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Preliminary Analysis of Renewal Application and Site Visit

School Name: J. Paul Taylor Academy

School Address: 402 W. Court Avenue, Building 2, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Head Administrator: Eric Ahner

Business Manager: Vicki Chavez

Authorized Grade Levels: Kindergarten – Grade 8

Authorized Enrollment: 200

Contract Term: July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2021

Mission: *“J. Paul Taylor Academy, in alliance with families at the school and community, will offer a rigorous, well-rounded Spanish Acquisition, project based instructional program in a small school to promote academic excellence for the diverse student of the Las Cruces area”.*

Summary of Performance

Academic. The school's academic performance has been evaluated under two different accountability systems throughout the term of its contract; A-F School Grading Report in school years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 & the New Mexico System of School Support and Accountability in school years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.

J. Paul Taylor Academy (JPTA) has maintained stable academic performance over the course of its contract term. Conversely, JPTA has demonstrated a slight decline in its Reading proficiency from the 2016-17 to 2018-19 academic years, while demonstrating consistent Math proficiency when comparing the same academic years ranging from 31% to 28% back to 31% proficient. In 2018-19, JPTA demonstrated 43.0.0% Reading proficiency compared to the State's 34.0% overall Reading proficiency rate, while the school's Math proficiency rate was 31.0% compared to the State proficiency rate of 21.0%; performing well-above the State Proficiency percentages in both subjects.

The school's Overall Academic Performance during the contract term was a **C letter grade, C letter grade, and Spotlight School** designation, respectively. The school also received **designations of excellence** in science proficiency and English learner progress in 2018-2019.

The school has demonstrated a slight fluctuation in performance with its mission-specific goals, earning an overall rating of "*Falls Far Below Standard*" during the 2016-17 academic year, an overall "*Exceeds Standard*" rating for 2017-18, and an overall "*Meets Standard*" rating during the 2018-19 academic year, respectively.

Financial. Over the course of the contract, the school received six (6) audit findings derived from published audited financial statements from 2016-2017 through 2018-2019. The findings consist of no repeat findings, one (1) material weakness, one (1) significant deficiency and four (4) noncompliance. In the most recent reporting year, 2018-2019, the school received three (3) audit findings classified as noncompliance/other matter, none of which were repeat findings. J Paul Taylor Academy is on a quarterly reporting schedule. The business manager is responsive and reports in a timely manner. Smaller corrections on reports have been required to achieve approvable budget status.

J Paul Taylor Academy's membership mirrors approved membership capacity, which implies the school's current leadership aligns with the school's initial membership goals. The school's membership is steady and consistent indicating the school's financial outlook and viability are positive. The school's leadership prioritizes spending in the classroom evidenced by stable percentages >65% of instructional cost.

Currently, this LEA has no financial concerns.

Organizational. During the most recent year evaluated (2019-20), the school did not receive any "*Falls Far Below Standard*" indicator ratings. JPTA received five (5) "*Working to Meet Standard*" indicator ratings; two (2) of which were a repeated "*Working to Meet Standard*" rating for the Educational Plan: protecting the rights of English Language Learners and Business Management and Oversight: meeting financial reporting and compliant requirements indicators. JPTA has demonstrated consistent improvement in its organizational framework from the first year of its contract (2016-17) earning five (5) "*Falls Far Below Standard*" ratings and nine (9) "*Working to Meet Standard*" ratings to the most recent year (2019-20) receiving five (5) "*Working to Meet Standard*" ratings with the rest rated as "*Meets Standard*".

PART A:	Data analysis provided by CSD Please see Part A - Summary Data Report based on accountability and reporting data from Current Charter Contract term
PART B:	Progress Report provided by the School Please see Part B for the school's self-report on the progress of meeting the academic performance, financial compliance and governance responsibilities of the charter school, including achieving the goals, objectives, student performance outcomes, state standards of excellence and other terms of the charter contract, including the accountability requirements set forth in the Assessment and Accountability Act during the Current Charter Term.

