

BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

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1 experience in education, their experience in  
 2 leadership, their understanding of what's important  
 3 for students and student growth and what's important  
 4 and critical for making sure that at-risk students  
 5 that we have in New Mexico, that they are being  
 6 served appropriately by charter schools, these  
 7 Commissioners have all helped lead that conversation  
 8 and been strong advocates for their communities, the  
 9 charters schools that they did have -- charter  
 10 schools in their districts -- and I don't see  
 11 Commissioner Raftery.  
 12 MS. KAREN WOERNER: No. She's been having  
 13 trouble joining, Madam Chair.  
 14 THE CHAIR: And Commissioner Raftery, it's  
 15 only been unfortunately a two-year term. We had  
 16 quite a whirlwind to get her on the Commission.  
 17 But, once again, her experience in education serving  
 18 in multiple capacities, a superintendent not being  
 19 the least of it, the input has been invaluable.  
 20 So I want to say thank you, thank you,  
 21 thank you for the time and effort and the -- what  
 22 you've added to the Commission over these years. I  
 23 truly do appreciate it.  
 24 And I'd also like to acknowledge that we  
 25 have three of the new oncoming Commissioners as

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1 attendees today: Melissa Armijo, Steven Carrillo,  
 2 and K. T. Manis. And that's all I saw. I  
 3 apologize. If someone else is on and isn't, please  
 4 let me know, and I will certainly recognize you.  
 5 So that being said, thank you -- I can't  
 6 say thank you enough.  
 7 We'll continue now with the regular  
 8 portion of the meeting.  
 9 So, Commissioner Armbruster, will you  
 10 please call us to order?  
 11 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Yes, I will.  
 12 Commissioner Robbins?  
 13 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Present.  
 14 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  
 15 Crone?  
 16 COMMISSIONER CRONE: Here.  
 17 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  
 18 Ruiz?  
 19 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: I'm present, but I  
 20 can't be on camera. I've been battling COVID since  
 21 the election, and I cannot -- I'm laying down or in  
 22 the chair, and I am here; but I cannot be on camera.  
 23 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Are we okay?  
 24 So Commissioner Voigt?  
 25 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Here.

8

1 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  
 2 Davis?  
 3 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Here.  
 4 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  
 5 Gipson?  
 6 THE CHAIR: Here.  
 7 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  
 8 Chavez?  
 9 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Here.  
 10 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  
 11 Armbruster is here.  
 12 Commissioner Raftery is not here; is that  
 13 correct?  
 14 MS. KAREN WOERNER: She is not.  
 15 THE CHAIR: Correct. She's not.  
 16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Not yet. Okay.  
 17 THE CHAIR: Right.  
 18 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  
 19 Caballero.  
 20 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Presente.  
 21 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Ah-ha. Thank  
 22 you.  
 23 That's nine out of ten of us are here, and  
 24 we have a quorum.  
 25 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. We are

9

1 now on to the Pledge of Allegiance and the Salute to  
 2 the New Mexico Flag. And we're going to ask  
 3 Commissioner Crone to lead us in the Pledge, and  
 4 I'll do the New Mexico flag.  
 5 (Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to  
 6 the New Mexico Flag conducted.)  
 7 THE CHAIR: Okay. We are on to Item  
 8 No. 2, which is the approval of the agenda, and  
 9 with -- I don't think there are any changes to the  
 10 agenda. So I will entertain a motion for approval  
 11 of the agenda.  
 12 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: So move.  
 13 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: I'll second.  
 14 THE CHAIR: There's a motion by  
 15 Commissioner Robbins and a second by Commissioner  
 16 Voigt.  
 17 All in favor?  
 18 (Commissioners so indicate.)  
 19 THE CHAIR: Opposed?  
 20 (No response.)  
 21 THE CHAIR: Hearing no opposition, the  
 22 motion passes.  
 23 We are now on to Item No. 3.  
 24 Bev, did anyone sign up for regular open  
 25 forum?

10	<p>1 (Ms. Friedman indicates in the negative.)</p> <p>2 THE CHAIR: Okay. All right. So we are,</p> <p>3 then, quickly on to Item No. 4, which is the consent</p> <p>4 agenda. And I do not believe there's any changes to</p> <p>5 the consent agenda, either.</p> <p>6 So without that -- without further ado,</p> <p>7 I'll take a motion for approval of the consent</p> <p>8 agenda.</p> <p>9 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: So move.</p> <p>10 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: I move --</p> <p>11 THE CHAIR: There's a motion by</p> <p>12 Commissioner Caballero, a second by -- I think it</p> <p>13 was Commissioner Davis.</p> <p>14 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Yes, second it.</p> <p>15 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Armbruster?</p> <p>16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner</p> <p>17 Robbins?</p> <p>18 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Yes.</p> <p>19 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner</p> <p>20 Crone?</p> <p>21 COMMISSIONER CRONE: Yes.</p> <p>22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner</p> <p>23 Ruiz?</p> <p>24 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yes.</p> <p>25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner</p>	12	<p>1 decided to take a position with the Department of</p> <p>2 Tax and Revenue as a lead tax policy analyst for the</p> <p>3 State, which is wonderful for him. He has -- he's</p> <p>4 going to bring a lot of experience and energy to</p> <p>5 that position. But a little sad for us, because</p> <p>6 he's just been a really strong legal voice on behalf</p> <p>7 of the Commission, and he's been a really great</p> <p>8 collaborator with me.</p> <p>9 But in order to best serve the Commission,</p> <p>10 I'd like to introduce you to Elizabeth Jeffreys.</p> <p>11 And she and I together will serve the PEC. And</p> <p>12 Elizabeth comes with an extremely strong background</p> <p>13 in administrative law, administrative appeals, and</p> <p>14 worked for various agencies within the State, which</p> <p>15 Elizabeth will explain. And she and I both have</p> <p>16 legislative analyst background as well.</p> <p>17 And, in addition, Elizabeth has worked for</p> <p>18 the Administrative Office of the Courts, so she also</p> <p>19 has a lot of familiarity with kind of working with</p> <p>20 judges and the judicial process and the judicial</p> <p>21 structure.</p> <p>22 So with that, I'm going to let Elizabeth</p> <p>23 introduce herself.</p> <p>24 MS. ELIZABETH JEFFREYS: Hi, everybody.</p> <p>25 It's really nice to see everyone again. And I have</p>
11	<p>1 Voigt?</p> <p>2 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yes.</p> <p>3 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner</p> <p>4 Davis?</p> <p>5 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Yes.</p> <p>6 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner</p> <p>7 Gipson?</p> <p>8 THE CHAIR: Yes.</p> <p>9 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner</p> <p>10 Chavez?</p> <p>11 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Yes.</p> <p>12 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner</p> <p>13 Armbruster votes "yes."</p> <p>14 Commissioner Caballero?</p> <p>15 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yes.</p> <p>16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. That is a</p> <p>17 nine-to-zero vote in favor of accepting.</p> <p>18 THE CHAIR: Right. Motion passes,</p> <p>19 nine-zero. Thank you.</p> <p>20 We are on to Item No. 5, which is</p> <p>21 Discussion on Adding Elizabeth Jeffreys as Counsel</p> <p>22 to Substitute for Mark Chaiken.</p> <p>23 So, Ami, I'll just turn it over to you</p> <p>24 briefly.</p> <p>25 MS. AMI JAEGER: Thank you. Mark Chaiken</p>	13	<p>1 almost 20 years of experience as an attorney working</p> <p>2 in New Mexico, primarily for the executive branch;</p> <p>3 although, as Ami mentioned, I've served the</p> <p>4 legislative and judicial branches as well.</p> <p>5 And I've been asked to talk primarily</p> <p>6 about my administrative hearing background and my</p> <p>7 appellate background.</p> <p>8 So I've had several hundred cases that</p> <p>9 I've defended in administrative hearings of various</p> <p>10 types, and I've also advised several hundred final</p> <p>11 decisions, both for Human Services Department and</p> <p>12 for approximately 30 professional licensing</p> <p>13 organizations.</p> <p>14 So I've taken cases on appeal to district</p> <p>15 court in New Mexico, also to the New Mexico Court of</p> <p>16 Appeals, and I have had a couple of cases go to the</p> <p>17 New Mexico Supreme Court.</p> <p>18 So that's basically my background. And I</p> <p>19 am open to questions, if anyone has any questions.</p> <p>20 THE CHAIR: Thank you. And welcome.</p> <p>21 Commissioners, any questions?</p> <p>22 Okay. So -- oh, I'm sorry.</p> <p>23 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: No question. Just</p> <p>24 welcome, Elizabeth.</p> <p>25 THE CHAIR: Thanks. And strap on your</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">14</p> <p>1 boots.</p> <p>2 All right. So we are on now to Item</p> <p>3 No. 6, which is Discussion and Action on Charter</p> <p>4 School Renewal Applications.</p> <p>5 And 6A is The GREAT Academy.</p> <p>6 So, Karen, if you want to start bringing</p> <p>7 those folks in.</p> <p>8 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Sure. Madam Chair,</p> <p>9 before I do that, did you want me to go over the --</p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: Oh, yes. Thank you.</p> <p>11 MS. KAREN WOERNER: And also --</p> <p>12 THE CHAIR: I told you to remind me,</p> <p>13 because I forget.</p> <p>14 MS. KAREN WOERNER: And, Commissioner</p> <p>15 Armbruster, you have a video on on two different</p> <p>16 devices. So if you want to disable one of those,</p> <p>17 we're seeing double of you.</p> <p>18 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Do you think</p> <p>19 that if I turn off this, because I was trying to</p> <p>20 turn on the iPad but I couldn't get on? So I'm</p> <p>21 going to turn off the one on the computer. And I</p> <p>22 should be okay with the iPad, then; right? Okay.</p> <p>23 MS. KAREN WOERNER: You can just disable</p> <p>24 the video on one of them.</p> <p>25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">16</p> <p>1 preliminary reports and responses, the renewal</p> <p>2 reports and responses, and then the current</p> <p>3 contracts and performance frameworks for the</p> <p>4 schools. That was so we could provide it to you as</p> <p>5 we went along through this process this fall.</p> <p>6 If you click on Public Education</p> <p>7 Commission, you go back out, the materials today are</p> <p>8 listed individually by each number, as always. But,</p> <p>9 normally, Commissioners, you know that we usually</p> <p>10 combine all of these into one large file.</p> <p>11 These files were so large with all the</p> <p>12 renewal packets that we've made a folder called</p> <p>13 "Combined Packets." And in there, you will see the</p> <p>14 section of the agenda. And then Items 1 through 6</p> <p>15 were listed in this file, agenda Item 7 through 14</p> <p>16 in this file. And then we have a couple of</p> <p>17 documents for -- related to renewals. And then each</p> <p>18 of the schools' renewal packets are separate,</p> <p>19 because they're so large.</p> <p>20 So when we're working with The GREAT</p> <p>21 Academy's, I would assume you would want to have</p> <p>22 this packet opened.</p> <p>23 I also want to point out that the school</p> <p>24 provided some handouts as if we were in Mabry Hall</p> <p>25 today. Those have been added to the bottom and</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">15</p> <p>1 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Now we see you once.</p> <p>2 That's good.</p> <p>3 THE CHAIR: I was only seeing one of her.</p> <p>4 I had two of Commissioner Crone, but I only had one</p> <p>5 of Commissioner Armbruster.</p> <p>6 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Yes, but at least</p> <p>7 Commissioner Crone has one live view and one still</p> <p>8 view.</p> <p>9 THE CHAIR: Right. Yeah.</p> <p>10 COMMISSIONER CRONE: I closed the one that</p> <p>11 didn't have the camera working.</p> <p>12 THE CHAIR: Right. Thanks.</p> <p>13 MS. KAREN WOERNER: So before we start the</p> <p>14 renewal, Commissioners, I just wanted to -- things</p> <p>15 are a little bit -- slightly different than we</p> <p>16 normally do for the materials. And I just wanted to</p> <p>17 be sure that all of you knew exactly where</p> <p>18 everything was and what was where, so I asked</p> <p>19 Madam Chair if we could go over that.</p> <p>20 So on your PEC SharePoint -- let me get</p> <p>21 back to -- so you are in your -- if you're in your</p> <p>22 SharePoint folder, you have several folders. Of</p> <p>23 course, you did receive the renewal packets as we</p> <p>24 prepared them. So meaning the renewal packets</p> <p>25 folder has each of the applications as well as the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">17</p> <p>1 e-mailed to you as well.</p> <p>2 We have a presentation and some exhibits</p> <p>3 that are here at the bottom of the folder that they</p> <p>4 are going to go over shortly when it's their turn to</p> <p>5 present. And, again, remember, you just click up</p> <p>6 here to go back out at the top of the screen, to go</p> <p>7 back out to see anything else.</p> <p>8 This is still here so that you can see</p> <p>9 each individual item listed here, or it may be</p> <p>10 easier to use the combined sections. And just</p> <p>11 wanted to be sure that you were aware of where to</p> <p>12 find all those files.</p> <p>13 As I go through my presentations, I'll be</p> <p>14 using these packets, because the packets, as you</p> <p>15 know, contain, first, our recommendation from the</p> <p>16 team, then the responses, if any were received from</p> <p>17 the school, preliminary analysis, and then the whole</p> <p>18 application, Parts A through E, as submitted; A,</p> <p>19 from your division, the data analysis; and then</p> <p>20 Parts B through E are the applications submitted by</p> <p>21 the schools. So that makes the complete packet.</p> <p>22 These two extras that were handouts today</p> <p>23 were not in that packet.</p> <p>24 Any questions for me before I move on?</p> <p>25 MS. AMI JAEGER: I just wanted -- this is</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">18</p> <p>1 Ami. I just wanted to state that, you know, legal 2 counsel for PEC was not consulted on this, including 3 the information that's up there on reasons for 4 nonrenewal. That was done by CSD. 5 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Oh, yeah. That's just 6 a section of the Charter School Act, of the statute 7 for reference for the Commissioners, that the 8 statutorily listed reasons -- it's just a copy of 9 the statute. So just wanted the Commissioners to 10 have that handy in the event that they should decide 11 for a nonrenewal, the -- and I'll show that to 12 the -- oops -- 13 MS. AMI JAEGER: I don't think you need to 14 show it. I'm just letting the Commissioners know 15 that it was legal advice for review for counsel for 16 the PEC. 17 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I just wanted to be 18 clear what it was. 19 Thank you. And also there's a rubric also 20 provided in that same folder. That rubric, 21 Commissioners, is how we are -- it's from your 22 renewal application kit. And it's how we -- the 23 team reviews the Part B progress report from each 24 school and provides the ratings of Meets, 25 Demonstrates Progress, or Fails to Demonstrate</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">20</p> <p>1 done, I also want to let Commissioners know that the 2 school did provide a digital copy of their 15-minute 3 presentation, and that -- yesterday -- or late 4 yesterday. So that was e-mailed out to 5 Commissioners this morning. 6 The request was -- this would have been 7 something that the school would have passed out if 8 we were live, a hard copy of it, so they could make 9 reference to it and Commissioners could look at some 10 things as the video was being shown. 11 So it was e-mailed out to Commissioners 12 this morning. 13 MS. KAREN WOERNER: And that -- it is also 14 in the SharePoint folder for your reference as well. 15 Mr. Matthews, Ms. Matthews, good morning. 16 Could you unmute yourself and advise me who else I 17 should add to your panel for your presentation? 18 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Good morning. And 19 thank you for allowing us to add those exhibits and 20 presentation. 21 We would like for you to add Charlotte 22 Archuleta, our business manager, and then Lonnie 23 Juarez. He's our CPA consultant. 24 MS. KAREN WOERNER: And I assume Sue Fox? 25 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: And Sue Fox. I'm</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">19</p> <p>1 Progress. So that rubric is also provided there as 2 well. 3 With that, I will go -- oh. I also -- I 4 guess I could do that as part -- I better not do it 5 there. 6 I do want to mention that in the 7 recommendations -- the recommendation pages are set 8 out the same for every school with our 9 recommendation and then the areas of concern, as 10 noted per the renewal application. 11 Commissioners, the renewal application 12 asks schools to address any areas that were a 13 Workings to Meet or a Falls Far Below in the last 14 contract year. So we did address those concerns as 15 a list for you to see what was noted in the last 16 contract year and should be what the school 17 responded to in their Part B, as well as some other 18 documents we'll be going over -- I mean over notes 19 that we'll be going over as we cover each school. 20 So let me add -- I'll start by adding 21 Mr. Matthews, Jasper Matthews, the school leader, to 22 the panel. And then he can advise me who else from 23 his school needs to be added to the panel to get 24 started. 25 THE CHAIR: Okay. And as that's being</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">21</p> <p>1 sorry, yes. 2 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I don't see Sue yet. 3 Oh, she's there somewhere. There we go. 4 So we have Charlotte Archuleta, Lonnie 5 Juarez, and Susan Fox. 6 And then folks in the audience, if you are 7 signed up for public comment, we will be adding you 8 to this panel at that time. So -- 9 THE CHAIR: Are we ready? 10 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I think so. 11 THE CHAIR: We have everyone from the 12 school? 13 Okay. So Karen, whenever you're ready. 14 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Oh, okay. Somehow 15 I've closed my file, but let me just open it up 16 again. My apologies. Mistakenly closed the wrong 17 thing. Trying to do too many things at once over 18 here. 19 So, as you know, Commissioners -- 20 Madam Chair, Commissioners, this school before you 21 is The GREAT Academy. It's a school that serves 22 students in Grades 6 through 12, previously had also 23 served adult learners over age 22. It's located in 24 Albuquerque. 25 My understanding is the school first</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">22</p> <p>1 opened in 2011, was renewed once in 2016, and is now 2 seeking a second renewal.</p> <p>3 I'm sorry. I don't have the packet. 4 Technical difficulties.</p> <p>5 So the -- the PED is recommending a 6 nonrenewal of this school's contract because the 7 school has failed to meet or has not demonstrated 8 substantial progress toward educational standards 9 and performance framework standards.</p> <p>10 In addition, there are several financial 11 concerns, most significantly in audit findings and 12 issues with the lease, and some potential conflicts 13 of interest between the school and the foundation.</p> <p>14 For academics, the school earned 40 points 15 in the last Accountability Report, which was in the 16 year 2018-'19, placing it in the lowest 25 percent 17 of all New Mexico schools, as well as all New Mexico 18 high schools.</p> <p>19 The reading and proficiency rates have 20 been below the local district and statewide averages 21 throughout the contract term.</p> <p>22 Their graduation rates are abysmally low, 23 in the 20 to 38 percent range as opposed to the 24 district and State 70 to 78 percent range.</p> <p>25 Their meeting of their mission goals has</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">24</p> <p>1 or lack thereof and services not being provided as 2 described in the IEPs, some inconsistent 3 calculations regarding levels of service, and no 4 direct services logs or student schedules that 5 indicated what direct service was being provided.</p> <p>6 In addition, there has been some what's 7 called MOE. Maintenance of Effort is a federal 8 requirement to maintain effort in support of your 9 special education students. And this school has 10 failed to meet their Maintenance of Effort in Fiscal 11 Year '17 and Fiscal Year eight -- no, sorry. They 12 met it in Fiscal Year '17, did not meet it in Fiscal 13 Year '18 or '19, and, as a result, have a liability 14 of over \$26,000 for failing to meet their MOE.</p> <p>15 I do want to add, Commissioners, that 16 perhaps when we get to the questions, we do have 17 several folks here from the Special Ed Bureau. If 18 you have specific questions for them, they are here, 19 as well as other staff from my team that are happy 20 to answer specific questions around the concerns 21 that they had noted.</p> <p>22 Financial concerns continue to be an issue 23 with increase in audit findings. And more 24 importantly than the number is -- although that is 25 seven, if you count the foundation and the school's</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">23</p> <p>1 been inconsistent through the years. But this last 2 time, they did reach a Meets Standard, Exceeds 3 Standard, and a Falls Far Below.</p> <p>4 The school does point out that the rating 5 system does assign the lowest score to their 6 ratings, or the indicator on mission goals, because 7 we have, in this contract, one indicator for all 8 three goals. So that's -- that's accurate that when 9 they say that it unfairly, I think, shows just one 10 rating. And we'll go over that in just a second.</p> <p>11 In addition to the academic indicators, we 12 have several concerns in their organizational 13 framework. And as I mentioned, the areas of concern 14 that were highlighted in your recommendation on 15 Pages 1 and continuing on Pages 2 -- Page 1 and 2 -- 16 are the areas that the school had weaknesses in the 17 last year's contract -- last year's report, as 18 reflected in the renewal packet instructions to 19 address those findings that were Workings to Meet or 20 Falls Far Below in the last contract year.</p> <p>21 The main concern for us, beyond the 22 academic proficiency levels and academics in 23 general, are serving the needs of students with 24 special education. There were some concerns 25 expressed to the school about their direct services</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">25</p> <p>1 findings, more importantly than the number of 2 findings is that many of them have been material 3 weaknesses or significant deficiencies, which are 4 concerning.</p> <p>5 The remainder of these concerns are not as 6 significant. The recurrent enrollment has not met 7 the expectation, or the goal, of 85 percent. 8 They've ranged from around 70 percent, 66 to 9 71.5 percent over the contract term.</p> <p>10 Their staff turnover rates, there was an 11 error in the original renewal recommendation. It 12 was 50 percent in the first two years, and it has 13 been increasing in terms of their retention over the 14 last couple of years. It has been going up. I 15 think it's now at 70-something percent.</p> <p>16 And as you know, the contract -- or the 17 performance framework for this school has a staff 18 turnover rate not to exceed 20 percent in any year. 19 Of course, the school did respond to that and 20 explained it in the response about why those numbers 21 were low for those years. But I do notice that they 22 have been increasing.</p> <p>23 Student withdrawal and retention is also a 24 concern.</p> <p>25 The remainder of these, Next Step Plans</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">26</p> <p>1 reporting accurately to -- in S.T.A.R.S. and these 2 other things that are listed here, have not been as 3 significant, but I mention because they were repeat 4 Workings to Meet or Falls Far Below in the last 5 report. 6 The funded membership has decreased from 7 223 at the start of the contract term to 158 this 8 year; although the student -- the school's 9 enrollment on 40-day was only 115, showing quite a 10 decline in their enrollment numbers. 11 The school, I did notice, has been 12 doing -- I've noticed some commercials trying to 13 recruit additional students, and I think those 14 efforts are important because they are showing such 15 a decline. 16 Another concern is the amount of 17 percentage of the operating budget that is spent on 18 administrative costs versus instructional costs. 19 This school's administrative supports are among the 20 highest percentage, not only, you know, across the 21 sector -- charter school sector. 22 And their amount -- percentage spent on 23 instructional costs was averaged over the contract 24 term just over 43 percent, with an expectation of 25 68 percent, as recommended through House Bill 2.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">28</p> <p>1 audit reports. That's true of all foundations for 2 charter schools in New Mexico. 3 And, as indicated in the report there's a 4 potential conflict-of-interest concern and 5 appearance of impropriety in terms of the foundation 6 board members and the history of those board members 7 along with the staff and governing board members. 8 The school did respond that the 9 documentation that I had have from the Secretary of 10 State is not accurate, and that they -- that the 11 head administrator and the secretary of the 12 governing board have not been on the foundation 13 board since 2013. 14 But as I will show you, that has not been 15 updated with the Secretary of State's website. 16 If I can share my screen and go through a 17 few things to support, this recommendation obviously 18 was based on a compilation of the entire packet. So 19 I would like to just go over a few things here. 20 Sorry while I scroll. 21 This Evaluation Summary is the summary I 22 mentioned about the rubric. This is an evaluation 23 of their Part B documentation. 24 We find that the -- in terms of the 25 academic standards of excellence, that the school is</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">27</p> <p>1 In addition to high salaries, the 2 administrators at this school do receive significant 3 fringe benefits and stipends and other allowances, 4 such as cell phone stipend of \$80 per month per 5 administrator. And that's for Mr. and 6 Mrs. Matthews. 7 They have a car allowance to Mr. Mat- -- 8 or there was a car allowance to Mr. Matthews at \$450 9 per pay period. So that would be twice per month, 10 as I understand. And that was discontinued, 11 apparently; although when we were on a site visit, 12 they were not able to provide the documentation to 13 support that, and it's still contained in his 14 contract with no amendment to the contract. 15 They also have an additional \$350 per pay 16 period for -- paid into a retirement plan. And that 17 is per pay period per administrator, Mr. and 18 Mrs. Matthews. These -- this percentage of 19 administrator supports does not include all those 20 added benefits and stipends that they receive. 21 The school does have the support of a 22 nonprofit foundation called "The GREAT Academy 23 Foundation." As the school noted, some of the 24 findings are attributable to the foundation, which 25 is listed as a component unit of the school in the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">29</p> <p>1 Failing to Demonstrate substantial progress. The 2 charter goals. Similarly, their audits. 3 On the Board of Finance, it is a Meets 4 Standard. The requirement here is simply that they 5 don't have the Board of Finance revoked by the 6 State. And this school has not; therefore, it Meets 7 the standard. 8 We do have concerns, some of which have 9 been noted, and I will continue with in a minute, 10 about financial performance. 11 They have met their material terms in 12 terms of mission and the material terms of the 13 contract. 14 In terms of their education plan, as 15 observed. 16 Their organizational performance 17 framework, we feel, is Failing to Demonstrate 18 substantial progress. There have been a couple of 19 complaints reported during this contract term. 20 There are documents related to this in your packet. 21 One was a formal special education complaint; that's 22 a complaint filed by a parent charging that the 23 school was not meeting its legal obligations to 24 their student. The school was indeed found guilty 25 and has resolved that as of March of 2018 for that</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">30</p> <p>1 complaint.</p> <p>2 There is a matter that has not been</p> <p>3 decided but is under review by the Attorney General,</p> <p>4 and that is also here in this packet.</p> <p>5 For governance responsibilities, we have a</p> <p>6 Meets the Standard. The requirement here is that</p> <p>7 they maintain their five members or more, that those</p> <p>8 members take their training hours, et cetera. Oh.</p> <p>9 And do an evaluation of the head administrator is</p> <p>10 part of that as well.</p> <p>11 We did go over this data, but it's</p> <p>12 provided to you here in a chart. The GREAT</p> <p>13 Academy's academic performance and graduation rates</p> <p>14 as compared to the local district of Albuquerque</p> <p>15 Public Schools and statewide.</p> <p>16 And then you have this colorful chart that</p> <p>17 shows the ratings for each year. It's very blurry</p> <p>18 and hard to read, but I will show you a clearer copy</p> <p>19 that was provided as part of the preliminary</p> <p>20 analysis.</p> <p>21 Please note that, obviously, there are</p> <p>22 many indicators. The -- this one here, the top part</p> <p>23 is the academics. These are grayed out in the far</p> <p>24 right column because we don't have academic data for</p> <p>25 the '19-'20 school year and -- due to the waiver of</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">32</p> <p>1 really be rectified until the next audit.</p> <p>2 Moving on, I'd like to go to Page 27 of</p> <p>3 your packet. There are a total of 219 pages. And,</p> <p>4 Commissioners, if you're trying to follow along,</p> <p>5 Page 27 -- or rather 26, excuse me -- I just wanted</p> <p>6 to show that each -- Melissa Sanchez, who is our</p> <p>7 financial analyst, provided a chart for every</p> <p>8 school's renewal that lays out the operational</p> <p>9 budget and how the expenses versus revenue compare.</p> <p>10 Of course, the school may have other forms</p> <p>11 of revenue. But this shows the operating budget and</p> <p>12 the difference between instructional and</p> <p>13 administrative costs, as well as what -- this number</p> <p>14 across the top is the number of funded students this</p> <p>15 school received each of those years, which is based</p> <p>16 on prior year enrollment.</p> <p>17 And you see, for this year, they have an</p> <p>18 enrollment cap of 360, but their budgeted membership</p> <p>19 for this year was 158. Their actual membership at</p> <p>20 40-day was 115.</p> <p>21 So, thereby, you see the need, very much</p> <p>22 so, to raise their membership, because at this</p> <p>23 point, they're going to owe money back out of the</p> <p>24 SEG funding because their membership is low.</p> <p>25 Next, I would like to show you -- point</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">31</p> <p>1 State assessments.</p> <p>2 This Meets the Standard across here is</p> <p>3 financial performance. But this indicator just</p> <p>4 requires the school to provide a self-assessment</p> <p>5 survey. If they provide that survey, they Meet the</p> <p>6 Standard.</p> <p>7 Down here in red are financial concerns</p> <p>8 that are based on audit findings and other financial</p> <p>9 concerns.</p> <p>10 And then the other indicators cover the</p> <p>11 rest of the organizational performance framework,</p> <p>12 most of which is reviewed on-site during site</p> <p>13 visits.</p> <p>14 In addition, I want to point out that</p> <p>15 Meets the Standard -- as you know, these visits are</p> <p>16 sort of like an audit. And so depending on which</p> <p>17 files we pick and what we look at or what compliance</p> <p>18 we see or don't, Meets the Standard means we did not</p> <p>19 see any evidence of non-compliance. When we do see</p> <p>20 some non-compliance, the school is given a chance to</p> <p>21 work on something or develop an action plan on it,</p> <p>22 and they get a Workings to Meet Standard.</p> <p>23 And the Falls Far Below here are because</p> <p>24 of the repeat audit findings and significant</p> <p>25 deficiencies or material weaknesses. Those can't</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">33</p> <p>1 out the -- Page 39 is their -- shows the graduation</p> <p>2 rates for the four-year graduates.</p> <p>3 The other page that I showed you earlier</p> <p>4 had also the five- and six-year, particularly since</p> <p>5 the students had worked with adult learners that may</p> <p>6 have longer or students that had taken more time.</p> <p>7 But as you can see, their graduates there are pretty</p> <p>8 low.</p> <p>9 And, then, if I can go to Page 43, we have</p> <p>10 here the percentages of students remaining enrolled</p> <p>11 within the school year have improved here slightly</p> <p>12 at the end. Again, that's during the school year.</p> <p>13 The contract does say that students must remain</p> <p>14 enrolled between school years with a goal of</p> <p>15 85 percent. And so you can see that the school,</p> <p>16 again, is showing a slight increase, which is good,</p> <p>17 but has hovered around the 70 percent mark in terms</p> <p>18 of students returning from one year to the next.</p> <p>19 Continuing on, we talked about the teacher</p> <p>20 retention rate. I did say that the school is</p> <p>21 correct. There was an error in the first year on</p> <p>22 the first report we provided. This was not correct.</p> <p>23 It is 50 percent. That is correct. And the school</p> <p>24 has been increasing its retention of teachers these</p> <p>25 last couple of years.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">34</p> <p>1           Audit findings, you saw these here. But I 2 just wanted to point out -- this is on Page 45 -- 3 and shows that the school did have fewer audit 4 findings in the first two years here. Obviously, we 5 don't have FY '20's results yet; however, the school 6 has received them.</p> <p>7           But you can see that our concern is not 8 only in the number of findings, but that two are 9 repeats and four of the seven are Material Weakness 10 and Significant Deficiency findings. And they're 11 described on Pages 45 to 47 for you.</p> <p>12          And then as promised, I wanted to scoot 13 down to the colored chart for the ratings, so that 14 you can see -- you do have this in your packet 15 that's a little clearer to read. But I just went 16 over that this is academics. There is a financial 17 survey, and the bulk of this is around 18 organizational pieces.</p> <p>19          I will note that the school had, on 20 serving English Language Learners, that for three 21 years in a row, they had a Working to Meet Standard. 22 And I credit Ms. Matthews with really working hard 23 to improve their processes and has now earned a 24 Meets Standard for -- in terms of identifying and 25 servicing English Language Learners. So I</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">36</p> <p>1           But since last week, the school did 2 provide this actual complaint submission that was 3 submitted to the Attorney General's Office. And 4 that's on Pages 112 to 117. And I want to be 5 sure -- we just added that; it was inadvertently 6 omitted from the packet. So it is in there for you 7 today, but I'm not sure if you had seen that before.</p> <p>8           And also at the end of your packet, 9 starting on Page 213, I did provide the 10 information -- and this was printed on December 2nd. 11 This is the information from the Secretary of 12 State's website regarding The GREAT Academy 13 Foundation and its contact information, its 14 registered agent, its board members, and any of its 15 filings from '13 to 2019.</p> <p>16          And then also the TGA Foundation, LLC, 17 which was recently formed -- and I'm not sure the 18 relationship with The GREAT Academy. But this is a 19 for-profit corporation and only lists one registered 20 agent, Mr. Shorter, who is also listed as -- on this 21 document as the president of the nonprofit 22 foundation, along with -- and this is where I got 23 the information about Mr. Matthews on the board as 24 well as registered agent, and then the secretary of 25 the board -- school's board on this foundation</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">35</p> <p>1           congratulate them on that work, and thank you, 2 Ms. Matthews.</p> <p>3           The other -- another -- not to say any of 4 these are not important, but certainly the one about 5 protecting the rights of students with special needs 6 is of a concern for us. It does say here a Meets 7 Standard in '17-'18.</p> <p>8           Again, I am not sure who on the team -- I 9 have to go back and check what they reviewed. But 10 it does mean that they didn't see evidence of 11 non-compliance.</p> <p>12          In the other three years, it's been 13 Working To Meets Standard. And if you have any 14 questions about this, certainly let me know.</p> <p>15          I do want to add that the Commissioners -- 16 I know some of you may have reviewed this packet 17 maybe even a week ago or so ago. But I want to 18 point out that the school did provide -- in relation 19 to the complaint that was filed with the Attorney 20 General's Office, the school did provide its -- as 21 required -- sorry. It did provide the letter that 22 it received in July from the Attorney General's 23 Office, and it did provide the response that they -- 24 the school submitted back and summaries of the 25 allegations.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">37</p> <p>1           board. And those are Pages 213 to 219 of your 2 packet.</p> <p>3           I think, with that, I will also just stop 4 sharing this and advise you that I have not had an 5 opportunity, probably like you all, but to read the 6 handouts that the school had submitted. Although I 7 did open it, and the first page addresses some 8 concerns related to the Charter Schools Division in 9 terms of late -- late reports.</p> <p>10          And I would ask for an opportunity to 11 respond to that. But I'll let the school present it 12 as is, and then would like an opportunity to respond 13 to their allegations of the charter school teams and 14 the later ones.</p> <p>15          THE CHAIR: Okay. And I think that's -- 16 because I've had just a little bit of time --</p> <p>17          MS. KAREN WOERNER: In fact, I think with 18 that, I've covered the reasons that we recommend 19 nonrenewal.</p> <p>20          I would ask the Commission that if you are 21 so inclined to renew this school, that you 22 consider -- please consider a Corrective Action Plan 23 or conditions that will allow the school to address 24 these significant concerns of ours.</p> <p>25          THE CHAIR: Okay.</p>

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1 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Thank you,  
 2 Madam Chair.  
 3 THE CHAIR: Thanks. And I think I need  
 4 just a little bit of clarification, because this did  
 5 come in late.  
 6 So the --  
 7 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Madam Chair, I can't  
 8 hear you. You don't appear to be muted. Is that  
 9 just me or --  
 10 UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONERS: I can hear  
 11 you.  
 12 THE CHAIR: Karen, you shut me off  
 13 finally.  
 14 So I guess before we do this 15-minute --  
 15 and I know the school has their 15 minutes, and then  
 16 we do the other 15-minute presentation.  
 17 So what was submitted -- Karen, what  
 18 you're referencing and the response by the school,  
 19 is that being submitted as part of that 15-minute --  
 20 the second 15-minute presentation of the school? Is  
 21 that part of that packet?  
 22 I guess I'm a little confused, and I need  
 23 a little clarification on that.  
 24 MS. KAREN WOERNER: We may need to ask  
 25 Mr. Matthews. But I understand that the packets

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1 they provided to you via e-mail are their first  
 2 15-minute presentation. And then they intend to  
 3 show a video for the optional presentation section.  
 4 But you may want to ask Mr. Matthews to confirm.  
 5 THE CHAIR: Maybe it's just me. My  
 6 understanding was that that packet was being  
 7 provided, because that's what we would be looking at  
 8 as we went through the video.  
 9 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: No, ma'am.  
 10 THE CHAIR: So that's where my confusion  
 11 is, because we don't take new information from part  
 12 of the regular piece of the renewal application.  
 13 So -- and maybe it got -- there was confusion in the  
 14 communication. So I'm -- so I need some  
 15 clarification here.  
 16 MS. FOX: It's -- Madam Chair and members  
 17 of the Commission, it's not new information. It's  
 18 follow-along information, exhibits to what the folks  
 19 who are going to be speaking today are going to be  
 20 speaking about so that you can follow along.  
 21 Much of it is probably -- although we  
 22 haven't seen what's in your packet -- is probably  
 23 already in your packet or somewhere. But it was  
 24 designed to allow the Commission to follow along  
 25 with -- with more fluency, I guess, given --

