts, that have media arts, that have all 12 different kinds of arts. And I think until we see 13 the "hows," it's not -- I'm not holding this as a 14 starkly innovative application. It's attractive, 15 but it's not innovative. 16       Another question I have is how are 17 students going to flourish socially through an 18 online platform and with ancillary services being 19 provided online and face-to-face? How are students 20 going to be expected to flourish, especially in 21 their social-emotional learning aspect? 22       And if you could also describe how the 23 special education director is going to meet all of 24 the at-risk students' needs through the online 25 platform. In reading through the application, it</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 56</p> <p>1 breaking up. We can't -- we're not understanding 2 what you're saying. 3       MS. KAREN WOERNER: Commissioner Voigt, 4 perhaps you could stop your video and that might 5 help your connection. 6       COMMISSIONER VOIGT: What was the last 7 thing you heard? 8       THE CHAIR: You're on your one last thing, 9 and then you cut out. 10 Now she's gone on. 11       MS. KAREN WOERNER: Now I don't see her at 12 all. 13       THE CHAIR: No. I'll send her a message. 14 So while you're digesting that, can I 15 just -- oh, you're back. 16       COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Can you hear me? 17       THE CHAIR: We can. 18       COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Okay. Super. So the 19 one last thing -- I don't know if you heard that 20 question or not. 21       THE CHAIR: We didn't. 22       COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Okay. If you can 23 describe how GES's curriculum is better suited to 24 serve the New Mexico communities, the New Mexico 25 students, how is that -- how is it more relevant in</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 55</p> <p>1 was stated that the special education director would 2 be hired by, or be a staff of Edmentum or the GES. 3 So maybe that can be fleshed out. 4       I didn't see health education listed in 5 your curriculum list as a graduation requirement. 6 It is a graduation requirement for the State of New 7 Mexico. 8       And then also it was obvious in your 9 application your goals were not stated in a 10 measurable context. 11       But I think my biggest takeaway question I 12 think is it would be great if you could describe how 13 GES and their curriculum is going to be relevant to 14 New Mexico's communities, and do you feel that GES 15 can be representative of New Mexico students more 16 than the local wisdom that comes within every corner 17 of our state. Why would you bring something from 18 out of state to meet the needs of New Mexico 19 students? I just don't understand that. 20       So I think that is all -- oh. Other 21 thing. 22       [Incomprehensible due to connectivity] -- 23 I'm just going to be blunt about saying. This is -- 24 [incomprehensible due to connectivity]. 25       THE CHAIR: Commissioner Voigt, you're</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 57</p> <p>1 bringing forward the local wisdom of our teachers in 2 New Mexico. I don't understand how that could be 3 better from an out-of-state entity to serve the 4 students' needs of New Mexico. 5       And then my last thing was, with a canned 6 curriculum that you're bringing forward, how is 7 that -- can you hear me? 8       THE CHAIR: Yeah. It's -- you're starting 9 to break up again. 10       COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Okay. I'm going to 11 take my video off. How's that? 12       THE CHAIR: Hopefully, better. 13       COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Okay. So within a 14 canned curriculum such as you're offering to 15 students, is that going to be customizable for the 16 students of New Mexico? Do you think that it might 17 be [incomprehensible due to connectivity] to bring 18 forward a unique and locally-owned curriculum, and 19 then, you know, reverse that process so that you 20 could put your authentic curriculum into an online 21 platform? 22       I notice [incomprehensible due to 23 connectivity] school is already doing that. And 24 it's providing the relevancy for the New Mexico 25 students.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 58</p> <p>1 So those are my only comments. Thank you 2 very much. Sorry about the glitches. 3 THE CHAIR: That's okay. It's the world 4 we live in right now. 5 So before the school starts, let me just 6 add a clarifier around the special ed coordinator, 7 because I think the three of us have mentioned that. 8 And it was somewhat confusing to me in the 9 application, because there was a mention that that 10 individual was, in fact, going to be on campus. 11 But there's no FTE identified for that 12 person. I didn't see in the budget a separate 13 salary item for a special ed coordinator. So I'm 14 confused as to who that special ed coordinator is 15 going to be and how that's going to work. So I 16 don't know if you want to jump into it, or you need 17 a second to digest all that and be ready to respond. 18 It's completely up to you. 19 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Madam Chairperson, I 20 think that we'll just start responding, because 21 there's so many different questions that have been 22 brought into perspective, and we appreciate this 23 opportunity to be able to speak and address them. 24 And I think the -- I think a lot of 25 questions can be answered by starting generally and</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 60</p> <p>1 about 25 students to take care of. And that person 2 is on-site, walking around behind the students the 3 entire day while they are working on their 4 curriculum. They are teaching the students to 5 advocate for themselves with their online teachers. 6 They are teaching the students how to 7 manage and time-manage themselves and pace 8 themselves correctly in -- with the -- with the 9 curriculum. And they are also setting goals, 10 together with the students and the parents, of how 11 the curriculum will be paced each semester. 12 This is -- our students in the Denver 13 model were never ever alone on a computer. There 14 was always that person next to them, their coach, 15 bringing them through, showing them how to advocate, 16 showing them how to time-manage and working out the 17 best curriculum for them, because they will be 18 pretested in order to see what would be the best 19 next step. 20 Edmentum is the curriculum provider. GES 21 does not provide curriculum. GES partners with 22 Edmentum. And I believe that they create curriculum 23 for probably about -- and I'm not the expert here -- 24 but I think it's about 25 to 30 different states. 25 So they're very accustomed to coming in and looking</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 59</p> <p>1 looking at the model. And at this time, I would 2 like to share with everyone that I actually am the 3 author of this model and ran this school in Denver, 4 Colorado, working together with GES about seven 5 years ago. And it was under the title of "arts 6 immersion." 7 And so I can speak very highly of the 8 success of the program. I can also give you a lot 9 of content in regards to what it looks like, because 10 I know I -- I've never seen this model anywhere 11 else. So I would like to explain here's what it 12 looks like. 13 So the on-site -- the on-site staff are 14 enrichment life coach teachers. Our art teachers, 15 which we call community artist contributors, our 16 SpEd teacher, our -- our head administrator, our 17 creative arts director, or, in this case, we call 18 them -- call this person the "chief creative 19 officer," and then we also have an operations 20 coordinator on-site as well. 21 So these people are there to -- to offer a 22 complete wraparound experience for our students. So 23 they are never ever scrambling to try to find their 24 way through a curriculum. 25 Every enrichment life coach teacher has</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 61</p> <p>1 at the states' requirements and to follow those. 2 As far as -- as far as the arts-integrated 3 curriculum is concerned, there is multiple ways in 4 which that is offered to the students. One of the 5 reasons why I particularly like Edmentum, because 6 they offer us a blank platform in which we can build 7 our arts-integrated curriculum and offer it to the 8 students, either live or online. 9 And the -- as far as serving the students 10 in this state of New Mexico, our art teachers are 11 going to -- are going to bring, as it was said, the 12 flavor of this -- of this state through the arts, 13 because we have a very strong intention, and we have 14 already communicated with many different indigenous 15 artists here in the state of New Mexico. And they 16 will bring the flavor of this state to our students. 17 Whereas, the online curriculum is 18 preparing students to be able to step out anywhere 19 nationally and to be able to be competitive 20 nationally. 21 The -- the -- all of the special student 22 services will -- will be -- will be administered 23 on-site. So we will have a SpEd teacher on-site. 24 We will not have a SpEd director on-site. The SpEd 25 director will be available to the -- to the special</p>