<p>The PED team reviewed the school's Part B (Progress Report) and conducted a virtual renewal site visit on October 27, 2020. <i>Ratings are based on the rubric provided in the application.</i></p>

Section	Indicator	Final Rating
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE		
1.a	Department's Standards of Excellence— Overall NM School Grade 2016-2017: <i>C letter-grade</i> 2017-2018: <i>C letter-grade</i> NM System of School Support and Accountability 2018-2019: <i>Spotlight School designation with designations of excellence in science proficiency and English learner progress</i> 2019-2020: <i>No data available for schools</i>	<i>Meets the Standard</i>
1.b	Specific Charter Goals Schools that have met all of their school specific goals in each year of the contract term do NOT provide a narrative. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate Reading progress grades K-4 • Adequate Reading progress grades 5-8 • Math growth and proficiency grades K-5 • Math growth and proficiency grades 6-8 	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE		
2.a	Audit Schools that have received no material weakness, significant deficiency, or repeat audit findings in each of the annual audits during the term of the contract do NOT complete this Section. <i>[Organizational Performance Framework 2a and 2b]</i> <i>[Organizational Performance Framework 2a-2e]</i>	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
2.b	Board of Finance Schools that have maintained all Board of Finance authority during the entire term of the contract do NOT complete this Section. If required to complete this section, provide a narrative explaining the actions taken (improved practices and outcomes).	<i>Meets the Standard</i>

2c	Additional Financial Information					
	J PAUL TAYLOR					
	MEMBERSHIP					
	Enrollment CAP	200				
	2021 Budgeted MEM	200				
	Actual 40 Day 10-01-2020	200				
	Funded Membership	200	200	200	200	
	OPERATIONAL EXPENSES vs. OPERATIONAL REVENUE					
			2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
	Direct Inst	1000	818,630	910,729	968,085	997,610
	Student Sup	2100	29,392	53,769	43,811	54,200
	Instrtnl Sup	2200	5,480	6,467	8,083	9,718
	Central Admin	2300	28,426	210,637	211,620	219,247
	School Admin	2400	145,787	0	41,507	52,864
	Central Svcs	2500	50,328	64,764	71,746	77,186
Maint/Ops	2600	66,702	81,001	83,798	86,404	
Food Svc	3100	30,965	38,202	41,740	45,092	
Other	other					
Total Operating Exp		1,175,709	1,365,569	1,470,390	1,542,322	
Total Operational Rev		1,296,236	1,385,817	1,457,101	1,614,895	
Surplus		120,527	20,248	(13,289)	72,573	
		10%	1%	-1%	5%	
Year End CASH balance		119,439	139,686	126,398	198,971	
DISTRIBUTION OF EXPENSES						
Instructional Cost		853,501	970,965	1,019,980	1,061,528	
% of total operating exp		73%	71%	69%	69%	
Per student membership		\$4,268	\$4,855	\$5,100	\$5,308	
Admin Support		224,541	275,401	324,873	349,298	
% of total operating exp		19%	20%	22%	23%	
Per student membership		\$1,123	\$1,377	\$1,624	\$1,746	

CONTRACTUAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND GOVERNANCE

3.a	<p>Material Terms</p> <p>All schools must provide a response for this section of the application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commitment to Healthy Life Skills is a pillar of the school's educational program. • Project-Based Learning is implemented through experimenting with true student leadership, sharing failures and successes, discussing options to identify best solutions to problems, negotiating, compromising, and, ultimately, supporting each other. • Monthly Professional development specifically in the area of Project Based Learning and Spanish Language Acquisition for those teachers working in the Spanish Language Acquisition program. • Parents J. Paul Taylor Academy is committed to fostering and developing at least 3 strong community partnerships. • participate in school-wide committees such as Parent Advisory Committee, Academic Oversight Committee, and Gifted Advisory Committee. J. Paul Taylor Academy will also host 3 Family Nights (in a variety of formats) that inform parents about various aspects of the school to include Project Based Learning and Spanish Language Acquisition. 	<p><i>Meets the Standard</i></p>
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3.b	Organizational Performance Framework Schools that do not have any repeated “working to meet” ratings or any “falls far below” ratings on the most recent organizational performance framework evaluation do NOT complete this Section. <i>[Organizational Performance Framework 1b-1g, 4a-4c, and 5a-5c]</i> <i>[Organizational Performance Framework 1b-1f, 4a-4e, and 5a-5d]</i>	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
	Any OCR complaints or formal special education complaints, identify those, provide all communication related to those, and describe the current status in an Appendix, referenced in narrative by name.	<i>None Known</i>
3.c	Governance Responsibilities All schools must provide a response for this section of the application. <i>[Organizational Performance Framework 3a and 3b]</i> <i>[Organizational Performance Framework 3a-3c]</i>	<i>Meets the Standard</i>

Parts C, D, and E were provided by the school as part of the renewal application.

PART C:	Financial Statement A financial statement that discloses the costs of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that is understandable to the general public that allows comparison of costs to other schools or comparable organizations and that is in a format required by the department.
PART D	Petitions 1. A petition in support of the charter school renewing its charter status signed by not less than sixty-five percent of the employees in the charter school, with certified affidavit. Number: <u>32 out of 32</u> Percentage: <u>100%</u> 2. A petition in support of the charter school renewing its charter status signed by at least seventy-five percent of the households whose children are enrolled in the charter school, with certified affidavit. Number: <u>131</u> Percentage: <u>91%</u>
PART E:	Description of the Charter School Facilities and Assurances A description of the charter school facilities and assurances that the facilities are in compliance with the requirements of Section 22-8B-4.2 NMSA 1978. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A copy of the facility lease agreement as Appendix D A narrative description of its facilities and attach the school’s Facility Master Plan, if available, as Appendix H Attach a copy of the building E Occupancy certificate(s) Dated: <u>11 MAR 2015</u> Maximum Occupancy (if listed): <u>Not listed on Certificate</u> Most recent facility NMCI Score <u>2.35%</u> indicating that the school meets the requirements of Subsection C of 22-8B-4.2 NMSA 1978 If the charter school is relocating or expanding, provide assurances that the facilities comply with the requirements of Section 22-8B-4.2 NMSA 1978 _____ Public (Cert A) _____ Private (Cert B) _____ Foundation (Cert C)
PART F:	Amendment Requests 16 MAR 2018 PEC APPROVED Amendment Request: “I move that the PEC approve J Paul Taylor is requesting to amend Section 8.01 related to the operational structure. The school is proposing to make changes to the length of school year/length of school day, instructional hours.” 11 MAY 2018 PEC APPROVED Amendment Request: “I move to approve the amendment presented by J Paul Taylor Academy to add mission specific indicators for Spanish Language Acquisition as required per the school’s contract and school specific terms.”

J. Paul Taylor Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews were conducted on October 27, 2020 via the Zoom Meeting platform. The participants included six (6) parents, more than ten (10+) students, three (3) Governing Council members, and ten (10) staff members.

Parents of students attending J. Paul Taylor Academy were drawn to the school because of the Spanish language program, music program and the community feel of the school. One parent commented that the parents may like the school even more than their children. The parents cited the project-based learning style of the school with enabling their child to grow, thrive, and value different cultures and people. Some mentioned that their draw to the school has changed over time and grown into an appreciation of how the school has prepared their students to be successful beyond JPTA. All of them commented on the fact that all of the adults in the school, including parent volunteers, know all of the students which creates a supportive, community feel. When asked about the JPTA teachers, the parents commented on the wonderful job they do of thinking outside the box to ensure the students feel engaged in their lessons. Parents felt that the staff and teachers do a good job at keeping them informed about what is going on with their students via regular email communications. Parents noted that their students want to go to school and that they, the students, mentor and help each other navigate through life. There is a very active parent teacher association (PTA) that acts as a fundraiser and spirit club. The PTA reached out to NMSU departments of music and arts to connect JPTA students with college students to encourage the JPTA students to continue practicing in isolation. The PTA has also instigated a “try-athon” to encourage the students to try a little harder every day.