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1 THE CHAIR: What's in our packet is  
 2 publicly posted. We don't have any information that  
 3 the public doesn't see. So there's no reason why --  
 4 to say we haven't seen what's in your packet. We  
 5 don't have anything that hasn't been publicly  
 6 posted. My concern is that if there is a new  
 7 response that's in there that we didn't get to see  
 8 until this morning, that makes it very difficult for  
 9 us to see it, because we haven't had time -- you  
 10 know, we got it this morning, and we're -- you saw  
 11 the -- you know, what went -- what went through this  
 12 morning so that there's really very little time.  
 13 So that's why I'm saying there may be new  
 14 information in there, and that's what concerns me.  
 15 MS. FOX: I understand that concern, and  
 16 that's certainly not the intent is to add new  
 17 information. However, I would point out that  
 18 Ms. Woerner related that you -- she expects to have  
 19 some special ed folks available to testify today.  
 20 And we haven't had that information provided to us.  
 21 I'm not trying to get into the weeds here.  
 22 But I'm just saying this is -- this is designed to  
 23 be a hearing. It's what the statute requires. And  
 24 so in the interest of us providing as much  
 25 information to you as we can to allow you to make an

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1 informed decision, that's what we're trying to do.  
 2 I believe that the only thing that you may  
 3 not have seen before, or CSD may not have seen  
 4 before, is the written-out statement of The GREAT  
 5 Academy's representatives. And that was just merely  
 6 to allow you for convenience. They will be  
 7 eventually presenting that information orally.  
 8 THE CHAIR: Okay. And let me make it  
 9 clear, because Ms. Woerner did make it clear, that  
 10 special ed is here to answer any questions we may  
 11 have. It has been clearly identified, the special  
 12 ed concerns of the school. So there's no -- nothing  
 13 new that's coming up, and we don't have -- they're  
 14 not here to offer any new information or to testify  
 15 outside of answering any questions we may have.  
 16 Okay. Let's just move on.  
 17 Well, before we do this, there's a  
 18 half-hour time period for the school. I'm going to  
 19 ask Commissioners if they want a short break before  
 20 this half-hour time period.  
 21 (Commissioners indicate in the  
 22 affirmative.)  
 23 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Sure. Five or ten  
 24 minutes would be great.  
 25 THE CHAIR: I'm sorry, Glenna. Could you

42	<p>1 repeat that?</p> <p>2 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: I said, "Sure. Five</p> <p>3 or 10 minutes would be great."</p> <p>4 THE CHAIR: Okay. All right. So if I can</p> <p>5 indulge this so that we can give -- and I will also</p> <p>6 say if we create a problem if we just double-checked</p> <p>7 those that want to do public comment for the school</p> <p>8 at this time?</p> <p>9 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Madam Chair, I was</p> <p>10 just going to ask you.</p> <p>11 THE CHAIR: Can we do that? Okay.</p> <p>12 Thanks.</p> <p>13 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I opened up the Chat.</p> <p>14 So, people in the audience, if you haven't signed up</p> <p>15 to speak for The GREAT Academy, now is your chance</p> <p>16 in the Chat option.</p> <p>17 THE CHAIR: Thank you. And could the</p> <p>18 record also reflect that Commissioner Raftery has</p> <p>19 joined us?</p> <p>20 Welcome. Welcome to the break.</p> <p>21 MS. KAREN WOERNER: She apparently can't</p> <p>22 speak. She's on her phone. Can you unmute your</p> <p>23 phone?</p> <p>24 COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: Am I unmuted?</p> <p>25 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Now you are.</p>	44	<p>1 opportunity. My name is Jasper Matthews. I'm the</p> <p>2 founder and executive director. Next to me is</p> <p>3 Keisha Matthews, the co-founder and director of</p> <p>4 academics. And then we have Susan Fox from Matthews</p> <p>5 Fox; she's our school attorney.</p> <p>6 We have Charlotte Archuleta; she's our</p> <p>7 school business manager. And then we have Lonnie</p> <p>8 Juarez; he's our contracted CPA consultant.</p> <p>9 THE CHAIR: So there is no one from your</p> <p>10 governance council here today?</p> <p>11 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: We have two</p> <p>12 governing council members present, but they're not</p> <p>13 on the panel to present. And that would be Stacey</p> <p>14 Boyd and Retired Lieutenant Colonel Michael Pitts,</p> <p>15 the vice chair.</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: So could I ask, if you</p> <p>17 wouldn't mind, that they be brought in just in case</p> <p>18 Commissioners have questions? It would be easier</p> <p>19 for them to be in at the beginning.</p> <p>20 It's fine if they're not a piece of your</p> <p>21 presentation, but that they're here so that in case</p> <p>22 anyone had a question for them.</p> <p>23 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Yes. I mean, I'm --</p> <p>24 I'm -- yes.</p> <p>25 THE CHAIR: Okay. So could you repeat</p>
43	<p>1 COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: All right. I'm on</p> <p>2 my phone, because my iPad -- I don't know what</p> <p>3 happened. So I am on my phone. So here I am.</p> <p>4 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Thank you,</p> <p>5 Commissioner.</p> <p>6 COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: It has been the</p> <p>7 biggest hassle getting this iPad to work. So here I</p> <p>8 am. I'll take a break, and I'll leave the phone on.</p> <p>9 Thank you.</p> <p>10 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: The people I have</p> <p>11 listed to speak for The GREAT Academy are Maria</p> <p>12 Escalante, Deanna Pina, Isaiah Gallegos, Charles</p> <p>13 Lakins, and Sue Fox. If there is anyone else who</p> <p>14 would like to speak, please sign up in the Chat.</p> <p>15 (Recess held, 10:04 a.m. to 10:18 a.m.)</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: So thank you. And the school</p> <p>17 has 15 minutes to do their whatever comments, and</p> <p>18 then there's the 15 minutes for their presentation</p> <p>19 on equity and identity.</p> <p>20 So I will ask for the school -- Jasper, if</p> <p>21 you can just introduce everyone from the school and</p> <p>22 what their role is so that the record is clear for</p> <p>23 that, I'd appreciate it.</p> <p>24 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Yes, Madam Chair,</p> <p>25 and thank you very much for giving me this</p>	45	<p>1 those names again so Karen can do that?</p> <p>2 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: So Retired</p> <p>3 Lieutenant Colonel Michael Pitts is the</p> <p>4 vice president of the board of directors. And then</p> <p>5 Stacey Boyd is a board member.</p> <p>6 MS. KAREN WOERNER: So Stacey Boyd and</p> <p>7 Michael Pitts have been added to the panel. If</p> <p>8 required to speak, they'll have to unmute.</p> <p>9 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. So</p> <p>10 welcome, once again, and thank you for all the time</p> <p>11 and effort that you put into this renewal</p> <p>12 application. And especially this year, I know that</p> <p>13 there were, you know, a multitude of challenges for</p> <p>14 what we're all going through.</p> <p>15 I mean, you saw just a little bit of our</p> <p>16 challenges today. We understand that that happens</p> <p>17 each and every day in schools. So we appreciate,</p> <p>18 always, everything that you're doing and what it</p> <p>19 took to get this all ready for today, because we --</p> <p>20 like I said, we know it's never easy, and we know it</p> <p>21 always takes extra time that so many of us don't</p> <p>22 have.</p> <p>23 And to be able to get this completed for</p> <p>24 us during this time, we acknowledge the fact that</p> <p>25 it's -- there's those unique challenges with it. So</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">46</p> <p>1 thank you.</p> <p>2 And Beverly is doing the timing. So</p> <p>3 you've got your 15 minutes.</p> <p>4 I'm sorry. Did someone want to say</p> <p>5 something?</p> <p>6 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: Madam Chair, I just</p> <p>7 wanted to question the timing. Fifteen minutes for</p> <p>8 a presentation, and then an additional fifteen</p> <p>9 minutes --</p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: Correct.</p> <p>11 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: -- for the</p> <p>12 optional?</p> <p>13 THE CHAIR: Correct. Yes.</p> <p>14 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: And I will be</p> <p>15 timing the first 15 minutes.</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: Okay. And Bev does have</p> <p>17 little reminder cards as well. So thanks.</p> <p>18 All right. Thank you. And welcome, once</p> <p>19 again.</p> <p>20 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Madam Chair, if I</p> <p>21 might before the time starts, just a point of</p> <p>22 procedure. As a part of our presentation, we do</p> <p>23 have statements from both Charlotte Archuleta and</p> <p>24 Lonnie Juarez. But just to make sure we fit it all</p> <p>25 in the 15 minutes and to cut down on technical</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">48</p> <p>1 included in your packet, Exhibit 2 from CSD dated</p> <p>2 July 24th, 2019, the school was notified that the</p> <p>3 preliminary site visit report for the '18-'19 school</p> <p>4 year, the site visit was on March 26th of 2019, was</p> <p>5 ready to be viewed in Web EPSS five months later.</p> <p>6 Please note that this was prior to COVID.</p> <p>7 Note also Page 22 of the contract states,</p> <p>8 "Following the site visit, the authorizer or its</p> <p>9 designee shall complete a draft of the annual site</p> <p>10 visit report and present it to the school within</p> <p>11 45 days after completion of the site visit."</p> <p>12 You will find several more in our response</p> <p>13 to the renewal recommendation, Exhibit 3, that you</p> <p>14 will find in your packet.</p> <p>15 I would like to point out that the</p> <p>16 majority of the concerns that CSD highlighted in</p> <p>17 their renewal recommendation have strictly been from</p> <p>18 the '19-'20 school year. Due to limited time, we're</p> <p>19 not able to address each of the concerns that CSD</p> <p>20 listed in the renewal recommendation in our oral</p> <p>21 presentation. Therefore, we would like to enter</p> <p>22 into the record a four-year analysis of the ratings</p> <p>23 that we received in the following areas: Special</p> <p>24 education, recurrent enrollment, staff turnover,</p> <p>25 Next Step Plans, S.T.A.R.S. reporting,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">47</p> <p>1 issues, I'm just going to read their statement, if</p> <p>2 that's okay.</p> <p>3 THE CHAIR: Sure. Sure.</p> <p>4 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: All right. Thank</p> <p>5 you.</p> <p>6 Good morning. We hope that you all are</p> <p>7 making it through these challenging times in good</p> <p>8 health. Thank you for providing us this time to</p> <p>9 share information about our successes at TGA and to</p> <p>10 respond to the CSD's analysis of our performance</p> <p>11 over the term of our contract.</p> <p>12 It should be noted that TGA's '19-'20 site</p> <p>13 visit was March 3rd, 2020. We received an e-mail,</p> <p>14 Exhibit 1, from CSD on Tuesday, December 8th -- that</p> <p>15 was yesterday -- stating that the final site visit</p> <p>16 report was available for our review just one day</p> <p>17 prior to this hearing, giving us less than 24 hours</p> <p>18 to be able to prepare and respond.</p> <p>19 We have also identified several mistakes</p> <p>20 and inconsistencies in Part A, the preliminary</p> <p>21 analysis, and the renewal recommendation; so we</p> <p>22 appreciate the opportunity to address those.</p> <p>23 CSD has repeatedly not abided by its own</p> <p>24 timeline established for the site visit and</p> <p>25 reporting process. As you will see from the e-mail</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">49</p> <p>1 McKinney-Vento, and background checks. That's</p> <p>2 Exhibit 4. We feel that we should be evaluated on</p> <p>3 the entire term of the charter contract and not just</p> <p>4 one year.</p> <p>5 In reference to the organizational</p> <p>6 performance framework on Page 20 of CSD's Part A</p> <p>7 data analysis, over the course of the term, TGA</p> <p>8 received a rating of Falls Far Below for only</p> <p>9 15 percent, or 12 out of 78 indicators during the</p> <p>10 entire term of the contract. Only two of these</p> <p>11 ratings were in the '19-'20 school year. This means</p> <p>12 that 85 percent of the time, TGA received a rating</p> <p>13 of Working to Meet or Meets or Exceeds.</p> <p>14 The rating of Working to Meet was received</p> <p>15 31 percent of the time, or 24 ratings out of</p> <p>16 78 indicators. And Meets or Exceeds was earned</p> <p>17 54 percent of the time, 42 ratings out of</p> <p>18 78 indicators. Exhibit 5.</p> <p>19 During the remainder of this presentation,</p> <p>20 we will focus on CSD's concerns regarding academic</p> <p>21 performance, special education, and fiscal</p> <p>22 management.</p> <p>23 We are extremely proud of the fact that</p> <p>24 the graduates from the '16-'17 school year to the</p> <p>25 '19-'20 school year have earned 1,182 college</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">50</p> <p>1 credits. This shows that our students are 2 college-ready and that we have been able to 3 consistently give students who would not have 4 otherwise had the opportunity to get such a 5 jump-start with college credits the means to do so. 6 TGA did not meet its mission-specific goal 7 to have qualified TGA graduates complete 12 college 8 credits each year. This goal was met in the '17-'18 9 school year. All TGA graduates were able to take 10 college courses and were able to broaden their 11 horizons by experiencing the level of academic rigor 12 that college courses present. 13 Not only did TGA grads get the chance to 14 enter college with multiple courses completed, 15 several got close to earning Associate's degrees, 16 and one did earn his AA and is currently attending 17 New Mexico Tech. 18 Some participated in career focus programs 19 that led to employment in fields such as banking and 20 health care. 21 In addition, many of these graduates were 22 between the ages of 22 and 49. These were students 23 who would not have earned their high school diplomas 24 if it had not been for TGA's program. 25 We are also proud to share that, over the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">52</p> <p>1 It should be noted that the school's 2 mission-specific indicators are listed on Pages 3, 3 4, and 5 of the performance framework, Exhibit 8; 4 and the performance of these indicators should be 5 considered individually and not grouped together as 6 one indicator. 7 As you can see in TGA's response to the 8 renewal recommendation, we attempted to clear up 9 and/or correct some of the concerns that CSD 10 presented as grounds for nonrenewal. We were 11 surprised that CSD listed non-compliance for the 12 "protecting the rights of students" indicator as a 13 reason for nonrenewal. TGA received Working to Meet 14 in '16-'17, Meets or Exceeds in '17-'18, Working to 15 Meet in '18-'19, and Working to Meet in '19-'20 for 16 this indicator. 17 Please note that TGA never received a 18 rating of Falls Far Below during the entire term of 19 the contract for this indicator. 20 First, we reject CSD's insistence on only 21 counting one-on-one special education service direct 22 service and ignoring the full range of special 23 education services that we provide our special 24 education students at TGA. 25 CSD is aware that we utilize our SEMS case</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">51</p> <p>1 term of our contract, we met the school-specific 2 goals related to reading three out of four years and 3 two out of four years for math. 4 The reading goal in the '17-'18 school 5 year was only missed by 5.9 points. The math goal 6 was missed in that same year by only 2.4 points. 7 Not only that, but the student growth index, as 8 evidenced by CSD's Part A data analysis, Pages 6 and 9 7, Exhibit 6, has been higher than that of the State 10 in both reading and math. 11 On the 2017 school grade report card, TGA 12 renewal application, Page 22, or Exhibit 7, TGA 13 ranked higher on a majority of the indicators than 14 36 similar schools. 15 All of this illustrates that TGA's program 16 is making academic progress. 17 I would like to reiterate that 18 mission-specific indicators are given equal weight 19 statutorily and contractually to that of the 20 Department's Standards of Excellence. In 2017 and 21 2019, TGA met or exceeded at least two of the three 22 mission-specific goals that should be reflected 23 properly in the recommendation. 24 In 2019, TGA met one out of three of the 25 mission-specific indicators.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">53</p> <p>1 management system. SEMS is an acronym for Special 2 Education Accountability and Management System, 3 Exhibit 9. 4 And CSD is also aware that TGA uses a 5 full-inclusion delivery method to provided special 6 education services for our students. Special 7 education supports are provided during Edgenuity, 8 face-to-face classes, co-teaching, small group, 9 pullout, and ancillary. 10 In an attempt to clear up this 11 misunderstanding, Jasper had a conversation with CSD 12 where he posed a scenario using an example of a 13 student who has 20 hours of special education 14 services on their IEP. Based on CSD's position on 15 direct service, their expectation is for us to pull 16 that student out of the classroom to work with that 17 student one-on-one for 20 hours per week, only on 18 the goals in the IEP. 19 So the question was when would the student 20 work on the general education curriculum? If the 21 student is in the school for the typical 32 hours 22 per week, then that student would only have 12 hours 23 of class time remaining. 24 He tried to explain to CSD that the 25 essence of special education is to provide special</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">54</p> <p>1 education students access to the general education  2 curriculum while taking into account their least  3 restrictive environment.</p> <p>4 To the layperson, this means that the  5 students with IEPs should be educated in the general  6 education setting for the maximum extent that is  7 appropriate with nondisabled peers.</p> <p>8 Next, TGA strongly disagrees with CSD's  9 assertion that services are not being provided as  10 described in the IEP. This, we believe, is another  11 misunderstanding, because during the '19-'20 site  12 visit, CSD reviewed an IEP of a student who came to  13 us from APS. In the '19-'20 CSD monitoring report,  14 on Page 6 in the last sentence of the first  15 paragraph -- this paragraph continues from Page 5;  16 it's Exhibit 10 -- CSD states, "One of the students  17 was identified as a Service Level D and Setting 3  18 from an IEP from an APS school that this school  19 adopted; yet the services were not being provided as  20 described."</p> <p>21 We attempted to explain to CSD that once  22 we receive an incoming student with an IEP, we  23 implement it immediately.</p> <p>24 Next, the special education team completes  25 an IEP info sheet -- that's Exhibit 11 -- for all of</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">56</p> <p>1 Exhibit 13. That was uploaded to Web EPSS.  2 Unfortunately for us, this still didn't meet CSD's  3 expectations.</p> <p>4 Lastly, during our renewal site visit, a  5 member of CSD's site visit team asked Jasper to  6 contact our special education liaison to get a  7 better clarification on how to count direct service  8 versus indirect service, because, at the time, it  9 seemed like there was still some confusion.</p> <p>10 After reaching out to our special  11 education liaison by e-mail, included in your  12 packet, Exhibit 14, the liaison said, quote, "All  13 service should be direct service unless otherwise  14 indicated on the IEP," end quote.</p> <p>15 None of the APS IEPs that CSD reviewed  16 during the site visits separated direct service from  17 indirect service.</p> <p>18 Charlotte Archuleta, Business Manager:  19 TGA feels that we have not failed to meet  20 Generally Accepted Standards of Fiscal Management,  21 as stated by CSD.</p> <p>22 First, in the past four years the school  23 has never received more than five findings during  24 the term of the contract. In Fiscal Year '17, the  25 school only received one finding. Fiscal Year '18,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">55</p> <p>1 the teachers who will be working with that student.  2 The IEP info sheet has the eligibility, the level,  3 the goals, modifications, accommodations, and  4 testing accommodations.</p> <p>5 Then we explained that it typically takes  6 about 45 days for a new school to gather enough data  7 to draft a well-written IEP that is specific to the  8 student's needs, taking into account the setting the  9 student is in.</p> <p>10 Within that time frame, we are able to  11 establish present levels of performance through  12 Short Cycle Assessment, Edgenuity progress reports,  13 report card grades, teacher and parent input,  14 attendance, and behavioral reports.</p> <p>15 To further examine this issue we pulled  16 three student IEPs who came from APS. As you can  17 see on your redacted copies of the service page,  18 Exhibit 12, none of those IEPs differentiated direct  19 service from indirect service. When we transferred  20 them to TGA's IEPs, we did not differentiate  21 services, either.</p> <p>22 After the site visit in '19-'20, we began  23 differentiating direct service from indirect service  24 based on the feedback we received from CSD, as you  25 will see from our CAP included in your packet,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">57</p> <p>1 the school received one finding. And in Fiscal  2 Year '19, the school received three findings, and  3 the school has only received a rating of Falls Far  4 Below only one of the last four years during the  5 term of the contract, as per the 3.b. organizational  6 performance framework.</p> <p>7 Secondly, we would like to point out that  8 the school has never lost its Board of Finance or  9 been placed on monthly monitoring during the entire  10 term of its contract. Plus, the school has always  11 had a healthy cash balance for the entire term of  12 the contract.</p> <p>13 Lastly, regarding CSD's concern about  14 HB 2, 68 percent of annual budgeted for direct  15 instruction, this budget snapshot was taken on the  16 40th day. The original amount budgeted for the  17 direct instruction and instructional support was  18 72 percent of the budget; but because of the  19 September 2020 budget adjustment for PED in the  20 operational fund, the school's budget was decreased  21 by \$81,637.</p> <p>22 The school will be hiring two teachers and  23 an educational assistant in January 2021. Next  24 year, with the two additional teachers and  25 educational assistant, the percent of dollars</p>

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1 budgeted for the 1000, 2100, and 2200 functions will  
 2 be at 70 percent for direct instruction and  
 3 instructional support.  
 4 Lonnie Juarez, CPA. Mr. Juarez is a CPA  
 5 and partner with the SJT Group, a New Mexico CPA  
 6 firm. He's been in public accounting for over  
 7 20 years, and has been a practicing CPA in the state  
 8 since 2003. During his time in public accounting,  
 9 he's focused nearly all his time in auditing  
 10 government entities, including charter schools,  
 11 tribal schools, and other public institutions. He  
 12 served as one of the lead auditors in the Public  
 13 Education Department's audit for four years, and his  
 14 firm was responsible for auditing approximately  
 15 25 of the State charters.  
 16 Based on his review of the GREAT Academy's  
 17 audit findings for the last three years and his  
 18 understanding and review of the school's financial  
 19 situation, he would not conclude that The GREAT  
 20 Academy has failed to meet Generally Accepted  
 21 Standards of Fiscal Management.  
 22 In closing, none of the concerns that have  
 23 been highlighted have been pervasive over the term  
 24 of the contract. Although TGA got audit findings,  
 25 we've followed the auditors' recommendations and

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1 have addressed the issues via an LPA that has been  
 2 pending at PED since April of 2020.  
 3 TGA entered into and completed Corrective  
 4 Action Plans where and when required by CSD or PED  
 5 relating to many of these issues. At no time has  
 6 PED taken over the school's Board of Finance. At no  
 7 time have the school's contracts or performance  
 8 frameworks been amended by both parties, as would be  
 9 required in law and in the contract for any  
 10 amendment or deviation to be effective. TGA --  
 11 almost made it.  
 12 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Appreciate it.  
 13 And now we've got the 15 minutes for your  
 14 Equity and Identity presentation.  
 15 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Is someone going to  
 16 giving me the ability to share the screen? Or,  
 17 Karen, are you going to show the --  
 18 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I just gave you the  
 19 ability. If you'd prefer me to go to the link, I  
 20 can do that, too.  
 21 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Let me see if I can  
 22 do it. Well, I tell you what. It might be easier  
 23 for you to share. I appreciate it.  
 24 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Okay. Sorry. I  
 25 didn't have it queued up, so let me get that.

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1 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: You know what? Let  
 2 me try it. If somebody can just let me know that  
 3 the screen -- something's going on with the screen.  
 4 So I will try it --  
 5 THE CHAIR: Sure.  
 6 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: -- in advance mode.  
 7 Uh-oh. I don't see it. How are we going  
 8 to do that?  
 9 Okay. Can everybody see that video?  
 10 THE CHAIR: Yes. Yeah.  
 11 MS. KAREN WOERNER: You might want to make  
 12 it full screen in the lower right corner, Mr.  
 13 Matthews, the four little corner boxes. Then it'll  
 14 fill the screen instead of all the white space.  
 15 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Okay. Is that  
 16 better?  
 17 THE CHAIR: No, not really.  
 18 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Well, not much bigger,  
 19 but -- mine filled the screen, if you want me to --  
 20 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Let me try one more  
 21 thing.  
 22 Okay. What about that?  
 23 MS. KAREN WOERNER: It's about the same.  
 24 But go ahead and play it. We can see it.  
 25 THE CHAIR: Yeah, I think we can see it.

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1 (Video is played.)  
 2 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Okay. Did I stop  
 3 sharing, Karen?  
 4 MS. KAREN WOERNER: You did.  
 5 THE CHAIR: Yes, you did.  
 6 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: All right.  
 7 THE CHAIR: Okay. So thank you very much  
 8 for that.  
 9 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: You're welcome.  
 10 THE CHAIR: That's -- you know, it's  
 11 always -- when we were talking about adding this, we  
 12 actually were led into adding this based on some  
 13 presentations last year and how they so profoundly  
 14 affected the Commissioners. So we appreciate the  
 15 time and effort and energy in showing us what your  
 16 school means to you and the community. And that's  
 17 what, hopefully, we're all about here.  
 18 So I have a couple of areas that I'd like  
 19 to address. And I think Commissioners will probably  
 20 weigh in on some as well, and some can ask probably  
 21 some more in-depth questions. But --  
 22 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Madam Chair? Excuse  
 23 me.  
 24 THE CHAIR: Yeah? I'm sorry.  
 25 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I don't know if you

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1 intended to do the public comments next.  
 2 THE CHAIR: Oh, I'm sorry. You're right.  
 3 Sorry. Sorry. You are right. I overstepped.  
 4 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: Madam Chair, we  
 5 have six people who are signed up for public  
 6 comment, and we have eight minutes.  
 7 THE CHAIR: Okay. So everyone has a  
 8 minute-and-a-quarter, I guess, about? Okay. All  
 9 right.  
 10 MS. SUSAN FOX: Madam Chair, members of  
 11 the Commission, I'm going to start this off, if  
 12 that's okay.  
 13 Beverly, is that all right?  
 14 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: Sure.  
 15 MS. SUSAN FOX: Okay. Hi. I'm Sue Fox.  
 16 I've already been introduced. I just wanted to  
 17 lodge a quick procedural objection to the  
 18 deliberation in Closed Session that's proposed on  
 19 your agenda, pursuant to the Open Meetings Act,  
 20 Exception 8-1, which reads, "Meetings pursuant to  
 21 issuance, suspension, renewal, or revocation of a  
 22 license, except at a hearing at which evidence is  
 23 offered or rebutted, shall be open."  
 24 So, first of all, this isn't a license  
 25 renewal; it's a statutory contract renewal. And

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1 even if this exception is deemed to apply, the  
 2 second clause in that exception provides that  
 3 inasmuch as this process involves a hearing at which  
 4 evidence is being offered, it requires the entire  
 5 process to be open. There's not a provision in the  
 6 Open Meetings Act allowing just the deliberations  
 7 part to be closed.  
 8 So deliberating in Closed Session in the  
 9 context of these contract proceedings deprives the  
 10 appellants of the right to transparency in  
 11 governmental proceedings, their rights to due  
 12 process, and a right to a fair appeal on the full  
 13 record.  
 14 Thanks. Needed to state that for the  
 15 record.  
 16 MS. AMI JAEGER: And I have a -- just a  
 17 quick response, as counsel to the PEC.  
 18 THE CHAIR: Hold on just a sec. I don't  
 19 want this to take from the rest of the public. So  
 20 could you just stop timing at this point in time?  
 21 Thanks.  
 22 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: Our next speaker is  
 23 Maria Escalante.  
 24 THE CHAIR: No, no, no, Ami is going to  
 25 talk. But I don't want Ami to eat into their time.

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1 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: No. The timer is  
 2 stopped.  
 3 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thanks.  
 4 MS. AMI JAEGER: Just quickly for the  
 5 record, this issue has actually already been  
 6 litigated by the Fox Matthews firm. And it was at  
 7 the administrative level where the Secretary  
 8 confirmed that this indeed is a license. It's a  
 9 license to operate a school, that the charter  
 10 contract is really just the process by which the  
 11 license is implemented.  
 12 So this -- this question has been  
 13 presented. The PEC prevailed on that at the highest  
 14 administrative level when this issue was appealed to  
 15 the district court. And the other issue, it was not  
 16 brought up on appeal as part of the process to  
 17 district court.  
 18 So, I mean, we can proceed. And if this  
 19 becomes part of additional litigation, we'll just  
 20 deal with that at that time. Thank you.  
 21 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thanks.  
 22 Bev, do you want to call the next person?  
 23 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: Yes. You have six  
 24 minutes and 50 seconds left. The next speaker is  
 25 Maria Escalante.

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1 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Madam Chair, may  
 2 I bring up a point prior to the open forum, or  
 3 people from the public? I -- I don't -- I prefer  
 4 not to count the school's time with attorneys' time.  
 5 I think the school has a right to -- to  
 6 representation and not be limited so that the public  
 7 has its full time. If they had eight minutes, they  
 8 should have their eight minutes.  
 9 THE CHAIR: Okay. The only thing I'm  
 10 going to say, Commissioner Caballero, it was the  
 11 school's attorney that chose to sign up during this  
 12 time. The school's attorney could have signed up  
 13 during public comment and not taken the school's  
 14 time. So it was the school's attorney's time, and  
 15 she was specifically asked, and she said she would  
 16 speak during that time. And that -- and it's  
 17 clearly stated that it's timed.  
 18 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Okay.  
 19 MS. SUSAN FOX: Madam Chair, just to point  
 20 that out, I did ask --  
 21 THE CHAIR: You know, we're not -- this  
 22 isn't open discussion for -- this is the -- you  
 23 know, I'm not entering into any more discussion on  
 24 this. I'm sorry. This is the public -- this is the  
 25 public comment for the school.

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1 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: Ms. Escalante.  
 2 MS. KAREN WOERNER: So I'm going to  
 3 promote Maria Escalante to the panel.  
 4 Maria, you have been added to the panel.  
 5 You can unmute yourself, please, and make your  
 6 comments.  
 7 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Good morning. My name  
 8 is Maria Escalante, and I am in favor to this  
 9 school's renewal because they care about our mental  
 10 health and they make sure that the students are not  
 11 overload. They give us opportunity --  
 12 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Maria, I think you've  
 13 muted yourself again somehow.  
 14 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Sorry. They give us  
 15 the opportunity to get ahead and learn as we go, and  
 16 so we don't have this need to be on the same level  
 17 as other students. We can go at our own path.  
 18 We have the chance to graduate early, and  
 19 that is a great opportunity for many of us.  
 20 And students who are struggling with  
 21 something, we can talk to them about anything, and  
 22 they will always give us advice and solutions to  
 23 solve anything that we needed solutions. And we  
 24 also have amazing teachers.  
 25 THE CHAIR: Maria, unfortunately -- well,

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1 Maria you muted yourself again; but,  
 2 unfortunately --  
 3 PUBLIC COMMENTER: They also have amazing  
 4 teachers that are there in the full schedule, and  
 5 always try to tell us (indiscernible due to audio  
 6 distortion) as well. So, yeah.  
 7 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.  
 8 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Thank you, Maria.  
 9 THE CHAIR: Thank you.  
 10 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I'm going to move you  
 11 back to an attendee. So you can finish watching the  
 12 meeting if you want.  
 13 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Okay. Thank you.  
 14 THE CHAIR: I think we had a big time gap  
 15 there.  
 16 MS. KAREN WOERNER: That was  
 17 technological.  
 18 THE CHAIR: So, Bev, if we need to scooch  
 19 a few more seconds on, we can, because that was  
 20 completely out of our control.  
 21 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: Yeah. Okay. Our  
 22 next speaker is Deanna Pina.  
 23 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Okay, Deanna. I'm  
 24 going to move you to the panel.  
 25 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: And you have

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1 basically about five minutes left in the response  
 2 time. And there are four more -- three more people  
 3 to speak.  
 4 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Deanna, if you could  
 5 unmute yourself.  
 6 PUBLIC COMMENTER: I'm Deanna Pina, and  
 7 I'm a junior at The GREAT Academy. Before The GREAT  
 8 Academy, I wasn't as confident as I am now. I was  
 9 bullied so that really bogged down my confidence.  
 10 But during The GREAT Academy, feeling the warm  
 11 embrace from all the teachers, and then helping me  
 12 along the way making me more successful, I'm very  
 13 grateful to have teachers like them in my life, and  
 14 I'm really grateful to The GREAT Academy.  
 15 So I'm in favor of the school renewal.  
 16 They, like, just brought so much joy to my life.  
 17 They helped me through this pandemic. I'm going to  
 18 graduate early already. I'm already a junior. So  
 19 it's really, like, unexpected. But I'm really proud  
 20 of myself for, like, becoming more confident because  
 21 of them.  
 22 They made me open and to share my story.  
 23 And I now feel proud to share my story that I was  
 24 bullied. So thank you.  
 25 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Thank you, Deanna.

