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Charter Schools Division
Preliminary Analysis of Renewal Application and Site Visit (Revised)
November 2021

School Name: New America School Las Cruces

School Address: 207 Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico

Head Administrator: Margarita Porter

Governing Board Chair: Susie Kimble

Business Manager: Ashley Wolfel

Authorized Grade Levels: 9-12

Authorized Enrollment: 450

Contract Term: 2018 – 2022

Mission: To empower new immigrants, English language learners and academically underserved students with the educational tools and support they need to maximize their potential, succeed and live the American Dream.

Statutory Renewal Requirements

According to New Mexico Statutes Annotated (NMSA) 1979, Section 22-8B-12 K., a charter may be suspended, revoked, or not renewed by the chartering authority if the chartering authority determines that the charter school did any of the following:

- (1) committed a material violation of any of the conditions, standards or procedures set forth in the charter contract;
- (2) failed to meet or make substantial progress toward achievement of the department's standards of excellence or student performance standards identified in the charter contract;
- (3) failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management;
- (4) for a charter school located on tribal land, failed to comply with ongoing consultations pursuant to the Indian Education Act; or

(5) violated any provision of law from which the charter school was not specifically exempted.

Renewal Application

Parts A and F of the Renewal Application are provided by the Charter Schools Division (CSD). All other parts of the application are provided by the school.

PART A	Data analysis based on accountability and reporting data from current charter contract term
PART B	Progress report on meeting the academic performance, financial compliance and governance responsibilities of the charter school, including achieving the goals, objectives, student performance outcomes, and accountability requirements set forth in the Assessment and Accountability Act and the charter contract.
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.
PART D	Petitions in support of the charter renewing its charter status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petition signed by at least 65% of the school’s employees, with certified affidavit. 21 of 26 = 80% • Petition signed by at least 75% of the households whose children are enrolled, with certified affidavit. 153 of 204 = 75.4%
PART E	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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facility lease agreement as Appendix D • Narrative description of its facilities, attaching the Facility Master Plan, if available, as Appendix H • The building E Occupancy certificate(s) dated 8/9/12 Maximum Occupancy: 578 • Most recent facility NMCI Score 1.81% indicating that the school meets the requirements of Subsection C of 22-8B-4.2 NMSA 1978 • If the school is relocating or expanding, 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)
PART F	Amendment Requests

The CSD team reviewed the school’s Progress Report and conducted a renewal site visit on October 28-29, 2021. Ratings are based on the rubric provided on page 14 of the [State Charter Renewal Application](#).

Progress Report (Part B) and Site Visit Evaluation		
Section	Indicator	Rating
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE		
1.a	Department’s Standards of Excellence NM System of School Support and Accountability 2020-2021: <i>No data available for schools</i> 2019-2020: <i>No data available for schools</i> 2018-2019: 45 Overall NM School Grade 2017-2018: <i>letter grade</i>	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
1.b	Mission-Specific Goals	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE		
2.a	Audit <i>Organizational Performance Framework 2a-2e</i>	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
2.b	Board of Finance <i>The school has maintained a board of finance throughout the charter term.</i>	<i>Meets the Standard</i>
CONTRACTUAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND GOVERNANCE		
3.a	Comprehensive Educational Program <i>See the narrative below for detail.</i>	<i>Meets the Standard</i>
3.b	Organizational Performance Framework <i>Organizational Performance Framework 1b-1f, 4a-4e, and 5a-5d</i>	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
3.c	Governance Responsibilities <i>Organizational Performance Framework 3a-3c</i>	<i>Meets the Standard</i>

Academic Performance

NMPED Accountability Data 2018-2019

	Overall	Reading Proficiency	Math Proficiency	Science Proficiency	English Learner Progress
New America LC	45	29	6	15	43
Las Cruces	53	34	19	42	28
Statewide	-	34	21	40	29

* Green shading indicates Spotlight School (overall) or Spotlight Designations of Excellence (other areas).

New America School Las Cruces (NAS-LC)'s academic proficiencies are reflective of a population that NAS-LC is designed to serve, students who have been traditionally underserved or who have left public education altogether and have come back to earn their diploma. Though proficiency scores are below state and district averages, English learner progress exceeds both the local district and the state average. Student growth for the lowest performing students exceeds the state average in both reading (61%) and math (60%). Growth for middle performing students was slightly below the state average in math (46%) but far exceeded the state average in reading growth (79%), with students making more than a year's worth of growth.

