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Preliminary Analysis of Renewal Application and Site Visit

School Name: Red River Valley Charter School

School Address: 500 E. High St., Red River, New Mexico 87558

Head Administrator: Kimberly Ritterhouse

Contracted Business Manager: The Vigil Group; specifically Zach Kirchgessner

Authorized Grade Levels: Kindergarten – Grade 8

Authorized Enrollment: 100

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

Mission: *"To provide every student the opportunity to develop academically, socially, and physically through quality learning experiences utilizing the Core Knowledge Curriculum".*

Summary of Performance

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

Red River Valley Charter School's (RRVCS) academic performance evidenced an overall decline between school years 2016-17 to 2017-18 and a significant improvement between school years 2017-18 to 2018-19. In 2018-19, RRVCS demonstrated a 38% reading proficiency compared to the State's 34% overall reading proficiency rate, while the school's math proficiency rate was 12% compared to the State proficiency rate of 21%.

The school's Overall Academic Performance during the contract term was a **B letter grade**, **D letter grade**, and **Traditional Support School** designation, respectively. The school received **designations of excellence** in reading growth and math growth in 2018-2019.

The school received a "*Falls Far Below Standard*" rating on its mission specific goals during the first year of its contract, 2016-2017. The school received a "*Meets Standard*" rating on its mission specific goals in 2017-2018, and an "*Exceeds Standard*" rating in 2018-19.

Financial. Over the course of the contract, the school received 13 audit findings derived from published audited financial statements from 2016-2017 through 2018-2019. The findings consist of three (3) repeat findings, one (1) material weakness, two (2) significant deficiency and 10 noncompliance/other matter. In the most recent reporting year, 2018-2019, the school received two (2) audit findings classified as noncompliance/other matter, none of which were repeat findings. RRVCS is on a quarterly reporting schedule. The business manager is responsive and reports are submitted in a timely manner. For Q4 of FY20 no corrections on reports were required to achieve approvable budget status, demonstrating the professionalism of this Business Manager.

Membership at RRVCS appears to hover at 80 students, although the school had anticipated some growth in the count this school year. It remains to be seen if the next reporting periods show an improvement. The school has experienced some fluctuation in keeping operating expenses within operating revenues, causing them to dip into cash reserves, but not at a level of concern. The school seems to be showing an upward spending trend and will need to keep an eye on expenses if the membership growth does not materialize. The school has shown a commitment to emphasizing spending in the classroom. Given the school size, the percentage of classroom spending is very encouraging and the school should be recognized for these efforts.

Currently, this LEA has no financial concerns.

Organizational. During the most recent year evaluated (2019-20), the school did not receive any "*Falls Far Below Standard*" indicator ratings. RRVC received one (1) "*Working to Meet Standard*" rating for the Business Management and Oversight: meeting financial reporting and compliant requirements indicator, though demonstrated improvement from the previous academic year (2018-19), in which the school received a "*Falls Far Below Standard*" rating for this indicator. RRVC has demonstrated consistent improvement in its organizational framework from the first year of its contract (2016-17) earning seven (7) "*Falls Far Below Standard*" ratings and six (6) "*Working to Meet Standard*" ratings to the most recent year (2019-20) earning one (1) "*Working to Meet Standard*" rating with the rest rated "*Meets Standard*".

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

The PED team reviewed the school's Part B (Progress Report) and conducted a renewal site visit on October 08, 2020.
Ratings are based on the rubric provided in the application.

Section	Indicator	Final Rating
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE		
1.a	Department's Standards of Excellence— Overall NM School Grade 2016-2017: <i>B letter-grade</i> 2017-2018: <i>D letter-grade</i> NM System of School Support and Accountability 2018-2019: <i>Traditional Support designation with designations of excellence in reading growth and math growth</i> 2019-2020: <i>No data available for schools</i>	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
1.b	Specific Charter Goals Schools that have met all of their school specific goals in each year of the contract term do NOT provide a narrative. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading growth and proficiency grades 3-8 • Reading growth and proficiency grades 1-2 • Math growth and proficiency grades 1-8 	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE		
2.a	Audit Schools that have received no material weakness, significant deficiency, or repeat audit findings in each of the annual audits during the term of the contract do NOT complete this Section. <i>[Organizational Performance Framework 2a and 2b]</i> <i>[Organizational Performance Framework 2a-2e]</i>	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
2.b	Board of Finance Schools that have maintained all Board of Finance authority during the entire term of the contract do NOT complete this Section. If required to complete this section, provide a narrative explaining the actions taken (improved practices and outcomes).	<i>Meets the Standard</i>

2.c	Additional Financial Information					
	RED RIVER VALLEY CHARTER					
	MEMBERSHIP					
	Enrollment CAP	100				
	2021 Budgeted MEM	84				
	Actual 40D 10-01-2020	74				
	Funded Membership	79	78	81	80	
	OPERATIONAL EXPENSES vs. OPERATIONAL REVENUE					
			2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
	Direct Inst	1000	384,559	341,821	397,852	436,429
	Student Sup	2100	65,857	44,774	60,181	63,899
	Instrtnl Sup	2200	317	490	332	148
	Central Admi	2300	15,979	113,588	112,712	130,303
	School Admtr	2400	158,142	51,314	56,845	56,634
	Central Svcs	2500	71,197	78,590	75,585	68,554
Maint/Ops	2600	36,532	60,379	68,913	60,526	
Food Svc	3100	13,360	0	0	0	
Other	other	0	0	1,281	0	
Total Operating Exp		745,943	690,956	773,702	816,494	
Total Operational Rev		723,341	758,421	742,747	939,190	
Surplus		(22,602)	67,465	(30,955)	122,697	
Year End CASH balance		26,610	93,505	62,551	185,248	
DISTRIBUTION OF EXPENSES						
Instructional Cost		450,733	387,085	458,366	500,476	
% of total operating exp		60%	56%	59%	61%	
Per student membership		\$5,705	\$4,963	\$5,694	\$6,236	
Admin Support		245,318	243,492	245,142	255,492	
% of total operating exp		33%	35%	32%	31%	
Per student membership		\$3,105	\$3,122	\$3,045	\$3,184	

CONTRACTUAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND GOVERNANCE

3.a	<p>Material Terms</p> <p>All schools must provide a response for this section of the application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Love and Logic” fosters a sense of self-discipline and control, imparting children the self-confidence they need, while respecting all others and treating them with kindness and respect. Core Knowledge provides children with a strong foundation of knowledge in traditional disciplines, while encouraging innovative thinking and multi-disciplinary integration. Character development is also an integral part of the RRVCS program and is focused on developing positive character traits, which assist all students to grow in relationships with others and to develop citizenship skills that are vital to becoming contributing members of society. Teachers and administrator participate in an annual PLC, conducted monthly and incorporated into teacher contracts. The PLC topic is determined by collaborative decision-making and is based on needs assessment and school wide data analysis for the school year. The PLC is directly related to instructional practice and student learning, is teacher-lead, and provides on-going peer observations and feedback. 	<p><i>Meets the Standard</i></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents and teachers elect the Governance Council from a list of parents of enrolled students. At least five to seven parent and community events are held each school year (shared learning events). 	
3.b	Organizational Performance Framework Schools that do not have any repeated “working to meet” ratings or any “falls far below” ratings on the most recent organizational performance framework evaluation do <u>NOT</u> complete this Section. <i>[Organizational Performance Framework 1b-1g, 4a-4c, and 5a-5c]</i> <i>[Organizational Performance Framework 1b-1f, 4a-4e, and 5a-5d]</i>	<i>Meets the Standard</i>
	Any OCR complaints or formal special education complaints, identify those, provide all communication related to those, and describe the current status in an Appendix, referenced in narrative by name.	<i>None Known</i>
3.c	Governance Responsibilities All schools must provide a response for this section of the application. <i>[Organizational Performance Framework 3a and 3b]</i> <i>[Organizational Performance Framework 3a-3c]</i>	<i>Meets the Standard</i>

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

PART C:	Financial Statement A financial statement that discloses the costs of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that is understandable to the general public that allows comparison of costs to other schools or comparable organizations and that is in a format required by the department.
PART D	Petitions 1. A petition in support of the charter school renewing its charter status signed by not less than sixty-five percent of the employees in the charter school, with certified affidavit. Number: <u>12</u> out of <u>12</u> Percentage: <u>100%</u> 2. A petition in support of the charter school renewing its charter status signed by at least seventy-five percent of the households whose children are enrolled in the charter school, with certified affidavit. Number: <u>56</u> Percentage: <u>93%</u>
PART E:	Description of the Charter School Facilities and Assurances A description of the charter school facilities and assurances that the facilities are in compliance with the requirements of Section 22-8B-4.2 NMSA 1978. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A copy of the facility lease agreement as Appendix D A narrative description of its facilities and attach the school’s Facility Master Plan, if available, as Appendix H Attach a copy of the building E Occupancy certificate(s) Dated: <u>08 MAR 2011</u> Maximum Occupancy (if listed): <u>320</u> Most recent facility NMCI Score <u>13.27%</u> indicating that the school meets the requirements of Subsection C of 22-8B-4.2 NMSA 1978 If the charter school is relocating or expanding, provide assurances that the facilities comply with the requirements of Section 22-8B-4.2 NMSA 1978 <u> </u> Public (Cert A) <u> </u> Private (Cert B) <u> </u> Foundation (Cert C)
PART F:	Amendment Requests The school has not requested or been granted any amendment request(s) during the current contract term.

Stakeholder Interviews Summary

Stakeholder interviews took place on October 8, 2020 virtually, via the Zoom Meeting platform. The participants included two (2) parents, one (1) student, two (2) Governing Council members and three (3) teachers.

Parents interviewed grew up in the area, wanted something more and different for their children, and therefore, chose to send their children to RRVCS. One parent had such a positive experience with their first child, they have had all three children attend the school. The other parent interviewed mentioned growing up in the area, had moved away but when their child became of school age, the family moved back to Red River so their child could attend RRVCS. One of the teachers also attended school in the area before RRVCS became a charter, had taught in a large school district out of the state, and came back to NM to teach at RRVCS.

Parents stated what attracted them most to the school is the low student-to-teacher ratio. However, they have since appreciated the good relationship between teachers and students, positive community support and the genuine feeling that students are supported in all aspects of learning. In addition, students who are struggling are not singled out; they are not made to feel different. These sentiments were repeated throughout the interviews with the student and teachers. Teachers felt the school's strengths are close relationships, community involvement, shared goals, and families feel they are making decisions together. They used the term "tight-knit groups" to define the school atmosphere. One teacher expressed that, when first meeting students, she had an eye opening experience at having the ability to have rich discussions with the students because of the core curriculum. She went further to say she has never been with a group of students with a "more well-rounded bank of knowledge before".

Both governing board members and teachers felt test scores did not reflect the actual learning accomplished by their students. Teachers felt the academic data did not necessarily drive instruction, but it is used as a tool to identify individual student needs and interventions. Teachers and governing board members also mentioned concerns over the mobile classrooms and their desire to have all students in one building.

Teachers said that they felt supported and that they have been given more opportunities than they can take advantage of in the way of professional development, stating the head administrator forwards timely training opportunities. In addition, teachers, parents and governing board members feel the head administrator communicates relevant information well and timely.