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1 THE CHAIR: Thank you. And it's hard to  
 2 believe that you didn't have confidence.  
 3 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: Our next speaker is  
 4 Isaiah Gallegos.  
 5 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Isaiah, I'm going to  
 6 promote you to the panel. Where is Isaiah? There  
 7 he comes.  
 8 Isaiah, if you could unmute yourself, when  
 9 you're ready, you can make your comments.  
 10 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Well, good morning. My  
 11 name is Isaiah Gallegos. I can't see myself. Can  
 12 you guys see me?  
 13 MS. KAREN WOERNER: No. But we can hear  
 14 you.  
 15 PUBLIC COMMENTER: That's fine. Once  
 16 again, my name is Isaiah Gallegos. Once again, I'm  
 17 representing the staff and teachers at The GREAT  
 18 Academy. And, of course, we all unanimously are in  
 19 favor of the school's renewal.  
 20 I have taught here at The GREAT Academy  
 21 for the past ten years. I teach science and CNM  
 22 dual-credit courses. And I have seen success  
 23 stories. Of course, you guys just saw that video.  
 24 You heard from Deanna and Maria.  
 25 But the countless success stories that

70	<p>1 I've seen, Mrs. Matthews and I have said that we've 2 graduated students from 15 to 50. So, of course, 3 you guys have heard about those success stories. 4 But one thing that I do want to say is 5 that The GREAT Academy serves an invaluable function 6 in this community, being around for the past ten 7 years, partnering with CNM, and, of course, having 8 that transition process where students can go from 9 knowledge and understanding to application in the 10 real world. 11 I am -- excuse me once again -- in favor 12 of this charter's renewal, because we serve a 13 purpose in this community far more than just a 14 quality education. 15 Thank you. 16 THE CHAIR: Thank you. 17 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: Our next speaker is 18 Charles Lakins. 19 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Charles, I'm promoting 20 you to the panel. Charles, if you could unmute 21 yourself, you can make your comments to the 22 Commission. 23 There he is. 24 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Madam Chair, 25 Commissioners, thank you very much. My name is</p>	72	<p>1 And I just -- I can't speak wholeheartedly 2 enough for support of The GREAT Academy, because 3 closing this school would be an impact and a 4 devastation to kids who really need what's offered. 5 And the needs of those few kids that The GREAT 6 Academy so well serves should be taken into account 7 here and recognized, and The GREAT Academy should be 8 given another chance to continue to do what they are 9 doing, which is such a superb job for the kids that 10 are there. 11 All of the students, all of the faculty 12 I've ever dealt with is top-notch, above and beyond 13 everything I've ever seen from any teacher. And I 14 just hope and pray that the PED takes action to keep 15 this school open and to take action, just do some 16 administrative things to institute a Corrective 17 Action Plan. Please, please, please do not close 18 this school down. 19 Thank you. 20 THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. 21 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Thank you. And I'm 22 going to move Mr. Lakins back to the attendees. 23 Somebody remember to mute your microphone 24 if you're not speaking. We could hear something in 25 the background.</p>
71	<p>1 Charles Lakins. I have a junior at GREAT Academy. 2 She's my fifth kid in school. I'm a little bit 3 older than a lot of the parents. 4 The motto, "Together we can," is so much 5 more than just a motto; it's the real world. 6 My child has -- this is her fifth school. 7 She went to one public, a couple of parochials and 8 another charter school. And I can't speak highly 9 enough of my years of comparisons at school, the 10 GREAT Academy is just far and above everything else. 11 My daughter will be a senior here in just the next 12 couple of weeks next year because of Edgenuity. 13 She's enrolled in CNM dual-credit classes. And by 14 the time her graduation comes, she'll be about 15 halfway through an Associate's degree. That 16 wouldn't be possible anywhere else. 17 I really don't think that the school 18 should be closed. I think the recommendation for a 19 Corrective Action Plan is appropriate. What I heard 20 was basically about just a few things that 21 Ms. Matthews also addressed as concerning the audit, 22 really just a few minor financial issues that have 23 to be cleared up and tended to appropriately. 24 Almost everything on that chart that was shown is in 25 the green on the performance evaluations.</p>	73	<p>1 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: Our next speaker is 2 Lorenzo Christie Pina [verbatim]. 3 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I do not see -- I do 4 not see that name in our list. Can you help me 5 look, Madam Chair and Bev? I don't see -- 6 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: This was from 7 Deanna Pina. And she said, "Lorenzo," comma, 8 "Christie Pina, The GREAT Academy, in favor." 9 MS. KAREN WOERNER: So should I -- let's 10 see if -- I see a Deanna Pina. But didn't she 11 already speak? 12 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: Yes, she did. 13 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Maybe she knows who 14 that is. Maybe it's her daughter? 15 Let me allow her to talk and see what's 16 going on. 17 Deanna, do you know who Christie or 18 Lorenzo Pina are? 19 PUBLIC COMMENTER: They're using my Zoom. 20 MS. KAREN WOERNER: So would it be here 21 that we -- they would speak from this account? 22 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Yeah. Yes. 23 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Let me fix that. 24 Sorry. A little confusing there. 25 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: You have one minute</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">74</p> <p>1 left in the comment period.</p> <p>2 MS. KAREN WOERNER: But for some reason --</p> <p>3 let me promote.</p> <p>4 Hold on, Bev, because I want to promote</p> <p>5 them to the panel officially.</p> <p>6 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: They are shown.</p> <p>7 MS. KAREN WOERNER: There we go. You have</p> <p>8 to unmute yourself, Mr. and Mrs. Pina. Thank you.</p> <p>9 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Good morning. My name</p> <p>10 is Lorenzo, and my wife, Christie, Pina. We're</p> <p>11 parents at The GREAT Academy. My daughter is now a</p> <p>12 junior and is participating in a dual credit program</p> <p>13 at CNM.</p> <p>14 I am strongly in favor of The GREAT</p> <p>15 Academy charter renewal. The school is small, but</p> <p>16 (indiscernible). The (indiscernible) population is</p> <p>17 conducive of the strong learning environment. The</p> <p>18 GREAT Academy is a free public charter school for</p> <p>19 Grades Six through Twelve, and it embraces a unique,</p> <p>20 one-of-a-kind business school model. The mission</p> <p>21 statement and motto of the school is to ensure their</p> <p>22 students gain real-world experience through active</p> <p>23 learning. The GREAT Academy not only improves the</p> <p>24 education for students, but provides students with</p> <p>25 the necessary skills for career success.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">76</p> <p>1 This unique business model allows student</p> <p>2 to work at their own pace, earn college credits</p> <p>3 while in school and at no cost, and participate in</p> <p>4 internships and SMART Labs to encourage career</p> <p>5 exploration.</p> <p>6 For all these reasons, we strongly support</p> <p>7 the renewal of The GREAT Academy. Thank you.</p> <p>8 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Thank you.</p> <p>9 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: No further</p> <p>10 speakers.</p> <p>11 THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you. And</p> <p>12 thank everyone for your time and your thoughts for</p> <p>13 the school.</p> <p>14 Okay. So let me just ask some general</p> <p>15 areas, and you can answer them in whatever order you</p> <p>16 wish.</p> <p>17 But I guess I'm -- my first question is</p> <p>18 about the special ed servicing issues. So I'm going</p> <p>19 to ask if you've had any communication from the</p> <p>20 Special Ed Bureau in relation to the concerns that</p> <p>21 have been addressed.</p> <p>22 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: No. No, ma'am. We</p> <p>23 have not.</p> <p>24 THE CHAIR: So the Special Ed Bureau</p> <p>25 hasn't indicated any concern about servicing or</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">75</p> <p>1 The GREAT Academy ensures seniors are well</p> <p>2 prepared for the demands that come after graduation.</p> <p>3 Having a prepared graduate improves the community by</p> <p>4 improving its residents.</p> <p>5 The GREAT Academy is committed to</p> <p>6 providing students with an education that is</p> <p>7 relevant and meaningful to their journey of</p> <p>8 achieving success.</p> <p>9 The GREAT Academy model is a business</p> <p>10 setting. School hours are based on a regular</p> <p>11 business day from 9:00 to 5:00. Everyone at the</p> <p>12 school is expected to wear a uniform, and even</p> <p>13 casual Friday requires a school tee shirt. This</p> <p>14 requirement sets the standard for an equal setting</p> <p>15 where no one is either over- or underdressed.</p> <p>16 In class, students (indiscernible)</p> <p>17 computer (indiscernible) --</p> <p>18 MS. BEVERLY FRIEDMAN: Time is up.</p> <p>19 PUBLIC COMMENTER: -- that's it? --</p> <p>20 through their Edgenuity classes, where an instructor</p> <p>21 lectures students, takes notes, and students get to</p> <p>22 answer questions following class instruction. All</p> <p>23 lectures are followed by an assignment and then an</p> <p>24 assessment. They must score a grade of 70 or better</p> <p>25 to move on to the next section.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">77</p> <p>1 service logs to you or through any audits?</p> <p>2 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: No, ma'am, Madam</p> <p>3 Commissioner. The communication that we had with</p> <p>4 Special Ed was prompted after the site visit. And</p> <p>5 the communication that I received back from our</p> <p>6 liaison, Liz, was included as one of those exhibits.</p> <p>7 But we have not had any contact regarding</p> <p>8 any non-compliance or deficiency areas or anything</p> <p>9 having to do with our special ed program.</p> <p>10 And I would like to add, in the past,</p> <p>11 during our site visits, we've always actually been</p> <p>12 praised for the level of service that we offer with</p> <p>13 our case management system, that includes</p> <p>14 communication logs, service logs, accommodations,</p> <p>15 modifications, how well we include our students in</p> <p>16 the general ed setting, which is one of the reasons</p> <p>17 many of our special ed parents choose The GREAT</p> <p>18 Academy, because they don't want their kids to be</p> <p>19 pulled out and segregated and not allowed to even</p> <p>20 sometimes eat or take breaks with their peers.</p> <p>21 THE CHAIR: Okay. And outside of the</p> <p>22 complaint, which it's clear that was satisfied,</p> <p>23 there hasn't been any Corrective Action Plans that</p> <p>24 have been created between the school and the Special</p> <p>25 Ed Bureau; correct?</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">78</p> <p>1 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: No, Madam 2 Commissioner. And if I could also add, on that 3 special ed complaint, it actually happened during 4 the last cycle. But we received the complaint right 5 in July of this cycle of '16. (Verbatim.) 6 And the -- you see in that complaint, 7 there was a lot of things that was actually alleged. 8 But the only thing that was substantiated is 9 compensatory time for speech and occupational 10 therapy. 11 What happened was the parent brought in 12 the IEP when we registered the student. So we 13 implemented the level of ancillary hours based on 14 that IEP. Then when we did a records request, it 15 took months -- probably February -- before the IEP 16 came from the previous school. 17 And there was a update -- there was a 18 newer IEP that had more ancillary time than what we 19 had in the previous IEP. 20 So if you look at that complaint, you will 21 see the only thing that was substantiated is that we 22 owed some compensatory time to that family, which we 23 provided at the family's new school. They 24 transferred to Southwest Secondary. And our speech 25 and OT person went to Southwest Secondary and</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">80</p> <p>1 then that will hurt our maintenance of effort. 2 But, like I said, if -- that's my 3 understanding. But Ms. Archuleta may have something 4 to add to that or a better understanding of that. 5 THE CHAIR: Okay. And, Karen, Palacios 6 has been added. If it's the Robert Palacios I'm 7 familiar with, he's with La Academia. 8 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I don't know why he's 9 added. I will demote him to attendee. Sorry. I 10 don't even see him in my panelist list. 11 THE CHAIR: Yeah. He's on mine. 12 Okay. Sorry. 13 MS. KAREN WOERNER: While I'm -- I don't 14 see him on my panelist list, I do not know how that 15 happened. 16 THE CHAIR: Okay. Yeah. He's on my -- 17 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I see him on the 18 screen. But in the list of panelists and attendees, 19 I don't see him in either list so that I can adjust 20 him. 21 THE CHAIR: He was on the attendees. But 22 I haven't looked lately. That's all right. 23 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Also, Madam Chair, I 24 know there are several folks here from the Special 25 Ed Bureau in case there are detailed questions</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">79</p> <p>1 finished that ancillary time off to complete that 2 corrective action. 3 THE CHAIR: Okay. So let me ask you, 4 because there was raised the concern that you may 5 have a potential liability for a lack of Maintenance 6 of Effort. 7 So have you been notified of any of that? 8 Or can you add any information on that for us? 9 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: That would -- that's 10 more. But it's a special ed and budget question. 11 And Ms. Archuleta would be probably better equipped 12 than me to speak to that. 13 THE CHAIR: Okay. 14 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: I know that my 15 understanding is we have to spend a certain amount 16 every year out of operational on our special ed 17 program, and then we get the additional federal 18 money to -- to support our special ed program. So 19 every year, we have to provide a certain amount -- 20 spend a certain amount ourselves. Then we get 21 additional money. 22 So we fall short -- so let's say, for 23 instance, we have a high special ed population one 24 year, and then it dips down. Then the amount of 25 money we spend towards special ed will drop, and</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">81</p> <p>1 around this. Should I add them, or should I wait 2 until we have questions? Or how would you like me 3 to handle that? 4 THE CHAIR: Well, you know, I guess, if 5 there's been no communication from the Special Ed 6 Bureau directly to the school, I don't know what 7 they can add at this point in time, because it would 8 be something that the school would not have been -- 9 you know, if they're adding something, it truly is 10 new information, that if there had been 11 communication between the Special Ed Bureau and the 12 school, I'd be fine with them speaking to that and 13 addressing any of those concerns. 14 But for the Special Ed Bureau to have -- 15 bring a concern now, I'm going to -- I'm going to 16 say I have difficulty with this. 17 If other Commissioners wish to hear from 18 Special Ed, I'll hear from the other Commissioners 19 to get a consensus. But I have a concern about 20 that, because it's new information and information 21 that the school would not have been able to address. 22 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: I have that 23 similar concern, Madam Chair, that they be brought 24 in. We can only deal with what's on the table. And 25 nothing is on the table that would require them to</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">82</p> <p>1 speak to.</p> <p>2 I don't think we should talk in</p> <p>3 probabilities and potentiality and that kind of</p> <p>4 stuff. And that's what it amounts to. They could</p> <p>5 be there in case that is needed. But to bring them</p> <p>6 in at this point, I don't think it's proper. That's</p> <p>7 my point of view.</p> <p>8 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: I agree with</p> <p>9 Chairwoman Gipson.</p> <p>10 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Madam Chair, I just</p> <p>11 want to add that the MOE -- there's been frequent</p> <p>12 correspondence with any schools that have MOE</p> <p>13 liability. And Special Ed has been in constant</p> <p>14 communication with the school about this to try to</p> <p>15 resolve any MOE calculations. And so I do think</p> <p>16 that Mr. Jasper -- Mr. Matthews may have</p> <p>17 misrepresented a little bit.</p> <p>18 Also, the school has introduced an e-mail</p> <p>19 from Liz as evidence of their IEPs being correct.</p> <p>20 And Liz is here as well. I'm not sure that that was</p> <p>21 an accurate presentation of the meaning of her</p> <p>22 e-mail, and they included that as an exhibit.</p> <p>23 I do think that the school has also</p> <p>24 misrepresented my comments about special ed to them,</p> <p>25 implying that we don't understand and that there's</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">84</p> <p>1 they did do. This isn't new information. This was</p> <p>2 information that was presented.</p> <p>3 But this is -- you know -- and I</p> <p>4 appreciate the -- Ms. Woerner's -- Deputy Director's</p> <p>5 concerns. But I'm going to say that if the Special</p> <p>6 Ed bureau did -- has not communicated any concerns</p> <p>7 over this directly to the school, I have difficulty</p> <p>8 having the Special Ed Bureau now weigh in on this,</p> <p>9 because this would be opening up for new</p> <p>10 information.</p> <p>11 And as I addressed the attorney, that</p> <p>12 Special Ed was here to answer any questions that we</p> <p>13 had, not to provide any new information.</p> <p>14 Commissioner Robbins, I apologize.</p> <p>15 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: No. I'm sorry I</p> <p>16 spoke over you.</p> <p>17 I would just like to hear from Special Ed</p> <p>18 Bureau whether or not they actually did send a</p> <p>19 communication to the school.</p> <p>20 THE CHAIR: Okay.</p> <p>21 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: The school is</p> <p>22 saying they have not. I think Special Ed should say</p> <p>23 whether or not they have.</p> <p>24 And if they haven't, then I agree that any</p> <p>25 new evidence at this time would be inappropriate.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">83</p> <p>1 some confusion. There's not been confusion on my</p> <p>2 part.</p> <p>3 We have -- I was -- I -- at least on one</p> <p>4 visit, maybe two, I was the one who reviewed their</p> <p>5 IEP files. And they are -- I understand about full</p> <p>6 inclusion, and I'm wholeheartedly behind the least</p> <p>7 restrictive environments is what we always aim for</p> <p>8 in all of our schools. But to suggest that I was</p> <p>9 saying that that's not what we're looking for is</p> <p>10 incorrect.</p> <p>11 What the school is doing is counting hours</p> <p>12 of Edgenuity classroom. Because the teacher in the</p> <p>13 classroom is a special ed teacher, they're counting</p> <p>14 those hours in that classroom as service, when, in</p> <p>15 fact, what's happening --</p> <p>16 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Madam Chair,</p> <p>17 we're getting into the meat and substance of the</p> <p>18 school by way of the Division. And we were just</p> <p>19 getting a consensus by the Commissioners whether to</p> <p>20 invite those folks in or not. And we're going</p> <p>21 somewhere else. I don't get it.</p> <p>22 THE CHAIR: No. Commissioner Caballero,</p> <p>23 this was brought up in the school's presentation.</p> <p>24 They did rebut the Charter School's Division's</p> <p>25 comments and assessment at the site visit. So that,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">85</p> <p>1 But if they have, I think that counters what the</p> <p>2 school says. So I would like to hear whether or not</p> <p>3 they have notified the school.</p> <p>4 THE CHAIR: Okay. Fair enough.</p> <p>5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And,</p> <p>6 Madam Chair?</p> <p>7 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Madam Chair? I'm</p> <p>8 sorry. Go ahead, Commissioner.</p> <p>9 THE CHAIR: I don't know who's --</p> <p>10 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It's fine. I</p> <p>11 just wanted to say that I think there's a number of</p> <p>12 questions around special ed. And I think whether or</p> <p>13 not Special Ed Bureau has contacted them or not, I</p> <p>14 think there's a lot of issues here that are not</p> <p>15 clear. And I personally want to at least hear --</p> <p>16 I'm not asking them to condemn or do anything. I</p> <p>17 just wanted to get the picture here of how services</p> <p>18 are delivered.</p> <p>19 THE CHAIR: But that's from the school.</p> <p>20 That's not the --</p> <p>21 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Right.</p> <p>22 THE CHAIR: You want information from the</p> <p>23 school. Absolutely. Absolutely.</p> <p>24 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: But I also think</p> <p>25 Special Ed Bureau should be listening to this.</p>