Page 62

1 education teacher via the -- the -- the GES online  
 2 platform.  
 3 So those are -- but I would like for Megan  
 4 to speak a little bit more about special education  
 5 with this model.  
 6 MS. MEGAN GARRIGAN: Thank you, Stephen.  
 7 What I want to provide are a little bit more about  
 8 my credentials and background.  
 9 I was part of the applicant team, and I do  
 10 plan to stay on as one of the board members for  
 11 Aspire Integrated Arts Institute.  
 12 I have a current special education  
 13 teaching license. I taught for five years in  
 14 Rio Rancho Public Schools. I specialize working  
 15 with students with severe and profound disabilities.  
 16 I have a lot of on-the-ground experience  
 17 for what it takes to provide education in the  
 18 traditional setting.  
 19 My current work is I'm a Clinical Behavior  
 20 Analyst. So I'm a Board Certified Behavior Analyst.  
 21 I'm a BCBA. And we provide behavioral therapy  
 22 treatment for children who have autism.  
 23 Part of my work, however, is in other  
 24 advocacy areas, where I'm one of the founding  
 25 members of a new organization -- well, founded last

Page 63

1 year -- called Elevate the Spectrum, where we work  
 2 very, very closely with community members,  
 3 individuals who have different developmental  
 4 disabilities for public policy, social-emotional  
 5 support. And really what it is is working side by  
 6 side with families as well as self-advocates and  
 7 individuals with disabilities.  
 8 So my experience on the board, I will be  
 9 able to bring insight and expertise and support for  
 10 students who require special education needs and  
 11 services.  
 12 It is my passion to bring empowerment and  
 13 quality for people of all different learning needs,  
 14 and I will certainly be bringing my passion for that  
 15 within this school.  
 16 Now, as far as the service delivery for  
 17 special education, that is certainly a big question.  
 18 Part of my colleagues on other advocacy groups --  
 19 and we've been very active. I have fellow board  
 20 members as part of Elevate the Spectrum, who have  
 21 been on the advisory panels and the task forces to  
 22 integrate special education into the new models of  
 23 public education during the pandemic; so I've been  
 24 very on to and aware of -- and I've been bringing  
 25 that to this group as well -- the different

Page 64

1 challenges and options that are explored -- that  
 2 have been explored in our state.  
 3 I'm trying to think of the other areas to  
 4 address. If anyone would like to jump in,  
 5 particularly related to special education, I'd --  
 6 I'd be happy to provide more --  
 7 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Megan, as you're  
 8 reviewing this, I would just like to also expand a  
 9 little bit on the role, the very, very important  
 10 role of our enrichment life coach teachers in the  
 11 students' lives.  
 12 The enrichment life coach teacher is  
 13 the -- basically, a life coach who goes through the  
 14 training of GES and serves the students on-site.  
 15 And what's -- beside writing weekly reports about a  
 16 student's academic success and sending that to the  
 17 head administrator and to the parents, they act as a  
 18 go-between between the -- our online teachers and  
 19 our on-site art teachers.  
 20 So the enrichment life coach teacher is in  
 21 a position to assure that no one, or any activities,  
 22 fall through the cracks. The enrichment life coach  
 23 teacher is there continuously the entire day  
 24 interacting with the students, with the online  
 25 teachers, and with our on-site art teachers, which

Page 65

1 we call community artist contributors.  
 2 This is a really important role, and it  
 3 assures that our students do not go unnoticed, do  
 4 not fall between any -- any cracks. Everyone is --  
 5 everyone is being guided and mentored in the process  
 6 of how to become a good student and how to be  
 7 successful.  
 8 And it's not like they have to go to a  
 9 guidance counselor to talk about that. This is  
 10 something that they're -- this is an input that they  
 11 are getting every day. And this is the uniqueness  
 12 of our program.  
 13 We have built an extremely  
 14 student-centered program that has -- has proven in  
 15 the past, in the model in Denver, that our students  
 16 are being -- are being cared for the entire day.  
 17 They're being encouraged, and they're being guided  
 18 the entire day.  
 19 And before Megan -- I come back to you in  
 20 a second. But I also wanted to say that sort of the  
 21 uniqueness of this program also lies in the fact  
 22 that once a student comes into the building and  
 23 their day begins, they will be receiving three hours  
 24 of on-site, with art instruction, with a live  
 25 teacher. And then four hours will be devoted to

