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2021 Charter School Renewal Recommendation – La Academia Dolores Huerta

PED RECOMMENDATION

The PED recommends **non-renewal of the contract** because the school has failed to meet and has not demonstrated substantial progress toward the department's minimum educational standards and has not met the standards outlined in the performance framework of the charter contract. In addition, the school has failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management. The school has identified improvement actions that are not targeted to address specific root causes.

The school's remote learning model due to the pandemic is based on the anticipated in-person hybrid model, with teachers providing instruction to one-half of the students on Monday and Tuesday and the other half on Thursday and Friday, with a brief advisory check-in with all students and tutoring opportunities on Wednesdays. The school is offering in-person support in 5:1 setting for students with disabilities for two (2) hours each Wednesday, with approximately four (4) students participating regularly. Though there is currently no indication as to when middle schools will be permitted to implement an in-person hybrid model, the school has not made adjustments in the schedule to maximize learning opportunities for their students – for the entire semester. The school has also not made attempts to administer short cycle assessments.

The school earned 36 points in 2018-2019, the most recent school year with state assessment data. This score is notably lower than the cutoff for the lowest 25% of elementary/middle schools at 40 points. The school has been identified as a school in need of Targeted Support and Improvement. Both reading and math proficiencies have been significantly below the local district and statewide averages. The school's current contract was for only two (2) years and no assessment data is available for 2019-2020 due to the waiver of state-mandated assessments. It is noted that the school did not elect to include mission goals, as those were optional at the time the school's charter contract was negotiated.

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In addition to the **academic concerns** noted above, the school's organizational performance ratings for 2019-2020 indicate that the school has many areas in need of improvement, including 10 working to meet standard ratings and two (2) does not meet standard ratings. Those areas include, but are not limited to:

- **Repeat noncompliance with protecting the rights of English Language Learners, including proper identification resulting in students not receiving English Language Development services, resolution of reporting errors, and annual notification to parents**
- **Repeat noncompliance in two financial indicators due material weakness findings**
- **Noncompliance in one financial indicator with repeat findings between fiscal years**
- **Repeat noncompliance with governance and reporting, specifically annual evaluations of the head administrator**
- **Compliance concerns related to audit committee membership, anti-nepotism policy and conflict of interest policy**
- **Repeat noncompliance with long-term substitute and endorsement waiver requirements**
- **Repeat noncompliance related to student immunization requirements**

The school's most recently published financial audit report indicates four (4) findings with three (3) repeats and one (1) material weakness.

The school's efforts to increase membership have not materialized as anticipated in their FY20-21 budget submission, resulting in overfunding of approximately 30%. The school's funded membership decreased from 120 to 81 (FY19-20 to FY20-21) and the school's 40-Day enrollment was at 71. The school saw a decrease in staff from 12.27 FTE to 11.27 FTE in FY19-20 and FY20-21 respectively; however, this adjustment will not be sufficient to lower operational expenses to meet operational funding, if all other expenses remain constant. Although the school appears to have a strong cash balance, it is trending to whittle down by approximately 75%.

The school spent 53% of its operating budget on instructional costs (categories 1100, 2100, and 2200) in 2019-2020, 12% lower than the 68% recommended per HB002. The percentage of operating budget spent on administrative support was 39% with a funded membership of 120 students in 2019-2020

The school does not have the support of a foundation.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Section	Indicator	Rating
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE		
1.a	Department's Standards of Excellence	
1.b	Specific Charter Goals	<i>Not Applicable</i>
FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE		
2.a	Audit	<i>Failing to Demonstrate Substantial Progress</i>
2.b	Board of Finance	<i>Meets the Standard</i>
2.c	Financial Performance	<i>Significant concerns</i>
CONTRACTUAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND GOVERNANCE		
3.a	Material Terms	<i>Meets the Standard</i>
3.b	Organizational Performance Framework	<i>Failing to Demonstrate Substantial Progress</i>
3.c	Governance Responsibilities	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>

NMPED Accountability Data 2018-2019

	Overall	Reading Proficiency	Math Proficiency	Science Proficiency	English Learner Progress
La Academia Dolores Huerta	36	16	3	33	14
Local District	53	34	19	42	28
Statewide	-	34	21	40	29

Public Education Commission (PEC) Performance Framework

La Academia Dolores Huerta	2018-2019	2019-2020
Category I. Academic Performance Framework		
I-A.00 NM A-F School Grading System / NM System of School Support & Accountability	Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) Standard	
I-A.01 Required Academic Performance Indicators	Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) Standard	
I-A.02 Optional Supplemental Indicators (school specific items in charter)	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Category II. Financial Performance Framework		
II-A.00-06 Operating Budget/Audits/Periodic Reports/Expenditures/Reimbursements/Audit Reviews/Meals	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Category III. Organizational Performance Framework		
III-A.00 Educational Plan: material terms of the approved charter application	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
III-A.01 Education Plan: applicable education requirements	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	
III-A.02 Education Plan: protecting the rights of all students	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Working to Meet Standard
III-A.03 Educational Plan: protecting the rights of students with special needs (IDEA, 504, gifted)	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Working to Meet Standard
III-A.04 Educational Plan: protecting the rights of English Language Learners (Title III)	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard
III-A.05 Educational Plan: complying with the compulsory attendance laws	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
III-A.06 Educational Plan: meet their recurrent enrollment goals	Working to Meet Standard	
IV-A.00 Business Management & Oversight: meeting financial reporting and compliance requirements	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard
IV-A.01 Business Management & Oversight: following generally accepted accounting principles	Working to Meet Standard	Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) Standard
V-A.00 Governance and Reporting: complying with governance requirements	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Working to Meet Standard
V-A.01 Governance and Reporting: holding management accountable	Working to Meet Standard	
VI-A.00 Employees: meeting teacher and other staff credentialing requirements	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard
VI-A.01 Employees: respecting employee rights	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
VI-A.02 Employees: completing required background checks	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
VII-A.00 School Environment: complying with facilities requirements	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
VII-A.01 School Environment: complying with health and safety requirements	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard
VII-A.02 School Environment: handling information appropriately	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Category: Organizational Performance Framework		
School Specific Terms: data on any terms specified in the school's Performance Framework	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
OTHER		
School specific conditions in the Charter Contract, if any		
Indicator 1b Educational Program: complying with all state and contractual assessment requirements		Working to Meet Standard
Indicator 1e Educational Program: meeting program requirements for all PED and federal grant programs		Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 1f Educational Program: NM DASH Plan		Not Applicable
Indicator 2c Financial Mgmt & Oversight: responsive to audit findings		Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) Standard
Indicator 2d Financial Mgmt & Oversight: managing grant funds responsibility		Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 2e Financial Mgmt & Oversight: staffing to ensure proper fiscal management		Working to Meet Standard
Indicator 2f Financial Mgmt & Oversight: meeting obligations timely / appropriate internal controls		Not Applicable
Indicator 3b Governance & Reporting: complying with nepotism and conflict of interest requirements		Working to Meet Standard
Indicator 3c Governance & Reporting: meeting obligations timely / appropriate internal controls		Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 5b School Environment: complying with transportation requirements		Not Applicable