86	<p>1 Otherwise, we have to repeat it, and I don't want to</p> <p>2 repeat it.</p> <p>3 THE CHAIR: Oh, they are.</p> <p>4 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I think we</p> <p>5 should just let them in. It just seems easier.</p> <p>6 THE CHAIR: I'm going to let them in.</p> <p>7 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Madam Chair, as a</p> <p>8 point of clarification -- may I be recognized,</p> <p>9 please?</p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: Sure.</p> <p>11 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: So communication</p> <p>12 regarding the MOE is a --</p> <p>13 THE CHAIR: No.</p> <p>14 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Oh, okay. You don't</p> <p>15 want --</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: Just all communication.</p> <p>17 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Oh, okay. So, yeah,</p> <p>18 they -- we always have to do maintenance and efforts</p> <p>19 to satisfy the MOE. So that's regular</p> <p>20 communication. My understanding was, was there --</p> <p>21 has the Special Ed Bureau ever contacted The GREAT</p> <p>22 Academy Charter School during the term of this</p> <p>23 contract regarding any issues or concerns about how</p> <p>24 we deliver our special ed program?</p> <p>25 And that answer is --</p>	88	<p>1 find that out from her.</p> <p>2 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Shall we proceed with</p> <p>3 Special Ed, first, Madam Chair? Or shall I respond</p> <p>4 to Commissioner Raftery?</p> <p>5 THE CHAIR: No. Let's do Special Ed first</p> <p>6 and get that done with.</p> <p>7 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Tim Crum, can you</p> <p>8 unmute yourself. Is there someone else from your</p> <p>9 bureau I should add, or will you speak to the</p> <p>10 question about communication?</p> <p>11 You're muted.</p> <p>12 MR. TIM CRUM: I think it would be good if</p> <p>13 Liz was added in the event that she's had</p> <p>14 communication. She works directly with the school.</p> <p>15 She's the educator that works with the school.</p> <p>16 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Yeah. And I don't see</p> <p>17 her in the Attendees list anymore.</p> <p>18 MR. TIM CRUM: She may have dropped off.</p> <p>19 MS. KAREN WOERNER: She was there earlier.</p> <p>20 MR. TIM CRUM: I did speak with Liz.</p> <p>21 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Oh, here she is. I</p> <p>22 think Bev found her, or somebody found her.</p> <p>23 MR. TIM CRUM: All right.</p> <p>24 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Bev, was that you that</p> <p>25 added her? I don't know what happened, Tim.</p>
87	<p>1 THE CHAIR: Correct. And I'm simply going</p> <p>2 to --</p> <p>3 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Okay. Okay.</p> <p>4 THE CHAIR: And I'm simply going to ask</p> <p>5 the Special Ed Bureau to come in, as Commissioner</p> <p>6 Robbins requested, to respond to that question, and</p> <p>7 then we can move on. And then we can move on to</p> <p>8 Commissioner Armbruster's concerns so we can move</p> <p>9 on. Okay?</p> <p>10 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Yes, ma'am.</p> <p>11 MS. KAREN WOERNER: So, Madam Chair, I've</p> <p>12 added Tim Crum. I don't know if he'll need to add</p> <p>13 anyone else that's with him from the Special Ed</p> <p>14 Bureau. I know that Liz --</p> <p>15 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: There's a</p> <p>16 Commissioner that wants to speak, Madam Chair.</p> <p>17 THE CHAIR: Oh, I'm sorry.</p> <p>18 COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: Yeah. I wanted to</p> <p>19 finish --</p> <p>20 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Raftery, I</p> <p>21 apologize.</p> <p>22 COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: That's okay. I</p> <p>23 wanted to finish hearing Karen's explanation as to</p> <p>24 how she saw them servicing the special ed kids;</p> <p>25 because I thought that was pretty interesting to</p>	89	<p>1 MR. TIM CRUM: That's okay.</p> <p>2 MS. KAREN WOERNER: She was there; but...</p> <p>3 MR. TIM CRUM: I can try to answer the</p> <p>4 questions that you would have. I've been in</p> <p>5 communication with her.</p> <p>6 MS. KAREN WOERNER: So if I --</p> <p>7 Madam Chair, you're muted. I think the question was</p> <p>8 around has there been any communication with the</p> <p>9 school? And it seems, from the last discussion,</p> <p>10 that they're saying beyond the MOE.</p> <p>11 So we know that there was communication.</p> <p>12 Now it's clear that there's been communication</p> <p>13 around the Maintenance of Effort issues. But have</p> <p>14 there been any other communications from Special Ed,</p> <p>15 and would there be?</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: Correct.</p> <p>17 MR. TIM CRUM: Are you asking me that</p> <p>18 question, Karen?</p> <p>19 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Yes.</p> <p>20 THE CHAIR: Unfortunately, Liz is on my</p> <p>21 screen, but she's not -- she's muted, and I'm unable</p> <p>22 to unmute her.</p> <p>23 MS. KAREN WOERNER: That's not the right</p> <p>24 Liz.</p> <p>25 THE CHAIR: Okay.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">90</p> <p>1 MR. TIM CRUM: I also have -- pardon me.  2 I have Charlene Marcotte, who's our data supervisor,  3 who's on the meeting, too, who could be let in,  4 because she would be privy to communication with all  5 the LEAs when it comes to data and other things.  6 MS. KAREN WOERNER: So I've added  7 Charlene. But I'm not finding -- Liz was on the  8 list, but a different Liz. I don't know how to  9 pronounce her name. There's a different Liz in the  10 attendees, but not the Liz we wanted. She was there  11 earlier, but I don't know if we've lost the  12 connection or what happened.  13 But Charlene is now on the panel and can  14 unmute herself if she wants to.  15 THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you. And  16 Tim, Charlene, thank you, and it's good to see you.  17 MR. TIM CRUM: Nice to see you, Chairwoman  18 Gipson and all the Commissioners and everybody here.  19 THE CHAIR: So, Tim, any information that  20 you can provide in terms of any possible  21 communications that have come regarding concerns  22 over servicing -- servicing the students to The  23 GREAT Academy, we'd appreciate it.  24 MR. TIM CRUM: Yeah. Chairwoman Gipson,  25 the only communication that I'm familiar with -- and</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">92</p> <p>1 distortion) progress.  2 So those direct services have to be  3 provided directly from a special education teacher,  4 generally, it is, to the student themselves in an  5 individualized manner and not in a group setting,  6 generally.  7 I mean, I'm not aware of -- especially all  8 individualized services would have to be produced  9 that way. So that would be a clarification that I  10 would provide.  11 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Madam --  12 THE CHAIR: I appreciate it. And I  13 believe that this was -- this e-mail that Tim is  14 referencing is the e-mail that Mr. Matthews also  15 referenced; correct?  16 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Yes, that's correct,  17 Madam -- and, Madam Chair, may I piggyback off of  18 Mr. Crum?  19 And, hi, Tim, you've been very helpful  20 over the years, and I know Mrs. Matthews has talked  21 to you a number of times.  22 So when -- so if you look at the -- if you  23 remember Exhibit No. 12, where we took three APS  24 IEPs, and then Student A, we followed from the APS  25 service page to The GREAT Academy service page to</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">91</p> <p>1 I did a little research before I was invited in  2 today -- was a communication regarding direct  3 services and nondirect services. And that  4 communication was with Liz. And it was a fairly  5 short communication; it was an e-mail communication.  6 And Mr. Matthews was inquiring about what  7 differentiates direct services and indirect  8 services. And I must (indiscernible due to audio  9 distortion) earlier with a definition around  10 indirect services for special education. I don't  11 know that the Idea B puts out that definition.  12 There are some group contexts, where  13 related services can be provided in a work group  14 setting, work setting, generally around the  15 discipline category; but not around academics.  16 So direct services would be the more  17 appropriate, because direct services, to me, would  18 tie into individualized services, which are  19 delineated in all of the IEPs and must be out --  20 delivered in a timely fashion to -- it's very key to  21 produce goals.  22 And those goals are based around academic  23 achievement, access to Free and Appropriate Public  24 Education, and, if you look at the Supreme Court  25 decision, around (indiscernible due to audio</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">93</p> <p>1 the post-site-visit service page.  2 And what you will see is that APS did not  3 distinguish or separate direct service from indirect  4 service. And that was the feedback I was trying to  5 get from -- you know, when I reached out to Liz.  6 Because I was asked to reach out to our liaison,  7 because it really didn't seem like everybody was on  8 the same page.  9 I mean, I -- special ed is -- is -- is --  10 is my passion, like I'm sure many of you-all. My  11 son graduated from The GREAT Academy with an IEP.  12 This is not, like -- I mean, we embedded our case  13 management system in our charter application. You  14 know, it's a big deal around here.  15 And so if you look at that -- if you  16 follow Student A, what you will see is that the APS  17 service page did not distinguish direct from  18 indirect service.  19 Then we transferred the IEP to The GREAT  20 Academy service page. We didn't distinguish the  21 difference.  22 But then if you see the last student A  23 from Exhibit 12, you will see that we did  24 distinguish, because we were taking guidance from  25 CSD after the site visit.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">94</p> <p>1 And so we included the hour of direct 2 service -- I think, in that particular example, it 3 might have been an hour, and then the remainder of 4 the time was ancillary and indirect service. 5 So we attempted to satisfy the concern, 6 even though we did not see anything in the federal 7 guidance -- and I even had our Teach for America, 8 Dr. Linda Gregg, research this and did some research 9 on my own. And we did not see any federal 10 definition of "direct service" in IDEA legislation, 11 you know. 12 So all I ask is, hey, if Southwest 13 Secondary -- if I was told that there was an issue 14 with Southwest Secondary a few years ago about this, 15 and you all were able to sit down with them and the 16 SpEd Bureau and work this out, then why are we not 17 afforded the same opportunity, especially since 18 we've never fell "Far Below" on this indicator for 19 the entire term of our charter. We've never had any 20 issues with special ed until this time. 21 And if somebody -- and I know -- I don't 22 want to go back too far. But in our last renewal, 23 there was no issues with our special ed. And we 24 didn't change anything. For ten years, we've been 25 doing the same thing, until '19, we started</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">96</p> <p>1 very much. I appreciate the time, and thanks for 2 being available for us. 3 MR. TIM CRUM: Sure. Uh-huh. 4 THE CHAIR: Okay. 5 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Should I move Tim and 6 Charlene off? 7 THE CHAIR: Yeah, please. So if we can 8 look just briefly at some of the data that did come 9 in through '17, '18, and '19 -- and I don't know if 10 the page number is correct or not, because I 11 downloaded this a while ago. 12 But I'm looking at Page 9 of 22, and I 13 think it's from the original submission. But the -- 14 the subgroup proficiency in both '17, '18 and '19 is 15 really significantly low; so that we're, you know, 16 not just looking at last year, but looking at the 17 performance from prior years. You're looking at it 18 in terms of reading, anywhere from 27 percent 19 overall to 20 percent for your English Language 20 Learners. And that was in '17. 21 And in '19, you had dropped down to your 22 overall being 21 percent from your original high of 23 27 percent. 24 So that is concerning. And that was in 25 reading and your math.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">95</p> <p>1 separating direct service from indirect service. 2 And that's still not seemed like it's enough. 3 So whatever we need to do, I've asked, 4 "Hey, let's sit down and let's all get in the same 5 Zoom and let's figure this out so that we're 6 compliant." 7 There's no reason or rationale for us 8 to -- to willfully be non-compliant with an issue 9 that is as important as special education. That's 10 just not who we are as a school. We don't butt 11 heads with our authorizers. We try to work with 12 them so that we do what we need to do. 13 THE CHAIR: Okay. So -- but we brought 14 Tim in just to clarify for Commissioner Robbins that 15 outside of that one e-mail, which Mr. Matthews did 16 reference, and any communications regarding 17 Maintenance of Effort -- we know those occurred -- 18 there's been no additional communications addressing 19 concerns or expressing a concern and asking the 20 school to respond to a specific concern from the 21 Special Ed Bureau. Correct? 22 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I don't know if we 23 lost you, Tim. But I think that was correct from 24 what I heard, Madam Chair. 25 THE CHAIR: All right. So, Tim, thank you</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">97</p> <p>1 A little bit of kudos, because your math 2 did -- overall, your math dropped. But with your 3 English Language Learners, it was better, and it 4 stayed fairly consistent over those three years, but 5 still significantly low. 6 And, in addition, even though I appreciate 7 the fact that you've got kids that are graduating 8 and getting scholarships -- and I absolutely 9 appreciate that -- the message also is that college 10 isn't for everyone and that there's a lot of 11 opportunities to be successful and not go to 12 college. And especially with the population that 13 tends to -- to attend your school, there are those 14 alternate career options that are great and have 15 significant value. 16 But your graduation rate as a whole is 17 still very low, that for those that do graduate, 18 yes, there is great successes. But the graduation 19 rate itself is -- is really quite low. So if -- you 20 know, if you could spend some time talking about 21 that, I'd appreciate it. 22 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Thank you, 23 Commissioner, and thank you for that question. 24 As you are aware, we -- up until House 25 Bill 5 passed adding an age cap, prior to that, we</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">98</p> <p>1 did serve a -- numerous population of students over 2 the age of 18. And a good number of those students 3 weren't just over 18; they were in their mid to late 4 20s, 30s, even 40s.</p> <p>5 And so because we make the program -- or 6 made the program -- available to those students, 7 these are students who are very non-traditional; 8 they have families; they have full-time jobs. They, 9 a lot of times, came to us with all intentions of 10 completing their high school diploma and program, 11 but, a lot of times, would enroll and either become 12 inactive, or, you know, have life situations that 13 happened to them that caused them not to be able to 14 continue.</p> <p>15 As you're aware, these students calculate 16 into our -- our graduation rate, because they start 17 the year. They fizzle out or something happens, and 18 they're not able to continue. So those students 19 count against our graduation rate.</p> <p>20 In addition, you know, with serving this 21 type of population, a lot of times a student in 22 their late 20s is coming to us having been 23 disconnected from academics for quite a few years. 24 And so, you know, when they start with us, we do 25 everything that we can to remediate and get them</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">100</p> <p>1 realized that some of them were really just using 2 them for GED prep. Even though we told them we 3 don't offer GED prep, they were taking classes in 4 order to better themselves in order to pass the GED.</p> <p>5 What we did was we rebranded that program. 6 We thought the term "Second Chance" had a negative 7 connotation. You'll see in that response to the 8 preliminary analysis in the green box, we rebranded 9 that program right around '16-'17 or '17-'18 and 10 rebranded it to the Bridge to Success program. And 11 then we required those students to participate in 12 more of the dual enrollment courses.</p> <p>13 And so we recognized that that graduation 14 rate was really low, and we were not satisfied with 15 it. But we have -- over the last few years, have 16 made some efforts to improve that graduation rate, 17 not just limit it to rebranding that program, but 18 also bringing on American Teacher Academy that's led 19 by Dr. Linda Gregg, and she has had about 40-plus 20 years in education.</p> <p>21 So she's been working directly with the 22 team as a whole for our monthly professional 23 developments, and then she works with individual 24 teachers to help them with challenges, you know. So 25 we -- we -- we understand that we're -- you know,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">99</p> <p>1 to -- to proficiency.</p> <p>2 But as you know, that takes some time. 3 And because that population tended to be kind of 4 start-and-stop because of their real-life 5 situations, we weren't always afforded the amount of 6 time that it does take to show that growth and to -- 7 to help those students perform more proficiently.</p> <p>8 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: And, also, if I 9 would like to add, you know, we definitely were 10 not -- are not satisfied and was not satisfied with 11 the graduation rates that we have been receiving, 12 you know, even back when we was designated as a SAM 13 school, before that went away and -- you know.</p> <p>14 So you will see in -- I want to say one of 15 our responses; it's probably to the preliminary 16 analysis, we -- what we notice is after doing a data 17 analysis, that the students that signed up for our 18 Second Chance program were only coming to get a high 19 school diploma.</p> <p>20 And so when we looked at those students in 21 the Second Chance program, the over-age population, 22 those that were taking dual credit classes tended to 23 graduate at a much higher rate than those that 24 didn't. So -- and then after having some 25 conversations with some of those students, we</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">101</p> <p>1 we're as dissatisfied with that graduation rate as I 2 think anybody else, and we're really working hard 3 and trying to implement and change some things to -- 4 to improve that. And so we expect to see that go 5 up, you know, over the years.</p> <p>6 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: And, 7 Madam Chairwoman, if I could, just addressing your 8 comment about the fact that all students are not 9 college-bound, we do recognize that. And what we 10 found, especially when working with our over-age 11 population, is we work with them to discover what -- 12 what things they want to do.</p> <p>13 A lot of times, they come to us, and 14 they're working in a particular area. I'm thinking 15 of a young man who graduated last year who was 16 working in nursing homes. And he's a cook in 17 nursing homes. And he stated that he had the 18 opportunity to get a -- to advance with the company 19 that he was with, but because he didn't have a high 20 school diploma, he had a hard time with that.</p> <p>21 So we hooked him up with CNM's culinary 22 arts program, and so he was able to take some 23 courses with that and was working on certifications 24 to further the position that he was currently in. 25 I'm thinking of a young man who came to us</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">102</p> <p>1 who was interested in HVAC. CNM has a -- as you are  2 probably aware, I'm sure -- has a number of --  3 number of just career-focused programs that lead to  4 a certification rather than a degree. And so we do  5 try to get students involved in those. We kind of  6 think of those classes as the carrot. A lot of our  7 over-age students, they're -- while they want their  8 high school diploma, while they need their high  9 school diploma, their focus is how can they put  10 themselves in a situation to better provide for  11 their families and to put themselves in a position  12 where they can, you know, earn -- you know, be  13 better earners.</p> <p>14 And so getting those students hooked up in  15 those different programs really has been a benefit.  16 But a lot of times there are several programs that  17 are fewer than four classes to get a certification.  18 And those students, depending on when they start  19 with us, you know, may start on that path and then  20 kind of run out of time, or, in their own lives,  21 they have to decide, okay, I have to work on my high  22 school. I want to take these CNM classes but, you  23 know, my kids have school, and I have work.</p> <p>24 And so, you know, their main focus tends  25 to be high school. So I just wanted to add that.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">104</p> <p>1 and the -- the chart going down in terms of your  2 numbers. I appreciate the fact -- and one of the  3 reasons we look at staff retention when we're  4 talking about retention, it's sometimes a symptom of  5 what's going on at the school if you can't keep  6 staff. It's not something that we're going to make  7 the decision about. But it is part of the picture  8 of the story.</p> <p>9 But student retention is important for us  10 for a variety of reasons, especially now, because  11 everyone's concerned about kids getting lost during  12 this time period. They've left your school, and,  13 you know, are they picked up? So we worry about,  14 you know, the lost souls at this point in time.</p> <p>15 But can you just talk a little bit about  16 what you think might be happening in regards to  17 student retention?</p> <p>18 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Sure. So the first  19 part of that answer is when -- when House Bill 5 was  20 enacted, we did lose a good chunk of students based  21 on some of the language in that House bill. If  22 those students were enrolled with us -- I believe it  23 was the 120th day of the '18-'19 school year, we  24 were advised that we could keep those students.  25 (Commissioner Robbins exits screen).</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">103</p> <p>1 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thanks. And thanks  2 for -- I think it was all of our heartbreak when the  3 funding went away for those over 21. Unfortunately,  4 there's buyer's remorse with a lot of legislators as  5 well. And it was sad that -- you know. And the  6 expressions that they said that they were sorry  7 about it after the fact, it's too late. And you're  8 not looking at the folks that were truly lost.</p> <p>9 So let's look just a little bit at student  10 retention. And I don't know if student retention  11 goes into that piece that, you know, you've got  12 those, at the time, somewhat over-aged students so  13 that they are difficult to hold onto, because we  14 know life happens with a lot of those students. And  15 as much as you want to help them, it does become  16 challenging.</p> <p>17 But there seems to be a drop from last  18 year to this year as well. And I guess -- I mean,  19 we've seen a number of charters, because they've had  20 the infrastructure and the capacity to do online,  21 actually picked up students through this  22 unfortunate, you know, circumstances. And that  23 doesn't seem to be the case with your school.</p> <p>24 So I'd just like you to spend a little bit  25 of time talking about the -- you know, the charts</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">105</p> <p>1 And as it turns out, PED has informed us  2 that now they won't be funding those students, even  3 though they were enrolled on the 120th day of the  4 '18-'19 school year. But any students past that,  5 you know, we were -- we were required to drop. And  6 so that's one part of the decrease.</p> <p>7 Another part of the decrease, I believe,  8 was some of the unsurity [ph] -- lack of knowing  9 what was going to happen, families wanting to be  10 closer to -- I had a few discussions with a few  11 parents who withdrew. Parents had lost their jobs.  12 There were a few families who lost their  13 transportation because their cars were reposed  14 because they lost their jobs, and thinking that, you  15 know, soon we would be reopening, they wanted to be  16 closer to a neighborhood school so they didn't have  17 to worry about transportation, because we -- you  18 know, we don't provide transportation.</p> <p>19 Our students either catch the bus or their  20 parents bring them. So I can think of about five  21 families that were affected in that way.</p> <p>22 So, you know, those are just a few of  23 the -- of the reasons.</p> <p>24 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: And, also,  25 Madam Chair, if -- so when we do a projection, we'll</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">106</p> <p>1 project what we think our enrollment is going to be.  2 And then -- then -- so when we did our projections  3 last go-round, I think we projected around -- even  4 though we had about 156 or 160 kids, we projected  5 180. Then when COVID hit, then we saw the decline.  6 So not only did we see the decline, but it  7 hurt our ability to successfully reach those  8 projections that we projected. And, you know, we --  9 we've always been pretty aggressive in our  10 marketing. And I think right -- you know, COVID hit  11 (Commissioner Robbins returns) in our big spring  12 marketing campaign that we typically do every year.  13 And so what we found out is, even though  14 we were pretty aggressive on numerous platforms -- I  15 think we had a billboard for two or three months;  16 we've had TV; we've had -- and I think radio. But  17 what we didn't anticipate is that during the  18 shutdown from March to August, that people just  19 really wasn't thinking about school, at least, you  20 know, based on the numbers. We got very few  21 numbers -- we actually got more activity from this  22 campaign than we got from our spring campaign.  23 So, yeah. It's -- you know, it's been a  24 challenge. But we've seen -- you know, we've kind  25 of seen the cycles, you know, over the years, where</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">108</p> <p>1 sort of thing.  2 And so, you know, we're struggling with  3 that, just like the rest of the state is. I think  4 the number that I heard the other day was  5 14,000 students that, you know, we don't -- we  6 haven't been able to track them down. You know,  7 some of those students are our students. So just  8 wanted to add that.  9 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. And because  10 I'm home, I have to -- I'm sorry. I've got to go  11 get my dog, who's -- so I will be right back.  12 (Commissioner Caballero leaves screen.)  13 (Commissioner Chavez leaves screen.)  14 (Chair momentarily leaves screen.)  15 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Maybe I could  16 ask a couple of yes-no questions while we're letting  17 the dog in. Mine just came in.  18 So how many special ed students do you  19 have?  20 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Currently, I think  21 we have 13. It kind of fluctuates. (Commissioner  22 Caballero returns.) We have a couple that just  23 applied yesterday. But 13 to 15.  24 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And how many EL  25 students?</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">107</p> <p>1 some years, we do a lot better, and then some years,  2 it'll drop off. But I think this was, like, the  3 perfect storm that came all at once.  4 And I think it really has impacted us.  5 But because we carry such a healthy cash balance --  6 you know, you can't anticipate everything. But it's  7 always good to be able to not have to go beg for  8 money when something does happen. So, you know,  9 fiscally, you know, even though our numbers are  10 lower than what we want it to be, you know, we're --  11 we're fiscally in good shape as far as, you know, we  12 pay all our bills; we pay all our taxes. You know,  13 we pay everything. We don't owe anybody anything.  14 So that's always good.  15 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: And one more thing  16 that I'll add, if I might. When the initial closure  17 happened in March, similar to stories that I think  18 you guys are familiar with, because of job loss and  19 students -- we had several students who ended up  20 having to double up with other families and, you  21 know, situations changing, we, like the State, you  22 know, did lose some students that we were not able  23 to reach, because we didn't have current addresses,  24 you know, because they had, you know, moved or -- or  25 had to relocate because of job loss and all that</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">109</p> <p>1 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Sixteen, I believe.  2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So, really, you  3 have about a significant portion of your school is  4 either special ed or EL; correct?  5 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Yes, ma'am.  6 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: That's about 30.  7 And of those special ed, I think we're still calling  8 them A- and B-level, or are they 1 and 2? D -- the  9 D-levels, how many of those students do you have,  10 would you say?  11 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: I would have to go  12 back -- one or two. We tend not to get a lot of  13 D-level students because they -- you know, the  14 online learning tends not to be their preference.  15 They tend to -- we do have it. We do the core  16 courses on Edgenuity, and then we do the  17 face-to-face classes. But they tend to prefer  18 the --  19 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Face-to-face.  20 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: The traditional  21 classrooms.  22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I would suspect  23 that. So are those D-level students -- I mean, I'm  24 not asking you to identify them, of course. But I'm  25 asking, in terms of their services, does a lot of it</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">110</p> <p>1 deal with behavior issues and those kinds of things? 2 Or is it more like life skills? 3 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Well, can I -- the 4 one D-level kid that comes to mind is SLD and 5 dyslexic. But not as far as behaviors. It's more 6 of an academic deficit. 7 (Chair returns to screen.) 8 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. I was 9 just taking up time, Madam Chair, while you were 10 there, to get some information. 11 THE CHAIR: I know. Thanks. I'm sorry. 12 Dog's bell. I'm sorry. 13 So let me -- let me ask you, because you 14 did mention, you do your academics through 15 Edgenuity, and then you do your electives live or in 16 a more traditional setting. 17 But in the video, there was a -- there was 18 a segment that talked about project-based learning. 19 So how do you blend the online learning with the 20 project-based learning? And about how much time 21 would you say the -- is it through the electives 22 that they're doing the project-based learning? Or 23 how do you split out that time? 24 And I'll make this even more difficult. 25 Now that we're in this, what have been the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">112</p> <p>1 business-and-entrepreneurship lab. 2 So we matriculate the middle-school 3 students through those four labs throughout their 4 middle-school time with us. 5 And then the high-schoolers, ninth and 6 tenth grade, they will take the second version of 7 those SMART Labs. 8 And then what we try to do -- see, we 9 don't do field trips. We do career expeditions. 10 Now, to the kids, they look like a field trip and 11 feel like a field trip. But we tell them, "No, 12 we're not going just to have fun; we're going to 13 learn something." 14 So we would take them into the community 15 to see how those skills that they're learning in 16 those SMART Labs apply to real-world application. 17 And so those SMART Labs are about an hour 18 and 15 minutes. And they usually have them -- 19 they'll have one lab on Monday and Wednesday per 20 semester. So each person will have -- throughout 21 the year, they will attend two SMART Labs. 22 Now, the challenge has been, since -- 23 since COVID, is we focus on the Edgenuity classes 24 and face-to-face. And then we maintain our Double 25 Dose reading and Double Dose math for our</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">111</p> <p>1 challenges that you've had to address with that in 2 light of what we're going through now? 3 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: That's a very good 4 question, and I'll see if I can handle it. So 5 Edgenuity is our primary curriculum for our core 6 courses; so for math, language arts, science, and 7 social studies. And then there are some other 8 Edgenuity courses that we utilize for elective. 9 Like we have -- for language, we have Rosetta Stone 10 for our language courses. 11 So about four hours a day, the students 12 are on Edgenuity. So kind of here's how it works. 13 So you have your middle-schoolers -- and 14 this is before COVID. So everything is before 15 COVID. Then I'll talk post-COVID. 16 You have your middle-schoolers in our 17 face-to-face classes in the morning and our 18 high-schoolers doing their Edgenuity in the morning. 19 And so after lunch, they just swap. So then you had 20 your middle-schoolers doing Edgenuity in the 21 afternoon, high-school kids doing your face-to-face 22 classes. 23 So we have four SMART Labs: The STEMS 24 lab; you saw the audio-video-production lab. We 25 have a health-and-education lab, and we also have a</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">113</p> <p>1 interventions. 2 So we maintain those. But we physically, 3 right now, are not doing the project-based SMART 4 Labs, because we really need to be hands-on, 5 especially with that level of equipment that we 6 have. It's kind of hard to do that. 7 Now, there are some Edgenuity classes that 8 have STEMS-type classes. But we prefer to do that 9 more in-house, hands-on. They just -- the kids like 10 the robots; they like the drones; they -- in the 11 business and entrepreneur lab when Mr. Komp [ph] was 12 with us -- he was in the video -- they did a Shark 13 Tank activity where we invited sharks and they had 14 to evaluate their product. 15 So they really like -- you know, when 16 you're sitting in front a computer -- and we make 17 sure during those four core courses, those core 18 courses are only -- at least an hour long. So they 19 would get a break in between to give their eyes some 20 rest. So after lunch, we want to make sure that we 21 focus more on the tactileness of them acquiring 22 their education. 23 So we try to blend it really well with the 24 computer-based learning and then the more hands-on, 25 face-to-face, traditional, project-based.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">114</p> <p>1           And then the kids present those. Like, in 2 a STEMS lab a couple of years ago, the kids 3 presented a video game, and they presented it at 4 parent night. 5           So they showcase their products, their 6 finished products. 7           MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: And a few of the 8 challenges that we've seen and have been 9 experiencing -- like many of you have experienced 10 using Zoom, I'm sure -- you know, we have students 11 who have and have had Internet access. But with the 12 increased need and with the increased bandwidth 13 that's required, we found that a lot of students 14 that had Internet, one, especially if there's, you 15 know, a parent that needs the Internet and siblings 16 sharing the -- the Internet connection that they 17 have has been an issue. 18           Students who -- we have very few students 19 who don't have Internet access at all. But we do 20 have that issue. We have students who didn't have 21 devices to work on so that we were able to issue 22 devices so that every student definitely had a 23 Chromebook to work on. We had families with 24 multiple siblings that were sharing, so we made sure 25 that each student had a Chromebook.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">116</p> <p>1           And I appreciate that. 2           So let's just take a quick glimpse at what 3 a day may look like now during -- during this school 4 year, in particular. 5           And have you changed in terms of how much 6 face time does a student have? Because we know that 7 that's one of the significant concerns that everyone 8 has. Social-emotional, kids are disconnected. We 9 need to try to keep track of them. 10           And, yes, some of them are fading away on 11 us, and it's a concern. So based on the fact that 12 your kids do spend so much time, you know, and they 13 can, off face-time or Zoom, on Edgenuity, how much 14 screen time do they get with a physical teacher at 15 this point in time? 16           MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Certainly. I can 17 break that down for you. 18           So I'll speak to middle-schoolers first. 19 Middle-schoolers have -- they have Double Dose math, 20 a math intervention, Double Dose reading, which is a 21 reading intervention. And we continue those during 22 this time to help address the learning loss that may 23 have happened due to the closure last year. 24           Those students also have a 25 homeroom/advisory period, where our social-emotional</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">115</p> <p>1           Another one of the challenges that we face 2 is, you know, we do have students with parents who 3 are still working, be that in health care, or, you 4 know, fast food, or anything that has been deemed 5 essential. So those (Commissioner Caballero leaves 6 screen) parents are not at home during the day 7 making sure that their student is doing, you know, 8 what they need to do with school. 9           So, just, we have a huge focus on 10 communicating with the parents so that they know how 11 much time their student is working, or whether they 12 missed their Zoom classes or didn't do what they 13 needed to do with their core classes and Edgenuity. 14 Those are a few of the challenges that we've 15 experienced. 16           MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: We apologize for 17 being long-winded on some of these answers. We are 18 going to try to make them a little more concise. 19 But we really like talking about The GREAT Academy. 20 So we really don't get a lot of opportunity. So 21 please forgive us for being long-winded. 22           THE CHAIR: No problem. And can the 23 record please reflect that Commissioner Caballero 24 and Commissioner Raftery have stepped away? 25           Oh, Commissioner Caballero is back.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">117</p> <p>1 curriculum is taught, where they get to have, like, 2 social time and play games and do those sorts of 3 things. 4           Our special ed teachers also have a 5 resource room period, where they meet with their 6 caseload. 7           And then I'm probably getting ahead of 8 myself. So those Double Dose classes and the 9 homeroom classes are twice a week. And so the 10 classes are about an hour apiece. And so the time 11 outside of that is focused on Edgenuity. 12           And we also have teachers who will get 13 small groups together to work with the students 14 while they're working on Edgenuity, so that it's -- 15 and those are typically students who have just have 16 a little bit of an issue with time management and 17 making sure that they're doing what they need to do. 18 So we try to push into Edgenuity so to speak. 19           And then -- and we have had students come 20 into the building, also, of course, abiding by 21 the -- by the health order, you know, working with 22 small groups here in the building. 23           When it comes to high school students, 24 it's rather similar. We don't call it Double Dose 25 for the high school students. It's reading</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">118</p> <p>1 intervention; it's math intervention. They also  2 have homeroom advisory, where their social-emotional  3 curriculum is taught.  4 Our teachers have gone above and beyond.  5 This Friday, we have a movie night. I have teachers  6 who have gotten kids together for guitar lessons.  7 We have a group of students working on -- I'm not  8 sure if you're familiar with National -- National  9 Writing Month, which is November. But we extended  10 it, because they're doing a presentation at our  11 parent night in January. They're working on their  12 own novels.  13 And so they have a Tuesday -- they have a  14 name for it. I can't think of it. It meets on  15 Tuesday evenings. They get together and write  16 together and share ideas and do their thing with  17 their novels.  18 But the teachers have really gone above  19 and beyond trying to be present for the students in  20 ways that are not strictly academic, just giving  21 them outlets, be it music with the guitar lessons --  22 we had one student who offered to do workouts, and  23 he was the workout instructor.  24 And so that's -- that's kind of how things  25 run right now.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">120</p> <p>1 some kind of, you know, like escrow-type account.  2 I don't know, you know, exactly what the  3 term would be. But that seems to be an ongoing  4 concern. But I'm guessing that it's a concern that  5 the foundation may be -- I don't know -- spending  6 down that money. So that is a concern.  7 And I -- you mentioned that -- or Karen  8 mentioned that there was an LLC that was created,  9 The GREAT Academy. And if you could just explain a  10 little bit about the relationship between what  11 appears to be now two foundations, a for-profit and  12 a non-for-profit foundation. Because it's a  13 little -- somewhat confusing to me.  14 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Yes, ma'am.  15 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Maybe add in to  16 that, like R. Shorter is the president of the  17 nonprofit and the sole person that's listed on the  18 for-profit LLC. Maybe just do that all at once.  19 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Yes, ma'am, I can do  20 that. So let's -- we'll go back a little bit.  21 So myself and Mr. Liu, which was the  22 business manager at the time in 2013, we were the  23 founding members of the foundation. Because we had  24 a lease -- our first lease had a purchase option  25 that we wanted to execute. But it had a time limit</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">119</p> <p>1 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thanks. And just real  2 quick, now that people are so remote, how do you  3 keep track of their time on Edgenuity?  4 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: So Edgenuity keeps  5 track of that time. It logs it. We have continued  6 our weekly progress reports. And a part of the  7 weekly progress reports, it lays out for the parent  8 how many activities the student has completed within  9 Edgenuity for the week.  10 We have kind of a -- a baseline, so to  11 speak, of activities that they did complete for  12 middle school and high school. And so if they fall  13 below that, or if they go above that, it's addressed  14 with the parents on a weekly basis.  15 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thanks. And I've got  16 one more thing, and then I can -- I'm sure others  17 have some things.  18 The foundation. So there has been  19 continuing ongoing concerns, it appears, through the  20 audits, with the prepayment of the -- the lease.  21 And the auditor, I think, addressed, through two  22 separate audits -- I think that was one of the  23 repeat findings -- a concern over the school's  24 prepayment of the lease and the fact that the  25 foundation appears to not be holding those funds in</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">121</p> <p>1 that it was going to run out.  2 So working with the -- with Matthews Fox  3 and with -- not -- well, Connie Dove, as our  4 consultant, and the other law firm for the  5 foundation. So we had to beat that timeline,  6 because the owner wanted -- once it expired, she  7 said she wasn't going to renew it. And we didn't  8 want to be in a lease relationship with no real  9 benefits, you know, forever.  10 So we -- so myself and Mr. Liu were two of  11 the founding members. But that was in 2013. Once  12 the foundation was formed, we immediately  13 transitioned off the board. We have not been on the  14 board of the foundation since its inception. And I  15 wanted to make sure that I -- I -- I expressed that.  16 So, secondly -- so when we started the  17 prepayment process -- and it was a long process, a  18 process of about seven years or so -- we -- one of  19 the things that we saw was the lease assistance.  20 And I think we put that in one of our answers. The  21 lease assistance -- and definitely in the answer for  22 the audit finding that we received on that. Because  23 we had never received an audit finding on that for  24 '13, '14, '15, '16, '17. And then we got -- and  25 then '18, '18 it was a going concern.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">122</p> <p>1 And one of the -- and if you look at the 2 answer in FY '18's audit regarding that, it wasn't a 3 finding; it was a going concern. 4 And so what me and the auditor did, in 5 conjunction with the foundation, is say, "Hey, how 6 are you going to address this going concern? It's 7 not a finding, but we just want you to know that we 8 want a response." 9 So the answer that I remember -- and I'm 10 trying to do all this from memory, so please forgive 11 me if I'm not 100 percent on this. But the plan was 12 for the foundation to refinance the building and 13 pull some cash out of the building. 14 So there was two lenders that said no. 15 And then the current lender used to be People's 16 Bank. People's Bank got bought up by Hillcrest. 17 People's Bank used to be a community bank, where 18 they finance charter schools. Now they don't 19 anymore, because they're Hillcrest. Hillcrest even 20 said no. Even though there was over a million 21 dollars of equity in the building, they still said 22 no. 23 So in that going concern, if you see that 24 for 2018, it was, "Hey, first thing we'll do is try 25 to refinance the building."</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">124</p> <p>1 Now -- so -- I wasn't sure about the other 2 part of the question. 3 THE CHAIR: Okay. So I'm sorry. So let 4 me just clarify this. And I didn't mean to 5 interrupt. I thought you were done. So the LLC, 6 for all intents and purposes, is not operating. Is 7 that what you're saying? 8 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: No. It doesn't -- 9 it exists in that initial filing, but it's not 10 complete. It didn't have any transactions, so 11 that's why it wasn't audited during this last cycle. 12 THE CHAIR: And I -- honestly, I don't -- 13 okay. Okay. All right. 14 Commissioner Ruiz expressed -- 15 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Oh. I'm sorry. 16 THE CHAIR: I'm sorry. 17 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Glenna, I've seen 18 your hand up, and I've been wanting to say 19 something, but I didn't want to step out of line. 20 But -- so in the audit finding we did get in '19, 21 the recommendation was, if you enter into a 22 lease-purchase agreement, then that prepaid rent can 23 be rolled into that agreement, and then it would 24 disappear as a liability the way that it's 25 structured now.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">123</p> <p>1 So when that failed, then the banker at 2 Hillcrest said, "You know, it's hard to find people 3 to loan to not-for-profits. If you change it to an 4 LLC, you may have a better opportunity to -- to get 5 your building refinanced." 6 So that process was started, but never 7 finished. So there was a lawyer that the -- if I 8 remember, from the foundation -- hired, and she 9 started the paperwork. But in the process in 10 working with the accountant, the last nine 11 (indiscernible) could not be filed until assets were 12 transferred and liabilities, which would be the 13 building and the prepaid rent. 14 So then it was discovered that, well, that 15 can't be -- that can't be transferred to a 16 for-profit LLC; it has to go to a tax-exempt LLC, 17 and then you have to do another 1023, which is the 18 same thing you've got to do to get the 19 not-for-profit. 20 So that process basically just stalled, 21 even though the initial filing had been done for the 22 name change. But the process at this point, to my 23 understanding, has stalled. So that's kind of how 24 that whole thing, that whole history, how that whole 25 thing happened.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">125</p> <p>1 Because right now, it's amortized over the 2 course of 20 years. It's about \$44,000 a year of 3 lease benefit that we get. And, you know, you just 4 never know how much money we will get for lease 5 assistance. So that's what we were trying to pace 6 ourselves to keep up with. 7 And so I remember the last charter school 8 director, he actually attended our exit conference. 9 And he was there to answer questions regarding the 10 lease-purchase agreement. 11 But that was the recommendation from the 12 auditor. We accepted the recommendation. And in 13 April, I think, we submitted a lease-purchase 14 agreement. And that's what -- to my understanding, 15 you know, there was some communication back and 16 forth. But there was an analysis done by one of the 17 budget people that myself and Ms. Archuleta 18 participated in last week or week before last. 19 So to resolve that issue, because it seems 20 like it caused a lot of heartburn with a lot of 21 people, we agreed to enter into this lease-purchase 22 because that's what the auditor said would satisfy 23 this finding. 24 And CSD at the time, the director -- and I 25 can't remember this guy's name for anything in the</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">126</p> <p>1 world. Tall. Blonde.</p> <p>2 THE CHAIR: Alan Brauer.</p> <p>3 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Yes, he was there.</p> <p>4 We followed the recommendation that was given to --</p> <p>5 you know, that was given because we don't want to be</p> <p>6 in bad standing or in any kind of -- be perceived in</p> <p>7 any kind of negative light.</p> <p>8 So we -- it's -- we was given the</p> <p>9 recommendation at the exit conference in December.</p> <p>10 And by April, we had already submitted the</p> <p>11 lease-purchase agreement, which is a very big packet</p> <p>12 of a lot of stuff.</p> <p>13 So we feel we were very proactive in</p> <p>14 trying to resolve that -- that issue. And I know</p> <p>15 that -- that, you know, Budget is aware, because</p> <p>16 they have the packet, and we've been communicating</p> <p>17 regarding the packet.</p> <p>18 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. And I am</p> <p>19 going to turn it over to Commissioner Ruiz.</p> <p>20 Let me just get a clarification. That</p> <p>21 exit conference was for the audit?</p> <p>22 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Yes, the exit</p> <p>23 conference for the audit for FY '19.</p> <p>24 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thanks.</p> <p>25 Commissioner Ruiz?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">128</p> <p>1 already mentioned that big population of our kids</p> <p>2 are -- a population of our seniors don't go on to</p> <p>3 college, the point is they still have to have a</p> <p>4 diploma. And that is a huge concern for me because</p> <p>5 that is the goal of public education.</p> <p>6 The other thing is I will tell you, I'm</p> <p>7 glad that you did improve on your ELLs. But even</p> <p>8 with that, in SpEd, there's so much room for</p> <p>9 improvement. I mean, there is just a vast area</p> <p>10 there that still needs to be addressed.</p> <p>11 And so I do want you to talk to me about</p> <p>12 your food service program. And then another huge</p> <p>13 concern that I have -- because one of the things</p> <p>14 that is very telling of any organization, not just a</p> <p>15 school, is if you have problems at the upper end and</p> <p>16 with management and just a lot of different concerns</p> <p>17 and issues like that, that's going to trickle down</p> <p>18 to your students. You cannot be successfully</p> <p>19 ensuring that your students are getting a quality</p> <p>20 education and ultimately graduating if you can't</p> <p>21 even take care of business in your own front.</p> <p>22 The fact that you've been involved in</p> <p>23 cases that have been referred to the Attorney</p> <p>24 General is very, very much concerning to me.</p> <p>25 And then, also, the fact that a lot of</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">127</p> <p>1 And then Commissioner Voigt.</p> <p>2 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Thank you. Just a</p> <p>3 couple of questions, please, and comments. First of</p> <p>4 all, kudos to Karen and Lee and everybody for</p> <p>5 getting all this information ready for us. And</p> <p>6 thank you.</p> <p>7 Also, I have concerns. And one of them</p> <p>8 being that -- that I really want to address. And I</p> <p>9 am still actively employed in the schools. And I am</p> <p>10 a counselor and a test coordinator. And so the</p> <p>11 goal -- the goal for our students, the primary goal</p> <p>12 for our secondary students is that we get them to</p> <p>13 graduate.</p> <p>14 And I know you talked about your</p> <p>15 graduation rates. But I am really concerned when</p> <p>16 Albuquerque has a 70 percent, and statewide, it's a</p> <p>17 78 percent, and you only have 33 percent graduation</p> <p>18 rate.</p> <p>19 And I understand this is a different year</p> <p>20 for all of us. But when you only have a third of</p> <p>21 your students actually completing and graduating</p> <p>22 from high school, that is a huge concern. And that</p> <p>23 has been going on even prior to COVID.</p> <p>24 That's a big concern, because for -- you</p> <p>25 know, even though Commissioner -- Chairwoman Gipson</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">129</p> <p>1 money is spent for upper administrative positions</p> <p>2 and different benefits. And it appears, from</p> <p>3 everything that I've read, that the money is not</p> <p>4 spent perhaps where it should be, which is more on</p> <p>5 student support and student services; but, instead,</p> <p>6 it's very, very top-heavy. A lot of money is going</p> <p>7 to that upper administrative ladder.</p> <p>8 And so I really want you to discuss all</p> <p>9 that with me, because I have a real big concern for</p> <p>10 our children. I do not believe they are being</p> <p>11 serviced as well as they should with all those</p> <p>12 reasons listed and many more. Thank you.</p> <p>13 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Thank you, I'll --</p> <p>14 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Okay. Are we free</p> <p>15 to address --</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: Yeah, absolutely.</p> <p>17 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Thank you,</p> <p>18 Commissioner Ruiz. And I've -- I feel for your</p> <p>19 health right now. And I hope you have a very speedy</p> <p>20 recovery.</p> <p>21 As we were talking about before, with the</p> <p>22 population that we were serving up until last year</p> <p>23 when House Bill 5 was enacted, you know, in our</p> <p>24 prior -- what's the word? -- renewal process for</p> <p>25 the -- for the first cycle that we went through, the</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">130</p> <p>1 Commissioners stated, you know, "Hey, you have a 2 population of students (Commissioner Crone leaves 3 screen) that's dragging your performance, your 4 graduation rate, your proficiency down. 5 And we acknowledged that. We understood 6 that because of the population that we were serving. 7 But we felt that, as a benefit to the community and 8 a benefit to the state, we were attempting to 9 provide a service to students who otherwise, you 10 know, might not have the opportunity to complete 11 their high school -- high school diploma and 12 graduate. 13 You know, it is a hit that we took 14 knowingly. And now that we're not able to serve 15 that population, unfortunately and fortunately, we 16 feel like we will see an increase in our graduation 17 rate. There's really not a good way previous -- you 18 know, when we were serving that population of 19 students (Commissioner Crone returns) to know if a 20 particular student would enroll and hang in there, 21 would, you know, stay for the duration and get 22 their -- get their diploma. 23 We did everything that we could as a 24 school to ensure that they did. But just a lot of 25 times, by the nature of the situation that they were</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">132</p> <p>1 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: And if I can address 2 the other issues. 3 So for food service, we don't have a lunch 4 program at The GREAT Academy. So what we do is we 5 provide the students with a free, healthy breakfast 6 when they come in in the morning. That's free to 7 all students. And then we have a -- a healthy snack 8 program. 9 One of our components in our health and 10 education lab is having healthy lifestyles and 11 choices. And so we -- because the kids are here 12 from 9:00 to 5:00, we provide them that snack 13 around -- roughly around 4:00 between that last two 14 periods to hold them over till -- until lunchtime. 15 But they bring their own lunch, and then 16 we provide lunch for students that can't afford to 17 bring lunch. 18 One of the things that I remember, not too 19 long ago, we did -- we used to do canned food drives 20 as part of our service learning. But we realized we 21 had so many needy families that we started doing 22 canned food drives for our own families. We would 23 create the boxes, and the families would come in 24 during off times so that kids wouldn't see that 25 they're getting food so that we can assist them in</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">131</p> <p>1 in, their age, you know, their family status, you 2 know, it's just a -- an unfortunate fact that we had 3 to face in serving that population. 4 As you can see, our -- our graduation rate 5 is increasing, and we feel like you'll probably see 6 it shoot up here in the next few years. 7 Unfortunately, because we don't have that population 8 for our more average students, you know, we are a 9 small school. Each year, we do have a small 10 graduating class. And, you know, our seniors, who 11 are more traditional seniors, you know, we will have 12 probably, you know, 75 or higher percentage 13 graduation rate with that population, with the 14 traditional population of seniors. 15 We are bringing on a graduation coach in 16 January. I have served in that position up until 17 now. But, of course, I wear a lot of different 18 hats. I do have a teacher on staff that assists 19 with that. But we will have a person who at least 20 half of their main job will be just focusing on 21 assisting students to getting to graduation. 22 But we share the same concern, and we have 23 the same belief and the same heart for making sure 24 that students get all that they need to graduate, 25 and you know, move on to college or a career.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">133</p> <p>1 that food insecurity area. 2 The AG complaint, I was blown away, 3 actually, when I received that initial 4 communication. And then it took a while for Sue and 5 I to actually get our hands on the actual complaint, 6 because I was, like, "Well, what in the world is 7 this?" 8 And after reading the complaint, I don't 9 feel better; I feel worse. I feel like who -- you 10 know, who would spend the time to do an anonymous 11 complaint and use -- use somebody else's name? You 12 know, if they don't have a student there, what -- 13 they think that -- I'm not in a position to go after 14 anybody for filing a complaint. You know, just 15 trying to read through that complaint and trying to 16 make any kind of co- -- you know, trying to 17 understand what it is they're alleging and what 18 they're saying is happening. 19 And it seemed like it was -- just, to me, 20 after reading it, it was, like -- so they're 21 implying. They're not saying they know. 22 I think something in the complaint said, 23 "Well, I saw that the vehicles wasn't there one day. 24 So I just assume the Matthews have them." 25 Well, if the Matthews is at work, how can</p>

134	<p>1 they be in the vehicles at the same time?</p> <p>2 You know, it's -- I really kind of was</p> <p>3 kind of really caught offguard -- you know, caught</p> <p>4 offguard with that, you know.</p> <p>5 The other part of that complaint about the</p> <p>6 double billing, you know, we both wear multiple</p> <p>7 hats. You know, I do the director; I do the special</p> <p>8 ed piece; I do the facilities piece; I do the</p> <p>9 personnel piece.</p> <p>10 I can't even name all the positions that</p> <p>11 Mrs. Matthews has.</p> <p>12 So, yeah, it looks, you know, like, on the</p> <p>13 surface, yes, administratively, we're heavy. And</p> <p>14 we're actually heavier than what we want to be. And</p> <p>15 as we identify more teachers that have the skill</p> <p>16 sets where they can take some of these other jobs</p> <p>17 from us, you know, we want to have a life, too, one</p> <p>18 day. But we want to make sure the school goes well,</p> <p>19 too, you know.</p> <p>20 But our plan definitely is to -- you know,</p> <p>21 as the staffing patterns have stabilized -- because,</p> <p>22 you know, we had the 50 percent, 50 percent, 75, and</p> <p>23 this year, we have 100 percent staff retention. Now</p> <p>24 those guys have been around. They've made licensure</p> <p>25 jumps, and they're ready to take on some of those</p>	136	<p>1 So I understand that you have a</p> <p>2 challenging group. But we have to do that. In</p> <p>3 education, you have to take them where they're at</p> <p>4 and bring them to a successful passing graduation.</p> <p>5 And so that's just what education does is</p> <p>6 that we take kids where they're at, and we bring</p> <p>7 them up to where they need to be to be successful</p> <p>8 students.</p> <p>9 And the other thing I have an issue with,</p> <p>10 the fact that your kids attend all day and they get</p> <p>11 breakfast and a snack? Because there's a lot of</p> <p>12 money that's spent on salaries and benefits. And to</p> <p>13 me, if you have those kids, and you know that</p> <p>14 they -- if you're going that long, they need to be</p> <p>15 having some kind of food service at lunch. I'm</p> <p>16 sorry. A snack and a breakfast for an all-day</p> <p>17 school attendance does not work.</p> <p>18 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Okay. And I</p> <p>19 appreciate your -- your service towards education.</p> <p>20 And I just want to clarify. So the students bring</p> <p>21 lunch, and the students that don't bring lunch, we</p> <p>22 provide lunch free of charge to all students.</p> <p>23 So no student ever goes a whole day</p> <p>24 without eating. Actually, one of my rules is you</p> <p>25 have to eat. We talk to the kids about, you know,</p>
135	<p>1 responsibilities so we can reduce our administrative</p> <p>2 load and actually take a walk out to dinner one of</p> <p>3 these days.</p> <p>4 So, hopefully, I was clear enough to</p> <p>5 address -- you know, I'm -- you know, no bones about</p> <p>6 it. I'm one of those people -- I tell people, "I</p> <p>7 wish I had the ability to sugar-coat. But on the</p> <p>8 surface, it looks -- it looks really bad."</p> <p>9 And it looks bad to me. And I don't want</p> <p>10 it to look that way. And we're going to, you know,</p> <p>11 work and do everything we can to -- to not only</p> <p>12 improve the surface level but, you know, underneath.</p> <p>13 So, hopefully, I answered -- answered your question.</p> <p>14 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Thank you.</p> <p>15 Madam Chair, can I just respond something to that?</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: Sure.</p> <p>17 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Okay. So I -- just so</p> <p>18 you know, I work in an alternative campus for Hobbs</p> <p>19 Schools. So I understand the challenge of having</p> <p>20 students that -- you know, we have 99 percent of our</p> <p>21 kids that have -- that come in with issues and</p> <p>22 failing grades and returning seniors.</p> <p>23 But, even still, we -- the goal of our</p> <p>24 school is to make sure that our kids are successful</p> <p>25 and graduate.</p>	137	<p>1 their glucose level dropping and how it's going to</p> <p>2 be hard to concentrate.</p> <p>3 You know, we have had struggles trying to</p> <p>4 convince kids to eat. We actually have put kids in</p> <p>5 rooms until they can finish eating. Then they can</p> <p>6 go out for the rest of their lunch with their peers.</p> <p>7 So we take the eating really seriously.</p> <p>8 We budget an amount of money every year to</p> <p>9 provide -- we do not let our kids go, and we do not</p> <p>10 allow our kids to go without eating. If a kid</p> <p>11 doesn't bring lunch, then we don't chastise them for</p> <p>12 it or criticize them for it. We just provide the</p> <p>13 lunch for them, and we make sure that there's a</p> <p>14 variety of -- of healthy nutritious choices.</p> <p>15 So I just wanted to make sure that there</p> <p>16 wasn't an understanding that our kids only got a</p> <p>17 breakfast and a snack throughout a full day of the</p> <p>18 school.</p> <p>19 THE CHAIR: Thank you.</p> <p>20 Commissioner Voigt?</p> <p>21 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Thank you,</p> <p>22 Madam Chairwoman. And thank you to the Matthews for</p> <p>23 being here and representing and giving us so much</p> <p>24 information about The GREAT Academy.</p> <p>25 I also -- I had a whole lot of questions</p>

1 when I was reading through the packet. A lot of  
2 those questions have been answered.

3 I just want to follow up with some  
4 clarification and some cleanup questions.

5 But I wanted to say, I do have a concern  
6 also about the non-lunch service. So you're not  
7 participating in the Free and Reduced Lunch program;  
8 right?

9 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: No, ma'am, we're  
10 not. So we don't have -- we have an office building  
11 that was converted into a school building. So we do  
12 not have kitchen facilities.

13 There is a restaurant next door before it  
14 was vacant. Our plan was to lease that restaurant  
15 and turn it into our food services; but then it was  
16 leased. So we're just waiting for them to go out of  
17 business. Then we can get that building and have --  
18 then we can have our intro culinary program in  
19 conjunction with CNM and what were our plans on  
20 that.

21 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: That's great. But  
22 lunch service can be very minimal and simplified.  
23 Most charter schools don't have full-on kitchens;  
24 they don't. A refrigerator, maybe an ice machine.  
25 A salad bar takes nothing to implement. And kids

1 love salad bars because they can make their own  
2 lunch.

3 So, you know, there's -- it just -- you're  
4 missing out. I'm just going to say you're missing  
5 out by not having a Free and Reduced Lunch program.  
6 That could also help subsidize, for whatever it's  
7 worth, a nickel profit per lunch. After a while it  
8 can go somewhere. It can help fund an activity.

9 So I don't know. It's a pile of  
10 paperwork. But if you have an EA or someone  
11 dedicated to your lunch program, it doesn't take a  
12 big lift.

13 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: We can take a second  
14 look at that. We're open to that.

15 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yeah. Check it out.  
16 I mean, it would only -- it might even help you  
17 retain students. There's many reasons why students  
18 come to certain schools, right? And I'll tell you,  
19 lunch is a hot topic on the open house nights  
20 sometimes. It can be a pretty hot topic.

21 Some of the big questions have already  
22 been asked, so I just want to ask you. So this  
23 whole thing about the vehicle. That's already been  
24 clarified, and your -- your stipend for having a  
25 vehicle, has that already been approved by your

1 board?

2 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Well, the board.  
3 ended -- ended the vehicle stipend I want to say  
4 that December, after that audit, where the auditor  
5 confused -- because the finding was -- okay.  
6 So the auditor -- you know, they do their interviews,  
7 right?

8 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yeah.

9 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: So he asked me about  
10 the vehicles, and I told him what they were for. We  
11 use them for service learning, for college tours,  
12 career expeditions. In our shared parking  
13 agreement, we're not allowed to park a bus on the  
14 premises. So we had to purchase three Suburbans  
15 with our I think it was HB 33 money years ago. In  
16 fact, there are two -- we bought them in 2014.