NAS-LC has one mission-specific goal, requiring students to improve performance (fall to spring) on the National Career Readiness assessment and earn a higher-level certificate. In the first two years of the charter term, the school did not meet its target, and because of the pandemic was unable to administer the assessment in the way it was intended in 2020-21.

In the spring of 2021, 16 of the 19 students who took the assessment earned a certificate. Although the school rating was *Falls Far Below* in the first two years, it is on track for collecting the data this school year. Furthermore, the school has recently applied for, and received Career Technical Education grants to increase career readiness programming for students. This resulted in the GRAD program, which was observed during the site visit. Because NAS-LC has not historically had a strong CTE program, but has expanded courses to include web design, computer applications, and child development, and it has demonstrated substantial progress resulting in the actions taken.

Public Education Commission Performance Framework

New America School - Las Cruces	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Category I. Academic Performance Framework				
Indicator 1 Components of School Accountability System	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Working to Meet		Unable to Review - COVID
Indicator 2 Subgroup Performance	Not Applicable	Working to Meet		Unable to Review - COVID
Indicator 3 Mission Specific Goals	Not Applicable	Working to Meet		Unable to Review - COVID
Financial Performance Framework				
Self-Assessment Survey completed and signed by Head Admin, SBO, and Finance Chair	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Not Applicable
Category II. Organizational Performance Framework				
Indicator 1a Educational Program: mission and educational program of approved charter application	Working to Meet Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Working to Meet Standard
Indicator 1b Educational Program: state assessment requirements	Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet Standard)	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Unable to Review - COVID
Indicator 4a Students & Employees: protecting the rights of all students	Working to Meet Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	ASSURANCES
Indicator 1c Educational Program: protecting the rights of students with disabilities	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 1d Educational Program: protecting the rights of English Language Learners	Working to Meet Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard
Indicator 4b Students & Employees: attendance, retention, and recurrent enrollment	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard
Included in Indicator 4a	Working to Meet Standard			
Indicator 2a Financial Mgmt & Oversight: meeting financial reporting and compliance requirements	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard
Indicator 2b Financial Mgmt & Oversight: following generally accepted accounting principles	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 3a Governance & Reporting: complying with governance requirements	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Included in Indicator 3c	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard			
Indicator 4c Students & Employees: meeting teacher and other staff credentialing requirements	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 4d Students & Employees: respecting employee rights	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard	ASSURANCES
Indicator 4e Students & Employees: completing required background checks / reporting ethical violations	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Working to Meet Standard	ASSURANCES
Indicator 5a School Environment: complying with facilities requirements	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	ASSURANCES
Indicator 5c School Environment: complying with health and safety requirements	Working to Meet Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	ASSURANCES
Indicator 5d School Environment: handling information appropriately	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	ASSURANCES
OTHER				
School specific conditions in the Charter Contract, if any				
Indicator 1e Educational Program: meeting program requirements for all PED and federal grant programs		Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	ASSURANCES
Indicator 1f Educational Program: NM DASH Plan		Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Unable to Review - COVID
Indicator 2c Financial Mgmt & Oversight: responsive to audit findings		Working to Meet Standard	Does Not Meet Standard	Does Not Meet Standard
Indicator 2d Financial Mgmt & Oversight: managing grant funds responsibility		Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 2e Financial Mgmt & Oversight: staffing to ensure proper fiscal management		Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 2f Financial Mgmt & Oversight: meeting obligations timely / appropriate internal controls		Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Indicator 3b Governance & Reporting: complying with nepotism and conflict of interest requirements		Working to Meet Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	ASSURANCES
Indicator 3c Governance & Reporting: meeting obligations timely / appropriate internal controls		Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	ASSURANCES
Indicator 5b School Environment: complying with transportation requirements		Not Applicable	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	ASSURANCES