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 66</p> <p>1 their online curriculum guided by their enrichment 2 life coach teacher.</p> <p>3 So I know that there's a lot of art 4 programs out there. But I have not seen any art 5 programs that offer three hours a day of -- of art 6 to students.</p> <p>7 And this is -- this is the type of robust 8 art immersement [verbatim] that brings about this 9 change, that brings about this community, where our 10 students are able -- and I can say this, because I 11 did this program in Denver, so I'm speaking from 12 that experience -- where our students begin to feel 13 safe, to voice their opinions, and to -- and to 14 be -- and to offer a creative idea without feeling 15 that they will be ridiculed for that.</p> <p>16 This is where they begin to flourish, and 17 this is where they begin to become these 18 problem-solvers and creative thinkers that we are 19 trying to cultivate in this program.</p> <p>20 So I'm going to return it back to Megan.</p> <p>21 MS. MEGAN GARRIGAN: Yeah. I did want to 22 speak to differentiation as far as students with 23 special learning needs accessing online education.</p> <p>24 So as a Behavior Analyst, as a practicing 25 Clinical Behavior Analyst, as one of my day jobs, we</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 68</p> <p>1 questions.</p> <p>2 So in this process, there was one other 3 thing. And I would like maybe to have Donna and 4 Michelle comment on this as well, as far as the -- 5 the -- the model, it is difficult to -- to -- 6 because the model is so different, it's hard to fit 7 it in to the wineskin that the application put us 8 through.</p> <p>9 And so we -- we realized. We realized 10 that there are some things that continually -- to 11 need unpacking and fleshing out. And it's probably 12 not, you know, going to be the reason -- the reason 13 will more than likely be we had a hard time trying 14 to fit it within the application.</p> <p>15 But as far as some -- I know there were 16 some financial questions about budgets and things 17 like that. And, Donna, would you like to try to 18 answer some of those at this time?</p> <p>19 MS. DONNA WARREN: Sure. I'd be happy to, 20 Stephen. Hi. Good morning. My name is Donna 21 Warren. I am a local business owner here in the 22 Albuquerque area. I own a construction company.</p> <p>23 Prior to that, I was a 20-year Air Force 24 officer who did federal acquisitions. 25 And then I'm a ten-year federal</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 67</p> <p>1 were hit with the pandemic as well. And so 2 providing that behavior therapy treatment, it looks 3 a lot like school for these kids.</p> <p>4 And we were faced with the same issues. 5 In my field, it's heavily research-based. And so we 6 were provided with research as well as new 7 technologies in the literature that was published in 8 order to provide different models of support for 9 students. And so that translates very easily and 10 very well into schools.</p> <p>11 Part of my advocacy work is helping to 12 bring those pieces together. We are talking about 13 the same child, just different funding pots and 14 different ways of viewing support in education. So 15 if the student isn't able to access independently 16 the online curriculum, there are different models 17 available.</p> <p>18 I'm happy to talk about those a little 19 bit, too, if you'd like a little clearer picture. 20 Just let me know.</p> <p>21 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: If -- at this time -- 22 I know I made a couple of notes during the -- during 23 the comments from the Commissioners, and I wanted to 24 make sure that we are not going off in a rabbit 25 trail, that we're actually addressing all of those</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 69</p> <p>1 acquisition executive working for the General 2 Services Administration in the Washington, D.C., 3 area.</p> <p>4 I moved here to Albuquerque in 2019, and 5 was able to connect with Stephen and Michelle. And 6 I am part of the application team, and I am the 7 person who did our budget. And I will not be 8 following on with the board as a board member, but I 9 am heavily invested in this as a parent of three 10 children who would have benefited from a school 11 model like this, because I do have one child who 12 attended a -- a generic online school, and it wasn't 13 a great experience.</p> <p>14 So the modeling for Aspire is something 15 that speaks to my heart as a parent.</p> <p>16 So I kind of brought the business flare to 17 this application team. And in the midst of the 18 budget, we had an option. We could have identified 19 each person's salary on our budget lines. But that 20 was not a true reflection of how this school budget 21 was going to work.</p> <p>22 So, instead, we decided to present it as a 23 bundled package with the nonprofit CMO that we would 24 be contracting with. 25 I happen to have about 60 versions of your</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 70</p> <p>1 budget -- or of the State's budget -- both for the  2 PEG [verbatim] -- for the SEG portion, where we  3 would get the charter school funds for the first --  4 for the implementation year. And, then, along with  5 that, I have several models of the budget that show  6 how much the head administrator would get, the  7 25 percent benefit rates, how much the -- you know,  8 the operations director and what that salary looks  9 like.</p> <p>10 And the reason why we have that -- or I  11 have that extensive detail documents is so that we  12 were able to use the SEG funds, through both  13 implementation year through the five years that were  14 required, so that we were taking great fiduciary  15 responsibilities with public funds.</p> <p>16 It's my understanding that we're not  17 allowed to present you with any more formal paper  18 documentation. But at any given time, I would be  19 happy to sit down with the Commission and kind of  20 run through the actual discrete line numbers of our  21 budget. Because all of those salaries, all of the  22 benefits, all of the actual -- you know, like food  23 costs, food services, things of that nature, were  24 taken into consideration when developing our budget.  25 So --</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 72</p> <p>1 budget."</p> <p>2 THE CHAIR: You can't. You have to use  3 the form that we use. But it specifies clearly how  4 the SEG money -- how the State's money is being  5 spent. So there's no "outside of the lines" in that  6 budget. We're not asking you to go outside of the  7 lines with that.</p> <p>8 MS. DONNA JARVIS: Like, I understand a  9 contract -- the amount of money obligated to a  10 contract is not -- is not detailed enough for  11 you-all.</p> <p>12 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Robbins, I know  13 you had your hand up a while ago. So I wanted to  14 give you an opportunity to speak. Thanks.</p> <p>15 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Thank you. I think  16 I share some of the same concerns, but I'll try to  17 address them in questions.</p> <p>18 One of them is, on on-site special ed, not  19 just OT, PT, speech, but English Language Learners,  20 how are those needs going to be met? Because the  21 State is facing a continuing oversight by the courts  22 of the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit. So that's an issue  23 that you may not be able to address right now. But  24 it is a concern, because it appears that it's not  25 fully fleshed out in the application.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 71</p> <p>1 THE CHAIR: Okay. I'm just going to say  2 that this appears to be one of those opportunities  3 lost. Because we have to be the steward of public  4 monies, and we don't have a clear picture. And at  5 this point in time, we don't take any additional  6 information. So we can't look at it, and it can't  7 be shared out, that the opportunity for the school  8 to show us how they were spending public monies was  9 in that application.</p> <p>10 So, you know, it's -- that was on -- that  11 was the school's decision to make; so -- but I just  12 want to make it clear that we can't look at anything  13 else at this point in time.</p> <p>14 MS. DONNA WARREN: I completely understand  15 that, that on the actual application website and the  16 training we all went through with -- I think her  17 name was "Missy" or -- and then, of course, we  18 actually hired someone who was recommended to us to  19 help us develop the budget. Her name was "Betty."  20 She's also done reviews in the past. At no time  21 were we told to go outside of the State's budget  22 lines.</p> <p>23 So for future applications, it might be  24 where, "Hey, you know, if your model doesn't really  25 fit into this budget, feel free to submit your own</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 73</p> <p>1 Specific questions would be, you mention  2 that the general council -- governing council,  3 excuse me -- would be involved in the evaluation of  4 staff. And that's -- other than the head  5 administrator, that's not a normal process to where  6 they get involved in evaluating the staff. And in  7 this case -- and, additionally, the staff of GES,  8 the education staff. That is a very odd thing.</p> <p>9 Coupled with that is how the head  10 administrator would be involved in controlling and  11 managing the staff of GES if they are not employees  12 of the school, but they are employees of this  13 nonprofit. How does an outside person then control  14 and direct and manage and supervise the day-to-day  15 activities of those individuals who are responsible  16 for the instruction to students?</p> <p>17 The last thing I have is really a comment  18 on the nonprofit CMO going to a -- what appears to  19 be a for-profit CMO. Although you mentioned in your  20 presentation that you believe that meets the letter  21 of the law, my concern is it doesn't meet the intent  22 of the law.