17 And so he asked me -- so he said, "So why  
18 do -- you know, why did your board agree to give you  
19 a stipend for car allowance?"

20 I said, "Because when I have to go to  
21 meetings, when I have to do things, I can't take one  
22 of the school vehicles, because it only seats..." --  
23 so they seat seven -- they seat eight passengers  
24 each with one driver each. So, really, it's only  
25 seven passengers each. So it's 21 students, which

1 is about the class of one class size if everybody  
2 doesn't show up.

3 So the vehicle stipend was given so that I  
4 can still participate in trainings and move about  
5 without impacting the SUVs that the school has.

6 And so when the auditor asked me, "Do you  
7 go to some of these service learning outings," I  
8 said, "Yes. I will take my personal car to the  
9 service learning outing. And if a teacher gets  
10 sick, or a student, you know, gets sick, if that  
11 happens, then we will have an extra vehicle there,  
12 you know, in case of emergency."

13 And so what he took that at is, "Oh, okay.  
14 So you're transporting students in your private  
15 vehicle."

16 And I said, "No, I'm not. I gave you a  
17 scenario that I'm there for emergencies and as the  
18 administrator on site for these outings. And so he  
19 was, like, "Okay." And he went and wrote it that  
20 way, you know.

21 So the board just said, you know, "If --  
22 if it's going to cause this much heartburn, you  
23 know, let's just end the -- the vehicle allowance."

24 And so that's what they did that December  
25 after that audit.

<p style="text-align: right;">142</p> <p>1 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Okay. Thanks. I'm 2 glad they did that. That's better optics for sure. 3 And then so the vehicles stay parked at 4 the campus, correct? 5 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Yes. We have three 6 designated parking spaces for them. 7 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Okay. Good. So can 8 you tell me -- I know you use Edgenuity for your 9 curriculum. Is that also something that you use for 10 remediation? Edgenuity? 11 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: I don't think we -- 12 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: The majority of our 13 remediation comes directly from the teachers during 14 reading and math intervention. We utilize the NWEA 15 MAPs. And so every month during PB, we do, like, 16 data dives, as we call them. And teachers use those 17 specific reports from NWEA to determine the areas of 18 need for individual students. And so that's how 19 they -- that's how they -- that's what drives their 20 instruction for the -- for the interventions. 21 And also looking in Edgenuity and where 22 kids tend to struggle on certain -- certain concepts 23 and such, they pull from those two sources to drive 24 their focus for instruction for those classes. 25 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yeah. I'm very</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">144</p> <p>1 they were doing on Edgenuity. You can teach math 2 5,085 different ways; but oftentimes it looks the 3 same. So they're doing something different. 4 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Right. And the goal 5 of those face-to-face interventions is so that it 6 can be more hands-on, you know, in the remote 7 learning, but more hands-on, more projects, just a 8 different way of attacking it. 9 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: And I'm sure it's 10 more individualized. 11 So how do you connect? I know you have an 12 SEL, a social-emotional learning, and a curriculum 13 for that. But how do you connect that to your 14 learning outcomes? 15 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: So one of the 16 things, because of the MLSS rollout process we're 17 gearing up for, one of the things that we've had a 18 focus on this year is professional development 19 around SEL in helping our staff understand how to 20 make those connections. 21 And I just had a brain fart. I'm sorry. 22 Can you repeat your question? 23 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: How do you connect 24 your social-emotional learning curriculum to the 25 learning outcomes? What does that look like?</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">143</p> <p>1 familiar with both of those. So what do they do 2 during remediation? 3 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: So I'll use a high 4 school example. For math, we have an Algebra 1 5 intervention class, a geometry intervention class, 6 and an Algebra 2 intervention class. So in those 7 math classes, that teacher looks at, like I said, 8 the NWEA class reports and the different reports 9 that are available and discovers -- finds different 10 areas where kids are having a harder time, and, you 11 know, using anecdotal evidence, and, like I said, 12 evidence out of Edgenuity, to build -- to build 13 lessons. 14 That math teacher, during this, you know, 15 time of remote learning, has gotten really, really 16 creative and found a particular program called "Boom 17 Learning" that the kids have just really gotten 18 into. It's very interactive. It's kind of like 19 Google Classroom, where she can see what the 20 students are doing in realtime. She divides them 21 into different groups to address different pieces of 22 a particular topic. She is able to differentiate 23 and give students -- 24 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: I get that. And so 25 my point is they're not doing the same thing that</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">145</p> <p>1 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: So one of the 2 portions of SEL, as you're probably very familiar 3 with, is decision-making, right? And so helping 4 students make the decisions that they make related 5 to am I going to do my homework? Am I going to 6 engage in school? Am I going to just, you know, 7 participate? Helping students understand that those 8 decisions that they make lend themselves to the 9 success that they have in school, taking a -- a 10 whole-kid approach, helping our staff understand, 11 and, you know, helping -- reminding all of us of the 12 hierarchy of needs and how that affects student 13 outcomes. 14 And, honestly, like I said, we're -- this 15 is our first year with a focus on SEL. So I feel 16 like I'm getting close to an answer for the question 17 that you have. But this is our first year with that 18 focus on social-emotional learning. And we -- we 19 have a group of teachers at a social-emotional 20 learning training right now, at a virtual training 21 right now. We are working towards learning how to 22 bring that into using it to, you know, address 23 student academic needs in the realm of 24 social-emotional learning. So that's something 25 we're learning and moving towards.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">146</p> <p>1 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Something you might 2 do that you can kill two birds with one stone is you 3 might look at your equity and your CLR framework and 4 look at how those can complement each other, okay? 5 Because I know your equity councils are up and 6 running now. 7 Just a question. Does your equity council 8 report out to a board? 9 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: I have to say -- I 10 have to say I don't think so. 11 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Probably not, if you 12 took that long to answer. So that's okay. So all 13 right. 14 One other thing. Your mission statement 15 talks about active transition. And I know that 16 talk -- that's mostly just dual-credit enrollment; 17 is that right? 18 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Well, yes and -- and 19 not really. So what we define -- and I remember 20 when we first drafted this mission statement a long 21 time ago. We -- the word "active transition" not 22 only refers to is a seamless transition from high 23 school into post-secondary -- we do have that career 24 component that we're active- -- so part of -- when 25 we do -- when we used to do trainings, and now that</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">148</p> <p>1 So it's a little more involved than that. That is a 2 big piece, because we want them to, you know, go to 3 college, if that's appropriate for them. But we 4 also want them to -- you know, we -- as educators, 5 we've always felt like school operated in a vacuum 6 and that everything you do, theoretically or 7 hypothetically, then you go out in the real world 8 and you never do it again. 9 And so what we wanted to do was make that 10 connection between how the world is. Because at the 11 end of the day, if these kids cannot -- if they 12 can't feed themselves and their family, then we 13 failed them. And that's not what we just got into 14 this business to do. Sorry. 15 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: That's all right. 16 Thank you for that answer. 17 So I presume, also, then, that you have -- 18 you have some skill sets of specific goal transition 19 points that you would like your students to obtain, 20 some certain life skills, as you were describing it 21 sounded like. 22 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Yes. 23 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Super. So you 24 mentioned the career technical ed. I think it's 25 phenomenal that you have that tech lab. And my</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">147</p> <p>1 we train our own staff, you know, the first question 2 that I always ask is, "Everybody write down where 3 the special ed mall is." 4 You'll be amazed at how many people 5 really -- they get into heated debates. And it 6 seemed like Winrock is winning. I don't know why, 7 but Winrock is winning. 8 What I try to explain is there is no 9 special ed mall. So when kids in this building 10 behave in a certain way, special ed -- when they 11 leave this building, special ed doesn't exist. 12 So when we actively transition into the 13 community, we want them to understand how the 14 community works. We don't want them to go out in 15 the community -- and I think one of the compliments 16 we typically get when we do go in the community is 17 how well our kids are dressed and how well they 18 behave when we go out. 19 So that transition piece extends beyond 20 post-secondary, so it's college, but it's how the 21 world works. 22 One of the financial units was about how 23 to build your credit, how to buy a car, how to -- 24 they had a budget, and they had to find an apartment 25 and had to do utilities and all that kind of stuff.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">149</p> <p>1 question about that is do you have -- do you have 2 pathways delineated so that there's completer 3 courses, so your students can get that type of 4 certification? Apparently, they're taking a lot of 5 dual classes at CNM and at your campus. So do you 6 have your pathways delineated with completer courses 7 towards any types of certification? 8 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Well, we attempted 9 to do that when we would have the -- excuse me -- 10 either CNM send an instructor or one of our 11 teachers, to teach and align so that they would get 12 the prerequisites in the SMART Labs and then do 13 the -- the post-requisites at the campus. 14 But we just haven't been able to get that 15 alignment in place. So what we've been doing for 16 the last few years is just using it as a career 17 exploration lab, so that they can see what kind of 18 jobs that they would have in those fields. 19 So -- you know. And in the long run, that 20 would be ideal, where kids can graduate with 21 certain, you know, non-academic certificates in 22 certain areas where they can go straight to work and 23 continue with college. 24 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: And, in addition, 25 Edgenuity does have courses and strands of courses</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">150</p> <p>1 that lead to certification that we do promote. But  2 because CNM, of course, up until now does have those  3 similar programs also, and they are more hands-on,  4 students tend to choose that route as opposed to the  5 Edgenuity route.</p> <p>6 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Okay. Super.  7 I've got just a couple of more. So -- and  8 I want to give -- I know there's other questions  9 that some other Commissioners are going to ask. I'm  10 going to let my list of questions go. I'm just  11 going to ask a general question about what is --  12 what mistake -- in all of your years of The GREAT  13 Academy, what mistake have you learned the most  14 from?</p> <p>15 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: That's a good growth  16 mindset question.</p> <p>17 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Yeah, for sure. I  18 might have to put a little thought in that. I feel  19 like that -- that the overarching, I guess, change  20 in thinking that we had to go through is we thought  21 if we build it, they will come. And so --</p> <p>22 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Yeah. So, you know,  23 when this idea of The GREAT Academy came to us and  24 we worked on it over years, that was our thought.  25 If we build it, they will come.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">152</p> <p>1 Just, you know, not -- we have such a  2 passion for -- for students and for education. But  3 there is a -- there is a structure. And, you know,  4 being able to make sure that every "I" is dotted and  5 every "T" is crossed and trying to get the perfect  6 people in each role and -- you know, there are a lot  7 of challenges. And we've learned many, many lessons  8 in making mistakes.</p> <p>9 And, you know, one of the questions that  10 we ask our students is, "What good mistakes did you  11 make today?"</p> <p>12 So that's why I kind of laughed when you  13 asked that question.</p> <p>14 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Yeah. I think now  15 that I had a little time to think about it, I think  16 one of the mistakes that we made is we -- I think we  17 underestimated the administrative functions to  18 the -- compared to the day-to-day, hands-on running  19 of a school.</p> <p>20 So, for example, schools have central  21 offices. School districts. And let's -- if it's a  22 decent-sized district, that central office is away  23 from the school building. And I remember back in  24 the day, especially when I worked in traditional  25 school districts, central office never wanted to</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">151</p> <p>1 And over the years, what we found is  2 there's a lot more, of course, that goes into that.  3 You mentioned something as -- I don't want to say  4 "small"; but, you know, a lunch program could be  5 something that would be more of a draw. You know,  6 one of the things that we have had to come to grips  7 with is while we believe in the positive effect of a  8 uniform and the students really get a boost from the  9 compliments that they get when they're seen in their  10 crisp white shirts and their black slacks, it's  11 not -- it's not always practical to have such a  12 uniform, which, as you can see, we're sporting our  13 polos. I'm always cold, so I have a sweater.</p> <p>14 And so we've had to make an adjustment  15 with that. We have had students that come to The  16 GREAT Academy, and they love everything about it.  17 And then we talk about the uniform, and they're,  18 like, "Oh, no, no. Get me out of here." You know  19 what I'm saying?</p> <p>20 And so, you know, just kind of off the  21 cuff, if we had a little more time to think about  22 it, certainly, we have made many, many mistakes.  23 And lessons, of course, are learned from everyone.  24 But those are two that kind of pop into my brain at  25 the moment.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">153</p> <p>1 come to the school, because that's where all the  2 real work was happening. They wanted to stay in the  3 building.</p> <p>4 And so I think we've underestimated trying  5 to do both, mainly just with us two, and run the  6 school. So I think it's just been difficult  7 sometimes. So --</p> <p>8 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Well, thank you.  9 Yeah, it's an intense job. And your passion shines  10 through. I appreciate it.</p> <p>11 And thank you again for that wonderful  12 video presentation.</p> <p>13 THE CHAIR: Thank you.  14 Commissioner Raftery?</p> <p>15 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Thank you. You made  16 me cry. Nobody does (indiscernible) --</p> <p>17 COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: I do remember you  18 stating that you were a small school. And I'm going  19 back to the responsibilities of that position. When  20 I was a superintendent, you know, it's -- you're the  21 one responsible for everything. You do special ed.  22 You do hirings. You do everything. That's your  23 job.</p> <p>24 And so, you know, to get paid an  25 additional amount of money for positions that you</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">154</p> <p>1 are responsible for, I think is a little bit  2 unethical, because there are a lot of small school  3 superintendents out there who work really hard at  4 putting it together. And it's only the one. And  5 there are two of you. And coordinating maybe  6 perhaps would be a good idea in learning how to be  7 better at administration, along with your other  8 duties.</p> <p>9 That being said, I'm still waiting for  10 Karen -- Karen's answer to the special ed question  11 that I asked her and her finding when she went over  12 there. I'm real interested in that. If you would  13 comment, please.</p> <p>14 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Madam Chair,  15 Commissioner Raftery, thank you. So a couple of  16 things. I do want to say, if I may, just to  17 underscore the part about being a school -- a state  18 charter school leader is like being a district  19 office. And I think what a lot of school leaders  20 find is that the district office actually did do a  21 lot of things for the schools. And now they are  22 having to do it all themselves.</p> <p>23 So I don't -- I think it's a huge amount  24 of work. But, you know, the school's been operating  25 for ten years.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">156</p> <p>1 need, 12 students in Level B, and 4 students in  2 Level C. And at 40-day they didn't have any at  3 Level D, although we did see a Level D previously.</p> <p>4 One of those that we viewed last year -- I  5 did review IEP files, and I reviewed I think it was  6 eight or nine of them. One of them was from APS, as  7 Mr. Matthews described. However, our visit was in  8 the spring. And this student, they were still  9 operating on the APS IEP, which is fine if they're  10 going to adopt that IEP. But then they have to be  11 offering it as described, and they were not.</p> <p>12 It had minutes per week -- 600 minutes per  13 week of ELA in a special ed setting, 300 minutes per  14 week in a special ed setting to address some needs  15 of that student.</p> <p>16 As a result of counting the hours working  17 on Edgenuity -- I did observe those. They may have  18 them in a smaller group classroom, which is a great  19 accommodation and modification for kids to be in a  20 smaller group. But they were just working in their  21 Edgenuity online and being supervised by a teacher.</p> <p>22 Mr. Matthews mentioned in his -- or  23 Ms. Matthews, I guess, read it in her report -- that  24 the -- likened it to something at Southwest  25 Secondary. And, yes, in my conversation with</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">155</p> <p>1 So to special ed to your question.  2 The concerns that we mention- -- and I do  3 want to thank the Matth- -- Mr. and Ms. Matthews for  4 their comments around being willing to work around  5 correcting some of these issues, because we have  6 found that they're very serious issues.</p> <p>7 And, for example, their service levels are  8 inflated from our review, because of the counting  9 the time in the classroom doing Edgenuity, that the  10 teacher, the special ed teacher, as service hours.</p> <p>11 So this school has inflated hours. And,  12 by that, I mean the service levels are A, B, C, D,  13 based on the amount of service a student needs; A  14 being minimal support, B being an extreme amount of  15 support. Typically, a D-level student is, as  16 Commissioner Armbruster referred -- alluded to  17 earlier, either something when a severe behavior  18 issue or a student who needs life skills training.</p> <p>19 So I haven't observed, you know, that at  20 the school. But the school, at the 40-day this  21 year, and similarly last year, had -- I just pulled  22 it up from S.T.A.R.S. earlier; I don't know -- I  23 didn't think I was going to be sharing this.</p> <p>24 But there were roughly 12 students; no  25 students in Level A, which is the lowest support</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">157</p> <p>1 Southwest Secondary, I mentioned that Southwest  2 Secondary also offers a lot of courses on Edgenuity.</p> <p>3 And when we pointed out to them that this  4 small group was a great accommodation but didn't  5 count as direct service, Southwest Secondary  6 immediately took action after our exit interview,  7 without any report necessary, to make the changes.  8 We did not have to engage Special Ed Bureau to make  9 those things happen.</p> <p>10 So I kind of resent the likening to  11 Southwest Secondary in his report.</p> <p>12 At our visit, there were no direct service  13 logs, no student schedules they could show us that  14 would match what we saw in the IEPs. And that is a  15 huge concern.</p> <p>16 I do expect that, if renewed, we will work  17 very closely together with the Special Ed Bureau and  18 the school, to correct these -- addressing the needs  19 of these students. I think there is more to be done  20 in that arena.</p> <p>21 Am I allowed to speak to other things,  22 Chairwoman, or just to the question of Commissioner  23 Raftery?</p> <p>24 THE CHAIR: No, just to the question that  25 you were asked.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">158</p> <p>1 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Okay.</p> <p>2 COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: Thank you.</p> <p>3 THE CHAIR: Thanks.</p> <p>4 Commissioner Robbins?</p> <p>5 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Yes. You know, one</p> <p>6 quick question. You mentioned the number of older</p> <p>7 students that you had previously, non-traditional</p> <p>8 students, that, you know, they wouldn't stick around</p> <p>9 to graduate; they'd go get a GED.</p> <p>10 What percentage of students were 19 and</p> <p>11 above in your previous years? I mean, was it</p> <p>12 10 percent? 20 percent? 30 percent?</p> <p>13 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Mrs. Matthews is</p> <p>14 going to try to get you closer. But it was enough</p> <p>15 to designate us as a SAM school when that</p> <p>16 designation was around. So whatever percentage that</p> <p>17 was, we met that -- you know, we met that threshold.</p> <p>18 Because we were a SAM school until that designation</p> <p>19 went away.</p> <p>20 THE CHAIR: You know, I'm just going to</p> <p>21 just say, unfortunately, that definition of SAM</p> <p>22 school changed so many times that you can't use that</p> <p>23 as a -- as a hallmark. Because four years ago, PED</p> <p>24 couldn't even tell you what designated a school as a</p> <p>25 SAM school. So I'm sorry to interrupt that --</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">160</p> <p>1 proficiency, science.</p> <p>2 And yet your video that you showed us had</p> <p>3 these wonderful projects of people working with</p> <p>4 drones, people working with 3D printers and things</p> <p>5 like that. It looks like it's a -- you know, from a</p> <p>6 video -- and I've seen recently your advertisements</p> <p>7 on TV -- it looks really neat. But when I look at</p> <p>8 the numbers, I don't see the result there. And I'm</p> <p>9 very, very, very concerned.</p> <p>10 Also, when I look at the ethnic breakdown</p> <p>11 of your school, it's very similar to APS. But when</p> <p>12 I look at those who qualify, you have a much lower</p> <p>13 percentage of students who qualify for Free and</p> <p>14 Reduced Lunch than APS in general. Now, that may be</p> <p>15 a reason why you don't go through the efforts of</p> <p>16 getting federal dollars for lunch and things like</p> <p>17 that.</p> <p>18 But given the nature of the rest of your</p> <p>19 students, it seems that there's a lot of emphasis on</p> <p>20 hands-on. But I'm concerned that the basic reading,</p> <p>21 which -- you know, my son-in-law has a machining</p> <p>22 business. He went to CNM, got his certificate and</p> <p>23 everything. You have to be able to read. You have</p> <p>24 to be able to do math to program these computers to</p> <p>25 do that.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">159</p> <p>1 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: No. I mean, was it</p> <p>2 less than 20 percent?</p> <p>3 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Well, it was -- I</p> <p>4 can -- let's go back. I remember when we first</p> <p>5 opened --</p> <p>6 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: I'm looking at the</p> <p>7 last three or four years, not ten years ago.</p> <p>8 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: I'm assuming it had</p> <p>9 to be at least 30, 40 percent, easy. It was almost</p> <p>10 half-and-half at one point.</p> <p>11 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Okay. But most</p> <p>12 recently, when you had those, and you were being</p> <p>13 compensated for those older students, what</p> <p>14 percentage of those students were -- I mean, was it</p> <p>15 as much as 40 or 50 percent? You said at one time.</p> <p>16 But most recently.</p> <p>17 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Most recently, it</p> <p>18 was at least 30 percent.</p> <p>19 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: 30 percent. Okay.</p> <p>20 So that could account for part of your low</p> <p>21 performance and low graduation if they left. But,</p> <p>22 you know, that would only account for it if every</p> <p>23 one of those 30 percent left. Otherwise, if only</p> <p>24 half of them left, you're still substantially below</p> <p>25 APS in terms of reading proficiency, math</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">161</p> <p>1 Operating a robot is one thing.</p> <p>2 Programming the robot is something else.</p> <p>3 Programming a 3D printer to do something where you</p> <p>4 just punch in a simple design is one thing.</p> <p>5 Building that 3D printer, which -- you know, that</p> <p>6 would be a goal for a lot of students to say, "I</p> <p>7 don't want to just operate it; I want to be able to</p> <p>8 make those things." That's a higher level of</p> <p>9 science and math capability than what I'm seeing in</p> <p>10 the results. So that's a concern that there's not</p> <p>11 enough emphasis on that.</p> <p>12 The finances. There's been a</p> <p>13 deterioration over three years in your finances due</p> <p>14 to the audit findings and the increase in material</p> <p>15 and significant deficiencies. I think -- I</p> <p>16 understand that you're saying you didn't realize how</p> <p>17 much effort it was going to take for doing the</p> <p>18 administrative work and things like that. But every</p> <p>19 small charter school has to do that. And I don't</p> <p>20 think their charter administrators are paying</p> <p>21 themselves to the degree that you guys are.</p> <p>22 I see a very deficient allocation of</p> <p>23 resources when I look at the spending and the</p> <p>24 budgets over the last several years. I'm very</p> <p>25 concerned about that when we look at, you know, a</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">162</p> <p>1 large district like APS bringing to the attention of 2 the Legislature putting forth saying, "A minimum 3 amount has to go into the classroom," and you're 4 nowhere near that.</p> <p>5 So I have a real concern when we have a 6 charter school that, you know, wants to do a great 7 job. And I believe -- I believe the intent is 8 there. But when I see the budgets that are put 9 forth and the spending that has been done over the 10 last few years, I mean, an enormous amount of 11 operating funds, it seems, going into the building, 12 disproportionate to -- I mean, in some years, it was 13 26, 27 percent of your total budget just going to 14 the building. That just seems to be out of kilter 15 with what really should be happening.</p> <p>16 What will you be doing going forward if 17 this Commission were to authorize -- reauthorize 18 your charter? What will you do to correct these 19 deficiencies? I mean, we've talked about, you know, 20 why things have happened. What are you going to do 21 to correct the deficiencies that we've observed?</p> <p>22 And I'll leave it at that, and you can 23 answer.</p> <p>24 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Okay. Appreciate 25 the question, sir.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">164</p> <p>1 that's material.</p> <p>2 Secondly regarding the HB 2 requirement, 3 see, we budgeted -- and I think 70 or 72 percent 4 towards instruction. But when we lost the number of 5 students, we didn't bring those teachers on yet. 6 And so I think what we're doing is we're looking at 7 this from a 40th-day snapshot. But by the time that 8 the year ends, this 43 percent should get up to -- 9 at least to the 70 percent with our planned hiring 10 patterns to -- to do that.</p> <p>11 We just -- we didn't want to bring them on 12 during -- during COVID when the kids wasn't there.</p> <p>13 And I've seen a number of charter schools, 14 you know, if they budget for ten FTEs, they'll go 15 and hire ten FTEs. And when their projection come 16 in, then they have to RIF and lay people off when 17 they've turned down jobs from other schools.</p> <p>18 We didn't want to do that. We wanted to 19 bring on the additional staff as we saw the 20 enrollment increasing. And so that's a part of our 21 plan, to -- you know, to rectify some of that.</p> <p>22 And, also, some of it is -- well, I'll 23 just leave it at that. That's the two big things I 24 know that we're planning on doing that we have 25 decided to do to help get us to a better place with</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">163</p> <p>1 So one of the things that -- and we -- I 2 believe this is in one of the answers for the 3 preliminary analysis -- is when we had the two years 4 with the two findings, one was for the school, one 5 was for the foundation for those two years. And the 6 school got the three findings last year, and one was 7 material.</p> <p>8 So one thing that we did back then is we 9 contracted with an accounting firm to assist us and 10 the business -- the school and the business manager 11 to avoid getting those kind of -- those kind of 12 audit findings.</p> <p>13 So when you look at, you know, '17, we had 14 two findings. And, you know, technically, the 15 school only had one; second year the school had one; 16 and then the third year, the school had three.</p> <p>17 So we said in our response that something 18 that we plan to do for our own internal corrective 19 action is to -- and that's why Lonnie is on from the 20 accounting firm, because we've already engaged them 21 to help us clear up those -- those audit findings 22 that we have. So that's one corrective action that 23 we took it upon ourselves to do.</p> <p>24 And we recognized that we don't want any 25 audit findings, but -- and definitely anything</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">165</p> <p>1 our -- with our audit findings and our -- our 2 financial position.</p> <p>3 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: What about 4 academically?</p> <p>5 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Well, academically, 6 one of the positions we're going to bring on is a 7 Level III instructional leader to be the graduation 8 coach, to work specifically with our seniors and 9 case-manage those guys and work with those guys to 10 get them across the finish line.</p> <p>11 You know, by the time they get to senior 12 year, sometimes they get -- they're tired; they're 13 beat-up, worn out. So we just felt like we needed 14 to bring somebody onboard to assist in getting them 15 across the finish line.</p> <p>16 In addition to the graduation coach, we do 17 plan to hire a special ed teacher and a -- an 18 additional EA to help us get our percentage there; 19 because, see, our contract -- see, I have an 20 administrative contract and a special education 21 contract for my special ed piece, because I'm a 22 licensed special ed teacher.</p> <p>23 So we have a middle-school teacher that's 24 special ed. She has the middle school kids on her 25 caseload. So we couldn't put all of her kids, all</p>

166	<p>1 the special ed kids, under her FTE, because we would</p> <p>2 have had to get a waiver, and they're not going to</p> <p>3 waive that many students on one.</p> <p>4 So my caseload is the high school special</p> <p>5 ed teacher. So that's why I'm a part-time teacher.</p> <p>6 And that's why Mrs. Matthews is the part-time EL</p> <p>7 teacher.</p> <p>8 So our -- you know, so our compensation is</p> <p>9 a combination between administration and teaching</p> <p>10 duties. And so I just want to make sure that</p> <p>11 that's -- that that's -- you know, it's not like --</p> <p>12 you know, that we are just getting paid for</p> <p>13 additional things. We get paid for the things that</p> <p>14 we do. So I just wanted to make sure that that</p> <p>15 was -- that was understood. I'm sorry.</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: Can I just tag in there for</p> <p>17 just a second? So your contract as an administrator</p> <p>18 says it is for what percentage of time?</p> <p>19 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: .78.</p> <p>20 THE CHAIR: I'm sorry?</p> <p>21 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: .78.</p> <p>22 THE CHAIR: .78? Okay. Thanks. Sorry.</p> <p>23 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: And I just wanted to</p> <p>24 speak to the academic concerns that he had.</p> <p>25 We are making growth. And if you look at</p>	168	<p>1 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And I know our</p> <p>2 Deputy Director has her hand up as well.</p> <p>3 THE CHAIR: I know, but we're at</p> <p>4 Commissioners' questions right now.</p> <p>5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I want to know,</p> <p>6 what is the base salary that each of you gets?</p> <p>7 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: The special ed piece</p> <p>8 or the admin piece?</p> <p>9 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Well, maybe</p> <p>10 separately.</p> <p>11 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Okay. So my admin</p> <p>12 is 117, and my special ed is 26.</p> <p>13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And your wife</p> <p>14 is?</p> <p>15 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: I think it's --</p> <p>16 Charlotte may know it quicker. But it's, like, 115,</p> <p>17 and then her --</p> <p>18 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: It's 114, and then</p> <p>19 20, 25, 26.</p> <p>20 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: For EL?</p> <p>21 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Yes.</p> <p>22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And then I heard</p> <p>23 you're getting \$395 a month for an IRA? Is that</p> <p>24 each of you, and is it once a month or twice a</p> <p>25 month? And how is it paid? What funds is it coming</p>
167	<p>1 our school-specific mission-specific indicators,</p> <p>2 those show that we're making growth. We're growing</p> <p>3 kids towards proficiency. And I feel like several</p> <p>4 of the things that we are doing on campus are</p> <p>5 lending itself towards that.</p> <p>6 You know, one of the things that we work</p> <p>7 really hard at is keeping students for a number of</p> <p>8 years so that we can -- so that we can build on what</p> <p>9 we're -- you know, the foundation that we start with</p> <p>10 them.</p> <p>11 You know, a lot of the -- one of the</p> <p>12 challenges that we face as a charter school is that</p> <p>13 we have students that hop from charter school to</p> <p>14 charter school and school to school. But when we're</p> <p>15 able to keep a student for three, four, or five</p> <p>16 years, those are the students where we see the most</p> <p>17 growth, because we're able to -- yeah. Anything</p> <p>18 that you implement, you need three or four years</p> <p>19 to -- to see the fruits of your labor.</p> <p>20 But I just wanted to add that.</p> <p>21 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Thank you.</p> <p>22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Maybe let Karen</p> <p>23 go first.</p> <p>24 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Armbruster and</p> <p>25 then Commissioner Caballero.</p>	169	<p>1 from?</p> <p>2 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: That's the -- I want</p> <p>3 to say it's -- the \$325 is a monthly amount, right?</p> <p>4 Or is it a paycheck amount?</p> <p>5 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Paycheck.</p> <p>6 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: \$325 per paycheck?</p> <p>7 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: For each of you?</p> <p>8 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Yes.</p> <p>9 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: We might want to</p> <p>10 double-check. That doesn't sound right.</p> <p>11 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: What about the</p> <p>12 cell phone? Is that 80 each?</p> <p>13 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: 80 stipend for a</p> <p>14 cell phone.</p> <p>15 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: For</p> <p>16 once-a-month, you get that amount? Each of you?</p> <p>17 MR. AND MRS. MATTHEWS: (Indicate.)</p> <p>18 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So 80 for each</p> <p>19 of you once a month. And you're no longer getting a</p> <p>20 car allowance; is that correct?</p> <p>21 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Yes.</p> <p>22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Also, I wanted</p> <p>23 to know -- I've actually forgotten how many students</p> <p>24 you can have for special ed on your caseload, if</p> <p>25 they're B-level.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">170</p> <p>1 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: B-level, you can 2 have, if I remember -- C-level was -- D-level is 8; 3 C-level is 15; B-level is around 20, 21; and then 4 A-level is -- you know.</p> <p>5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: A million. 6 So, really, your special ed is pretty 7 minimal, because you have 21 B-levels and four 8 C-levels. So that's barely two people, I would say 9 just in terms of caseloads.</p> <p>10 The other thing I want to check was the -- 11 on this R. Shorter, who's a -- he's a staff member 12 at your school. And I wanted to see -- he seems to 13 appear on a number of different forms. Let me -- 14 how do I say -- he's in the school handouts from the 15 site visit notes.</p> <p>16 Maybe I need Karen, our Deputy Director, 17 to explain that issue.</p> <p>18 The second thing is, in terms of 19 reengagement schools, I know you have that, 20 absolutely. But I wanted to see how that compares 21 to other schools who are -- because, of course, you 22 know, in New Mexico, we have several of those. And 23 so I wanted to see how the demographics are for your 24 school.</p> <p>25 And I guess maybe the Deputy Director may</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">172</p> <p>1 this school with, say, Cesar Chavez or any of them, 2 or just in general. I'm not picking a particular 3 one. I want to see where is the school compared to 4 our other schools who are doing better than this 5 school is doing?</p> <p>6 THE CHAIR: You know -- and I'm going 7 to -- and I'm just going to say I don't know 8 whether -- because the demographics are different. 9 So if you're looking at a reengagement school in 10 Las Cruces, I don't know whether you can adequately 11 compare that they should have the same demographics 12 as, you know, Albuquerque and the neighborhood of 13 Albuquerque. So...</p> <p>14 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: We don't have 15 any reengagement -- I guess I'm looking at 16 demographics. We have other schools in Albuquerque 17 that are reengagement.</p> <p>18 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Can I chime in, 19 Commissioner Armbruster? There are a lot of 20 reengagement schools, and they are all suffering 21 because of the age caps. A lot of the APS charter 22 schools like RFK and Gordon Bernell, they're all 23 suffering because of this age cap. They were all 24 formerly designated as the SAMs with that 30 to 25 60 percent enrollment population.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">171</p> <p>1 have to do this. We have La Montañas; I know they 2 did a school redesign. And New America, we have a 3 couple of those.</p> <p>4 THE CHAIR: Las Montañas is not a 5 reengagement school. New Americas is. Las Montañas 6 doesn't classify itself as a reengagement.</p> <p>7 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Cesar Chavez 8 does; right?</p> <p>9 THE CHAIR: Yeah, they do.</p> <p>10 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. So, 11 anyway, I just needed to get a picture of everybody 12 together here. And I don't know if the Deputy 13 Director could help me with that.</p> <p>14 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Madam Chair, 15 Commissioner Armbruster. So I think I heard two 16 questions, one around a staff member at the school 17 and our site visit notes on that, and the other was 18 comparing The GREAT Academy --</p> <p>19 THE CHAIR: The graduation rate 20 comparison? Is that what you're asking for with 21 those other schools? Or what exactly are you asking 22 for?</p> <p>23 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Well, I was 24 looking at the other reengagement schools that we 25 have and I wanted to compare the demographics of</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">173</p> <p>1 But I think it would be hard to, straight 2 across the board, make a comparison because they're 3 all so different with their demographics, as the 4 Chairwoman was saying.</p> <p>5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And I'm wanting 6 to say does this school have 100 percent Free and 7 Reduced Lunch, which a number of our schools do, or 8 80 percent. Some of them only have 40 percent, 9 which is way different demographic than, say -- I 10 that's why I was asking. I don't have to have that 11 comparison to exactly a school.</p> <p>12 But I'm just trying to put this school in 13 my mind in a place where I can say, "Oh. Well, of 14 course, this is this way," because I am concerned as 15 Commissioner Robbins was saying, on the reading 16 proficiency, the math proficiency, the graduation. 17 Those are things that I'm going to be considering. 18 So that's why I was asking.</p> <p>19 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: I can speak to the 20 Free and Reduced Lunch for 40th day of this year. 21 Our Free and Reduced Lunch percentage was 22 34 percent. One of the issues that we face in 23 having an overage population is anyone 18 or older, 24 whether they would have qualified, minus their age, 25 for Free and Reduced Lunch, because they're 18 and</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">174</p> <p>1 over, they don't get to count in those numbers. And 2 so that pulls our percentage down.</p> <p>3 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: How many do you 4 have of the -- I don't know what we call them -- 5 over 19-year-olds? How many of them?</p> <p>6 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Right now, we have 7 four that are over 22. We do have some that are 8 over 18. But because the age gap is 22, you know, 9 they're still -- we're good with them. Did I answer 10 that question?</p> <p>11 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Thank you. And, 12 Deputy Director?</p> <p>13 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Yeah. So I just -- 14 while we were talking, I pulled Cesar Chavez, 15 because they're an Albuquerque school that could 16 sort of be considered a reengagement high school. I 17 will tell you their race and ethnicity is similar to 18 The GREAT Academy, in that they have 7 percent 19 African-American; they have more Native American at 20 8 percent; and the rest are either Hispanic or -- 21 I'm sorry -- 13 percent Native American, 5 percent 22 African-American.</p> <p>23 I just made a note here.</p> <p>24 And then 73 percent Hispanic, 9 percent 25 White. So similar in some regards to The GREAT</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">176</p> <p>1 students with need, based on the numbers.</p> <p>2 The retention between school years, I did 3 note that earlier, that The GREAT Academy has been 4 hovering around 70 percent. They did have a slight 5 increase up to 72 percent this year. Cesar Chavez' 6 retention between years is 87 percent.</p> <p>7 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Thank you.</p> <p>8 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Your other question 9 was about -- and I'm trying to find -- I know that 10 we noticed the staff member you mentioned is on the 11 foundation and was listed on the governing board; 12 although Mr. Matthews said he's not on the -- I 13 don't know where he is. But I'm trying to find the 14 reference to the site visit report that you 15 mentioned.</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: I believe it was. I believe 17 the site visit report mentioned the governance -- 18 the staff member being on the foundation board.</p> <p>19 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: (Indiscernible) 20 packet. Mr. Fairley?</p> <p>21 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It was Shorter.</p> <p>22 MS. KAREN WOERNER: He's the president of 23 the governing board. So there was a -- I recall -- 24 and I don't know -- I know it's in here somewhere in 25 the school's response -- oh, no, it was in the thing</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">175</p> <p>1 Academy. However, they have 100 percent Free and 2 Reduced Lunch.</p> <p>3 Our chart shows 13 percent, Ms. Matthews. 4 So I don't know where the 34 percent came from. I 5 might need to check that.</p> <p>6 Oh, yeah, this was last year. Okay. So 7 you've gone up since then. This was from last 8 year's data.</p> <p>9 Also Cesar Chavez had a higher percentage 10 of special ed students, of students with 11 disabilities, at 24 percent. They had 32 percent 12 ELs. Similar gifted, with 4 percent. And I think 13 we have -- with those demographics -- let me find it 14 all. Sorry. Hold on. I'll get this report 15 switched over.</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Armbruster, is 17 that answering what you wanted?</p> <p>18 MS. KAREN WOERNER: They had similar -- 19 they had better graduation rates overall, but, 20 again, much lower than the local district and the 21 state. They had 38 percent in four years, 22 42 percent in five years, and 38 percent in six 23 years. So better than -- a few personal points 24 better than The GREAT Academy; although their 25 demographics are a little more different or more</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">177</p> <p>1 they presented today -- where they gave out the -- I 2 remember seeing this note.</p> <p>3 There was a thing about Mr. Shorter. What 4 I remember about Mr. Shorter is he's employed at the 5 school. He had been on the governing board, but he 6 came off the governing board appropriately and was 7 hired by the school as -- I think it was a -- I 8 don't know what it was the first year.</p> <p>9 But the contract -- I remember the 10 contract issue was his contract didn't have start or 11 end dates and didn't have -- it had a list of duties 12 that were not the duties he was doing, and it was a 13 salary of \$30 per hour.</p> <p>14 I think since then -- that was the first 15 year. I think the second year, he was hired as more 16 of an FTE instead of by an hourly rate. I think 17 it's \$61,000 this year.</p> <p>18 But he was hired as the dean of students 19 and truancy coach. Dean of students does not 20 require a license for that title. Schools use it in 21 different ways, but it's not a required license. 22 Attendance coach does require a license, and I think 23 it came up on the discrepancy report this year that 24 Mr. Shorter doesn't have a license for that.</p> <p>25 But more concerning was that he is listed</p>