There was a mixture of students who have been with the school since a young age and those who joined at middle school with a variety of ages, from students currently in kindergarten to eighth graders. The overwhelming consensus was that the academics and small environment of the school were why they choose JPTA. Many students spoke of not having to worry about being bullied and of how connected they feel to one another even during this pandemic. The students expressed how they feel the tight community empowers them to instigate student-led initiatives and to nip any attention getters/mischief makers in the bud. They expressly wanted to make sure that we understood that they don't perceive these mischief makers as bad kids. The students spoke of their healthy lunches and that extra food goes into a bin and is fed to farm animals at various students' homes. The students mentioned enjoying being exposed to all sorts of different cultures, learning how to collaborate, blend ideas, garden, and be a valued member of their community. Students expressed that they get daily updates from their teachers on how they are doing academically and that it is easy to get extra help from their teachers. When asked what they would change about the school, one student said she wished the school went through high school, another mentioned the desire for more sports, and the group was divided on their appreciation of being required to wear uniforms. One student, who joined at middle school, told us how he felt that JPTA offers him a stronger academic program. When he was asked how it was to transition into a school with such a strong community, he replied that he just felt welcome. His classmates started sharing how happy they are to have him as a new friend.

Three of the six board members present for the interview all expressed full support for the mission and their sense of duty to give back to their community as reasons that they decided to serve on the board. The board president stated that the board's main purpose is to ensure the school's sustainability through the oversight of the school's finances and to continue the legacy of J. Paul Taylor. Their biggest lever to ensure the mission of the school was being implemented was the oversight of the head administrator. This includes, but was not limited to, monthly reports on the project-based learning and how professional development is implemented. The board conducts a mid-year and end-of-year

evaluation of the head administrator. The board mentioned the lessons learned from the recent head administrator turn-over, including their role in finding the money within the budget to provide an assistant to the head. They have also implemented more feedback opportunities for the board and head administrator in order to strengthen both roles. The board president spoke of how the board has a strong committee structure and how the committees are beginning to step up the level of committee work that is done between monthly meetings. The finance committee meets and reports to the full board monthly and the full board gets those reports prior to their meetings, which enables them to be better prepared with any questions. The head of the finance committee mentioned concerns over how the statewide budget cuts will impact next year, but that this year's finances are on track. The board members had a laundry list of school strengths but recognize that there is always room for improvement and that the Spanish acquisition program has been the main focus of attention for improvement over the last number of years. The board evaluates themselves during their annual board retreat in June. They also review end-of-year data during the June retreat to investigate any issues or problems.

The teachers were an enthusiastic group including a teacher who moved across the state in order to work at the school and a parent with a degree in Physiology and a special needs student at the school who now teaches at the school. There were teachers who have been with the school since its inception to staff who have been there two years. They all expressed a love of project-based teaching, close-knit community, diversity of students, supportive parents, and emphasis on innovation. They spoke of how the remote learning has enabled them to deepen their ability to differentiate for each student. The teachers expect the students to be learning and using Spanish and spoke of the creative and real-world-scenario ways that students practice. They are proud that their students are engaged in their learning, including developing community based projects that the children then share with the entire school. The teachers talked about how the environment of their school enables students to develop leadership, teaching, and speaking skills. One teacher specifically discussed how the teachers work in teams per grade band and across grade bands in ways that deliver on the school's mission. They mentioned how the move to their current location enabled them to enroll more diverse students and how that has enriched the school community. The teachers spoke of the Asombro Science program and other community resources that they use to enrich the curriculum. If given the opportunity, it appeared that the teachers would have been happy to talk much longer; their enthusiasm was palpable.