</p> <p>23 And I think further explanation of how  24 that actually meets the intent, in addition to the  25 letter of the law, is really important. Because</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 74</p> <p>1 when you separate out the supervision, the 2 management, and you have someone who is employed by 3 the school as head administrator, how are they going 4 to supervise, evaluate, and control people who are 5 basically a subcontractor? 6 And the last thing is with regard to SEG 7 monies and educators. Are they participating -- 8 would they be participating in the State's 9 retirement program? Or is it totally a separate 10 program? 11 Because my understanding is is that 12 charter school teachers and administrators are part 13 of the State retirement program and the ERB. 14 THE CHAIR: So let me just say one thing. 15 There's nothing in the application that indicates 16 the creation of the nonprofit CMO. The only thing 17 that was provided in the application, and the 18 only -- and the only thing that we will be voting on 19 is what is in the application. And that is the 20 for-profit EMO and the contractor with GES, because 21 that's what was presented in the application. 22 So this change is a change in the 23 application. And we don't accept changes in the 24 application at this point in time, because we've not 25 been able -- the -- the review team hasn't been able</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 76</p> <p>1 upon by everyone that this is extremely important. 2 With my experience and expertise, I am 3 able to provide additional resources outside of a 4 traditional education model that relate to the child 5 very similarly with regards to appropriate 6 assessment of skills and knowledge and the 7 performance skills. 8 So if a student is struggling, there are a 9 variety of ways to look at it besides just the 10 academic content knowledge, if that makes sense. 11 If there's difficulty focusing, for 12 example, if the student has ADHD, I have resources 13 for that. If the student who has autism who is very 14 bright but has other difficulties in a 15 social-emotional or social communication capacity, I 16 can also bring resources to that as well. 17 I alluded to the differentiation with 18 online learning and the delivery of education in an 19 online platform. There are several models available 20 within the private clinical setting that would 21 relate very well to differentiation for students 22 accessing their online learning. 23 That includes things like facilitated 24 proxies in the form of our ELCTs. It could be 25 something where the online curriculum just isn't</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 75</p> <p>1 to look at it. We haven't had an opportunity to 2 look at it. 3 And that's why what is presented to us in 4 June is what we vote on. That's what we've had -- 5 that's what the capacity interview was able to deal 6 with. That's what the independent reviewers were 7 able to review and make comments on. And that's 8 what we've had the opportunity to be reviewing over 9 the past month with that application. 10 And that's why it's clearly defined and 11 delineated that we do not accept new information, 12 especially when -- when it's -- so we're dealing 13 with the for-profit EMO that was in the application. 14 MS. MEGAN GARRIGAN: I can speak to the 15 Martinez-Yazzie lawsuit. I'm actually working 16 closely, more recently, with Dr. Diane 17 Torres-Velasquez. Wonderful person. She's part of 18 the counsel working on the Martinez lawsuit. 19 So I also bring that experience and 20 awareness to this board and this -- this charter 21 school application regarding improvements for 22 students at risk and who have disabilities. 23 Again, this is something that's very dear 24 to my heart. I would not be working with these 25 people on my applicant team if it wasn't also agreed</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 77</p> <p>1 appropriate, and then we use differentiation from 2 the core content curriculum so the students are 3 still accessing their education similar to their 4 same-age peers in the best capacity possible; 5 however, it is differentiated to their learning 6 styles and needs. 7 The use of assessments is essential for 8 this. And so you were discussing English as Second 9 Language Learners, also students with different 10 levels of disability, the nature of their 11 disability. 12 So it's -- it's a matter of using those 13 strong evidence-based practices and truly valid and 14 researched evidence-based practices to assess the 15 students where they're at, but have that continual 16 assessment and oversight. 17 And that's really the key. If there's not 18 progress being made within a certain, you know, 19 limited time frame, then adjustments need to be made 20 immediately. And so as a board and as a school, 21 we're prepared to do that for students. 22 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Also, just to address 23 one of Commissioner Robbins' questions, there -- the 24 reason the board is -- would be involved in that 25 process with the EMO is because we want to have the</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 78</p> <p>1 best possible experience for our students. And that 2 needs to be a dialogue, continually to be a 3 dialogue, and to be able to work through all those 4 different services in making sure that the services 5 are being -- are coming to the students being 6 serviced in the best possible method. So we left 7 that door open.</p> <p>8 But as far as they're not going to be -- 9 the reason it says "staff" is because the governing 10 board is working with both the chief creative 11 officer and the head administrator. And they will 12 be responsible for evaluating both of these 13 characters who are on the same line as far as the 14 hierarchy of what they -- of what they are doing. 15 However, the content of their responsibilities is 16 completely different, obviously.</p> <p>17 So, obviously, the head administrator is 18 responsible for certain things, and the chief 19 creative officer, certain things as well. So the 20 responsibilities don't mix, but they're still on 21 that place where the board -- the governing board 22 will evaluate both of these positions.</p> <p>23 And then I wanted to -- as far as 24 Madam Chairwoman had mentioned very clearly, that we 25 will only be evaluating -- or the Commission will</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 80</p> <p>1 monies are going to GES, and that GES was hiring the 2 head administrator and the chief creative director.</p> <p>3 So that that CMO is a completely new 4 piece. It's not a clarifying piece, because there 5 was no mention of that in the application at all, 6 that the only discussion was an EMO, and that being 7 GES, and that the CMO that was mentioned in the 8 slide show, there was not one single mention of 9 that, quote, unquote, new nonprofit that was being 10 created. That didn't appear anywhere in the 11 application.</p> <p>12 So that is new; it's not clarifying.</p> <p>13 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: And I, 100 percent, 14 agree with you, Madam Chairperson. I just wanted to 15 say that it's always been a part of the EMO. It has 16 always been there. They have multiple CMOs within 17 their EMO; so -- but --</p> <p>18 THE CHAIR: But we can't vote on something 19 that doesn't exist in that paper. There was no 20 discussion, explanation or anything of that, so that 21 can't be a piece of the fabric of what we're looking 22 at to vote on because it doesn't exist in that 23 application.</p> <p>24 There's -- you know, you -- that's 25 where -- that's, once again, one of those areas</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 79</p> <p>1 only be evaluating our application based on its 2 June 1st status.</p> <p>3 And we definitely accept that, of course. 4 You know, that's -- it is -- we just -- I just see 5 it -- I think we see it -- these -- as clarifying 6 questions and drilling down and fleshing out the 7 model, because it's so difficult to put such a 8 complex model within the application.</p> <p>9 So I don't feel like we're giving new 10 information. I feel we're drilling down and 11 fleshing out information that, once one looks at it 12 more in a -- in that manner, there are certain 13 questions that come up. And we're trying to 14 answer -- we're not trying to give new information, 15 per se, but we're trying to clarify the model deeper 16 and fleshing out our intentions.</p> <p>17 THE CHAIR: Okay. So let me just be 18 clear. Nowhere in the application was there any 19 mention of a nonprofit CMO. And there is clearly a 20 distinction between a CMO and an EMO. And it was 21 clear throughout the application that you were 22 partnering with an EMO.</p> <p>23 So that clarifying the creation of a new 24 nonprofit, that being a CMO, is completely different 25 than -- and through the budget, it's clear that the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 81</p> <p>1 where there's -- where there was a missed 2 opportunity, because you had to see that that would 3 have -- that that would have to be a significant 4 concern for Commissioners. And a discussion of that 5 and a fleshing out of that would have been critical 6 for the independent reviewers and for us to be able 7 to see.</p> <p>8 But can I ask, before we go on -- because 9 I tried to -- I'm trying to multitask, and I tried 10 to Google the Denver immersion, and I couldn't find 11 it.</p> <p>12 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: The arts immersion? 13 THE CHAIR: Right. In Denver.</p> <p>14 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: It's on -- it's part 15 of the GES website.</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: Oh. But it -- so there's not 17 a separate --</p> <p>18 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: No, it does not --</p> <p>19 THE CHAIR: [Incomprehensible due to 20 simultaneous speech] or anything.</p> <p>21 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: It did at one point. 22 But when I left GES, Incorporated, AI, or Arts 23 Immersion's website, the information consolidated 24 into their corporate site.</p> <p>25 THE CHAIR: Okay. So there's not a -- I</p>