178	<p>1 as the president of the foundation and also as the 2 only person listed on that other group that they 3 were trying to transfer to but sounds like it's 4 defunct.</p> <p>5 So there, again, some appearance of 6 impropriety is going on there. Nothing 7 particularly -- can't say it's illegal at this 8 point. But it does present an appearance of 9 impropriety and some potential conflict of interest.</p> <p>10 But Mr. Shorter's name, I recognize, 11 because we had observed his file on a visit around 12 those contract issues.</p> <p>13 THE CHAIR: So does the school want to 14 respond to the staff member being on the foundation 15 board?</p> <p>16 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Well, as far as 17 going from the foundation to what was an attempt to 18 switch over to the LLC, one of the board members had 19 to be designated as that person. And so -- so, 20 yeah. I mean, it's -- you know, I guess maybe it 21 should look like there should be six or seven, eight 22 people on that LLC, but really it only requires one.</p> <p>23 THE CHAIR: No. I'm sorry. I don't think 24 the concern is with the LLC. I think the concern is 25 with the existing non-profit foundation, that a</p>	180	<p>1 The school itself had five.</p> <p>2 THE CHAIR: Right.</p> <p>3 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: And then the 4 foundation had the six -- the four. I'm sorry.</p> <p>5 THE CHAIR: Right. Okay.</p> <p>6 Commissioner Armbruster, do you have any 7 other questions?</p> <p>8 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: (Indicates.)</p> <p>9 THE CHAIR: Okay. So can I just ask -- 10 it's hard.</p> <p>11 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Madam Chair, can 12 I ask my question now?</p> <p>13 THE CHAIR: Certainly. I'm sorry. I 14 forgot. Sorry. Sorry. Absolutely.</p> <p>15 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: I know things 16 come up.</p> <p>17 I just wanted to ask if the school had 18 ever been approached by the -- the PED Division, or 19 have you ever entertained, some way, somehow, to 20 divide or differentiate the -- the regular students 21 that would be in high school from those that are 22 coming in to get their education again or get their 23 diploma or graduate again?</p> <p>24 Have you ever been -- have you ever 25 considered -- or requested or entertained this</p>
179	<p>1 staff member is on the board of the non-profit 2 foundation. Let's just -- let's just pretend the 3 LLC doesn't exist, and we're not going to -- but 4 that the staff member sits on the board of the 5 foundation.</p> <p>6 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: And we, in the past, 7 have had staff members -- for instance, a business 8 manager in the past was on the foundation board. 9 And we've never received an audit finding regarding 10 that. So no one from any of the entities or -- or 11 PED has expressed any concern or interest or any 12 issues with that. This is the first time that this 13 has ever come up.</p> <p>14 THE CHAIR: Right. And just so that 15 you're aware going forward with new contracts, the 16 PEC did pass that a staff member can't be on the 17 board of the non-profit foundation.</p> <p>18 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Okay. Thank you.</p> <p>19 THE CHAIR: Okay. And that's going 20 forward. And I understand. It hasn't been -- but 21 we were talking about audits. In my information in 22 the Section 2, Financial Compliance, in that chart, 23 it says you had seven audit findings. Is that 24 correct or incorrect?</p> <p>25 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: It's seven total.</p>	181	<p>1 notion of separating that data? I totally believe 2 that that's one of the problems that we have. 3 And -- but that is my question.</p> <p>4 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Okay. And that's a 5 great question. And Mrs. Gipson might remember this 6 from our last renewal hearing, Mr. -- he was from 7 Las Cruces.</p> <p>8 THE CHAIR: Mr. Gant, Gene Gant, my 9 predecessor.</p> <p>10 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: So he actually had 11 proposed that at our last renewal hearing, if I 12 remember, that we can see if we can get -- because 13 what we asked is, "Can we have two report cards? 14 Can we have one report card on our day program and 15 one report card on our night program?"</p> <p>16 The answer was, "No, you have to have one 17 report card."</p> <p>18 So we entertained that years and years 19 ago, but it didn't really get any traction. But 20 that is one of the things that Mr. Gant brought up, 21 that -- you know. Because I think during that 22 hearing, we might even have segregated that out 23 ourselves to show how each program was performing 24 independently.</p> <p>25 But since then, we were only going to be</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">182</p> <p>1 scored as one school. We haven't done that for 2 years.</p> <p>3 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: And, sir, did you 4 interact with the PED Division on that request or 5 that suggestion?</p> <p>6 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: I think 7 Mrs. Matthews did with whoever was in there at that 8 time. But, again, this was during the last contract 9 term. But there was nothing -- no additional 10 conversation since this contract that we're 11 currently in.</p> <p>12 THE CHAIR: Right. And I'm just going to 13 add a little bit to that. That has been always part 14 of the ongoing, but unsuccessful, conversations 15 about the SAM schools and how to define them and how 16 to report out that information. Because the State 17 has always refused to disaggregate that information.</p> <p>18 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: That's right, 19 Madam Chair. And in one of our open meetings at the 20 APS administrative building with charter schools, 21 that was one of the biggest concerns. And it was 22 fully discussed. And I walked out of there not 23 knowing what a SAM school was, not understanding 24 enough to -- as a Commissioner, to offer suggestions 25 on how to approach it.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">184</p> <p>1 applied to be a SAM school." And we were told -- 2 specifically, I remember a school coming to change 3 their mission because they had a document from PED 4 that said, "If you put in your mission that you want 5 to serve at-risk students, you will qualify as a SAM 6 school"; so they came to change the mission 7 statement a little bit so that they would get that 8 qualification.</p> <p>9 They didn't, because they stopped making 10 the designation. And, unfortunately, prior 11 administrations and how many people have gone by, 12 and we were told that there was active engagement 13 and talk about SAM schools and redefining it and 14 there would be clarification on it. And with 15 everything, that it is unfortunate that has never 16 moved forward, and we still -- we're still in that 17 same gray area of not being able to explain what's 18 going to happen with SAM schools.</p> <p>19 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: And, you know, we 20 hold our charter schools accountable from day one. 21 A friend of mine -- I taught alternative schools in 22 El Paso as a teacher. Very difficult. But a friend 23 of mine is still with it. He has an alternative 24 school within the school. And it was devised by 25 another friend of ours, who was the principal.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">183</p> <p>1 And at that time, one or two directors -- 2 I don't know if they're still with the schools -- 3 told me -- and kind of advised me -- that that -- 4 the problem was, if not resolved, would resolve in 5 the future issues with schools and -- and with us as 6 Commissioners. And I think --</p> <p>7 THE CHAIR: Sorry.</p> <p>8 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yeah. And they 9 were trying to say -- also with the Division. But 10 at the time, we were under the -- the system of 11 penalizing rather than advising to -- to improve. 12 And so they stopped short of that because somebody 13 got a little close.</p> <p>14 And so that's been my concern since I've 15 been reading all of the packet, Madam Chair, and 16 that's why I asked that.</p> <p>17 THE CHAIR: Yeah. And you are absolutely 18 right. It's been an ongoing concern. We have -- 19 we've -- I know we've had schools come up to us and 20 say, "I don't know how they got to be a SAM school." 21 We've had schools come up and say, "I 22 don't know how we're a SAM school." 23 You know, they got the designation, and 24 they can't even tell you how they got the 25 designation. And then we had schools say, "We</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">185</p> <p>1 And they have the luxury of -- even though 2 he's in constant stress over his students and 3 getting graded and evaluated -- but they figured out 4 a way to -- to drop -- that population drops in and 5 out.</p> <p>6 THE CHAIR: Right.</p> <p>7 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: No age limit, 8 which is very strange. So you have all kinds of 9 stuff. And his evaluation is, how many students do 10 you have on an average, what is their progress, 11 those that stay in until they get their GED, and 12 that's how he gets evaluated. Otherwise, that 13 alternative school would be a failure.</p> <p>14 And so that's the luxury that traditional 15 public schools can do. But if we are to allow 16 charter schools to entertain helping these type of 17 students, we have to figure out a way to -- to do it 18 that's not the traditional way, Madam Chair, because 19 charter schools really are supposed to be 20 non-traditional. We're supposed to reinvent what's 21 not there. But we -- we are trying to fit these 22 schools, the SAM schools --</p> <p>23 THE CHAIR: Into the same hole.</p> <p>24 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: The same hole. 25 Yes, ma'am. And I hate -- I hate charter schools to</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">186</p> <p>1 pull away from this, because initially they're all  2 going to see it and say, "Hell, no. I'm not going  3 to entertain bringing in these reengagement stuff  4 because it just doesn't help us."  5 And that is why I feel that some charter  6 schools make -- make themselves available to a  7 balance of their population to where they're not  8 weighted down by the students at the bottom. And  9 talking to parents all over my area, that's --  10 that's what they say.  11 I can't prove it. But the charter schools  12 find themselves in that stress. And we have charter  13 schools that we put on probation that were  14 99 percent of students at the bottom, English  15 Learners, low-income, and they managed to pull out  16 of there. But we gave them the opportunity and the  17 will to -- to reach their goals.  18 And so I think we need to have a view of  19 that with this school and see that, for one, that  20 with a SAM school, nobody knew what to do with them.  21 Two, they were under an administration that was  22 pro-punishment. It took us at PEC a long time to  23 get to where we're at. And in the meantime, we had  24 to morph and change our evaluating system.  25 Right now, we give a lot of status to</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">188</p> <p>1 service time for the special ed students so that you  2 know that you're staying in compliance with their  3 IEPs?  4 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Well, we use our  5 SEMS case management system. And that info sheet  6 was in your packet. That's (indiscernible due to  7 audio distortion) component.  8 THE CHAIR: Yeah. Right.  9 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: So, basically -- so  10 we have weekly progress reports that not only  11 special ed students get, but all students get. And  12 then we have service logs and communication logs.  13 And I just continue to struggle in  14 understanding how the service time that we're  15 providing is not being counted; because it's not  16 just about direct service. If the IEP says "special  17 education hours," and we provide that kid with that  18 many hours of -- of service, and because we don't  19 one-on-one the kid during that period of time that's  20 in the IEP just to work on the goal, that's not even  21 the essence of inclusion.  22 So, you know, as far as I respect Karen,  23 you know, I almost feel like -- like we're -- we're  24 talking past each other and not understanding -- I  25 think I understand what she is saying; but I don't</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">187</p> <p>1 mission, which, at one time, we hardly did. We're  2 now doing that, and we're looking back, years back,  3 at mission, which, in those years, we weren't doing  4 that. So charter schools didn't feel like --  5 probably, "Well, it's only 5 percent. Let's look at  6 other stuff."  7 And so that's -- that's my feeling,  8 Madam Chair. And I kind of feel like the system  9 dropped somewhat because of various reasons, not --  10 a lot of which this Commission did not have control  11 over. But now we are in control, but we're  12 reviewing schools as though everything that they did  13 happened in the evaluation period this time.  14 And we're in the pandemic, which is not  15 going to ease up for the next two years; not next  16 year, maybe the following year. And so I just throw  17 it out there to Commissioners that it's going to be  18 a long haul. We just have to figure out how do we  19 evaluate and keep charters or remove charters. But  20 we have to do it in that light.  21 And so that is my concern for asking  22 that -- that question, Madam Chair. Thank you.  23 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.  24 Can I just have one quick clarification?  25 How do you record the amount of services and the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">189</p> <p>1 think she's understanding what I'm saying.  2 The comment that was made a few minutes  3 ago about, "Well, Southwest Secondary  4 immediately..." -- well, when we got feedback from  5 the site visit, we immediately started  6 disaggregating direct service from indirect  7 services. So how is The GREAT Academy not taking it  8 upon itself doing what we need to do to satisfy our  9 authorizer?  10 Before we went electronic, we had binders  11 and binders and binders full of communication logs,  12 service logs. The ancillary service had to keep  13 that. And so that whole model kind of was borne out  14 of ancillary, how they kept notes and logs and time.  15 So we are a lot more hands-on when it  16 comes to special ed than just about any school I  17 know. I don't know another school that is as  18 hands-on with special ed as we are.  19 So I just -- so the short answer is  20 service logs. But the service logs do not say  21 one-on-one direct service for this much time, and  22 then classroom time for this much time, and then  23 this much time for this. It has it all together as  24 service, because that's what we're providing.  25 And when the accommodations and</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">190</p> <p>1 modifications follow the kid in their GE setting and  2 we co-teach with a special ed teacher in that  3 setting, we count that time.  4 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.  5 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Just to --  6 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Voigt?  7 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yeah. Just real  8 quick. Thank you.  9 The indirect and direct issue probably is  10 tied into your MOE issue as well. I'm just going to  11 say that. Because -- so you might just look at that  12 for going forward.  13 And I totally understand that the students  14 that you receive -- and this is not just you; it's  15 everybody -- the students that you receive from APS  16 that have out-of-date IEPs, you know, mislabeled  17 IEPs, student services, things like that, you can't  18 trust it.  19 I mean, that's why you guys -- and every  20 school would want to do an IEP pretty quickly after  21 enrolling a student. But I just wanted to point  22 that out. Look at that issue of the MOE in terms of  23 your direct and indirect.  24 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Yes, ma'am.  25 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Madam Chair, I have a</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">192</p> <p>1 What isn't written there, you might want  2 to know, is that 65 percent of the full academic  3 year students had to demonstrate one year's growth  4 or be at grade level for them to meet the goal.  5 So let me repeat that. 65 percent of full  6 academic year students had to make one year's growth  7 or be at grade level. And that was a Meets. So  8 that's how they got the Meets.  9 On the math -- so it's not all their  10 students. On the math goal, Goal 2, 60 percent of  11 the full academic year students had to make one  12 year's growth or be at grade level, either/or. So  13 they did meet that. They did exceed that.  14 I wonder if that has to do with some of  15 the double-blocking in math. They exceeded it in  16 2019, which is they got 75 percent of the full  17 academic year students to make a year's growth or be  18 at grade level.  19 In Goal 3, the credits, they had two  20 cohorts. One cohort was students that have been  21 enrolled since ninth or tenth grade. They have  22 80 percent of those kiddos get 12 total college  23 credits in their high school career.  24 Cohort 2 are students who started as  25 eleventh-graders. They had to get 75 percent of</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">191</p> <p>1 question, please, a real quick one.  2 THE CHAIR: Certainly. Certainly.  3 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: So I need  4 clarification real quick. And I don't even know  5 what page it's on. But the reason I'm asking is  6 because Ms. Matthews said something, and I'm not  7 really sure. So I need assistance from Deputy  8 Director Woerner. So can you clarify the growth  9 measure scores, please, for charter goals?  10 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Yes, Madam Chair,  11 Commissioners. Give me a second to find them.  12 The charter Goals report was covered in  13 the Part A data analysis, which, Commissioners, is  14 Page 40 of the 219. And so the school, as they  15 indicated -- maybe I should bring that up.  16 But the school indicated that -- the  17 goals, the charter goals, were three goals. And as  18 we talked about earlier, they get one rating, even  19 though they may meet some and not meet others.  20 So on Page 40, you see that there are  21 three goals. One was around reading; one was around  22 math; and one was around the college credits earned.  23 So I just -- when you look at the chart  24 there, it does say that for the reading goal, they  25 met the standard, then did not meet, then met.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">193</p> <p>1 those to get the 12 credits.  2 And students who started as  3 twelfth-graders were excluded. So they did meet  4 that in 2018, but they Fell Far Below, which means  5 below 39 percent of students who were enrolled in  6 ninth and tenth grade were able to make those,  7 and/or below 39 percent of the eleventh-graders as  8 seniors.  9 They only look at the graduates for Goal  10 3, but very low percentages of students were getting  11 12 credits.  12 So I just think it's important to note  13 that the -- these charter goals were not just for  14 the whole student population, but, rather, for full  15 academic year students. And making one year of  16 growth for some of these students who are so  17 significantly far behind is not sufficient enough.  18 They'll never catch up with just one year of growth.  19 THE CHAIR: Well, we can't look at -- but  20 we're not looking at whether the goal was a good  21 goal or not. I mean, the goal is the goal. So  22 that's what they had to meet. And I don't want to  23 muddy it with whether it was an adequate goal or  24 not, because -- well, this was -- I think this was  25 the first school that I did contract negotiations</p>

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1 with.

2 So -- okay.

3 Commissioner Ruiz, anything else? I'm

4 sorry.

5 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: No. Just thank you.

6 THE CHAIR: Thanks. So I -- and I hope

7 this is quick. And there's no one from your -- is

8 there anyone here from your governance council?

9 I would just like a clarification on how

10 your evaluations are done because of, you know, your

11 personal relationship. So is there -- does the

12 governance council hire out someone to do your

13 evaluations?

14 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: No.

15 THE CHAIR: So who does your evaluations?

16 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: The president and

17 the vice president.

18 THE CHAIR: But they're not certif- --

19 what gives them the qualifications to do an

20 evaluation of a certified staff member?

21 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Well, the board

22 president is a Level III instructional and Level

23 III-B. And he's worked in charter schools in

24 traditional districts for at least 20 years.

25 And then Retired Colonel Pitts was the

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1 Personnel Officer of the Year in the Air Force one

2 of those years, for the entire Air Force. And so

3 his background was personnel.

4 So -- now, that's my answer. Now, they

5 may have a different answer. But that's my answer,

6 though.

7 THE CHAIR: Okay. You know, I'm just

8 going to say I think that becomes quite muddled when

9 you've got the folks that are making the decision --

10 it's -- I think it's just very -- very -- very

11 muddled for that to happen.

12 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Real quick,

13 Chairwoman Gipson.

14 THE CHAIR: Yeah.

15 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Are we saying that

16 the governing board is evaluating staff and not just

17 administration?

18 THE CHAIR: No. Well, yes. They're

19 evaluating the staff -- well, actually, that's

20 where -- that's where it gets a little muddled.

21 Because Mr. Matthews is the only -- oh, you're

22 co-directors, so you are both directly contracted by

23 the governance council? Because -- yes or no?

24 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: So we both are hired

25 by the governing board, and they evaluate me

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1 directly.

2 THE CHAIR: And who evaluates

3 Mrs. Matthews?

4 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: She doesn't get an

5 evaluation from the board, because it's -- to my

6 understanding, the head administrator.

7 THE CHAIR: No. I understand that. So

8 who evaluates her?

9 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: I think, informally,

10 the board.

11 THE CHAIR: Well, see, that's -- see,

12 that's where it gets muddled. Because the board

13 doesn't have authority -- the board only has the

14 authority to hire one person. And that's the --

15 whatever you want to call it -- the executive

16 director, the head administrator, whatever that is.

17 So that's the only person. And they don't evaluate

18 any other staff people.

19 I mean, that's clearly defined in the

20 roles and responsibilities of boards. And for the

21 board to be the evaluators of the head

22 administrator, that's -- you know. Yeah.

23 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: So I understood that,

24 when you made your introductions when we first

25 started, that Jasper, you're the executive director.

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1 And so, Keisha, what's your role?

2 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: I'm the director of

3 academics.

4 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Director of

5 academics. So -- but you both have admin licenses.

6 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Yes, ma'am.

7 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Right.

8 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: So that's really

9 interesting and kind of funky, just to be straight

10 out with it, that you get evaluated by the governing

11 board, Keisha. I think that's --

12 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: Oh. I don't get

13 evaluated by the governing board.

14 THE CHAIR: So there's the problem.

15 That's the question. If you don't get evaluated by

16 the governing board, it would not be appropriate for

17 your husband to do your evaluation. So who does

18 your evaluation?

19 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: So our understanding

20 is that the head administrator gets evaluated by the

21 governing board. So I'm not the head administrator,

22 so I don't get evaluated by the governing board.

23 And I don't get evaluated -- he doesn't evaluate me.

24 THE CHAIR: But that's still -- I still --

25 so I need an answer to my question. Who does your

<p style="text-align: right;">198</p> <p>1 evaluation -- who does your annual evaluation?  2 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: She doesn't get an  3 annual evaluation.  4 MS. KEISHA MATTHEWS: And this question  5 has actually never been brought up. It's --  6 THE CHAIR: Well, you know, I -- honestly,  7 I need that job. Would love to have had that job.  8 And, honestly, even though the governing council  9 doesn't have a role in doing the evaluation of any  10 other staff members, they do have a role in making  11 sure that staff members are being evaluated.  12 They don't have a say in it. But that  13 should be -- that could be part of the conversation  14 of the governing council members, that that is part  15 of their role to make sure that management is doing  16 their job appropriately.  17 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Madam Chair, I'm just  18 surprised that never came up in a site visit.  19 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: And since the  20 inception, everyone knows we wrote the charter and  21 implemented the charter. But if I may add -- so the  22 director of academics does reports to the board  23 every three months. And then the off month, I do my  24 executive director's report.  25 So we're constantly reporting to the board</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">200</p> <p>1 interest, highly unethical and inappropriate.  2 THE CHAIR: Yeah. I'm just -- I'm kind of  3 astounded. And I hate to say I think it kind of --  4 I don't know. When you look at the intent -- you  5 know, I was really -- it's a shame that HB 5 had to  6 tell schools how to -- how to parcel out the monies  7 and make sure that the monies were going more  8 towards academics than administration.  9 And I don't know -- I don't want to put  10 words in Commissioner Robbins' mouth, but I think  11 that maybe what he was alluding to, that it -- we  12 shouldn't have had to tell schools, "You need to  13 spend more money on academics than you do  14 administration."  15 And when there's -- over years, it's been  16 addressed that there's a concern with the heavy load  17 of administration, and then when that administration  18 is not being appropriately checked and evaluated,  19 that just doubles the concern and makes it difficult  20 for everyone in the charter community in particular,  21 but education in particular.  22 So I will also express my real concern  23 over that.  24 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yeah. Madam Chair,  25 if I can chime in?</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">199</p> <p>1 on all the aspects of running the school, the  2 financials. Of course, the -- the Short Cycle  3 Assessments, the college credits, just -- you know,  4 testing, everything that we do, we take turns  5 reporting to the board four times a year so that the  6 board always knows how we're performing in areas.  7 And some of the board members participate  8 in, you know, some of the trainings and things that  9 we report out on.  10 So there's constant communication with --  11 it's not as if -- you know, for a whole calendar  12 year, she just goes about her business. There's  13 things -- you know, four times a year, she has to  14 report out to the board on the academic performance  15 of the school. So...  16 THE CHAIR: I appreciate that. But any  17 teacher could say, "Hey, I've talked -- I say hello  18 to the principal every morning. I talk to the  19 principal. I -- I've told the principal what I'm  20 doing."  21 That doesn't mean that staff member is  22 being evaluated appropriately.  23 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Right. Yeah.  24 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Madam Chair, I just  25 have to say that I think that's a huge conflict of</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">201</p> <p>1 THE CHAIR: Sure.  2 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: So I agree. I think  3 that's -- it's very -- not only is it bad optics, I  4 think it is borderline unethical. You have  5 115 students, 130, and you have two administrators?  6 There are so many charter schools out there that  7 have 260, 340 students with one administrator. And  8 they're doing -- they're doing a great job.  9 So, you know, to have two administrators,  10 one not even being evaluated by -- you know, I mean,  11 that's something that's got to be worked out. I  12 think going forward that should be some kind of plan  13 where the governing board evaluates the head  14 administrator or the executive director, whatever  15 their title is, and then that person evaluates  16 everybody else, the janitor, the teacher, assistant  17 principal. You know, that's the way it rolls, okay?  18 So whatever you guys are doing, I don't  19 know. It's -- it's interesting.  20 THE CHAIR: I mean, we've had charter  21 schools that have had similar types of  22 relationships, and they've had MOUs with another  23 administrator at a charter school. They come in and  24 they do that one single evaluation, just -- just so  25 that the school doesn't have -- you know, there's no</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">202</p> <p>1 semblance of impropriety. Because that's what --  2 you know, that's unfortunately what taints the  3 waters easier than anything else. It is.  4 Okay, Commissioners. Any other questions?  5 (No response.)  6 THE CHAIR: Okay. So -- sorry. I've got  7 a --  8 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I think Deputy  9 Director has something to say.  10 MS. KAREN WOERNER: May I?  11 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: She had her hand  12 up.  13 THE CHAIR: Yeah.  14 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I just wanted an  15 opportunity to respond to some misleading  16 information in the school's reports.  17 THE CHAIR: I'm sorry.  18 MS. KAREN WOERNER: And that was around --  19 the one day prior -- regard- -- maybe, to our  20 report.  21 THE CHAIR: Okay.  22 MS. KAREN WOERNER: The CSD report,  23 Mr. and -- Mrs. Matthews mentioned that the e-mail  24 came a day before this hearing. While that is true,  25 I need it on the record that the report was provided</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">204</p> <p>1 things that had to be fixed. And the last clean  2 report that the PEC has in front of them came last  3 night.  4 So just imagine preparing for this hearing  5 with so much at stake for not just, you know, our  6 students and families, but our -- our staff, and we  7 had to continue to, you know, follow the moving ball  8 because, you know, things pretty much changed  9 throughout the duration of this whole process.  10 So that's all we were trying to  11 communicate. Not that the first time we got this  12 report -- because then we wouldn't have been able to  13 get any sleep to prepare all of this stuff. I mean,  14 it took over a week without sleep to prepare all  15 this stuff. We couldn't have did it in one night.  16 So I just want to make sure that --  17 that -- we apologize if that's the perception that  18 you got, but that's not what we meant to  19 communicate.  20 THE CHAIR: Okay. And I want to make it  21 clear that the information that we've had has not  22 substantially changed since we first received it  23 from the preliminary. And then there was the --  24 then there was the final report. But we did not  25 receive -- outside of what the school provided</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">203</p> <p>1 much sooner than that. And then once it was --  2 everything was done for this renewal, we put all the  3 reports in a "Received" mode, which is so nothing  4 more can be added.  5 The e-mail that was sent by our team is,  6 "It's ready for re-review and to share with the  7 governing board," as an expectation. This was not  8 by any means the first time the school had seen the  9 report. And I think that was very misleading.  10 It is true our reports have been late to  11 the schools. As you all know, we are three vacant  12 positions in the authorizing side, plus the lack of  13 a director. That is true that we have been late in  14 getting the site visit reports out to the schools;  15 not just this school, it's been pretty much across  16 the board. And in exchange for that, we have  17 allowed the schools a significant amount of  18 flexibility in terms of their time to respond and  19 their -- working with them to clarify what is  20 needed. So I just wanted to be sure to --  21 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: And all due respect,  22 Karen, we didn't reply that we first saw the report  23 last night. What we tried to communicate is that we  24 had received reports over the course of a period of  25 time where there was errors and corrections and</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">205</p> <p>1 through that e-mail this morning, the information  2 that we have didn't change last night at all. We  3 haven't received any new information except for what  4 the school provided to us.  5 So these reports -- because what I have  6 loaded in my good notes is from back months ago.  7 That hasn't changed. So -- and we've not been  8 receiving any kind of continual updates to this  9 information. The reports were loaded. And then  10 what Karen did was collate those reports to make it  11 easier for us to look at.  12 But there has not been new information  13 that's -- that's been added. And there certainly  14 was not new information that was added last night.  15 Okay. If there are no further questions,  16 I am going to move that the Public Education  17 Commission enter into a Closed Session, pursuant to  18 NMSA Section 10-15-1(H)(1). The subject to be  19 discussed pertains to issuance of The GREAT Academy  20 charter license renewal.  21 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Second.  22 THE CHAIR: There's a motion by  23 Commissioner Gipson, a second by Commissioner  24 Robbins.  25 Commissioner Armbruster?</p>

206	<p>1 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Sorry. Things 2 kept flopping down. It wouldn't let me unmute. So 3 I apologize. 4 Commissioner Davis? 5 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Yes. 6 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner 7 Voigt? 8 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yes. 9 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner 10 Ruiz? 11 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yes. 12 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner 13 Robbins? 14 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Yes. 15 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner 16 Gipson? 17 THE CHAIR: Yes. 18 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner 19 Armbruster says "Yes." 20 Commissioner Chavez? 21 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Yes. 22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner 23 Caballero? 24 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Caballero? 25 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yes.</p>	208	<p>1 those specified in the motion for closure, and no 2 vote was taken during the Closed Session. 3 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: I second. 4 THE CHAIR: There's a motion by 5 Commissioner Gipson, a second by Commissioner Davis. 6 Commissioner Armbruster? 7 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner 8 Caballero? 9 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yes. 10 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner 11 Raftery? 12 COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: Yes. 13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner 14 Armbruster votes "Yes." 15 Commissioner Chavez? 16 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Yes. 17 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner 18 Gipson? 19 THE CHAIR: Yes. 20 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner 21 Davis? 22 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Yes. 23 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner 24 Voigt? 25 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yes.</p>
207	<p>1 THE CHAIR: He said, "Yes." 2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I'm sorry. I 3 couldn't hear it. 4 Commissioner Raftery, can you hear this? 5 THE CHAIR: I don't see her. So I think 6 she has stepped away. 7 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. Sorry. 8 Commissioner Crone? 9 COMMISSIONER CRONE: Yes. 10 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: So we have nine 11 out of ten to go into Closed Session. 12 THE CHAIR: Motion passes, nine-zero. 13 Commissioner Raftery has stepped away. 14 So, Commissioners, you have the separate link. I'm 15 going to ask for a five-minute break before we -- as 16 we move our way in. Thank you. 17 MS. KAREN WOERNER: And, Madam Chair I'm 18 going to change hosts to Dylan so I can set up the 19 Executive Session for you. 20 THE CHAIR: Thanks. 21 (Recess and Closed Session held, 22 2:15 p.m. to 3:41 p.m.) 23 THE CHAIR: I move that the Public 24 Education Commission end Closed Session. The 25 matters in the closed meeting we limited only to</p>	209	<p>1 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner 2 Ruiz? 3 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yes. 4 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I heard you. 5 Commissioner Crone? 6 COMMISSIONER CRONE: Yes. 7 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. And 8 Commissioner Robbins? 9 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Yes. 10 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. That's a 11 ten-to-zero vote to -- 12 THE CHAIR: The motion passed, ten-zero. 13 So thank you. 14 And thank you all for your patience with 15 this. 16 As we all know, this doesn't become easier 17 as we've spent more time on Zoom. So we appreciate 18 you hanging in there with our challenges. 19 And I would like to, also, because I 20 missed this earlier when I first recognized that 21 we've had two of the other new Commissioners also 22 on, Michael Taylor and Rebekka Burt have been on as 23 well. So I just wanted to publicly recognize that. 24 So thank you. 25 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Madam Chair?</p>

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1 THE CHAIR: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: I would like to

3 make a motion.

4 I move that the PEC not renew the charter

5 for The GREAT Academy as it has failed to meet or

6 make substantial progress toward achievement of the

7 Department's Standards of Excellent, or student

8 performance standards as identified in the charter

9 contract, and as demonstrated by their reports to

10 the CSD and presented in their packet to us. And it

11 has failed to meet Generally Accepted Standards of

12 Fiscal Management as supported by their close

13 financial audits for '17, '18, and '19.

14 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: I second.

15 THE CHAIR: There's a motion by

16 Commissioner Robbins, a second by Commissioner

17 Davis.

18 Is there any discussion?

19 (No response.)

20 THE CHAIR: Okay. Commissioner

21 Armbruster?

22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

23 Robbins?

24 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

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1 Crone?

2 COMMISSIONER CRONE: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

4 Ruiz?

5 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

7 Voigt?

8 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

10 Davis?

11 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

13 Gipson?

14 THE CHAIR: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

16 Chavez?

17 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

19 Armbruster votes "Yes."

20 Commissioner Raftery?

21 COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner

23 Caballero?

24 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: The motion

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1 passes, ten-to-zero.

2 THE CHAIR: The motion passed, ten-zero.

3 Once -- you know, these are never easy decisions

4 that we make. We want to absolutely thank you for

5 the time that you've given us today and allowing us

6 to ask as many questions as we could and the time

7 and the effort and the energy that you put into the

8 application, as I said before.

9 Our lawyer will draft up a letter that --

10 that will come to the school.

11 MR. JASPER MATTHEWS: Okay. Thank you.

12 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

13 So, Commissioners, I think we need to have

14 a discussion about what the rest of the day looks

15 like.

16 We do have -- we have two schools that

17 we're scheduled for. I think we're going to

18 struggle to get that third school in, you know, at

19 this point in time.

20 We're going to run late, obviously, with

21 the second school; but I think we will be stretched

22 beyond to get the third school in.

23 So I'm willing to hear any comments from

24 other Commissioners as to how they feel about the

25 remainder of today, because we have to give schools,

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1 you know, enough time. They were planning on being

2 heard today; but I think it's going to be

3 challenging.

4 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Madam Chair, I think

5 that we need to move the third school to -- I don't

6 know if we can move it till tomorrow or to Friday.

7 But we need to move that third school, because it's

8 going to be a late one, and we won't make it through

9 that.

10 THE CHAIR: Right.

11 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: It wouldn't be

12 fair to the school, I believe, not to have all their

13 discussion.

14 THE CHAIR: Right. Right. And I do

15 not -- you're absolutely right. I don't want to

16 have a school feel like we've rushed through a

17 decision because we were trying to cram it into -- I

18 want schools to feel like they had a fair and full

19 hearing on this.