Organizational Performance

As displayed in the chart above, NAS-LC has a record of meeting or working to meet all indicators of organizational performance throughout the charter term, with only one exception in three of the four contract term years. In 2017-18 the school received a *Falls Far Below* for state assessments, however, in 2018-19 demonstrated substantial progress by meeting the standard. Because of COVID, many of the organizational indicators were not rated and/or were difficult to assess over the past two years. One area the school has received a *Working to Meet* is in protecting the rights of English learners (ELs), this is evidenced by reviewing the school's STARS error reports. Like many other schools, NAS-LC struggles to get EL records for students who transfer from other schools, resulting in difficulty with timely identification of ELs. The school received no complaints, however and has taken improvement actions to provide school-wide services for ELs by obtaining professional development, implementing ESL classes and by using the SWRL (Speaking, Writing, Reading and Listening) strategies in most classrooms. SWRL, which aligns with the WIDA framework for supporting ELs, was evident in classroom observations. ACCESS assessment data shows a clear trend of increasing student proficiency levels (Part B, p. 28) over the charter term.

The school has over the charter term experienced a drop in enrollment, largely because state law capped the age in which students could enroll in a diploma-granting public school. However, each year the school experiences a decline in the number of students who enroll at the beginning of the year and the number of students who remain enrolled at the 40th day count. Then, typically enrollment increases for the spring semester. The transiency of the student population effects graduation rate and poses challenges for the school to meet recurrent enrollment target, however, the school rises up to each challenge and continues to build its program to better serve students and meet the need in the community.

Financial Performance

NAS-LC is on a quarterly reporting status, which indicates the school's business manager is responsive to School Budget Bureau requests and reports are submitted in a timely manner. Throughout the contract term the school's business management services have been under contract to the same firm and at no time during the contract did the school move from quarterly reporting status.

The student population NAS-LC served at the beginning of the current contract year changed significantly due to legislation that went into effect in 2019 which placed a ceiling on student age. As a result, the school experienced a 17% drop in enrollment from FY 2018 to FY 2019. The student membership remained steady in FY 2020, but suffered another 10% loss in enrollment in FY 2021 due to the global pandemic and the challenges described above.

The school received seven (7) audit findings from 2017 to 2020 all of which were deemed by the auditors to be non-compliance in nature. For FY2020, one finding was due to a check not being deposited within 24 hours, the other was a purchase order that wasn't approved prior to purchase. Because of the repeat findings, the school had one financial indicator that *Does Not Meet the Standard*, otherwise the school *Meets or Exceeds* the other financial standards.

Audit Year	Findings	Repeat Findings	Material Weaknesses	Significant Deficiencies
FY 2020	2	2	0	0
FY 2019	4	0w	0	0
FY 2018	1	0	0	0
FY 2017	0	0	0	0

Although the average classroom spending during the contract term so far put NAS-LC at an average of 43%, as the school experienced enrollment decreases, the classroom spending remained constant.

Administrative expenses are on the high end of the spectrum for charter schools of this size with an average of approximately \$35,000 spent each year in the categories of other services, other charges, advertising and board training and travel.

General Fund (11000) data as reported in OBMS - Fourth Quarter			Contract Years				
			Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budgeted
			General Fund - 11000- Amounts (in whole dollars)				
Enrollment			2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
1200 Student membership			253	211	214	192	182.5
40D program units from final funded run			532,822	543,456	476,415	425,561	402,873
Function	Function Name	Description of Expenditures					
1000	Direct Instruction	Classroom teachers, educational assistants, instructional coaches, textbooks, classroom technology	806,003	812,549	736,682	772,870	1,414,596
2100	Student Support	Attendance, social worker, guidance, health, psychological, speech & occupational therapy services	132,870	167,396	139,635	93,625	114,913
2200	Instructional Support	Library, instruction related technology	4,864	5,341	6,007	5,202	3,490
2300	Central Administration	Governance council, Office of Superintendent, community relations	221,608	257,900	233,656	237,107	293,879
2400	School Administration	Office of the Principal	194,268	194,864	193,521	195,025	220,044
2500	Central Services	Business management, administrative support, admin technology	304,512	324,318	290,615	289,466	313,567
2600	Maintenance & Operations	Building operations, maintenance, equipment upkeep, security & safety	524,455	533,038	495,603	362,103	247,597
2700-5900	All Other Function Codes	Transportation, food service & capital outlay	11,855				
Total			2,200,435	2,295,406	2,095,718	1,955,397	2,608,086
Total State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) Funding:			2,149,558	2,231,992	2,088,058	1,977,637	1,903,285
Other Operational Revenue			46,712	63,615	31,801	41,850	
Carryover(Shortfall)			(4,164)	201	24,141	64,090	
How Funds Were Spent in Percentages of Total							
Classroom			43%	43%	42%	45%	59%
Administration			33%	34%	34%	37%	32%
Other			24%	23%	24%	19%	9%

The PED Operating Budget Management System (OBMS) showed 70%, approximately \$215,000, of the NAS-LC grant fund requests for reimbursements (RfRs) were submitted during June and July 2021.