Page 82	Page 84
<p>1 guess I misunderstood then. I thought there was a 2 Denver arts immersion charter school. I thought 3 that's what you were referencing. 4 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: No. It was part of 5 GES. 6 THE CHAIR: Okay. Got you. Sorry. That 7 was just my -- my confusion. 8 So can you clarify a little bit about the 9 enrichment life coach? Are they certified 10 New Mexico -- or licensed New Mexico teachers? Or 11 no? 12 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: No, they are not -- 13 they are not licensed teachers. 14 And would you mind if I ask -- we have a 15 representative here from GES. His name is Randy 16 DeHoff. And since this is -- he is part of GES, do 17 you mind if I ask him to answer that question? 18 THE CHAIR: Fine. 19 MR. RANDY DeHOFF: Just very quickly. The 20 enrichment life coach teacher is a part of the model 21 that GES developed, of course, ten years ago, as we 22 started serving these truly at-risk teachers 23 [verbatim] -- what we prefer to call at-promise 24 students. 25 Their job is student engagement. They're</p>	<p>1 curriculum, overwhelmingly, the teachers, the school 2 districts, all brought forward the fact that the 3 curriculum has to reflect New Mexico. It can't just 4 be a canned curriculum. 5 I understand that Edmentum offers 6 curriculum throughout many states. And no one's 7 questioning the fact that they don't address core 8 curriculum. 9 But the fact that it's not administered 10 and being provided by New Mexico licensed teachers, 11 that it is this outside canned curriculum, I think, 12 once again, the opportunity was missed for the 13 school to be able to say, "Yes, we're using this, 14 but this is how -- this is an example of how we can 15 modify it so that it works better for New Mexico." 16 But I think I mentioned before. We know 17 that one size doesn't fit all. So a curriculum 18 isn't going to fit for everyone. And that's what 19 the expectation is for the school, through these 20 applications, to show us that they have that 21 understanding and the capacity to be able to do 22 that. 23 And we didn't see that. It's just this -- 24 you know, "Here it is, and they're going to go 25 online, and they're going to do it."</p>
<p>1 not academic teachers. They are -- some of them are 2 social workers. Some of them are paraprofessionals. 3 What we're looking for in that role is somebody who 4 can build those relationships with these students. 5 So that -- when we say they're certified, 6 they go through the training we've developed to give 7 them the skills. But, really, they need the 8 character makeup and some of those personal skills, 9 person-to-person skills, before we hire them. 10 Because you really can't teach that to somebody. 11 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. 12 MR. RANDY DeHOFF: Thank you. 13 THE CHAIR: So I just want to touch a 14 little bit -- Commissioner Voigt touched on it; I 15 think I did early on. But the Edmentum 16 curriculum -- and I understand that's separate 17 from -- that GES doesn't create that. I think we're 18 all familiar with Edmentum, because many school 19 districts do use it in some capacity. 20 But there's a number of us that have sat 21 through many Legislative Education Study Committee 22 meetings and other curriculum-type meetings. And it 23 has been clear that one of the concerns -- and when 24 the State, probably five or six years ago, started 25 to do some significant changes to its core</p>	<p>1 And I appreciate the -- the support that 2 life coaches are going to offer. But, once again, 3 that opportunity, as I talked about before, for that 4 blended learning, so that there's online, but 5 there's also the licensed teacher live there with 6 that student, as I said before, the LFC, the Special 7 Session, everyone has identified the learning losses 8 and the other losses that have taken place because 9 we've all been virtual. 10 And the fact that this education model is 11 all online, I think, is very challenging, especially 12 considering what we're moving out of. 13 And I think that's -- you mentioned in the 14 application that Generation Z likes to be 15 independent. I think part of our job is to -- and 16 that's why virtual learning works well, because 17 they're working there kind of alone, I think part of 18 our job is to make sure that students know how to 19 work collaboratively. 20 And I know they're going to get it in the 21 arts. But there's -- you know, I spent most of my 22 teaching career doing project-based learning. So 23 it's a -- it's a concern that the model only offers 24 that virtual opportunity. 25 Commissioners, any other questions?</p>
Page 83	Page 85

