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2020-2021 Annual School Performance Report: Explore Academy – Albuquerque

School Name: Explore Academy

School Address: 5100 Masthead St NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109

Head Administrator: Justin Baiarado

Business Manager: Ashley Wolfel

Authorized Grade Levels: 6-12

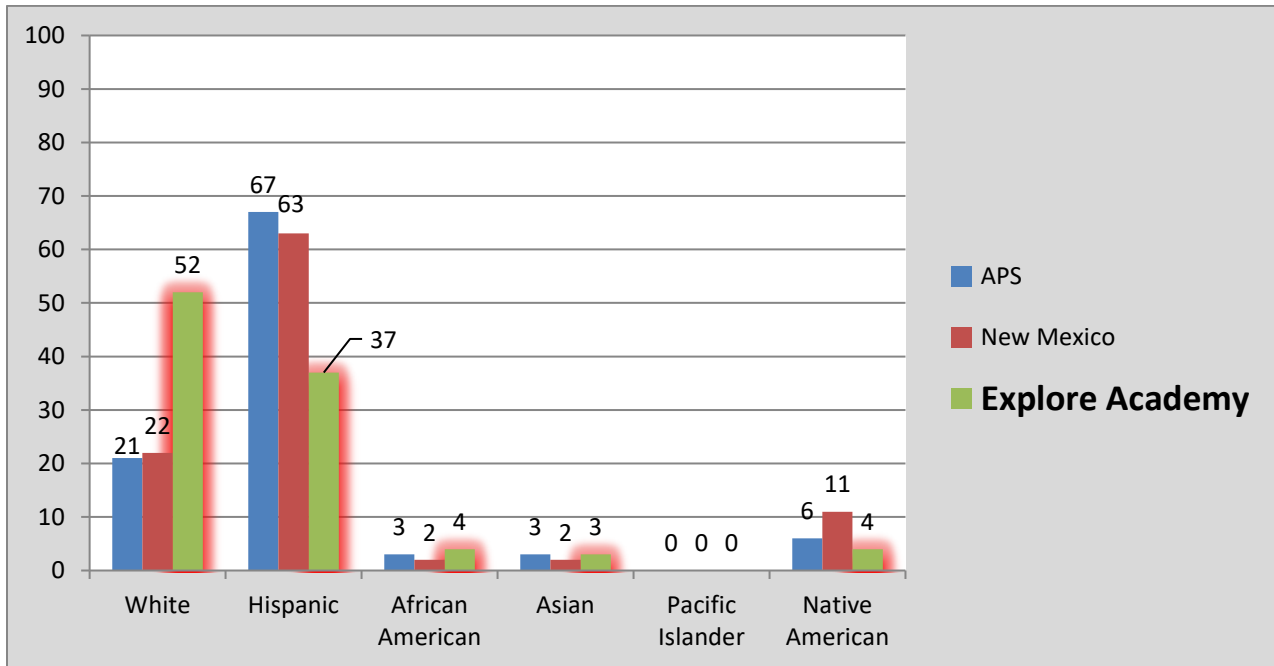
Authorized Enrollment Cap: 1700

Current Enrollment: 603

Contract Term: 2019 – 2024

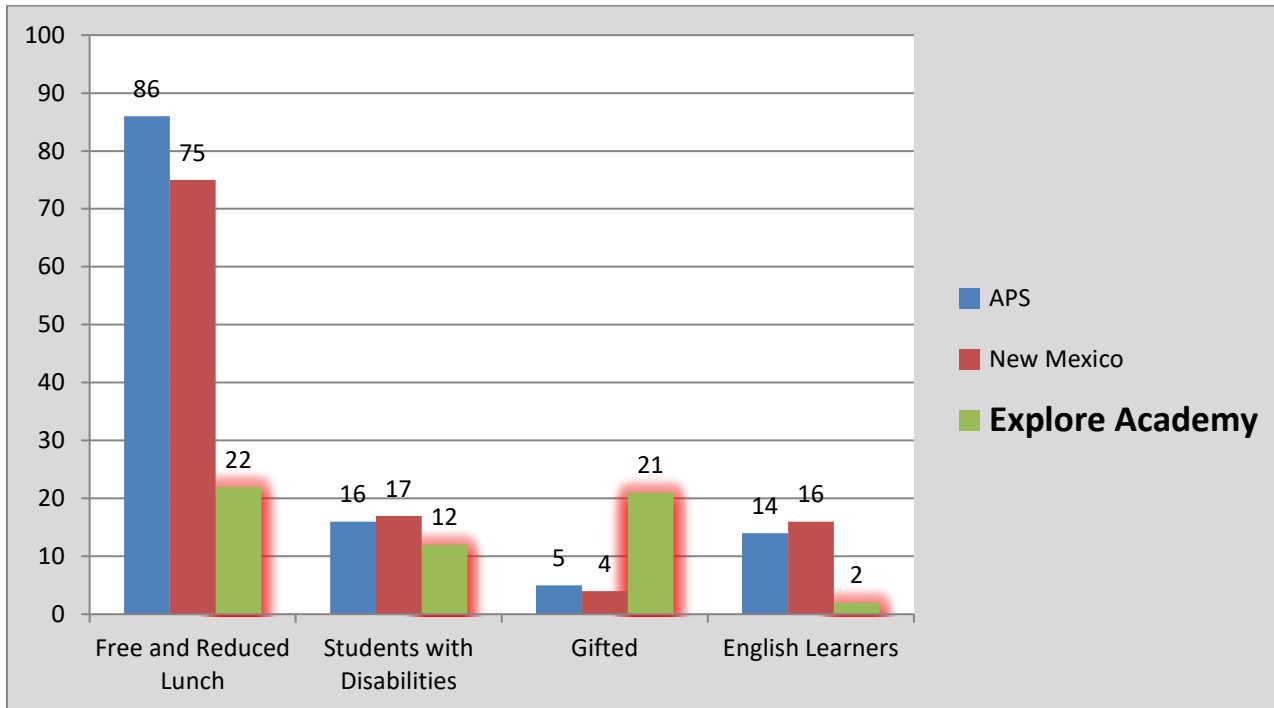
Mission: Explore Academy will provide each student with a personalized educational experience through the power of student choice, allowing each student to create a unique educational pathway in preparation for a college future.

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



Source: STARS District and Location Reports General Reports Enrollment Subgroup Percentages with Averages

Enrollment by Other Subgroups



Source: STARS District and Location Reports General Reports Enrollment Subgroup Percentages with Averages

Site Visit Summary: May 11, 2021

Virtual Site Visit Participants

School: Justin Baiardo: Executive Director; Karen Casedy: Assistant Principal; Elisha Varela: Operations Director; Leticia Fraga: Principal, Janea Menicucci: Director of Ed Tech
PED: Corina Chavez; Melissa Sanchez; Missy Wauneka

Response to COVID Pandemic

[Explore Academy](#) serves 603 students in grades 6-12 in Albuquerque, NM. Explore staff taught fully virtually from March 2020 through April 2021, then moved into full re-entry. The school projected an enrollment of 700 students in grades 6-12 but lost approximately 50 students and maintained an enrollment of approximately 650 students. Currently approximately 50% of students attend school in-person and 50% continue to learn virtually.

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

Explore Academy continued with its model to teach via standards-based, differentiated, choice-based modules. The school used a synchronous, structured schedule - mirroring an in-person schedule. Teachers utilized tech tools to convert hands-on, interactive lessons to virtual, to the extent possible. Modules continued to be standards-based but Explore Academy clustered standards more than they would during a non-pandemic school year and plans to cycle certain standards back into modules for next school year.

Explore Academy is a data-driven school. Students and families receive progress reports on a weekly basis, showing students' proficiency levels. The school also generates comprehensive monthly progress reports and utilizes trends from these reports to provide targeted support to students and to make curricular adjustments. Students also take monthly surveys in each class, which provide feedback about each learning module (flavor) as well as teachers' instructional practices. These surveys are used to adjust curriculum and to provide instructional coaching support to teachers.