Governance

NAS-LC governance has remained relatively stable over the contract term. The board has made strides in ensuring each member obtain the required hours of training. The board has worked with Kelley Callahan to obtain hours and has an active Finance Committee that meets just prior to the monthly board meetings. Although the school has no memorandum of agreement with the New America network, they maintain a relationship and contract for professional services, including financial consultation with Mr. Cook, who assisted the board in the process of obtaining a lease purchase agreement.

Governing Board Training Hours				
Board Members	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21
Toby Rue	7			
Fernando Macias	6	8	15.5	11.5
Susie Kimble	16	6	15.5	11.5
Martha Valdez	8	8	15.5	11.5
Oscar Juarez	14	6	15.5	11.5
Jennifer Garcia Kozlowski	7	0	15.5	14.5

Black shading indicates that the member did not serve a full year in that fiscal year; yellow indicates that the member did not complete all required training hours during that fiscal year. Training requirements are 8 hours per year for returning board members, and 10 hours for new members. Exemptions are noted in years marked by an asterisk.

Comprehensive Educational Program

NAS-LC serves a population of students of students who have been underserved in other settings. Students arrive with fewer credits and not so positive experiences in other schools. The school has established itself as a school of choice for high school students that have felt lost in a large, comprehensive environment and appreciate the smaller, more supportive learning environment.

In a focus group, students spoke of feeling accepted by peers, understood by teachers who get to know them, and felt clear about behavior expectations. The school is a closed campus, has a security guard and receptionist, with constant monitoring who walks in and out of the building. Both students and staff described how the school educational program does not allow for students to fly under the radar. With an enrollment of approximately 200, the school keeps meticulous track of students, using an early warning system (EWS) and following up with them when absent. The social worker and dean of students reach out to students and families when students are absent, and have made home visits to check on them. The schools uses a phone application to post assignments and grades. School leadership does whatever it takes to “eliminate all excuses for students not to attend” including letting a baby or work hours interfere with being in school. The school operates Monday-Thursday from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM and has an evening program from 4:30 to 8:30 PM. Friday tutoring is available for students who need or want extra support, and the school uses the EWS to identify individual students who may be required to attend Friday tutoring.

In addition to the dual-enrollment program with Doña Ana Community College and Edgenuity courses to support credit recovery, the school recently opened an on-site day care center for young parents. Overall, the school demonstrate substantial progress in organizational performance.

Approximately 18% of students are immigrant and NAS-LC has a higher EL population than the high school EL population in Las Cruces. Spanish and English speaking students at the school get along well. Adults are quick to intervene when there is any tension between students (none was observed during the site visit). Both teachers and students described how staff and students help perpetuate a positive school culture and a safe environment.

Teachers have latitude to select instructional materials and implement curriculum of their choosing/design, so long as it aligns to Common Core State Standards and includes SWRL. An exception to this is mathematics courses which use Carnegie Learning. Lesson plan are reviewed weekly by the head administrator. Across classrooms, teachers were observed using technology to prepare students for a quiz, facilitating a discussion on infant development, meeting individually with students as they were writing an essay and reading novels. Student engagement levels were high in both day and evening school, with fewer students in the evening mostly working independently with teacher walking around the classroom to provide support. The school participated in the instructional scope and uses data collection methods to increase support for rigorous classroom instruction. The head administrator also uses the Elevate system for evaluating teacher performance.

Beginning this school year, the school starting to use MAPs as the interim assessments. No additional short cycle assessment data was collected, however, the school tracks student engagement in postsecondary education.

NAS-LC demonstrates a clear focus on meeting student needs academically, social emotionally, and with basic needs. The school provides a safe, clean and orderly environment, food services, a day care center for young parents, and a cadre of caring staff who go above and beyond to support them.