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 86</p> <p>1 Commissioner Armbruster?  2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Unmute. Okay.  3 Yeah. I just want to tell the Commission  4 what a great job you are doing on this special ed  5 issue. I'm usually the one who brings this up.  6 But -- so I have a number of little  7 questions here, and I hope I'm not repeating.  8 My background is in special ed as well,  9 for 40 years, from -- you know, the whole spectrum  10 of special education.  11 And I wanted to know what proportion of  12 special ed students do you expect, given the ZIP  13 code, I guess, because it's Albuquerque, that you  14 are going to be hoping to draw from?  15 So I guess you all can answer that  16 question? Or did you not hear me?  17 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Megan, would you like  18 to -- do you have -- I know that -- I know that -- I  19 can't answer that question 100 percent specifically.  20 But what we did was we -- we took an average of the  21 different surrounding school districts, and we are  22 assuming that we are going to fall within that  23 average as far as the amount of at-risk students.  24 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And that is?  25 THE CHAIR: I remember seeing it as well,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 88</p> <p>1 say that's also reflective of the direction that our  2 applicant team has taken in terms of its makeup. I  3 came on just before the application was submitted.  4 But I came on board because I have special expertise  5 reaching out within communities of color.  6 There are other members of the board that  7 have -- or the soon-to-be board -- that have a lot  8 of expertise in connection to organizations like the  9 Office of African-American Affairs, the New Mexican  10 Black Leadership Council, the African-American  11 Performing Arts Center in Albuquerque.  12 So our intent, because this is a lottery  13 process, is that we drive the number of applicants  14 from at-risk populations to be high. And that was  15 one of the things that we've just started talking  16 about.  17 But it's our intentionality to move in  18 that direction in the application process is just to  19 ensure that we have enough people from marginalized  20 communities that are engaged knowing about the  21 school, you know, are able to have town hall  22 meetings with us -- you know, part of this, too, we  23 called out in the application, is that we did not  24 have a significant amount of time before the State  25 closures to have town hall meetings.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 87</p> <p>1 but I don't remember the number.  2 MS. MEGAN GARRIGAN: And we understand  3 that it's difficult, and that these are just  4 projections, because we will be collaborating very  5 closely with our community members in order to  6 target at-risk youth. So this is not just a school  7 for students of one color. We -- we value and  8 strive to be a truly multicultural and  9 multidimensional school related to embracing  10 differences of students and their community and  11 cultural backgrounds.  12 So while we do have projections within our  13 application -- and I don't have that on hand, I'm  14 sorry. Maybe one of my team --  15 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I may have  16 missed it, too.  17 THE CHAIR: I'm trying to pull it up,  18 so --  19 MS. MEGAN GARRIGAN: And -- and just to  20 restate, it is difficult to have accurate  21 projections, because, again, we're not sure. But  22 rest assured, we will be targeting the at-risk  23 youth, particularly, because we want to have  24 education security for students in our community.  25 MS. DEBORAH SCHOENBAUM: I just want to</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 89</p> <p>1 So we're now having to find other ways to  2 reach out to these communities and make sure that  3 they're engaged. But I think we've been extremely  4 successful thus far, even in the limited outreach  5 that we've been able to do, to start making  6 connections within those communities. So that's  7 our -- that's our approach.  8 THE CHAIR: I want to thank you for the  9 pictures, because it was so nice to see groups of  10 people together, that it was, like -- it was like  11 nostalgia to look back at the pictures in those  12 applications. "Oh, remember when we were able to do  13 that?"  14 MS. DEBORAH SCHOENBAUM: Yeah, the way it  15 was.  16 THE CHAIR: But I just want to clarify, as  17 you go on with the special ed, there is a difference  18 between special ed population and at-risk  19 population. So I think Commissioner Armbruster is  20 asking about special ed in particular.  21 MS. DONNA WARREN: This is Donna. Just to  22 clarify a little bit, when we were building the  23 budget, the actual special ed rate for Rio Rancho  24 Public Schools is 16 percent. And our original  25 budget actually mirrored a 16 percent special ed</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 90</p> <p>1 rate.</p> <p>2 And when we began working with Betty, our</p> <p>3 budget consultant from the PED, she mentioned</p> <p>4 several things to us. And one was to not expect</p> <p>5 that high of a rate in our first couple of years of</p> <p>6 school. And so that is why, in our budget, you</p> <p>7 would see a smaller reflection.</p> <p>8 However, again, it would definitely depend</p> <p>9 on, you know, our 40-day enrollment. And, again,</p> <p>10 our school is targeting those children who might</p> <p>11 benefit the most from this type of model.</p> <p>12 So I just wanted to clarify why our</p> <p>13 percentage might not have been as high as the public</p> <p>14 schools that you were seeing.</p> <p>15 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And this is a</p> <p>16 question, I'm sure, that we have -- I don't recall</p> <p>17 in six years having ever asked, but I am going to do</p> <p>18 this, because I am familiar with New Mexico School</p> <p>19 for the Arts, which, of course, is different, in</p> <p>20 that you have to qualify to get in, and it draws</p> <p>21 from the entire state.</p> <p>22 So understanding those differences, one of</p> <p>23 the things that I recently learned from them was</p> <p>24 that over 40 percent of their students are LBGTQ.</p> <p>25 And I'm wondering how you would be addressing their</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 92</p> <p>1 groups and support groups that actually serve them.</p> <p>2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: There will be</p> <p>3 these clubs at school?</p> <p>4 MS. DEBORAH SCHOENBAUM: Well, we have --</p> <p>5 in California, it was, typically, at least in our</p> <p>6 county and in San Francisco and in other counties of</p> <p>7 California, that there were LGBTQ support groups</p> <p>8 that met as official clubs on campus. And they were</p> <p>9 primarily focused on giving self-support to each</p> <p>10 other of things that they were facing in the school</p> <p>11 environment, and also to just be there as a -- you</p> <p>12 know, as a support system, if you will, within the</p> <p>13 school.</p> <p>14 But we take that to the next level as an</p> <p>15 organization and said -- and started talking to them</p> <p>16 about self-advocacy. And we created the first-ever</p> <p>17 county-wide Commission that had members of every</p> <p>18 school involved.</p> <p>19 It is also significant to say one of the</p> <p>20 things that we've been looking at is using Hart's</p> <p>21 Ladder of Engagement, which is all about</p> <p>22 self-advocacy and working at a level where young</p> <p>23 people are able to develop their own expertise</p> <p>24 around what systemically is affecting them, and how</p> <p>25 to go to school administrations, to their -- to</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 91</p> <p>1 particular needs, because I suspect, when you're</p> <p>2 talking about art and dance and music, that it would</p> <p>3 be a very typical population, as well as, by the</p> <p>4 way, special ed. Because, oftentimes, they have</p> <p>5 that extra skill that others don't have.</p> <p>6 MS. DEBORAH SCHOENBAUM: Right. So that's</p> <p>7 being fleshed out as well. But I will say that</p> <p>8 another thing that I bring to the table is I used to</p> <p>9 be a senior director for an organization called</p> <p>10 Youth Leadership Institute in California, and I ran</p> <p>11 the county-wide programs there. And one of them was</p> <p>12 working with the LGBTQ youth commission that we</p> <p>13 created in Marin County, California, in order to</p> <p>14 give student voices to that population.</p> <p>15 We found that one of the most effective</p> <p>16 ways to reach those students was to actually connect</p> <p>17 with their in-school clubs and support groups and</p> <p>18 actually sit down with them and talk about, you</p> <p>19 know, the various concerns that they had within the</p> <p>20 traditional school models that we could help them</p> <p>21 with in terms of advocacy for LGBTQ youth.</p> <p>22 So we have that expertise embodied in me</p> <p>23 and others that can actually reach out to those</p> <p>24 populations within New Mexico in really authentic</p> <p>25 ways. And that's our goal is to go directly to the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 93</p> <p>1 others in power and talk about changes that they</p> <p>2 would like to see within their school.</p> <p>3 So that's a part of the school engagement</p> <p>4 that we've already, as a group, embraced that we</p> <p>5 want to incorporate into how we run the school, is</p> <p>6 making sure that these young people, especially from</p> <p>7 marginalized communities, have an opportunity to</p> <p>8 voice their concerns, but also to identify projects</p> <p>9 and things that they can do about them.</p> <p>10 So it's all about self-empowerment. And</p> <p>11 that's really high within the LGBTQ community.</p> <p>12 Thank you.</p> <p>13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Thank you. The</p> <p>14 other thing I wanted to see -- so the -- I just want</p> <p>15 to clarify this, actually, more. So the kids are</p> <p>16 never really alone in a room with a computer. There</p> <p>17 really is an adult, not necessarily a licensed</p> <p>18 New Mexico teacher, but someone. But there is also</p> <p>19 a special education licensed New Mexico teacher who</p> <p>20 is giving services via the IEP, however that is,</p> <p>21 on -- as a pullout? Or how is that going to occur?</p> <p>22 MS. MEGAN GARRIGAN: That's why our</p> <p>23 flexible model comes into play. Because it really</p> <p>24 does depend on the individual students. So we have</p> <p>25 the flexibility to provide a pullout service if</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 94</p> <p>1 the -- if the curriculum needs to be modified or 2 differentiated in certain ways. 3 Otherwise, there's other supports that can 4 be provided via, you know, the elective [verbatim] 5 life coach teacher, or in collaboration with 6 ancillary providers, in order to meet those specific 7 needs of the students. But it will be according to 8 their IEP. 9 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: And as far as the 10 actual process, we're following the same model in 11 Denver, where we bring in the enrichment life coach 12 teachers; we bring in the community artist 13 contributors and the family and collaborate and 14 bring -- and come to terms with a proper way of 15 addressing any -- anything that needs to be 16 addressed in regards to special education. 17 So there's -- and it's also -- the online 18 teachers also participate in that as well. So we 19 have -- we have the art teachers, the ELCTs, the 20 online teachers, who all participate in that 21 meeting. 22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So when you -- 23 this is what I suspect. Of course, I don't know 24 this for sure. But I'm going to suspect that a 25 number of your sixth-graders will come in reading on</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 96</p> <p>1 together. 2 And it -- a lot of students elected to 3 soar forward in their studies so that they can then 4 do some concurrent enrollment courses. And I would 5 say about a fourth of our population from Arts 6 Immersion in Denver actually graduated with an 7 Associate's degree. 8 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. Thank 9 you. 10 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Yeah. 11 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Armbruster, do 12 you have anything else? 13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I think I'm 14 finished for right now. Thank you. 15 THE CHAIR: Thanks. Commissioner Davis? 16 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Hi. Yes. Well, I'm 17 wondering if I'm understanding this correctly. It 18 sounds to me like you want a charter school, but you 19 don't want to provide the services, that you're 20 subletting the services to another entity. 21 So have I got that correct? 22 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: I would say that 23 it's -- it's not true that we don't want to. I 24 would say that in order for us to spend a 25 half-a-million dollars on art, our art program, we</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 95</p> <p>1 a second-grade level. Those might be the advanced 2 students, even. 3 But how will you address that, getting 4 those kids to be able to read at an on-grade level 5 while still getting content. 6 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: We had very good 7 success with that by using Reading Plus. We start 8 wherever that student is as far as their reading 9 level is concerned, and that's where they start in 10 that program. 11 And, in Denver, we had a lot of success by 12 getting -- getting our students to be at the reading 13 level that is appropriate for their grade. And so 14 that -- that's another -- you know, it's a -- it's 15 not only remedial; actually, it helps the student 16 get past their grade-level reading. 17 So it's not like your -- it's not just a 18 remedial program that's going to help those, to 19 target those who are below their reading level. 20 So, actually, in Denver, we've been very 21 successful with this model. And we had quite a few 22 students graduate high school with Associate's 23 degrees, because the customizable curriculum through 24 Edmentum -- and at that time we were also using 25 Edmentum and Edgenuity. We were using both</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 97</p> <p>1 have found a way that allows us to do that and still 2 remain in a public school budget. 3 And the way forward by doing that would be 4 to work together with a management organization 5 so -- so that we can, instead of having a full-blown 6 HR department and all these different services that 7 we would need to be able to run our school, we are 8 outsourcing them, if you will, to responsible 9 parties and at a fraction of the cost so that we can 10 use taxpayers' money to highly educate our students 11 in different art forms, which we find very valuable 12 for their academic scores. 13 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Thank you for that 14 explanation. 15 I'm kind of suspicious of the model. So 16 I'll just stop talking. 17 THE CHAIR: Thank you. 18 Commissioner Caballero? 19 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yes. Thank you, 20 Madam Chair. 21 My question is, I thought you had a 22 charter school in Colorado. But it turns out 23 that -- that you -- you were involved with -- with 24 the -- with the group that you're trying to get now. 25 What was your -- your involvement? How</p>