Explore Academy has completed all the recommended walkthroughs and teacher observations for this school year. Teachers are supported by an instructional coach and a technology coach. In particular, Explore hired a Director of Educational Technology this school year, who has trained teachers to use tech tools including [Google Suite](#), [Flipgrid](#), [Nearpod](#), and [Desmos](#). Explore teachers wrote PDPs with goals around COVID instructional strategies, including virtual learning and SEL. Utilizing PDPs in this way has been helpful to support teachers to set and meet goals relevant to teaching and learning during the pandemic.

Student and Family Support and Engagement

Explore Academy provided targeted support to families to ensure that all students were able to get online and participate in virtual learning. Parents also receive weekly progress reports. The school counselor is available to meet with students and parents. She has worked with students on things like anxiety around turning on their camera during virtual learning. The social worker has also provided SEL resources for teachers to use in their classes.

Explore's schedule has Club Time built in every Friday. To meet students' social needs during virtual learning, students attended a social club of their choice, such as Among Us Club. Teachers have also been doing lunch socials and the SHAQ committee has provided input to the school about what could help meet students' SEL needs.

Monthly student surveys also provide information about students' academic and non-academic needs and allows for targeted support from the school social worker as well as 1 on 1 tutoring.

The school has been working for 2 years to align schoolwide systems with MLSS. The school already has its draft handbook and is on track to fully launch MLSS in August. Explore's weekly progress reports align well with general

progress monitoring and the school is looking more closely at academic and non-academic interventions for Level 2 and Level 3 students.

Explore also provided meals to all families during virtual learning via Friday pick-ups and continues to provide meals to students learning virtually and in-person.

Performance Framework Indicators (school-specific questions)

2a-2c Audit Findings FY20

2020-001 Food Service Fund Revenues (Other Matters)

The school uses Paypal to collect money for student activities and lunches, and the school lacked a process to properly credit the food service fund the correct amount for student lunch payments.

Although using Paypal makes it more complicated to be compliant with funds for Food Services, it is important to the school to continue to use it. The school has put a process in place to avoid over- and under- funding the account in the future.

2020-002 Internal Control Over Payroll (Other Matters)

The school had issues withholding the proper amount for dental benefits as well as for ERB.

The school will use the NMPSIA monthly invoice to reconcile monthly and note any differences to ensure that all employees are compensated properly moving forward.

3a. Is the school complying with governance requirements?

One governing board member still needs to complete training hours for this year. It is also recommended that the school post governing board bylaws on the website.

The school will connect with this board member and ensure that training hours are completed and submitted.

4c. Is the school meeting teacher and other staff credentialing requirements?

There are four teachers with licensure discrepancies showing in STARS.

School shared that all these teachers either had coding errors or had the appropriate paperwork submitted to the licensure bureau.

Mission-Specific Goals:

Goal 1: At the end of each term, at least 70% of students, enrolled at both the 40th and 120th day, will pass* 80% of the standards-based exit exams that are administered as a measure of proficiency on each seminar's specific required standards and skills.

*pass >= 80%, or as indicated on the IEP

School Response: Explore Academy tracks the data for student mastery rates for each of its eight academic terms across the scope of the school year. Each student enrolls in five seminars per term for eight terms per year, resulting in forty seminars per year. To demonstrate mastery in each seminar, students must pass each academic standard. For the goal in question, considering over three thousand seminars per term and over 24,000 for the year, the following is the breakdown of the pass rates across each term with the final average representing the summative pass rate when incorporating all data.

	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 4	TERM 5	TERM 6	TERM 7	TERM 8	TOTAL
PASS RATE	84%	84%	78%	84%	80%	83%	80%	80%	82%

Assurances:

The school provided the signed assurances document (Appendix B).

