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RYAN STEWART, ED.L.D.  
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM  
GOVERNOR

### Preliminary Analysis of Renewal Application and Site Visit

**School Name:** Roots and Wings Community School

**School Address:** HC 81, Box 22, Questa, New Mexico 87556

**Head Administrator:** Jon Orris

**Contracted Business Manager:** Sarah Pina

**Authorized Grade Levels:** K-8

**Authorized Enrollment:** 50

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

**Mission:** *“The mission of Roots and Wings Charter School is to inspire our students to academic and personal excellence. Our innovative learning community creates classroom, farm and wilderness adventure - engaging the head, hands and heart - enabling students to achieve more than they think possible and to take an active role in our ever-changing world.”*

### **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.

Roots and Wings Community School's (RWCS) 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, RWCS demonstrated a 64% 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 an **A letter grade**, **B letter grade**, and **Spotlight School** designation, respectively. The school also received **designations of excellence** in reading growth, reading proficiency, science proficiency, and English learner progress.

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 demonstrated consistent improvement earning a "*Meets Standard*" rating on its mission specific goals in 2017-2018 and 2018-19.

**Financial.** Over the course of the contract, the school received 17 audit findings derived from published audited financial statements from 2016-2017 through 2018-2019. The findings consist of eight (8) repeat findings, two (2) material weakness, four (4) significant deficiency and 11 noncompliance. In the most recent reporting year, 2018-2019, the school received five (5) audit findings classified as noncompliance/other matter, three (3) were repeat findings. The LEA is on a quarterly reporting schedule. The business manager is responsive and reports in a timely manner. Smaller corrections on reports have been required to achieve approvable budget status. This LEA is a small rural school with a membership of 50 students in multi-grade classrooms.

RWCS has maintained their membership goals, which align with the approved membership capacity. The school has struggled to find a balance in keeping annual expenses within annual revenues, which causes decreases in cash. Schools of this size tend to operate on small margins so continued diligence will need to be exercised to maintain spending within current year revenues. The small school size also causes the percentage of instructional cost to come in below the recommended 65%; however, per student membership spending indicates the school's commitment to prioritize instruction.

Currently, this LEA has no serious financial concerns. However, as noted above, there are three (3) repeat non-compliance/other matter findings in the most recent published audit (FY19).

**Organizational.** During the most recent year evaluated (2019-20), the school received one (1) "*Falls Far Below Standard*" rating in the Business Management and Oversight: meeting financial reporting compliance requirements indicator. In fact, the school has received such rating in this indicator over the past three academic years as a result of repeated/multi-year audit finding(s). However, RWCS received "*Meets Standard*" ratings for all other indicators within its Organizational Performance Framework in the 2019-20 academic year. Aside from the Business Management and Oversight indicator previously mentioned, RWCS has demonstrated consistent improvement in its organizational framework when comparing the first contract year to present. Specifically, in 2016-17 RWCS received eight (8) "*Falls Far Below Standard*" ratings and two (2) "*Working to Meet Standard*" ratings compared to the most recent year (2019-20) received one (1) "*Falls Far Below Standard*" rating and seventeen (17) "*Meets Standard*" ratings, respectively.

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

<p><b>The PED team reviewed the school's Part B (Progress Report) and conducted a renewal site visit on October 09, 2020.</b>  <i>Ratings are based on the rubric provided in the application.</i></p>
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Section	Indicator	Final Rating
<b>ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE</b>		
1.a	<b>Department's Standards of Excellence—</b> Overall NM School Grade 2016-2017: A letter-grade 2017-2018: B letter-grade NM System of School Support and Accountability 2018-2019: <i>Spotlight School designation with designations of excellence in reading growth, reading proficiency, science proficiency, and English learner progress.</i> 2019-2020: <i>No data available for schools</i>	<i>Meets the Standard</i>
1.b	<b>Specific Charter Goals</b> Schools that have met all of their school specific goals in each year of the contract term do <u>NOT</u> provide a narrative. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading growth and proficiency</li> <li>• Math growth and proficiency</li> </ul>	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
<b>FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE</b>		
2.a	<b>Audit</b> 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 <u>NOT</u> complete this Section. <i>[Organizational Performance Framework 2a and 2b]</i> <i>[Organizational Performance Framework 2a-2e]</i>	<i>Failing to Demonstrate Substantial Progress</i>
2.b	<b>Board of Finance</b> Schools that have maintained all Board of Finance authority during the entire term of the contract do <u>NOT</u> complete this Section. If required to complete this section, provide a narrative explaining the actions taken (improved practices and outcomes).	<i>Meets the Standard</i>