Page 98

1 were you involved with them in Colorado?  
 2 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: I was involved -- I  
 3 actually created a lot of the arts integrated  
 4 curriculum. And I was -- worked together -- working  
 5 together with certain persons at the State of  
 6 Colorado to be able to create arts-integrated  
 7 curriculum that would fulfill all of the educational  
 8 standards that were laid out by the State of  
 9 Colorado.  
 10 So that was one -- that was one of my --  
 11 that was one of -- in my job description to do that.  
 12 But I -- we also -- this was -- this  
 13 particular model doesn't really exist. So we had  
 14 a -- it was called a "contract school." So we  
 15 contracted with a school district, and they -- and  
 16 they did a lot of our office -- behind-the-scenes  
 17 sort of office work and reporting and everything.  
 18 And they would share, then, a certain  
 19 amount of the revenue that they got from the state.  
 20 In Colorado, it's called "per-pupil revenue." And  
 21 we would be able to run the program through --  
 22 through the collaboration with the -- with a school  
 23 district in Colorado.  
 24 And GlobalEd Solutions was the -- the --  
 25 brought to bear all of the professional and legal

Page 99

1 services in order for this contract to come to  
 2 fruition.  
 3 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: So I take it you  
 4 were employed by the organization in Colorado --  
 5 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Correct.  
 6 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: -- to form -- to  
 7 do whatever -- build the model.  
 8 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: That's correct.  
 9 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Were you employed  
 10 by the organization?  
 11 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Yes. I was employed  
 12 by the organization -- so the organization hired me  
 13 to work in collaboration with them to create this  
 14 model. And then it was authorized through a  
 15 contract that GES wrote to a school district.  
 16 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: So the question,  
 17 again, is are you still employed by -- by the  
 18 organization?  
 19 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Oh, no. Oh, no. No,  
 20 I'm not. I am not an employee of GlobalEd Solutions  
 21 and haven't been an employee since -- I don't  
 22 know -- six or seven years now.  
 23 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: And I'll tell you  
 24 why. My experience with outside groups -- and  
 25 that's why we -- we stay away from that -- is that a

Page 100

1 lot of money is spent for the outside group. And so  
 2 we begin to cut corners of delivery services and  
 3 teaching our children.  
 4 And we've had the misfortune of removing  
 5 charters, because we were never -- I was -- I asked  
 6 the question constantly of these organizations that  
 7 lost their charter. "How much are you paying, per  
 8 pupil, to the organization?"  
 9 I never got an answer.  
 10 "How many students are under the teacher's  
 11 supervision in computers?"  
 12 "How much is their classroom?"  
 13 And they never answered.  
 14 And so it became obvious to me that it --  
 15 it was a system where most of the money just went  
 16 out. And I'm not saying that's yours.  
 17 But I'm not convinced -- I can tell you --  
 18 I can tell you, I'm not convinced that 100 percent  
 19 virtual [verbatim] -- computer-based, especially in  
 20 the middle schools, is good for our students. I  
 21 have not been convinced for a long time. I'm still  
 22 not convinced.  
 23 When I read through your application, I  
 24 was confused as to what you had. But there was a  
 25 one-liner at the very end that stated that it was

Page 101

1 100 percent virtual. And that -- that puts me in an  
 2 awkward situation, because I do have this challenge  
 3 that -- that I need to be -- that I need to  
 4 overcome. And I haven't -- I haven't reached that.  
 5 The other thing is the outreach. I know  
 6 that we were challenged by the pandemic. But did  
 7 the Rio Rancho Public Schools know that you were  
 8 organizing this charter? And what was their  
 9 concern? Or not. They were?  
 10 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Actually, I'd be  
 11 really happy -- we actually met with Dr. Sue  
 12 Cleveland twice, and her staff. And they were --  
 13 and I quote -- extremely excited about the model.  
 14 And then I can even share the correspondence --  
 15 e-mail correspondence that we had with  
 16 Dr. Cleveland.  
 17 And the -- and then it -- and then there  
 18 was, obviously, the pandemic, and that hit directly  
 19 after that. In fact, we actually met with  
 20 Dr. Cleveland and her staff after the Rio Rancho  
 21 School District closed -- officially closed down.  
 22 And she brought her entire staff in, because she  
 23 loved the model. And she was saying, "We would love  
 24 to have this model, actually, at our school, too,"  
 25 you know?