Overall Financial/Organizational Framework Rating: Meets Standards

If a school receives a "Does Not Meet Standard" rating for three or more indicators, the school will receive an overall organizational framework rating of "Does Not Meet Standard" for the year. In addition, if a school receives a "Does Not Meet Standard" rating, on any indicator, the CSD and PEC may conduct a closer review the following year on that indicator, and/or the PEC may require the school to submit a corrective action plan to specify actions and a timeline to correct the performance deficiency. See ratings for individual indicators in Appendix A.

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK AND PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION (PEC) TIER LEVEL

The 2020-21 Performance Monitoring Plan was modified in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Many of the indicators were unmeasurable and the Performance Framework ratings in Appendix A is reflective of this. Rather than identifying evidence of compliance, schools are required to sign an assurance of compliance.

PEC Tier Levels are based on three indicators: (1) NM School System of Support and Accountability, (2) Student Subgroup Performance, and (3) Mission Specific Goals. Again, due to the pandemic and the resulting flexible administration of state assessments, in 2020-21 there is limited academic data, that could be used as an accountability measure. **Therefore, PEC Tier Levels cannot be assigned for the 2020-2021 academic year.**

Academic Performance: The school may provide evidence of meeting mission-specific goals to receive a rating on indicator 3 of the Academic Performance, however, if the school was unable to implement the goals due to the pandemic, the school will not be rated in this section.

Organizational Performance The assurances document covers the majority of the indicators of organizational performance. Where possible, results of desktop monitoring and bureau/division reports will be considered.

Financial Performance Framework: For indicator 2.c, evidence of implementing an Action Plan to prevent further findings will not be collected this year, therefore the school's rating is solely based on repeat findings.

Explore Academy	2020-2021
Category I. Academic Performance Framework	
Indicator 1 Components of School Accountability System	Unable to Review - COVID
Indicator 2 Subgroup Performance	Unable to Review - COVID
Indicator 3 Mission Specific Goals	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Category II. Organizational Performance Framework	
Indicator 1a Educational Program: mission and educational program of approved charter application	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 1b Educational Program: state assessment requirements	Unable to Review - COVID
Indicator 1c Educational Program: protecting the rights of students with disabilities	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 1d Educational Program: protecting the rights of English Language Learners	Working to Meet Standard
Indicator 1e Educational Program: meeting program requirements for all PED and federal grant programs	ASSURANCES
Indicator 1f Educational Program: NM DASH Plan	Not Applicable
Indicator 2a Financial Mgmt & Oversight: meeting financial reporting and compliance requirements	Working to Meet Standard
Indicator 2b Financial Mgmt & Oversight: following generally accepted accounting principles	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 2c Financial Mgmt & Oversight: responsive to audit findings	Does Not Meet Standard
Indicator 2d Financial Mgmt & Oversight: managing grant funds responsibility	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 2e Financial Mgmt & Oversight: staffing to ensure proper fiscal management	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 2f Financial Mgmt & Oversight: meeting obligations timely / appropriate internal controls	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 3a Governance & Reporting: complying with governance requirements	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 3b Governance & Reporting: complying with nepotism and conflict of interest requirements	ASSURANCES
Indicator 3c Governance & Reporting: meeting obligations timely / appropriate internal controls	ASSURANCES
Indicator 4a Students & Employees: protecting the rights of all students	ASSURANCES
Indicator 4b Students & Employees: attendance, retention, and recurrent enrollment	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 4c Students & Employees: meeting teacher and other staff credentialing requirements	Working to Meet Standard
Indicator 4d Students & Employees: respecting employee rights	ASSURANCES
Indicator 4e Students & Employees: completing required background checks / reporting ethical violations	ASSURANCES
Indicator 5a School Environment: complying with facilities requirements	ASSURANCES
Indicator 5b School Environment: complying with transportation requirements	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 5c School Environment: complying with health and safety requirements	ASSURANCES
Indicator 5d School Environment: handling information appropriately	ASSURANCES
Category III. Financial Performance Framework	
Self-Assessment Survey completed and signed by Head Admin, SBO, and Finance Chair	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard

[Appendix A: Historical Performance Framework Ratings during Current Charter Contract Term](#)

2019-2020 Renewal Year

2020-2021 was Explore Academy's first year of operation in the current contract.