2c	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Additional Financial Information</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="5" style="background-color: #ffffcc; text-align: center;">ROOTS AND WINGS COMMUNITY SCHOOL</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">MEMBERSHIP</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">Enrollment CAP</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">50</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">2021 Budgeted MEM</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">50</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">Actual 40D 10-01-2020</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">50</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="5" style="border-top: 1px solid black; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">Funded Membership</td> <td style="background-color: #00b0f0;"></td> <td style="text-align: right;">50</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">50</td> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">OPERATIONAL EXPENSES vs. OPERATIONAL REVENUE</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> <th style="text-align: right;">2016-17</th> <th style="text-align: right;">2017-18</th> <th style="text-align: right;">2018-19</th> <th style="text-align: right;">2019-20</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #d9ead3;">Direct Inst</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1000</td> <td style="text-align: right;">223,804</td> <td style="text-align: right;">261,606</td> <td style="text-align: right;">244,970</td> <td style="text-align: right;">270,209</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #d9ead3;">Student Sup</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2100</td> <td style="text-align: right;">8,584</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4,894</td> <td style="text-align: right;">13,098</td> <td style="text-align: right;">19,738</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #d9ead3;">Instrtnl Sup</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2200</td> <td style="text-align: right;">716</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2,644</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,940</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,783</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #fce4d6;">Central Admin</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2300</td> <td style="text-align: right;">8,492</td> <td style="text-align: right;">98,313</td> <td style="text-align: right;">117,602</td> <td style="text-align: right;">126,590</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #fce4d6;">School Admin</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2400</td> <td style="text-align: right;">119,784</td> <td style="text-align: right;">26,281</td> <td style="text-align: right;">29,228</td> <td style="text-align: right;">25,477</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #fce4d6;">Central Svcs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2500</td> <td style="text-align: right;">55,481</td> <td style="text-align: right;">62,703</td> <td style="text-align: right;">58,723</td> <td style="text-align: right;">57,651</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maint/Ops</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2600</td> <td style="text-align: right;">51,161</td> <td style="text-align: right;">51,180</td> <td style="text-align: right;">54,062</td> <td style="text-align: right;">33,747</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Food Svc</td> <td style="text-align: right;">3100</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td style="text-align: right;">other</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4,680</td> <td style="text-align: right;">762</td> <td style="text-align: right;">153</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Operating Exp</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right; 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**CONTRACTUAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND GOVERNANCE**

3.a	<p>Material Terms All schools must provide a response for this section of the application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roots &amp; Wings Community School makes education relevant, experiential, compelling and engaging. Because of this, the RWCS is inspired by Expeditionary Learning (EL Education), a nationally acclaimed school reform program with an emphasis upon adventurous learning and a proven record of significant student academic improvement.</li> <li>• The school offers three-day to seven-day backpack trips for students through which they experience the wonders of the wilderness and the transformation that comes from pushing themselves beyond their perceived limits. The experiences are provided at least two times a year.</li> <li>• At least 3 times per year, teachers are provided professional development in disaggregation of data.</li> <li>• Student-Led Conferences: All parents are encouraged to attend student-led conferences twice per year. Celebrations of Learning: All parents are encouraged to attend Celebrations of Learning, where students present to an authentic audience (parents and community) their culminating product work from the past semester.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Meets the Standard</i></p>
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3.b	<p><b>Organizational Performance Framework</b>                  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></p>	<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	<p><b>Governance Responsibilities</b>                  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></p>	<i>Meets the Standard</i>