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 102</p> <p>1           And so we actually had quite a good 2 response from Dr. Sue Cleveland. And we, at the 3 same time, were really shaking our limbs as we 4 walked in, because we know that she does not like 5 charter schools at all. 6           So -- but there was another thing -- the 7 only thing that I can really help to resolve some of 8 this concern is that I did this model, and it was 9 very popular. And I even have video materials of 10 student testimonies and things like that from this 11 model in Denver. 12           And I know it's hard to -- it's definitely 13 hard to wrap your mind around. And I know that 14 there's a lot of criminal EMOs out there. 15           But this EMO that I worked with in Denver, 16 they have been -- they have had about -- over 17 75 percent students who are at-risk, who were 18 truant, who have been in the criminal -- the justice 19 system already. 20           And it has been -- it has been proven to 21 work significantly for -- for children, for young 22 adults who are not -- who are just not making it, 23 who aren't making it. 24           And the key to this, and what we're -- 25 we're -- I'd really like to emphasize, because I'm</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 104</p> <p>1           as -- you know, in her under- -- or his -- 2 undergraduate degree, they may have gotten a -- a 3 minor in theater. So that is the only qualification 4 that that person would need in order to teach at a 5 school -- to teach theater at a school. 6           And our standard is much higher than that. 7 We -- we -- we're not doing it that way. So it 8 costs -- the expense involved does not work to -- to 9 build and to offer this type of experience for 10 students. We cannot do it without private 11 donations. 12           And as soon as we get into private 13 donations, then we have people who feel they own the 14 school. And we don't want anyone who's giving us a 15 donation to -- to be in a position to strong-arm 16 themselves into changing the program through a 17 governing board. 18           The only way to do this that really works 19 is through an Education Management Organization, or 20 a Charter Management Organization, because they can 21 consolidate -- just like Walmart is going to sell 22 things cheaper than if you go to your mom-and-pop 23 store on the corner. 24           And it's -- and that allows us to -- to 25 bring this extra half-a-million dollars into art</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 103</p> <p>1           hearing, again, that -- that there is a -- they're 2 never going to be alone, and they're never going to 3 be sitting at their computers, and -- 4           COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: The -- 5           MS. KAREN WOERNER: I'm sorry, Stephen. I 6 think I mistakenly hit your mute button on you. I 7 was trying to mute the sound in the background, and 8 it was yours. 9           COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: The last thing, 10 Madam Chair, just -- if you're so well-versed in how 11 this thing was done in Colorado, why do you need 12 the -- the national organization, the for-profit 13 organization, to be able to do it? 14           We have schools that have developed their 15 systems and done very well in the arts. And they're 16 not paying out anything. 17           MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Yes. I understand 18 that -- the model is different in really how we 19 approach the arts. We have three hours of art 20 professionals coming in to teach our students. 21           And there is -- there is an expense 22 involved with that. It's different than -- you 23 know, if you have a -- like, a theater teacher. So 24 if a theater teacher is a licensed New Mexico 25 teacher. And that teacher might teach math, and</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 105</p> <p>1           education, that if we did not use them, we would not 2 have. And that's sort of the reason why. 3           COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: (Indicates.) 4           THE CHAIR: Okay. Commissioners, I'm 5 going to remind everyone that we also have our 6 monthly meeting in, like, 20 minutes. 7           So I don't want to rush everyone. But 8 if -- you know, I think the last thing I'm going to 9 quickly say is I was a little concerned when the 10 idea was that we're going to outsource the 11 education. That's a comment that concerns me. 12 Because our primary purpose is to educate New Mexico 13 students. That's what we're here for. 14           And the idea that it's -- it's the -- to 15 do it economically, we have to outsource the 16 education component, the academic education piece, 17 that's -- that's where I -- I've had an overriding 18 concern all along with this, outside of the 19 partnership with a for-profit. 20           I'll just quickly -- I want to make 21 sure -- I know that the building is being leased, 22 and the individual was a founder, was going to be on 23 the GC, but is now not going to take place because 24 of that conflict. That individual is not going to 25 have in any role within the school at all; correct?</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 106</p> <p>1 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: That's correct.  2 MS. MICHELLE BOUTROS: That is correct. I  3 am that individual.  4 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Armbruster and I,  5 I think it was our second meeting, unfortunately, we  6 went into a revocation hearing. And that was one of  7 the items, that a founder was the lessor of the  8 building.  9 So we have this cautionary eye when we  10 read anything about that. And I appreciate that  11 they're not going to be on the board.  12 And I understand. Because we didn't have  13 to have any conversation about a facility because it  14 had been a charter school. That's great that you  15 had that opportunity to move into -- or possibly  16 move into -- the old ASK Academy. That doesn't  17 usually happen that often.  18 So that's very fortuitous, because that's  19 usually one of the challenges -- biggest challenges  20 that we have with schools.  21 So if there are no other questions, I'm  22 going to close by reminding people that any member  23 of the public, including the applicants, may submit  24 written input following this hearing. Written  25 comments can be sent to the Commission via</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 108</p> <p>1 So I thank you so much. If there are any  2 questions regarding the hearing or anything that we  3 can answer now?  4 If not, we thank you, everyone here, for  5 your time this morning and all the time that you've  6 put in.  7 Stephen?  8 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Yes, Madam Chair, is  9 there a -- you had mentioned approval, denied. Or  10 is there approval on conditions? Is that also a  11 possibility?  12 THE CHAIR: It is. And I'm sorry. I  13 lumped that in with approvals. Because you would  14 still be approved, but there may be conditions on  15 that approval, yes.  16 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Okay.  17 THE CHAIR: But it's still ultimately an  18 approval.  19 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Okay. Yes.  20 THE CHAIR: Because even if you are  21 approved even without conditions, you still have to  22 go through that Implementation Year and still get  23 the approval for the Commencement of Operations.  24 So -- and if there were conditions, of  25 course, there would be timelines that would be</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 107</p> <p>1 charterschool@ state.nm.us.  2 I do believe that's on the public notice.  3 Correct, Karen? Or Bev?  4 MS. FRIEDMAN: It is. It is, Madam Chair.  5 THE CHAIR: It can also be sent via snail  6 mail. And all the comments -- and that would go to  7 the Charter School Division, to PED at -- on Don  8 Gaspar. But all comments have to be in by 5:00 this  9 Thursday, which would be the 23rd, because it's  10 three days -- you have up to three days to -- for  11 the public to provide comment.  12 The Public Education Commission will be  13 meeting on August 21st. Am I correct with that  14 date?  15 Yes, August 21st, 2020, to render their  16 decision on approval or denial of this charter  17 school application.  18 Once again, we thank you for everything  19 that you've done. We -- as I said before, we know  20 this is not an easy task. This is not an easy  21 application. We don't make it easy on purpose,  22 because we're -- you're asking us to allow you to  23 educate New Mexico students. And we take that very  24 seriously, as well as the fiduciary responsibility  25 of New Mexico monies.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 109</p> <p>1 established with those conditions for the -- for the  2 applicant team to then meet those conditions.  3 MR. STEPHEN WYNNE: Okay. Thank you.  4 THE CHAIR: Okay?  5 MS. MICHELLE BOUTROS: Just a quick  6 question.  7 THE CHAIR: Sure.  8 MS. MICHELLE BOUTROS: So if approved with  9 conditions, any information that we have learned  10 thus far will, then, according to the conditions,  11 like you just stated, then we have time to make all  12 those changes in order to be in compliance with the  13 PEC; is that correct?  14 THE CHAIR: I'm not 100 percent sure. You  15 need to clarify that just a touch. Or maybe I just  16 need -- if the Commission voted to approve, the  17 Commission would clearly identify those areas where  18 the school would have -- what those improvements --  19 where those areas are of improvement and what would  20 need to be done and by what time the applicant team  21 would have to show the Commission that they have  22 completed and fulfilled that.  23 Does that help? Or not?  24 MS. MICHELLE BOUTROS: Yes. And so within  25 our model, being that we say we're flexible, there</p>

1 are things that we are flexible on. So I am just  
 2 putting that out there as well.  
 3 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.  
 4 Thank you, everyone. Have a good rest of  
 5 your afternoon, and we'll see you in August.  
 6 Commissioners, I'll see you soon.  
 7 (Proceedings adjourned at 11:45 a.m.)  
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1 RECEIPT  
 2 JOB NUMBER: 3819N CC Date: July 20, 2020  
 3 PROCEEDINGS: Community Input Hearing Proceedings  
 4 CASE CAPTION: In Re: Aspire Integrated Arts  
 5 Institute  
 6 \*\*\*\*\*  
 7 ATTORNEY: MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN, NMPED  
 8 DOCUMENT: Transcript / Exhibits / Disks / Other \_\_\_\_  
 9 DATE DELIVERED: \_\_\_\_\_ DEL'D BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
 10 REC'D BY: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 11 \*\*\*\*\*  
 12 ATTORNEY:  
 13 DOCUMENT: Transcript / Exhibits / Disks / Other \_\_\_\_  
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1 BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION  
 2 STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
 3  
 4  
 5 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE  
 6 I, Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR, CCR #219, Certified  
 7 Court Reporter in the State of New Mexico, do hereby  
 8 certify that the foregoing pages constitute a true  
 9 transcript of proceedings had before the said NEW  
 10 MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, held in the State  
 11 of New Mexico, via video teleconference, in the  
 12 matter therein stated.  
 13 In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my  
 14 hand on July 28, 2020.  
 15  
 16  
 17  
 18 \_\_\_\_\_  
 19 Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219  
 20 BEAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.  
 21 201 Third Street, NW, Suite 1630  
 22 Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102  
 23  
 24  
 25 Job No.: 3819N (CC)

## 1 BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

2 STATE OF NEW MEXICO

3  
4  
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15  
16  
17 *Cynthia Chapman*

18 Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219  
19 BEAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.  
20 201 Third Street, NW, Suite 1630  
21 Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

22  
23  
24  
25 Job No.: 3819N (CC)

SANTA FE OFFICE  
119 East Marcy, Suite 110  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
(505) 989-4949  
FAX (505) 820-6349

**BEAN & ASSOCIATES, Inc.**  
PROFESSIONAL COURT  
REPORTING SERVICE

MAIN OFFICE  
201 Third NW, Suite 1630  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
(505) 843-9494  
FAX (505) 843-9492  
1-800-669-9492  
e-mail: info@litsupport.com