20 And I don't think there's -- you know,

21 we've got -- and I'm willing to be flexible with the

22 school as well. If they want to have input as to

23 whether Thursday or Friday -- I mean, we can move

24 pieces of the agenda around that we were going to do

25 on Friday. We can fit that in tomorrow if we need

214	<p>1 to.</p> <p>2 And I know that we had also -- we had on</p> <p>3 the agenda the Perkins Grant, and she had asked to</p> <p>4 be -- if she could be available for Thursday,</p> <p>5 because that fit into her time schedule. So we have</p> <p>6 to take that into consideration as well.</p> <p>7 So if it's amenable to the school for</p> <p>8 Thursday.</p> <p>9 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Madam Chair, do you</p> <p>10 want me to have that conversation now with the</p> <p>11 school?</p> <p>12 THE CHAIR: Why don't we now, if we can do</p> <p>13 that quick. And I think before we start the second</p> <p>14 school, I think Commissioners are going to need a</p> <p>15 little bit of a break; not a whole lot, but a little</p> <p>16 bit.</p> <p>17 No napping there, Commissioner Voigt.</p> <p>18 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: I know. Come 4:00, I</p> <p>19 start yawning.</p> <p>20 THE CHAIR: I know. I know.</p> <p>21 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I've promoted Sylvy</p> <p>22 Lucero to the panel. She's the head administrator</p> <p>23 at La Academia Dolores Huerta. That's the third</p> <p>24 school today. So you can discuss with her what you</p> <p>25 want to discuss.</p>	216	<p>1 schools to push to Friday, if we need to.</p> <p>2 So -- because this was out of your control</p> <p>3 and partly out of our control, we don't want to --</p> <p>4 you know, we want the school to be able to have</p> <p>5 everyone available that you needed to be available.</p> <p>6 So if tomorrow doesn't work, we'll try to</p> <p>7 work that out.</p> <p>8 MS. GALVAN DE LUCERO: I'm trying to do a</p> <p>9 quick survey of everyone via text trying to get the</p> <p>10 messages in. So far, the consensus seems to be</p> <p>11 Friday after lunch preferable. We have a couple of</p> <p>12 funerals going on. I don't know if that's -- if</p> <p>13 that would be possible for you all.</p> <p>14 THE CHAIR: I think -- I don't think</p> <p>15 that's a problem.</p> <p>16 Karen, if we could just have the schools</p> <p>17 that were scheduled for Friday so that we've got,</p> <p>18 hopefully, two schools we can get in in the morning?</p> <p>19 And then that way, we would have two schools in the</p> <p>20 afternoon to accommodate them so that they could go</p> <p>21 in the afternoon.</p> <p>22 MS. KAREN WOERNER: On Friday, we only</p> <p>23 have two schools scheduled, Taos International</p> <p>24 School and J. Paul Taylor. Hopefully, we can get</p> <p>25 those done in the morning.</p>
215	<p>1 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Madam Chair,</p> <p>2 while she's getting on, so are you saying we're</p> <p>3 going to have the Perkins Grant and four schools</p> <p>4 tomorrow?</p> <p>5 THE CHAIR: Well, the Perkins Grant is on</p> <p>6 the agenda, and she did ask if she could be on the</p> <p>7 agenda -- be available for Thursday. So that was --</p> <p>8 you know, that was the plan.</p> <p>9 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay. I'm just</p> <p>10 looking at the agenda. And I --</p> <p>11 THE CHAIR: I know. I know.</p> <p>12 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I'm concerned</p> <p>13 about four schools and the Perkins Grant. I'm just</p> <p>14 saying. I mean, it is good about Zoom is that</p> <p>15 you're not moving. So --</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: That's the bad thing about</p> <p>17 Zoom, too. You're not moving, you know.</p> <p>18 So Sylvy, thanks for being here, and</p> <p>19 thanks for being here all day. We truly do</p> <p>20 appreciate your time.</p> <p>21 And as with most of these, we can never</p> <p>22 judge exactly how long any of them are going to go.</p> <p>23 So we would just -- if you want to weigh in on when</p> <p>24 would be best for your folks, either tomorrow --</p> <p>25 because I'm thinking we could also ask one of the</p>	217	<p>1 THE CHAIR: And then we can fill in with</p> <p>2 other agenda items, if we -- you know.</p> <p>3 MS. KAREN WOERNER: If we finish early?</p> <p>4 THE CHAIR: If we finish early on Friday,</p> <p>5 there's other agenda items that we could clear out</p> <p>6 and then accommodate you for the afternoon. That,</p> <p>7 we can certainly do.</p> <p>8 MS. GALVAN DE LUCERO: We'd appreciate</p> <p>9 that. Thank you very much.</p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: Sure. And we appreciate your</p> <p>11 flexibility as well. So thank everyone for being</p> <p>12 here through most of today with us.</p> <p>13 MS. GALVAN DE LUCERO: Hang in there,</p> <p>14 guys.</p> <p>15 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Sylvy, I'm going to</p> <p>16 move you back to attendees now, and we'll see you on</p> <p>17 Friday.</p> <p>18 MS. GALVAN DE LUCERO: All right. Thank</p> <p>19 you very much, all of you. Thank you.</p> <p>20 THE CHAIR: Ten minutes?</p> <p>21 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Instead of these</p> <p>22 schools tomorrow, other than North Valley, who's</p> <p>23 first -- could we just -- or Karen can do it,</p> <p>24 maybe -- call them, text them, or tell them we're</p> <p>25 going to do this like 10 minutes before -- or</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">218</p> <p>1 20 minutes, probably, before, so they don't have to 2 sit here all day, listening? 3 Do you know what I mean? Like, who knows 4 when you're going to be on. So you kind of get on 5 at a time you think. It just seems like they may 6 have other things to do, or they may be doing other 7 things since it's -- that's fine. Either way. 8 THE CHAIR: Ten minutes? 9 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Sure. 10 (Recess taken 3:52 p.m. to 4:05 p.m.) 11 THE CHAIR: Okay. So thank you, everyone. 12 And truly thank you for hanging in there with us 13 today. But, as I say all the time, thank you for 14 everything you do every day, especially -- I always 15 tell people, I loved education because every day was 16 different. 17 But, certainly, no one ever expected these 18 different days. So the fact that you're here and 19 you're serving -- serving our kids, we appreciate 20 everything that you're doing, especially today, and 21 the time and the effort and energy through this time 22 period to spend on the renewal application and the 23 thoughtfulness put into the renewal application. 24 We really do appreciate it, because 25 it's -- it truly is our time for us to -- we don't</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">220</p> <p>1 first 15 years, I think. And then with their third 2 renewal, they joined -- sought renewal with the PEC. 3 And here, they are seeking, I believe, what will be 4 their fourth renewal, if granted. 5 Happy to say that the PED recommends a 6 renewal term for renewal for this school. The 7 school earned 61 points on the last Accountability 8 Report in '18-'19. That qualifies as a Spotlight 9 School by a significant margin. 10 Schools needed to have over 53.33 to be a 11 Spotlight School, and this school, as I said, had 12 61 points. 13 They also received designations of 14 Excellence in reading proficiency, reading growth, 15 science proficiency, and English Learner progress. 16 Their math proficiency has been declining 17 a little bit; though it continues to be above the 18 District's percentage. 19 And we do recommend that they consider an 20 improvement plan focusing on their math instruction, 21 as that appears to be a weak point. 22 The school's organizational ratings have 23 been excellent with one exception in the area of 24 financial audit findings. Although we'll speak 25 about those in just a minute, those two have been</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">219</p> <p>1 get to see schools often enough. So it really is -- 2 it's the enjoyable part of what we do, that we get 3 to have that face-to-face with the schools. 4 We've always really looked forward to it, 5 because we were able to physically be together, and 6 it's so rare that, you know, we get to shake folks' 7 hands and say that thank you for what you do. 8 So -- and thank you for bearing with us 9 today. 10 So, without further adieu, Karen, you want 11 to start? 12 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Absolutely 13 Madam Chair. Thank you so much. 14 Madam Chair, Commissioners, the next 15 school on the agenda is Roots &amp; Wings Community 16 School. It's a rural school serving Grades K 17 through 8. I guess it's in Questa on the Enchanted 18 Circle. I think that's Questa there. 19 They serve -- their classes are multi-age, 20 multi-grade level, small school, with 50 students 21 consistent across the charter contract term, that's 22 the most they can house, and have stayed with 50 23 each year. 24 I think the school opened in 2001 as a 25 local charter school, locally authorized for the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">221</p> <p>1 improving. And though they had five audit findings 2 in the last published audit, none of them were 3 material weaknesses or significant deficiencies, and 4 hoping that they've been cleared with this current 5 report, but we don't know that yet. 6 The school does have -- has spent an 7 average of 52 percent of its operating budget on 8 instructional costs, which, of course, as we talked 9 about with the last school, is lower than the 10 68 percent recommended. But I would like to add 11 that the smaller school size of 50 students makes it 12 very difficult to reach a 68 percent on instruction. 13 They still need an administrator and a clerk and all 14 those sort of things. So the smaller the 15 enrollment, the harder it is to meet that goal of 16 68 percent on instruction. 17 The school had a foundation at one time, 18 but I've been told it's been inactive for a few 19 years and the new head administrator hopes to 20 revitalize that group to help with support for the 21 school. 22 If I could share my screen, I'm 23 referencing the packet that you all have; but just 24 to make it easier for everybody, if you don't mind. 25 This is the second page of the</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">222</p> <p>1 recommendation. And, again, as we talked about  2 earlier, the Evaluation Summary is an assessment of  3 the Part B progress report that the school provided.  4 We -- obviously, they're meeting the Standards of  5 Excellent with those excellent academic scores and  6 rates that I just mentioned.</p> <p>7 They had demonstrated progress on their  8 charter goals. Their audit, because of the repeat  9 findings, the rating here is a Failing to  10 Demonstrate Substantial Progress. They didn't have  11 their Board of Finance revoked at any point. They  12 had some minor financial concerns. And then they  13 met the standards all the way down in their material  14 terms, organizational, and governance  15 responsibilities.</p> <p>16 Also, you'll see in your packet, as you  17 can see there, the school's proficiency is  18 significantly higher than that of the local district  19 and than that of the State in most of these areas.</p> <p>20 Math, as you can see compared to the local  21 district, they're still above the local district's  22 math proficiency rate.</p> <p>23 And those green boxes indicate the areas  24 where the school received designations of  25 excellents. So, overall, even the Spotlight</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">224</p> <p>1 standard on their goals since, which is the reason  2 for demonstrating progress.</p> <p>3 Also in regards to their enrollment, on  4 Page 20- -- here's the 50, straight line across,  5 their enrollment. But also their retention, within  6 the school year, very high, above 90 percent.  7 Students stay enrolled during the school year. And,  8 similarly, they have had students return from one  9 school year to the next.</p> <p>10 A little dip here. I'm not sure if that  11 has to do with COVID; because that's for this year.  12 But you can see that they've increased their  13 retention between years.</p> <p>14 On the audit finding -- the teacher  15 retention took a dip, but has been at 100 percent  16 teachers returning the last couple of years.</p> <p>17 On the audit findings, you can see that  18 they had several in the first couple of years,  19 decreased those. And, certainly, what's really  20 important to point out here is that their material  21 weaknesses and significant deficiencies were down to  22 zero.</p> <p>23 But we still do not like to see repeat  24 findings. But as you can see on this page it lists  25 those findings from this past published report. And</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">223</p> <p>1 designation, Spotlight School. But as I mentioned  2 earlier, they have designations of excellents in  3 these other areas.</p> <p>4 These little dashes indicate that the  5 population in these two groups, the kids who take  6 the science tests and the number of EL students was  7 too low to give an actual score here, because then  8 it would be potentially a FERPA violation, because  9 you could figure out which kids it was.</p> <p>10 But, nevertheless, the proficiency level  11 was high enough and the EL progress was on a good  12 rate to earn the designation of excellence even  13 though they don't show the actual score here.</p> <p>14 Again, their performance framework, as you  15 can see, has been improving over the course of this  16 current contract. And the one Falls Far Below is  17 because of the repeat findings in the audit, which  18 I'm going to jump to in a bit.</p> <p>19 On Page 18 -- let me just type it in so  20 you don't get seasick watching me scroll. On their  21 charter school mission goals, they had mission goals  22 originally on Discovery, but switched to NWEA like  23 most of the schools, one on reading and one on math.</p> <p>24 And as you can see, the first year, they  25 didn't quite meet, but they have met or exceeded the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">225</p> <p>1 all of them are either other non-compliance or other  2 matters. And not to say they're not important, but  3 they're not as significant of a finding.</p> <p>4 So we'd like to see them get rid of those  5 repeats. But they're not as concerning as something  6 that would be considered a material weakness or  7 significant deficiency.</p> <p>8 Also, going down a little bit further so  9 that you can actually see their chart a little bit  10 clearer, as I said earlier, those grayed-out  11 academic data for '19-'20 is because we did not have  12 State assessments, so there's no academic data for  13 this section for that year. But you can see that  14 predominantly, the school has met or exceeded the  15 standards, other than those repeat audit findings.</p> <p>16 And I think with that, I hand it over to  17 you -- back to you, Madam Chair.</p> <p>18 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you very much.  19 And once again, welcome. And I will ask that the  20 head administrator introduce not only himself, but  21 all the folks from the school so the record is clear  22 as to who's here speaking for the school.</p> <p>23 MS. ERICA LANNON: Thank you, Madam Chair,  24 Commissioners. Jon -- we had planned that I would  25 introduce folks. But if you'd rather the</p>

226	<p>1 director --</p> <p>2 THE CHAIR: No. Sure. That's fine.</p> <p>3 That's fine.</p> <p>4 MS. ERICA LANNON: Okay. Okay. Thanks.</p> <p>5 THE CHAIR: No problem.</p> <p>6 MS. ERICA LANNON: We've got everything</p> <p>7 pretty choreographed so we can be concise. Thank</p> <p>8 you all for hanging in there with us, you know.</p> <p>9 So I am Erica Lannon. I am in my fourth</p> <p>10 year of service on the Roots &amp; Wings governing</p> <p>11 council, currently as president. Jon Orris, of</p> <p>12 course you know, our school director. He came on</p> <p>13 board this summer and brings a decade of experience</p> <p>14 in charter school administration, specifically with</p> <p>15 outdoor education components.</p> <p>16 And Sarah Piña, our business manager,</p> <p>17 joined us two years ago. And she has been</p> <p>18 instrumental in improving much of the financial</p> <p>19 challenges we were faced with at that time.</p> <p>20 Margaret Bartlett, also goes by "Peg," is</p> <p>21 one of the school's founders and has held various</p> <p>22 positions over 20-some years. She's currently</p> <p>23 employed as our special ed and EP teacher and serves</p> <p>24 on the Equity Council.</p> <p>25 And Annalise Zosel, our veteran teacher,</p>	228	<p>1 and Commissioners.</p> <p>2 Good afternoon. We're going to use this</p> <p>3 time to address a few obvious concerns, as well as</p> <p>4 some general academic and mission-specific points</p> <p>5 regarding the obvious concerns.</p> <p>6 We are aware that math proficiency and</p> <p>7 audit findings are areas in need of improvement, and</p> <p>8 we do have remedies in place, some of which have</p> <p>9 already produced results, while some results are yet</p> <p>10 to be seen.</p> <p>11 I will pass the baton to Jon and Annalise</p> <p>12 to speak to the academics more specifically. And</p> <p>13 then we'll have Sarah speak to the financials.</p> <p>14 So, Jon?</p> <p>15 MR. JON ORRIS: Good afternoon,</p> <p>16 Madam Chair and Commissioners. As mentioned</p> <p>17 earlier, I did start in July. I chose to come to a</p> <p>18 small rural charter school during a global pandemic</p> <p>19 in a charter renewal year. And a lot of people were</p> <p>20 asking me why would I do that.</p> <p>21 And three basic reasons: The school's</p> <p>22 mission, the students and their families, and the</p> <p>23 staff and governing council. Despite meeting and</p> <p>24 learning about the school after all they had been</p> <p>25 through because of COVID at the end of last school</p>
227	<p>1 has been with us for seven years in the kindergarten</p> <p>2 through second-grade cohorts.</p> <p>3 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you all so much.</p> <p>4 So the school has 15 minutes to do a</p> <p>5 present- -- whatever the school wants to provide for</p> <p>6 us.</p> <p>7 And Bev is not on; right?</p> <p>8 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Madam Chair, that's</p> <p>9 correct. Megan Maestas from our team --</p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: The time?</p> <p>11 MS. KAREN WOERNER: -- is going to do the</p> <p>12 timing. And I'm sorry. But the warnings times are</p> <p>13 at one minute? Or when does -- I apologize. I</p> <p>14 don't know when Bev normally notices. I think five</p> <p>15 minutes and one minute or something like that?</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: I think so. I think there's a</p> <p>17 five-minute.</p> <p>18 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Five minutes left, and</p> <p>19 then one minute left, and then the 30 seconds.</p> <p>20 THE CHAIR: I'm just guessing the school</p> <p>21 has it down to the minute; so --</p> <p>22 MS. KAREN WOERNER: She has it</p> <p>23 choreographed, but just want to be fair.</p> <p>24 THE CHAIR: Okay. So welcome and proceed.</p> <p>25 MS. ERICA LANNON: Thank you, Madam Chair</p>	229	<p>1 year, the positivity and passion for the school was</p> <p>2 still very evident. I could immediately feel, even</p> <p>3 through the Zoom meetings that I conducted my</p> <p>4 interviews with, it was a very welcoming attitude</p> <p>5 from all, and I knew my background would be a good</p> <p>6 match with Roots &amp; Wings.</p> <p>7 In coming to the school, when looking at</p> <p>8 the academics, there were many aspects to celebrate</p> <p>9 and build upon, as highlighted by the named</p> <p>10 New Mexico Spotlight School. There was also a</p> <p>11 challenge with the school's declining math scores.</p> <p>12 The staff and previous director had begun to address</p> <p>13 that issue by researching math curriculum and making</p> <p>14 the decision to switch to i-Ready.</p> <p>15 This curriculum is a good match for our</p> <p>16 multi-age classrooms, as through its program it</p> <p>17 creates individual learning plans for each student.</p> <p>18 And I have supported the switch, and as a staff, we</p> <p>19 have had several professional development trainings</p> <p>20 on the curriculum before school started and during</p> <p>21 our first semester, with additional trainings</p> <p>22 planned in the second semester to help implement</p> <p>23 that curriculum to fidelity.</p> <p>24 I am now going to turn it over to</p> <p>25 Annalise, our K-2 teacher, to continue our</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">230</p> <p>1 presentation on our mission and curriculum. Thank 2 you.</p> <p>3 MS. ANNALISE ZOSEL: Good afternoon, 4 Madam Chair and Commissioners, and thank you so much 5 for your time and for all your good work with 6 charter school accountability.</p> <p>7 A lot of times I get into conversations, 8 what is the moral, what is the point of charter 9 schools? And I hope that through the last five 10 years, we've solidified our point.</p> <p>11 It's been an honor to teach the K-2 cohort 12 for the last seven years. Last night I facilitated 13 my 14th Celebration of Learning. A Celebration of 14 Learning is a cornerstone of Expeditionary-inspired 15 learning, a culminating event where all students 16 present their final product with an authentic 17 audience.</p> <p>18 Last night, 100 percent of my students and 19 their families attended to present their anthology 20 of Painted Lady Fables. As I projected their 21 anthology, each student took a turn reading an 22 excerpt from their fable in entirety, or just an 23 excerpt if they were little.</p> <p>24 This Expedition is entitled "Butterfly and 25 I." Students successfully raised Painted Lady</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">232</p> <p>1 history, art, and science of distilling took center 2 stage. The third- and fifth-grade cohorts would 3 eagerly collect my paper scraps to experiment with 4 papermaking, so they could make sense of how ancient 5 cultures invented essential tools.</p> <p>6 Third- through eighth-grade students 7 recycled paper cards and locally extracted essences. 8 They raised over \$400 for the Dream Tree project and 9 learned about the importance of good citizenship.</p> <p>10 We have a student body of 50, and we all 11 know each other on a first-name basis. We have been 12 a long-standing Title I school with students and 13 families from all walks of life. RWCS staff is 14 committed to our mission to inspire our students to 15 academic and personal excellence.</p> <p>16 Our innovative learning community creates 17 classrooms, farm and wilderness adventure engaging 18 the hand, head, and heart, enabling students to 19 achieve more than they think is possible and to take 20 an active role in our ever changing world.</p> <p>21 We are proud to be fully enrolled with a 22 robust wait list, waiting list, and three years of 23 100 percent teacher retention. Teachers are 24 dedicated to the well-being and personal academic 25 success of all of our students.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">231</p> <p>1 butterflies from the Wings of Enchantment Butterfly 2 Farm.</p> <p>3 Ms. Tasha, who is the butterfly expert and 4 proprietor of the farm, met with students, and we 5 explored the common core State standards, the Next 6 Generation science standards, New Mexico art and 7 social science standards, through meaningful 8 collaborative projects.</p> <p>9 My students are currently, they published 10 an anthology and are making an e-book of how to 11 trace a Painted Lady Butterfly, because we couldn't 12 find any resources made by kids for kids.</p> <p>13 So last night, in the middle of a Google 14 Meet, we felt incredibly connected. I had 15 grandparents from New York and Boston online. They 16 are holding space to celebrate these children.</p> <p>17 My students beamed with joy and pride. 18 And I'm sorry. It was so special. I apologize for 19 getting emotional.</p> <p>20 My colleagues and I are determined to 21 vigorously teach grade-level standards while making 22 learning engaging, meaningful, and fun for our 23 students, even if means not a lot of free time.</p> <p>24 Last year, the entire middle school was 25 filled with the aroma of sage and pine, as the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">233</p> <p>1 We collaborate with senior citizens in 2 Taos Integrated Life together to have year-long 3 academic scholars serve Tier 2 and Tier 3 students' 4 needs to ensure small focus groups for instruction.</p> <p>5 Our commitment to educating the whole 6 child resulted in a strong pattern of consistently 7 meeting our performance framework goals for the past 8 three years.</p> <p>9 I would like to recognize the concerted 10 efforts we have made to ensure excellent Tier 1, 2, 11 and 3 instruction after struggling with our interim 12 data for the 2016 and 2017 school year. This is 13 also the year our school received an "A" based on 14 PARCC data, to kind of balance that a little bit.</p> <p>15 Our dynamic -- our SAT and RTI process 16 proactively identify students in need so they can 17 get the support they need in a timely manner.</p> <p>18 So in response to our poor performance on 19 math in the 2019 school year, staff has been 20 actively engaged addressing this concern. Last 21 year, staff met for an ongoing PLC and book study 22 about student-engaged assessment. Like Mr. Orris 23 noted, we have fully adopted four PD sessions 24 tailored to meeting the needs of our staff, and we 25 are planning three more sessions this spring.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">234</p> <p>1 Ms. Dragoo, Ms. Bartlett, and I are in 2 frequent communication about ensuring differentiated 3 and responsive math instruction. Our students are 4 currently working through the i-Ready math 5 curriculum and small-grade-level focus groups for 6 four days a week.</p> <p>7 Being a part of RWCS has been the most 8 transformative and meaningful experience of my 9 professional career. It has been an honor to see 10 our school grow and solidify throughout the past 11 five years.</p> <p>12 Thank you so much for your time today.</p> <p>13 MS. SARAH PIÑA: Good afternoon, 14 Madam Chair and members of the Commission. My name 15 is Sarah Piña. I'm the contracted business manager 16 for Roots &amp; Wings. I was contracted by the school 17 in July of 2018. At that time, Roots &amp; Wings was 18 required to provide cash reports monthly to PED. In 19 addition, the school was engaged in its audit for 20 the previous year and would end up with six audit 21 findings, three of which were material weaknesses or 22 significant deficiencies.</p> <p>23 The school had also come before the 24 Commission a few months prior to my hiring to 25 develop a Corrective Action Plan to address fiscal</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">236</p> <p>1 support of the governing council director and school 2 staff, I was able to implement solid internal 3 controls and procedures in order to provide a 4 foundation for fiscal success in the upcoming year. 5 As a result of this work, the school was able to 6 eliminate all audit findings that were classified as 7 material weaknesses or significant deficiencies.</p> <p>8 However, we still had five audit findings 9 in 2018-'19.</p> <p>10 We started the 2019-'20 school year with a 11 review of internal controls and financial procedures 12 to ensure that we would continue to build on the 13 successes of the previous year.</p> <p>14 I am very pleased with the progress that 15 the school has made in the financial operations up 16 to this point. Unfortunately, the 2019-'20 audit 17 report is not available for public review. But I 18 believe that the Commission would be very pleased 19 with the progress the school has made in adjusting 20 both the number and types of findings as of June 21 30th, 2020.</p> <p>22 Thank you for your time, and I will turn 23 it over to governing council president Erica Lannon 24 for closing remarks.</p> <p>25 MS. ERICA LANNON: Thanks, everyone. The</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">235</p> <p>1 concerns.</p> <p>2 I approached my first year of work at 3 Roots &amp; Wings in phases specific to these three 4 items. I approached my first year of work at Roots 5 &amp; Wings -- sorry. Excuse me.</p> <p>6 My first task was to get caught up on the 7 monthly reporting and to get the school back on a 8 quarterly reporting cycle. We were able to do that 9 by the September 30th, 2018, reporting period, and 10 the school has resumed quarterly reporting for the 11 period of October through December 2018, and we have 12 remained on quarterly reporting since then.</p> <p>13 The next phase was a review of the 14 school's internal controls, procedures, financial 15 document filing and retention and staff training. 16 The school hired a new director at the same time 17 that I came on board; so I was also tasked on 18 training him on the ins-and-outs of charter school 19 finances, while also working closely with the 20 governing council to revamp the monthly financial 21 reporting to include both the required elements, but 22 also to develop a user friendly set of reports that 23 allowed the GC and the director to have a solid 24 understanding of the school's finances.</p> <p>25 During the 2018-'19 school year, with the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">237</p> <p>1 last point I just want to clarify is regarding Roots 2 &amp; Wings' Youth Enrichment Program. RWYEP was 3 mentioned in the Charter School Division's report to 4 you. And while they are a foundation whose full 5 intent is to support our school, they are still 6 working on meeting the criteria to be a component 7 unit of the school for audit purposes.</p> <p>8 So, currently, they're not considered a 9 component unit of the school, and I just wanted to 10 make that distinction.</p> <p>11 And that is all we have for school 12 comments. Thank you.</p> <p>13 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. And we're 14 now -- I think, Karen, you said there were eight 15 people that signed up for Public Comment?</p> <p>16 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Yes, ma'am.</p> <p>17 THE CHAIR: So each person has 18 approximately one minute.</p> <p>19 MS. MARGARET BARTLETT: Are we showing our 20 movie first?</p> <p>21 THE CHAIR: Yep. Sorry. Sorry. See, the 22 last time I skipped Public Comment. This time I'm 23 skipping this. I apologize.</p> <p>24 MS. ERICA LANNON: It's been a long day. 25 So I'll turn it to Jon for the optional</p>

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1 presentation. We have a video recording that he  
2 will share his screen for.

3 THE CHAIR: Okay. Great.

4 MR. JON ORRIS: And Peg will be  
5 introducing it. Then I'll -- I should be able to  
6 share, correct, Karen? And I have it queued up.

7 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Yes, you should have  
8 sharing rights now.

9 MS. MARGARET BARTLETT: Good afternoon,  
10 all the Commissioners. Thanks for having us. This  
11 video speaks for itself. So all I really wanted to  
12 say was, as the co-founder 21 years ago and the  
13 certified old-timer, or as I tell the students, the  
14 old fart that can still run around with them  
15 outside, I'm very fortunate to have students from  
16 21 years ago come back to speak to my husband and I  
17 and tell us about their adult lives. And I  
18 consistently hear, without asking, the power that  
19 our model had on them, both the hands-on learning  
20 and the farm and wilderness component, and that I  
21 hear from them that our school was one of the most  
22 powerful schooling experiences in their career and  
23 that kids consistently say, now adults, that they  
24 feel the school set them up with -- to be ready for  
25 real-world challenges.

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1 So we've been really fortunate to be able  
2 to hear that. And so please enjoy this film.

3 (Video played.)

4 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I'm seeing it, but  
5 we're not hearing anything. Is there sound?

6 MS. MARGARET BARTLETT: No sound, Jon.

7 MS. ERICA LANNON: Are you getting the  
8 sound on your end, Jon?

9 MR. JON ORRIS: Yeah. Can you hear me?  
10 It says the sound is on and at full volume. Let  
11 me --

12 MS. ANNALISE ZOSEL: Sometimes when you  
13 present, it asks to turn the sound on, the audio on.

14 MS. ERICA LANNON: In the Zoom settings.  
15 Check the audio in the Zoom settings.

16 MR. JON ORRIS: It says I'm at  
17 100 percent.

18 MS. KAREN WOERNER: But at the microphone  
19 in the Zoom settings, maybe you need to switch your  
20 speakers that are being used, perhaps.

21 MR. JON ORRIS: Oh. Let me get back to  
22 this other screen. Sorry. Do I need to move it  
23 away from Microphone and put it Same as System?

24 MS. KAREN WOERNER: What do you have under  
25 Speakers?

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1 MR. JON ORRIS: Under Speakers? It's on  
2 my speakers. So I need to put it Same as System?

3 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I don't know for sure.

4 MS. ERICA LANNON: Try it.

5 MR. JON ORRIS: Sorry.

6 THE CHAIR: No. We're still not hearing  
7 it. If -- if sound is already started, we're not  
8 hearing anything.

9 MR. JON ORRIS: Yeah. It did.

10 MS. ERICA LANNON: I suppose I could try  
11 on my end. I don't know if that would be different.  
12 Do you --

13 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: I know if you're  
14 going to show a video in Zoom, you have to change  
15 the Zoom setting. But I don't know much more than  
16 that.

17 MR. ORRIS: Are you seeing the video?

18 THE CHAIR: Yes, we see it, but we just  
19 don't hearing anything.

20 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Do you have sound,  
21 Jon?

22 MR. JON ORRIS: I do have it.

23 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I can hear dogs  
24 barking in the background; I can hear phones ringing  
25 in the background. But I can't hear your sound.

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1 MR. JON ORRIS: I have it paused at the  
2 moment. I'm checking different settings to see --

3 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Right. But my point  
4 was that we normally hear the background.

5 THE CHAIR: We would have heard pieces of  
6 it, even though the volume would have been low. We  
7 hear everyone's background noise.

8 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Somebody has their  
9 hand raised. Robert Palacios.

10 THE CHAIR: Let's see if he has a  
11 suggestion.

12 MS. MARGARET BARTLETT: Also, I'm on the  
13 phone with Garrett VanEvery. He says he knows what  
14 to do.

15 All right. Garrett, tell me. You need to  
16 stop Share, Jon. Once you do that --

17 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Typically, if you take  
18 your mouse to the top of the screen, there should be  
19 a Stop Share.

20 MR. JON ORRIS: Pause Share?

21 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Stop Share.