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

<b>PART C:</b>	<p><b>Financial Statement</b>                  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.</p>
<b>PART D</b>	<p><b>Petitions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A petition in support of the charter school renewing its charter status signed by not less than sixty-five percent of the <b>employees</b> in the charter school, with certified affidavit.                      Number: <u>9 out of 9</u> Percentage: <u>100%</u></li> <li>2. A petition in support of the charter school renewing its charter status signed by at least seventy-five percent of the <b>households</b> whose children are enrolled in the charter school, with certified affidavit.                      Number: <u>35</u> Percentage: <u>87.5%</u></li> </ol>
<b>PART E:</b>	<p><b>Description of the Charter School Facilities and Assurances</b>                  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.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A copy of the facility lease agreement as Appendix D</li> <li>2. A narrative description of its facilities and attach the school’s Facility Master Plan, if available, as Appendix H</li> <li>3. Attach a copy of the building E Occupancy certificate(s)                      Dated: <u>25 JUN 2009</u> Maximum Occupancy (if listed): <u>Not noted on certificate</u></li> <li>4. Most recent facility NMCI Score <u>11.77%</u> indicating that the school <b>meets</b> the requirements of Subsection C of 22-8B-4.2 NMSA 1978</li> <li>5. If the charter school is relocating or expanding, provide assurances that the facilities comply with the requirements of Section 22-8B-4.2 NMSA 1978                      ___ Public (Cert A) ___ Private (Cert B) ___ Foundation (Cert C)</li> </ol>
<b>PART F:</b>	<p><b>Amendment Requests</b>  <b>15 JUN 2018 PEC APPROVED Amendment Request:</b> <i>presented by the Roots &amp; Wings Community School to change its material terms with respect to the operational structure, length of school year, to include K-2, 1,051-and-a-half hours, 147 days, plus 6 expedition days; Grades 3-5, 1,070-and-a-half hours, 149 days, plus 8 expedition days; Grades 6-8, 1,108.5 hours, with 145 days, plus 12 expedition days.</i></p>

## Roots and Wings Community School Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews were conducted on October 9, 2019 via the Zoom Meeting platform. The participants included four (4) parents, three (3) students, one (1) governing council member, and three (3) staff members.

Parents cited the expeditionary learning model, along with Roots and Wings established culture and environment as reasons they were originally drawn to the school and why they have stayed. One parent mentioned how their family considered moving, but decided not to because they “realized they wouldn’t find another Roots and Wings school for their student.” Parents appreciate the regular communication coming from the school via teachers and the principal’s weekly newsletters. Parents believe that they are very much involved with the school due to the school’s small size. Parents universally agreed that some expansion of the school with a slight increase in enrollment would be great. Additionally, a couple of parents would like the school to offer additional class options. Specific suggestions included an integrated Spanish curriculum and building upon the music program.

When asked why they choose to attend Roots and Wings, students mentioned feeling overwhelmed due to the large number of kids at other schools and that school at Roots and Wings feels less serious and more fun. Students like their PE class, hands on program, and outdoor learning. One student noted that he liked the “exuberance” of the students. When asked about concerns, the students were worried about the school closing because there are not enough kids due to COVID. While students do believe their teachers help and encourage them, they do think that teachers could be clearer about grades. “I don’t think they tell us how we are doing enough to motivate us. I would like to be told more,” said one student. All three students interviewed agree that the school is accomplishing its mission.

The governing board member interviewed became a board member because she agrees with the outdoor focus of Roots and Wings. She stated that the school is, “one of the more functional organizations I have volunteered for.” The board insures the mission of the school is being implemented by having a “mission moment” on every agenda. These moments could be a story about a student accomplishment or any other brief update from the director related to the mission. On top of mission moments, there is always a chunk of time on the agenda for the discussion of academics. The board uses academic data to determine if it needs to divert financial resources towards specific subject areas or towards the hiring of an educational assistant. The board member named community as Roots and Wings biggest strength. Echoing the parents, the board member believes the school could grow by increasing its enrollment slightly. The school has had to dig into reserves due to budget cuts. “Thankfully,” the board member noted, “we have healthy reserves.” Any parent, teacher, or member of the community can recommend a new member to the board. The recommended person must submit a resume, letter of interest, and attend one board meeting to gauge interest before being considered for the board.

Roots and Wings staff believe that social emotional learning and core academic subjects are strengths of the school. “Because we are so small we are able to intervene early.” Staff recognized that Math was one of the school’s weaknesses and adopted I-Ready as a tool to address this weakness. The school has a woman who provides professional development training to staff regarding strategies for **Expeditionary Learning**. Additionally, the school has contracted an academic coach to provide expeditionary learning training. One teacher stated, “I have had incredible opportunities to grow in my profession.” The school has partnered with Engage New Mexico to help address issues with transient students.