Appendix B: Assurances

<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%; padding: 2px;">Charter School Name</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Explore Academy: Albuquerque</td> </tr> </table> <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 10px;">In an effort to support the 2021 modified site visits and ensure compliance with contracts and applicable federal and state law, state-authorized charter schools shall provide assurances of compliance with the performance framework indicators listed below. Please check the box next to the indicator, then date and sign the form. Signatures of school leaders and governing board presidents are required.</p> <hr style="border: 1px solid black; margin: 10px 0;"/> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The school protects the rights of students with special needs, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Providing services per individual IEP, ✓ Maintaining both direct service and ancillary support logs, ✓ Including a Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) sheet documenting date, person, and purpose for reviewing student's IEP in all IEP folders. <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The school protects the rights of English Learner (EL) students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ School complies with requirements for English Learners in accordance with federal and state guidance, for identifying, screening, serving, assessing students and providing annual notification to parents. <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The school complies with federal and state grant program requirements.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The school meets Governance and reporting requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Governing Board completes and documents (with signatures) an annual evaluation of Head Administrator. ✓ School has a governing board-approved Conflict of Interest Policy that complies with NMSA § 22-8B-5.2. ✓ School has a governing board-approved Anti-Nepotism Policy that complies with NMSA § 22-8B-10(B). <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The school protects the rights of all students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ School meets all Culturally & Linguistically Responsive Framework requirements. ✓ School maintains lottery and enrollment practices as described in NMSA § 22-8B-4.1. ✓ School has a Discipline Policy to include the prevention of bullying and cyber-bullying per NMSA § 22-35-1. ✓ School follows a board-approved student/parent grievance policy and dispute resolution process per NMSA § 22-8B-9(12) ✓ School complies with the McKinney Vento Act, with a board-approved dispute resolution policy that meets ESSA guideline. ✓ School is implementing the Multi-Level Systems of Support (MLSS) NMAC 6.30. 17 ✓ School updates Next Step Plans annually for all high school students. <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The school's attendance policy aligns with the Attendance for Success Act NMSA § 22-12A-1.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The school protects employee rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Staff files contain signed contracts, official transcripts, and verification of employment forms. ✓ School has an employee handbook that includes discipline and grievance policies. ✓ School has a salary schedule that complies with minimum teacher salaries. ✓ School has a documented mentorship program for first year Level One teachers. ✓ School obtains legally compliant background checks per NMSA § 22-10A-5. <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The school complies with facility requirements in NMSA § 22-8B-4.2.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The school complies with transportation requirements, including all inspections and insurance, if applicable.</p>	Charter School Name	Explore Academy: Albuquerque	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The school complies with health and safety requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The school conducts all required emergency drills per PED memorandum of 3/25/21. ✓ The school maintains immunization records, including a master immunization log. ✓ All staff complete training on reporting child abuse and neglect. ✓ The school has a Diabetes Management plan. <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The school handles information appropriately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ School completes all STARS reporting requirements on time. ✓ School follows proper security procedures, including keeping student files locked. ✓ School follows all FERPA and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) guidelines. ✓ School maintains a procedure for the transfer of cumulative files. <hr style="border: 1px solid black; margin: 10px 0;"/> <p style="font-size: x-small;">By checking the box for each indicator above (on both pages) and signing this document, I affirm that the school complies with the performance framework items listed.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%; padding: 2px;">School Leader Printed Name</td> <td colspan="2" style="padding: 2px;">Justin Baiardo</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 60%; padding: 2px;">Signature</td> <td style="width: 20%; padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="width: 20%; padding: 2px;">Date</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">7.25.21</td> </tr> </table> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%; padding: 2px;">Board Chair Printed Name</td> <td colspan="2" style="padding: 2px;">David Kulb</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 60%; padding: 2px;">Signature</td> <td style="width: 20%; padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="width: 20%; 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