22 MS. MARGARET BARTLETT: Now you're going  
23 to hit Share Screen again.

24 MR. JON ORRIS: Okay.

25 MS. MARGARET BARTLETT: When it gives you

242	<p>1 the box of options, make sure you click "Share 2 Computer Sound." 3 MR. JON ORRIS: Ah. Okay. 4 MS. MARGARET BARTLETT: Jon just said, 5 "Ah." Okay. 6 Now he says it should work. 7 (Video played.) 8 MR. JON ORRIS: So that's our 9 presentation. Thank you. 10 THE CHAIR: That was excellent. 11 Excellent. Thank you for that at this point in our 12 day, too; so we appreciate that as well. Thank you. 13 So now we're onto the Public Comment, 14 where there are eight people, if they still hung in 15 there with us. So they have about a minute apiece. 16 MS. KAREN WOERNER: So the first person is 17 Mark Richert. And I'll add Mark to the panel. And, 18 Mark, then you can unmute yourself once you're 19 there. Mark, if you're there, you can unmute 20 yourself. There he is. 21 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Hello. Good morning. 22 I mean afternoon, evening. 23 Chairwoman Gipson, PEC members, my name is 24 Mark Richert, and I was the director of Roots &amp; 25 Wings Community School from July 2018 to June 2020.</p>	244	<p>1 part of something greater than themselves that is 2 rare and that is a gift. 3 I am so honored to have participated in 4 such a community at Roots &amp; Wings Community School, 5 because now I am a better educator, a better family 6 member, and a better person than I was prior to 7 July 2018. The corporate testers and big think 8 tanks will continue to try to tell me what matters 9 in education; but, frankly, had they gone to a 10 school like Roots &amp; Wings Community School, I don't 11 think they would have to try too hard to figure it 12 out. 13 Thank you so much. 14 THE CHAIR: Thank you. 15 MS. MEGAN MAESTAS: And that was actually 16 two minutes. 17 THE CHAIR: Okay. So there are six 18 minutes left for the seven people. 19 MS. ERICA LANNON: May I request that we 20 prioritize the students? There are two students. 21 THE CHAIR: That's entirely up to you. As 22 far as I'm concerned, I have no -- you know. 23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Kyla Stow and 24 Rocket are the next two -- if that -- thank you so 25 much.</p>
243	<p>1 And I unequivocally support charter renewal. 2 Prior to my hire at Roots &amp; Wings, I spent 3 28 years in urban and rural districts in four states 4 and at International Schools on four continents. 5 I've seen educational institutions thrive with clear 6 vision and united efforts, and I have seen schools 7 flounder with no purposeful direction. 8 I will kill the suspense. Roots &amp; Wings 9 is in the former category. I have read the 10 recharter application, so I know you already have 11 the required facts, the data, the anecdotes that you 12 need to make an informed decision. 13 I could give you a handy cliché, like, 14 "Your decision is a slam-dunk or a no-brainer." But 15 something immeasurable and often overlooked in this 16 field needs to be addressed and acknowledged. 17 Obviously, every school needs to maintain a focus on 18 its students. However, for those authentic 19 student-focused conversations to happen, an 20 atmosphere of trust, inclusion, and respect must be 21 established. A culture that embraces the goodness 22 of humanity must rise above all else. 23 When that happens, every member of the 24 school program, child, parent, teacher, 25 administrators, governing council member, becomes</p>	245	<p>1 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Mark, I'm sorry I 2 mispronounced your name. I'm going to switch you 3 back to Attendee. I'm going next to Kyla Stow. Let 4 me find you and move you to the panel. 5 Kyla, you're here if you want to unmute 6 yourself. 7 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Hi, Kyla. 8 (Low sound quality.) 9 MS. ERICA LANNON: Kyla, we can't hear 10 you. Kyla, we still can't hear you. 11 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Stay close to the 12 computer and speak really loudly. 13 MS. MARGARET BARTLETT: Or put on your 14 headphones. 15 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Okay. Can you just 16 hear me like that? 17 THE CHAIR: Let's check. Cindy, can you 18 hear her? 19 THE REPORTER: (Indicates.) 20 THE CHAIR: Okay. Then you're good to go. 21 PUBLIC COMMENTER: So I'd first like to 22 say hello. My name is Kyla Stow, and I go to Roots 23 &amp; Wings Community School. But I'm sure you've 24 figured that out already. 25 One thing that I love about my school is</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">246</p> <p>1 how we can grow educationally while still growing 2 into individual people that we all thrive to be. 3 They teach us real-life skills, while at the same 4 time the basics -- and maybe not so much of basic -- 5 of math, science, grammar, writing, and much more. 6 (Reporter requests audio amplification.) 7 (A discussion was held off the record.) 8 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Okay. So I'm adding 9 Rocket to the panel. Rocket, if you could unmute 10 yourself and give your comments, we would appreciate 11 it. 12 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Okay. I guess it's 13 evening now. But good evening. My name is Rocket 14 Holmes, and I've been attending RWCS for the past 15 three years now. And I can already see it fits me a 16 lot better than other schools because of the way the 17 teachers teach. And I think it's so important that 18 I have fun and interactive teachers, because it 19 enables me to learn more on the subject. And I 20 think that is what Roots &amp; Wings does so well is 21 brings that aspect -- is bringing that aspect into 22 learning. 23 And the activities we do are so enriching 24 and help guide students towards a greater future. 25 And for outdoor trips, we can separate ourselves</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">248</p> <p>1 into the individual people that we all thrive to be. 2 They teach us real-life, while at the same time the 3 basics -- and maybe not so much in the basics -- of 4 math, science, grammar, and writing and much more. 5 Speaking of much more, I really appreciate 6 all the different things we get to learn and areas 7 we get to grow in. This can be the Mid-School Math 8 we do every week, the book we are reading and answer 9 questions to, the novels we write, referring to the 10 one that we did last year, the camping trips, and 11 all the other things that will be too long to list 12 off. 13 But I don't want to sit here and not imply 14 that we do not have our bad run-ins, especially 15 since I said we learn real-life skills. Students 16 may get in an argument. And in these times, I am 17 sure we learned and are still learning how to live 18 with our current situation. 19 So there are going to be some troubles 20 along the way. But with our school, we sit together 21 and we find the solution to our problems. The 22 school is not cut-and-dry. They care and listen to 23 our opinions. That is probably what I love most 24 about our school. 25 Overall, our school is just very unique,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">247</p> <p>1 from the school environment and learn more about the 2 world around us and integrate endurance and 3 athleticism into our school year in the way that no 4 other school is doing. 5 And last school year, we actually wrote a 6 journal; it was a Choose Your Own Adventure journal. 7 And it was a very fun experience; it was one of the 8 best -- the most entertaining, most interactive 9 things I've ever done in a school year. And that 10 was really amazing for me. And I was really happy 11 that our school was able to do that. 12 And I think that's what RWCS does really 13 well. Overall, I'm really grateful that I've been 14 able to attend RWCS. I highly recommend Roots &amp; 15 Wings to others seeking a unique school environment. 16 Thank you. 17 THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. 18 MS. MEGAN MAESTAS: The school has 19 four-and-a-half minutes. 20 PUBLIC COMMENTER: How can you hear me 21 now? Okay. Well, I'll start over. So hello. My 22 name is Kyla Stow, and I'm at Roots &amp; Wings and I'm 23 sure you figured that. 24 One thing that I love about my school is 25 how we can grow educationally while still growing</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">249</p> <p>1 and I would not change how we operate. 2 Thank you for listening to me ramble for a 3 minute. 4 THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. 5 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Okay. Kyla, I'm going 6 to put you back in the Attendees. And I don't know 7 how much time we have left. But we still have Peg 8 listed, Evan Sanchez, Aline Robertson, Amelia 9 Eshleman, and Michael Rael. We still have five 10 people on the list. 11 MS. MARGARET BARTLETT: Not me. 12 MS. ERICA LANNON: You can take Amelia 13 off; she's actually in an after-school program 14 there. 15 MS. MEGAN MAESTAS: There's four minutes. 16 So one minute per person then. 17 MR. JON ORRIS: So at least get Evan in 18 next, and then go from there is another staff 19 person. 20 MS. KAREN WOERNER: So, Evan, I'll add you 21 next, promote you to the panel. And, Evan, if you 22 could unmute yourself, you can make your comment. 23 Evan, you appear unmuted, but we're not 24 hearing you. Evan, we don't hear you. 25 PUBLIC COMMENTER: How about now?</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">250</p> <p>1 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Now is good.</p> <p>2 PUBLIC COMMENTER: Technical difficulties.</p> <p>3 I don't have a camera, but I have a speaker. I'm</p> <p>4 Evan; I'm the tech support specialist. Just</p> <p>5 kidding, sorry. I am the six-through-eight teacher.</p> <p>6 I teach grades sixth through eighth grade at Roots &amp;</p> <p>7 Wings, in the ELA and social studies department,</p> <p>8 division. And I just wanted to speak on the -- what</p> <p>9 Mark had already brought up, the importance of our</p> <p>10 outdoor trips and our wilderness experiences.</p> <p>11 I've done my fair share of time in the</p> <p>12 traditional public school. And the one thing that</p> <p>13 was always lacking was the actual real relationship</p> <p>14 and rapport and trust and respect between student</p> <p>15 and teacher. It's not enough time in one year to</p> <p>16 really establish that.</p> <p>17 So with our model, these backpacking trips</p> <p>18 are super-transformative for students. We build</p> <p>19 that trust and we build that respect there. You</p> <p>20 know, when you're camping with kids for six days,</p> <p>21 that tends to happen. And then that also translates</p> <p>22 into the rest of the school year.</p> <p>23 You heard my students, Kyla and Rocket,</p> <p>24 speak. And I think it kind of comes through in</p> <p>25 their words that we have such a tight relationship</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">252</p> <p>1 yourself, you can make your comments. Thank you.</p> <p>2 PUBLIC COMMENTER: It kicks you out to</p> <p>3 bring you back in, I guess.</p> <p>4 I'll be brief. I'm Aline. I'm the parent</p> <p>5 of a ten-year-old boy who's in fifth grade at Roots</p> <p>6 &amp; Wings Community School. He also deals with autism</p> <p>7 disorder as well as ADHD as part of his gifts.</p> <p>8 We've gone to both regular schools, public regular</p> <p>9 schools and another public charter school. And</p> <p>10 we've been at Roots &amp; Wings now for -- I guess this</p> <p>11 is going on our third year.</p> <p>12 And we're very happy to have found a</p> <p>13 really good fit for our son. Though he may not</p> <p>14 count towards being considered an underserved</p> <p>15 minority on paper in the typical standards, I assure</p> <p>16 you he will always have to work just as hard, if not</p> <p>17 harder than his peers to keep up. So in that</p> <p>18 regard, I believe Roots &amp; Wings Community School is</p> <p>19 truly serving the needs of my child, who represents</p> <p>20 a generally served demographic in Northern</p> <p>21 New Mexico, as the greater United States.</p> <p>22 At Roots &amp; Wings School, my son has</p> <p>23 connected with his teachers, his peers, and he feels</p> <p>24 at home, which is a gift.</p> <p>25 At the larger more populated schools, he</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">251</p> <p>1 at this school that it's a huge reason for our</p> <p>2 success in all domains, not just academic, but for</p> <p>3 their character and for their -- for their life,</p> <p>4 really.</p> <p>5 So I know my time is limited. So that's</p> <p>6 basically what I wanted to say. And I'm so glad</p> <p>7 that they have this experience to enjoy our</p> <p>8 wonderful abundance of natural resources here in</p> <p>9 New Mexico.</p> <p>10 So thank you very much.</p> <p>11 THE CHAIR: Thank you. So, Megan, how</p> <p>12 much time is left?</p> <p>13 MS. MEGAN MAESTAS: A minute and a half.</p> <p>14 THE CHAIR: A minute and a half.</p> <p>15 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Well, Michael Rael is</p> <p>16 next. Michael Rael. And then we have one more; so</p> <p>17 why am I not finding -- I don't see Michael in</p> <p>18 the -- Ms. Lannon, might we have lost him perhaps?</p> <p>19 MS. ERICA LANNON: We may have. I can</p> <p>20 text him. You can promote Aline first, if you'd</p> <p>21 like.</p> <p>22 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Okay.</p> <p>23 MS. ERICA LANNON: Thank you.</p> <p>24 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Aline? So, Aline, it</p> <p>25 looks like you're muted; but if you could unmute</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">253</p> <p>1 was just a disconnected number in his classroom of</p> <p>2 30 or more. Roots &amp; Wings, he's got a classroom of</p> <p>3 17. It's great.</p> <p>4 I truly believe the outdoor recreation</p> <p>5 model is the best fit for my son, and I love that</p> <p>6 Roots &amp; Wings is where he feels connected, and I</p> <p>7 feel like he's truly growing.</p> <p>8 Thank you.</p> <p>9 THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. And we're</p> <p>10 out of time; right?</p> <p>11 MS. MEGAN MAESTAS: (Indicates.)</p> <p>12 THE CHAIR: Okay. All right. Thank you.</p> <p>13 Okay. So now back to -- so truly thank</p> <p>14 you all once again. This was -- this was a</p> <p>15 delightful little piece of our afternoon. So we --</p> <p>16 we appreciate, so far, all of this.</p> <p>17 I truly do appreciate this. I thought I</p> <p>18 would start my career in outdoor education. So it's</p> <p>19 always a piece that's near and dear to me. I've</p> <p>20 backpacked the Appalachian Trail from Maine to</p> <p>21 Georgia. So it's -- I spent a lot of time. And, in</p> <p>22 fact, looking at the picture, one of the last things</p> <p>23 I did live was a multi-day workshop on how to make</p> <p>24 an horno. And that is one of my own goals for my</p> <p>25 own yard is to make my own horno. So it's all</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">254</p> <p>1 pieces that are near and dear to my heart to be able 2 to see this.</p> <p>3 So it was a nice little diversion for that 4 reason as well.</p> <p>5 But I'd also like to thank you for the 6 presentation. Because we truly do appreciate it 7 when the governance council is so much a piece of 8 this presentation, because it really does show us 9 what this -- what the school is capable of doing. 10 And it also is a testament to why you are in the 11 position you're in at this point in time, when you 12 look at your performance framework. Because it's 13 clear that even with changes in administrations, the 14 school has been able to still thrive, because you've 15 got those active and ongoing conversations to keep 16 the school.</p> <p>17 And it's also a testament that the 18 school's not saying, "Oh, we couldn't do this 19 because we got a new head administrator, and, you 20 know, we can't answer that."</p> <p>21 So for all of that, we truly do thank you 22 for that.</p> <p>23 So -- and, actually, the only question 24 that I have -- and it's really -- there seems to be 25 a little bit of a disconnect with the demographics</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">256</p> <p>1 and taking them directly to the school and back. 2 And then they also have a bus that runs up to the 3 Red River charter school, which is in Red River, but 4 it serves Questa as well.</p> <p>5 And we do not have a bus. Our students 6 are either being dropped off or riding with public 7 transportation. And so that's -- transportation has 8 been one issue for families.</p> <p>9 And then also people still have that 10 misconception of charter schools. And it's -- and 11 some of the feedback I had received, just in the 12 little bit of discussions, is just that Roots &amp; 13 Wings, in the past, has been -- or charter school -- 14 has been where you send the kids that are having a 15 problem, or problem kids. And so parents are just 16 not understanding that.</p> <p>17 So we're really looking forward to this 18 year. Hopefully, we can get back to do more 19 in-person kind of learning and doing some open 20 houses. I've worked with this issue at other 21 schools, and I found that once getting parents 22 into -- or prospective parents -- into the school to 23 actually see what's happening and not just what 24 they've been told or heard through their grapevine 25 or whatever over the many years really goes to</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">255</p> <p>1 of the school and the rest of the community. And 2 I'm not exactly sure why. And I don't know if the 3 school can answer much to that.</p> <p>4 But there just -- and the one area where 5 it's masked, because you don't have a subgroup 6 that's large enough, kind of speaks to that.</p> <p>7 So I'm just -- I'm curious as to why you 8 think there is that little bit of disconnect there.</p> <p>9 MS. ERICA LANNON: Thank you, Madam Chair. 10 We have noticed that. And -- and, Jon, I think you 11 wanted to speak to that question.</p> <p>12 MR. JON ORRIS: Yes. Sorry. I was trying 13 to find my unmute button.</p> <p>14 I did -- that's something I did notice in 15 our reports. And we have discussed about -- 16 discussed it to some degree. And we are looking at 17 ways to improve that.</p> <p>18 I've talked with a few people, local 19 community members and things like that, to find out 20 what may be some of the causes for that. And so 21 we're going to work on building upon that.</p> <p>22 Some of the things that were mentioned to 23 me was just the transportation issue from Questa up 24 to here. The Questa school district runs their own 25 bus system, and they -- so they're picking up kids</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">257</p> <p>1 improve that.</p> <p>2 So that is definitely something that we 3 are focused on once we get rechartered, which I'm 4 hoping that will happen here this afternoon. And 5 then that's our next focus. We've been a little 6 preoccupied here at the beginning of the year with 7 that little COVID thing that's going on and this 8 recharter application.</p> <p>9 So it is definitely something that we're 10 addressing and want to correct as a school.</p> <p>11 THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you. And I 12 guess one of those challenges in reference to being 13 able to fix it, the easier fix would be able to take 14 more students.</p> <p>15 MR. JON ORRIS: Right.</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: But you're limited with your 17 ability to be able to do that. So it adds to the 18 challenge of trying to change the makeup of a 19 school. But I appreciate the fact that you are 20 looking into it. So thanks for that.</p> <p>21 MS. ANNALISE ZOSEL: Chairwoman, may I 22 please add an additional comment?</p> <p>23 THE CHAIR: Sure.</p> <p>24 MS. ANNALISE ZOSEL: I just wanted to 25 share that I am a part of a kindergarten</p>

258	<p>1 professional learning community of the greater town 2 of Taos. And for the last six years, I have gone to 3 Kindergarten Night and recruited with other 4 kindergarten teachers and stood by all the other 5 public schools in our community to give equal 6 opportunity to early childhood families seeking a 7 school. 8 So I just wanted to let -- for the record, 9 let you know that has been part of our steady 10 recruitment. 11 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. I 12 appreciate that. 13 Commissioners? 14 Commissioner Voigt. 15 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Thank you, 16 Madam Chair. And thank you, Roots &amp; Wings faculty, 17 for your presentation and your passion around your 18 programming. 19 I love the Expeditionary Learning. I love 20 that model. I'm curious as to, in your educational 21 plan and your mission-specific goals, why are they 22 only focused on your Short Cycle Assessment test 23 scores when you're doing all these other great 24 unique and innovative learning programs at your 25 school. I mean, your students are even presenting</p>	260	<p>1 So I'm really excited for the next round of contract 2 negotiations, because we can really focus on truly 3 mission-specific and not "mission-specific" means 4 English and math, you know. 5 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Right. And I should 6 have known something that's probably been -- and 7 you're nesting it right now. I can see -- like, 8 yeah, yeah, yeah, so that you're thinking about 9 those possibilities. 10 MS. ERICA LANNON: Thank you, Madam Chair. 11 That was going to be exactly my response. Back when 12 we were chartered five years ago, there was a lot 13 different perspective on what a school should be 14 focusing on. And we do look forward to having more 15 truly mission-specific -- school-specific goals for 16 this next cycle. Thank you. 17 THE CHAIR: Right. Thanks. 18 Commissioners? 19 Commissioner Robbins. 20 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: I appreciate 21 Ms. Piña's talking about the financial things. And 22 that's great, that there's better attention to those 23 things. 24 On the math scores, I mean, you're better 25 than the area, but you're still below State</p>
259	<p>1 with the Celebrations of Learning. And that's huge 2 when students can stand up and present their 3 learning and talk about why it's important and 4 answer questions. I mean that is very huge. 5 The backpacking trip, the Expeditionary 6 teaming that you do; I mean, those are what make 7 your school unique and innovative and successful. 8 Short Cycle Assessments, that will come. And it's 9 obvious that that does come with your successful 10 Expeditionary Learning program. 11 So that's just -- it's just something to 12 think about maybe going forward. I'm not asking you 13 to change your mission-specific goals. I'm just 14 saying that you have such a unique program that you 15 can be speaking to in a very rich way that's more 16 innovative and unique. 17 So that's all. And congratulations on 18 your successful longevity over time and all of the 19 accomplishments you've had over -- 20 THE CHAIR: So, Commissioner Voigt, 21 that -- unfortunately, they're on the old contract. 22 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Right. Right. 23 Right. 24 THE CHAIR: So that was the direction. 25 That's why, fortunately, we've moved away from that.</p>	261	<p>1 standards. And State standards -- not standards, 2 but State averages -- State averages in math 3 proficiency are really nothing to be thankful for. 4 So even if you're above State standards, that's not 5 saying a whole lot, when, you know, if you get a 12 6 or 15 percent proficiency, you can be at State 7 standards. 8 What are you doing to actually try to 9 improve the math proficiency in students, because -- 10 and I don't mean they need to be, you know, up there 11 in trigonometry. But just basic math proficiency. 12 MS. ERICA LANNON: Thank you, Commissioner 13 Robbins. It's true. Even though we are above 14 the -- some of the averages, that doesn't mean we 15 should stop there. And I think Jon or Annalise 16 might be better equipped to answer that question in 17 greater detail. 18 MS. ANNALISE ZOSEL: I mean, Jon? Are you 19 comfortable? 20 MR. JON ORRIS: Go ahead, Annalise. 21 MS. ANNALISE ZOSEL: Thank you for 22 bringing that to our attention. You're really 23 focusing on that 2019, the Frankenstein PARCC. And 24 that's what it was. It was all the outcast PARCC 25 questions conglomerated into that assessment.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">262</p> <p>1 I just wanted to point out that our -- in 2 our interim assessment data year from the 3 Discover -- from the NWEA in middle school, we met 4 our performance framework status. And I'll remember 5 Mr. Richert coming in. He was so excited. Our 6 middle school had -- I believe 70 percent had either 7 met their goals or were proficient that spring. 8 So what we're doing right now, though, is 9 we have fully adopted Ready math curriculum. We -- 10 that is one of the top-rated math curriculums 11 available. We had a rigorous search committee. We 12 researched it. 13 I spent nearly four hours with that 14 representative. Other teachers looked into 15 different math programs. We had a rigorous process 16 of vetting it and making sure it would work for our 17 school. And now we're in full-blown adoption. 18 So, as I noted earlier, we have already 19 had four individualized professional development 20 sessions tailored to meet the needs of our school. 21 When we're looking at data, we're looking 22 at overarching patterns and trends. And from that, 23 comes a lot of text conversations. Like, "Why 24 doesn't so-and-so understand numeracy?" 25 "Here is my strategy."</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">264</p> <p>1 individual learning pathway. 2 So those are the components that I use 3 with this curriculum. There is excellent Tier 1 4 instruction. So that for every unit, there's a 5 lesson. It's broken into lessons. And for every 6 lesson, after five days of instruction, you give an 7 assessment; you give a quiz. 8 So that is one of the ways that we're 9 monitoring just effective Tier 1 instruction. 10 And then for kids who need more Tier 2 and 11 Tier 3 support, we are increasing the rigor by 12 decreasing the size of students in the group. So 13 for my group of 1 to 2, they have really severely 14 involved attention spans. 15 But they are on the clock. I am 16 constantly going back and forth. And so they are 17 able to meet their goals. 18 Ms. Bartlett is also working with some 19 involved eighth-graders on a 1-to-2 ratio. So that 20 is what we are doing right now in real time. We are 21 getting these kids very substantial rigorous math 22 curriculum in a remote way. 23 And that math curriculum also has parent 24 letters as well, that are distributed to parents, so 25 that we can have that community connection. So</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">263</p> <p>1 "Use this strategy." 2 We're so small with only 50 students. 3 Ms. Drago and Ms. Bartlett and I are in constant 4 communication. I'm also really excited, because of 5 the size of our school, what we've decided to do 6 with the Ready math curriculum is have very focused 7 math instruction this year. 8 For instance, I teach four math blocks. I 9 teach 1 to 5 for my kindergarteners, 1 to 3 for my 10 accelerated first-graders, 1 to 2 for my students 11 with exceptionalities in first grade, and 1 to 7 for 12 our second-grade math block. And our third-, 13 fourth-, and fifth-grade program is the same. It's 14 a smaller than one-to-ten ratio for all of our math 15 groups. They're very focused. 16 And we are all teaching Ready math four 17 times a week, and there is a hands-on component, and 18 so kids have, on paper, real textbooks. 19 And we're also using Kami as an 20 interactive application. This is in alignment with 21 Math Talks. So my students are all doing the work. 22 It's inquiry-based. We all share the math concepts. 23 I am using different colors to share all of their 24 math thinking. And then they have the i-Ready 25 digital piece. And that solidifies their own</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">265</p> <p>1 thank you for that excellent question. And we hope 2 to get that up in the near future. 3 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Thank you. 4 THE CHAIR: Commissioners, any other 5 questions? 6 (No response.) 7 THE CHAIR: Okay. 8 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Madam Chair, I 9 just have a question. 10 THE CHAIR: Certainly. 11 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Not very 12 important. But I'm just wondering whether the 13 school thinks that the 50 students is the magic 14 number. And it -- it's just something that has been 15 in my mind since I read all their stuff, which is 16 fantastic. And maybe the community is too small. 17 Or maybe they found a magic number. And I'm just 18 throwing it out there. Maybe it's not. 19 MS. ERICA LANNON: Thank you, Commissioner 20 Caballero. I think that's actually a very important 21 question. And 50 is not our magic number. We have 22 a desire to increase our enrollment cap. 23 We want to maintain the community feel. 24 So we have certainly not talked about increasing it 25 beyond, say, 90, 96.</p>

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1 But, you know, it looks as though our  
2 facilities are at capacity with the 50 students we  
3 have, based on the recommended minimum square foot  
4 per student. So we may have to tackle a facilities  
5 expansion before we can, you know, attempt an  
6 enrollment cap increase.

7 So we are still gathering information  
8 about if and how we would plan for that. And once  
9 we're through this hearing, we hope to have more  
10 details to address this possibility during the  
11 contract negotiations. Thank you.

12 THE CHAIR: Thanks. And you're absolutely  
13 right. I mean, 50 is such a great number if you had  
14 had to say, "Well, I could keep my school at 50."

15 But I worry that as, you know, time goes  
16 on, a school of 50, to be able to continue to be  
17 financially viable, I think in this day and age, it  
18 becomes more and more difficult. As I'm sure you  
19 know, with the conversations that you've had, to be  
20 able to sustain that, but to be able to grow and  
21 keep that family together. It's really -- I don't  
22 envy that discussion and that struggle.

23 Commissioner Armbruster? And then I'll  
24 get to Commissioner Crone.

25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Yes. I just had

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1 that's people, not children. So it would be hard to  
2 take their students as well, really.

3 MS. ERICA LANNON: It's not an easy place  
4 to recruit from. But we are looking to recruit more  
5 from Questa. Because we have noticed --

6 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Another thing, I  
7 was actually relieved that a couple of people who  
8 are young people had some difficulty with the  
9 technology, because it made me feel so much better  
10 today. So thank you very much.

11 MS. ERICA LANNON: We're all in it  
12 together.

13 THE CHAIR: Thanks. Commissioner Crone.

14 COMMISSIONER CRONE: Yes. Thank you. So  
15 you're not actually physically in Questa; is that  
16 correct?

17 MS. ERICA LANNON: We are in Lama,  
18 New Mexico, which is just seven miles south of  
19 Questa.

20 MS. MARGARET BARTLETT: And, actually,  
21 just out of interest, being the co-founder, when we  
22 started the school, both Taos and Questa were  
23 unclear which district we were in. And it appears  
24 we border both districts but are over the line for  
25 Questa.

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1 a couple of questions. I know you have at least one  
2 special ed child. But out of your 50, how many do  
3 you have?

4 MS. MARGARET BARTLETT: I'm the special ed  
5 director, and I believe we're at 14 out of 50 this  
6 year.

7 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: A significant  
8 number. And the other thing I was going to say is  
9 do all or a large majority of your students come  
10 from Questa? Or do they come from Taos? Or where  
11 do they --

12 MS. ERICA LANNON: A lot of them do come  
13 from Taos, because of that public transportation  
14 that was mentioned. We do have chaperones on the  
15 public transportation so that children of any age  
16 can hop on the bus. But we don't have a school --  
17 we don't have buses that service, you know, the  
18 entire district just for us.

19 And that is one of the -- as Mr. Orris  
20 mentioned, one of our thoughts as to why we haven't  
21 been able to capture more students from the  
22 Questa -- from Questa proper.

23 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Well, it would  
24 also seem, realistically, that Questa is a pretty  
25 small place of a -- maybe 2,000 people. So -- and

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1 COMMISSIONER CRONE: Right. So you're up  
2 on the mountainside, then, looking west. I'm  
3 familiar.

4 Have you recovered from the fire?

5 MR. JON ORRIS: Actually, Commissioner, if  
6 you -- that's a shot out of my office window, and  
7 those are the mountains behind us.

8 COMMISSIONER CRONE: Absolutely.

9 MR. JON ORRIS: That's (indiscernible)  
10 house in front of that. So, yeah, we are at  
11 8,000 feet.

12 MS. MARGARET BARTLETT: And we've  
13 recovered quite well from the fire.

14 COMMISSIONER CRONE: Great. Great. So  
15 that's actually my question, and it links in with  
16 Commissioner Armbruster's, is that the demographics  
17 of Taos County are overwhelmingly Hispanic. And, of  
18 course, Questa and Taos both have very high -- you  
19 know, majority Hispanic populations. I don't have  
20 the demographic data for your school in front of me.  
21 But how do you do with Hispanic students?

22 MS. ERICA LANNON: Thank you, Commissioner  
23 Crone. We are lower than the district and State  
24 percentages for our Hispanic population. And that,  
25 I -- I guess I assumed that that was what Chairwoman

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1 Gipson was referring to.  
 2 THE CHAIR: It was, yes.  
 3 MS. ERICA LANNON: Okay. So -- so when  
 4 director Jon Orris was responding about, you know,  
 5 why we thought that was the case, that was what he  
 6 was referring to.  
 7 COMMISSIONER CRONE: I've lived in  
 8 Northern New Mexico since the 1970s, and I'm aware  
 9 of the dynamics here. And so I was just curious,  
 10 because I didn't have the actual demographic data in  
 11 front of me.  
 12 But I thank you. And keep working on  
 13 those kids from Taos and Questa and Amalia and all  
 14 of those other places. Thank you.  
 15 MR. JON ORRIS: Commissioner, if you're in  
 16 the northern part here, if you have any insight on  
 17 ways that would help us, we'd love to talk with you  
 18 later on about that. Seriously.  
 19 COMMISSIONER CRONE: I'd be happy to do  
 20 that.  
 21 MS. ANNALISE ZOSEL: May I add something?  
 22 Part of the nature of our school is that it's so  
 23 small. Family -- and with the sibling policy, a lot  
 24 of time we have families, and then their siblings  
 25 grow into the school. And that -- and with only 50

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1 spots, that's limiting.  
 2 So expanding would be exciting. But I  
 3 just want to say my students that I've worked with  
 4 as a dyslexia therapist, several from Questa, their  
 5 families recommend cousins go, and we have some  
 6 families from Questa. And the school has been  
 7 transformative for them. And they have noted -- I  
 8 had a family reach out to me and say, "We're so  
 9 grateful our child could get services because of  
 10 your proactive identification. Our eldest would  
 11 have never had this in Questa."  
 12 And I'm not trying to down -- I want  
 13 everyone to lift up. I think that this is a model  
 14 we could all proactively reach kids sooner. So I  
 15 just wanted to share that anecdote as well.  
 16 The other thing is, like, our puebloan  
 17 population is so small, you don't necessarily see  
 18 that represented. That doesn't mean they're not  
 19 there and we're not having conversations and not  
 20 being responsive as well.  
 21 COMMISSIONER CRONE: Well, I'll do  
 22 whatever I can to help. I actually taught. I  
 23 taught for Northern College for more than 40 years,  
 24 and I actually taught a class at Taos Pueblo. And  
 25 then also taught one at Questa High School as well.

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1 So, you know, I'm not laying it on you.  
 2 It's -- you know, I'm aware of the dynamics. But  
 3 good luck. Thank you.  
 4 MS. ANNALISE ZOSEL: Thank you.  
 5 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Okay. So,  
 6 Commissioners, I move that the Public Education  
 7 Commission enter into a Closed Session, pursuant to  
 8 NMSA Section 10-15-1(H)(1). The subject to be  
 9 discussed pertains to the issuance of Roots & Wings  
 10 Community School's charter license renewal.  
 11 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Second.  
 12 THE CHAIR: There's a motion by  
 13 Commissioner Gipson, a second by Commissioner  
 14 Robbins.  
 15 Commissioner Armbruster?  
 16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: My dog is  
 17 barking, and I'm trying to do this. Okay.  
 18 Commissioner Robbins.  
 19 COMMISSIONER CRONE: My dogs are barking,  
 20 too.  
 21 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Yes.  
 22 THE CHAIR: Okay. Yes. I'm sorry,  
 23 Commissioner Robbins said "Yes," I think.  
 24 Commissioner Voigt?  
 25 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yes.

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1 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  
 2 Armbruster votes "Yes."  
 3 Commissioner Davis?  
 4 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Yes.  
 5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  
 6 Chavez?  
 7 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Yes.  
 8 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  
 9 Gipson?  
 10 THE CHAIR: Yes.  
 11 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  
 12 Raftery? Is she -- I see her, but you're muted.  
 13 MS. KAREN WOERNER: She's on the phone but  
 14 muted. Commissioner Raftery, can you unmute your  
 15 phone? You may need to press \*6.  
 16 You're unmuted now, Commissioner Raftery.  
 17 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Right.  
 18 We're voting on going into Executive  
 19 Session, Commissioner. Is that a "Yes" from you?  
 20 Can you hear?  
 21 MS. KAREN WOERNER: She's unmuted, but I'm  
 22 not hearing her.  
 23 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: You can skip her  
 24 for now.  
 25 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I'll just leave

274	<p>1 that, is that okay?</p> <p>2 Commissioner Crone?</p> <p>3 COMMISSIONER CRONE: Yes.</p> <p>4 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner</p> <p>5 Ruiz?</p> <p>6 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yes.</p> <p>7 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner</p> <p>8 Caballero?</p> <p>9 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yes.</p> <p>10 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: That's</p> <p>11 nine-to-zero, and the motion passes, but we've lost</p> <p>12 a Commissioner.</p> <p>13 THE CHAIR: Thanks. The motion passes</p> <p>14 nine-zero. The same link, Commissioners. So see</p> <p>15 you on the other side of this. Thanks.</p> <p>16 (Closed Session conducted.)</p> <p>17 THE CHAIR: So can we do the motion to</p> <p>18 come out of Closed Session while we're still waiting</p> <p>19 for people so we can save some time here? Can we do</p> <p>20 that?</p> <p>21 (Commissioners indicate.)</p> <p>22 THE CHAIR: So I'm going to move that the</p> <p>23 Public Education Commission end Closed Session. The</p> <p>24 matters discussed in the closed meeting were limited</p> <p>25 to only those specified in the motion for closure,</p>	276	<p>1 THE CHAIR: Yes.</p> <p>2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner</p> <p>3 Chavez?</p> <p>4 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Yes.</p> <p>5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner</p> <p>6 Davis? Not yet, I think.</p> <p>7 Commissioner Armbruster votes "Yes."</p> <p>8 Commissioner Voigt?</p> <p>9 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yes.</p> <p>10 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner</p> <p>11 Robbins?</p> <p>12 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Yes.</p> <p>13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I believe that's</p> <p>14 an eight-to-zero vote to --</p> <p>15 THE CHAIR: Motion passes, eight-zero.</p> <p>16 But we still don't have -- I was hoping we'd have</p> <p>17 those two other Commissioners back in by the time we</p> <p>18 finish this. So...</p> <p>19 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I don't have --</p> <p>20 I don't have Commissioner Davis's e-mail.</p> <p>21 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Commissioner Raftery</p> <p>22 is trying to get in, and I re-sent it. She needed</p> <p>23 me to re-send it again. So I re-sent it a second</p> <p>24 time.</p> <p>25 THE CHAIR: All right. And I'm looking to</p>
275	<p>1 and no vote was taken during the Closed Session.</p> <p>2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Second.</p> <p>3 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Second.</p> <p>4 THE CHAIR: There's a motion by</p> <p>5 Commissioner Gipson and a second by Commissioner</p> <p>6 Ruiz.</p> <p>7 Commissioner Armbruster?</p> <p>8 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Ready?</p> <p>9 THE CHAIR: Yes.</p> <p>10 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER:</p> <p>11 Commissioner Caballero?</p> <p>12 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yes.</p> <p>13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner</p> <p>14 Ruiz?</p> <p>15 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yes.</p> <p>16 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner</p> <p>17 Crone?</p> <p>18 COMMISSIONER CRONE: Yes.</p> <p>19 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Is</p> <p>20 Commissioner -- trying to read the screen --</p> <p>21 Commissioner Raftery is not back.</p> <p>22 THE CHAIR: No, Commissioner Raftery is</p> <p>23 not in yet.</p> <p>24 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Okay.</p> <p>25 Commissioner Gipson?</p>	277	<p>1 see.</p> <p>2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: I have</p> <p>3 Commissioner Davis's cell phone here.</p> <p>4 Commissioner Ruiz, do you want to -- since</p> <p>5 you have that already on your phone, do you want to</p> <p>6 send that -- forward that on to Commissioner Davis?</p> <p>7 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Just a minute.</p> <p>8 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: And I'll give</p> <p>9 you that number when you're ready.</p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: I'm sending her a text to see</p> <p>11 if she's having trouble.</p> <p>12 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Commissioner</p> <p>13 Armbruster, you can give me that number.</p> <p>14 (A discussion was held off the record.)</p> <p>15 THE CHAIR: So, Megan or Melissa, I don't</p> <p>16 know who's running this. Commissioner Davis</p> <p>17 received a message that the host stopped the meeting</p> <p>18 and it won't let her back in.</p> <p>19 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Then she must be</p> <p>20 clicking on the meeting for Closed Session.</p> <p>21 THE CHAIR: So are you sure you clicked on</p> <p>22 the --</p> <p>23 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Commissioner</p> <p>24 Ruiz, I'm going to give you my number.</p> <p>25 505-***-****. I need an address I can forward some</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">278</p> <p>1 mail I got here by mistake.  2 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Okay. I'll send it to  3 you.  4 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Thank you.  5 MS. MEGAN MAESTAS: Yeah, Chairwoman  6 Gipson, she's not in the Attendees; so maybe --  7 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Actually, Commissioner  8 Raftery is -- her phone number -- she called in. So  9 let me --  10 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Davis was trying  11 to get back into the Closed Session. So she's  12 coming back in to this. So we're good.  13 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Yeah, I think  14 Commissioner Ruiz sent her a phone number as well.  15 THE CHAIR: It wasn't that. She was  16 clicking on the wrong link.  17 COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: I'm here. This is  18 Sonia.  19 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: We're waiting  20 for Commissioner Davis a second here.  21 COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: Okay.  22 MS. KAREN WOERNER: There's Commissioner  23 Davis.  24 COMMISSIONER CRONE: Are you ready for a  25 motion?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">280</p> <p>1 COMMISSIONER VOIGT: Yes.  2 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  3 Crone?  4 COMMISSIONER CRONE: Yes.  5 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  6 Raftery?  7 COMMISSIONER RAFTERY: Yes.  8 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  9 Robbins?  10 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Yes.  11 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  12 Ruiz?  13 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yes.  14 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Got it.  15 Commissioner Caballero?  16 COMMISSIONER CABALLERO: Yes.  17 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Ten-to-zero, the  18 motion passes.  19 THE CHAIR: Okay. The motion passes,  20 ten-zero. Congratulations. And, truly, thank you,  21 thank you, thank you. Thank you for everything that  22 you do every day. Thank you for being a bright spot  23 at the end of our day. We truly appreciate that  24 more than you'll ever know.  25 The presentation was great, and we</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">279</p> <p>1 THE CHAIR: Yes. We are, now that  2 Commissioner Davis is back. Yes, I am. Thanks.  3 COMMISSIONER CRONE: I move to approve the  4 renewal of the charter for Roots &amp; Wings Charter  5 School beginning July 1st, 2021, until June 30th,  6 2026.  7 COMMISSIONER ROBBINS: Second.  8 THE CHAIR: There's a motion by  9 Commissioner Crone and a second by Commissioner  10 Robbins. If there's no further discussion,  11 Commissioner Armbruster?  12 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Yes. I will  13 begin -- oh, I found -- okay. I just saw  14 Commissioner Davis. I'm sorry. Thank you.  15 Commissioner Chavez?  16 COMMISSIONER CHAVEZ: Yes.  17 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  18 Davis?  19 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Yes.  20 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  21 Armbruster votes "Yes."  22 Commissioner Gipson?  23 THE CHAIR: Yes.  24 COMMISSIONER ARMBRUSTER: Commissioner  25 Voigt?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">281</p> <p>1 absolutely appreciate the thoughtfulness that went  2 into the application and all the decisions you make  3 every day. So thank you.  4 MS. ERICA LANNON: Thank you so much,  5 Madam Chair, Commissioners. Especially Commissioner  6 Ruiz, you take good care of yourself. My goodness.  7 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Thank you.  8 MS. ERICA LANNON: Thank you so much.  9 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Be safe.  10 MS. ERICA LANNON: Good night.  11 THE CHAIR: So, we are in recess until  12 9:00 tomorrow morning.  13 (Proceedings in recess at 6:00 p.m.)  14  15  16  17  18  19  20  21  22  23  24  25</p>

BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION  
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR, CCR #219, Certified Court Reporter in the State of New Mexico, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages constitute a true transcript of proceedings had before the said NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, held via video teleconference, in the State of New Mexico, in the matter therein stated.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand on December 20, 2020.

Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219  
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CASE CAPTION: In re: Public Meeting of the Public Education Commission

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