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Charter Schools Division
Preliminary Analysis of Renewal Application and Site Visit
November 2021 (Revised 12.3.21)

School Name: Walatowa High Charter School

School Address: 147 Bear Head Canyon, Jemez Pueblo, NM 87024

Head Administrator: Arrow Wilkinson

Governing Board Chair: Kenneth Sando

Business Manager: Katherine Toya

Authorized Grade Levels: Grades 9 - 12

Authorized Enrollment: up to 150 students

Contract Term: 2018 - 2022

Mission: Through a community-integrated experiential learning program, Walatowa High Charter School will prepare students to be academically successful while promoting leadership, language preservation, and community wellness.

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. Number: <u>10 out of 10</u> Percentage: <u>100%</u> • Petition signed by at least 75% of the households whose children are enrolled, with certified affidavit. Number: <u>31 out of 34</u> Percentage: <u>92%</u> |
| 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 August 6, 2018. Maximum Occupancy (if listed):not listed • Most recent facility NMCI Score 18.83% 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: <u> </u>Public (Cert A) <u> </u>Private (Cert B) <u> </u>Foundation (Cert C) |
| PART F | Amendment Requests |

The CSD team reviewed the school’s Progress Report and conducted a renewal site visit on October 25, 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: 43 NM School Grade 2017-2018: D <i>(See narrative below for justification of rating.)</i> | <i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i> |
| 1.b | Mission-Specific Goals <i>The school did not include a mission-specific goal in its charter contract.</i> | <i>Not Applicable</i> |
| FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE | | |
| 2.a | Audit <i>Organizational Performance Framework 2a-2e (see narrative below)</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>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</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 |
|----------------------|---------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Walatowa High | 43 | 9 | Masked | 13 | Masked |
| Jemez Valley | 42 | 17 | 4 | 18 | 15 |
| Statewide | - | 34 | 21 | 40 | 29 |

In the most recent year when state data were available, Walatowa High Charter School (WCHS) received an overall score of 43, puts WHCS in the top 75% of all high schools.

CSD's rating for WCHS's academic performance is *Demonstrates Substantial Progress* based on information collected during the site visit and in Part B of the renewal application. WCHS has begun using three curricula to support students' reading and math proficiency. The first program, Reading Plus, is an adaptive literacy program that develops fluency, comprehension, and motivation in students to become successful readers. The program allows the school to track student data so they can see how each student is progressing. The program also identifies physical reading barriers such as poor eye muscle strength. WCHS is one of 90 schools in New Mexico currently using the program and according to their Reading Plus data, 70% of WHCSs non-proficient readers are not yet fluent.

Because students arrive at WHCS, the entire student population (38 students) are participating in the Reading plus Program. The Reading Plus Progress Report for October 24, 2021, indicates the majority of students (74% of students) have completed lessons that have resulted in increased reading fluency, gaining an average of 33 words per minute and growing 1.4 grade levels, since the beginning of the school year. An additional 8% of students have gained an average of 41 words per minute and grown 1.6 grade levels.

The second program, Readorium, is a science reading comprehension program which utilizes research-based proficient reading strategies to understand text. The third program, IXL-Learning, uses real-time diagnostics to get up-to-date, grade-level specific, Common Core skill alignments of students' progress in English language arts, math and science.

WHCS's growth in reading during the 2019-20 school year sees them in the 43rd percentile compared to the district at the 50th percentile, while math growth (49th percentile) was slightly above the district's (47th). Middle performing students are doing slightly better than the district (53rd percentile compared to 46th) in math, but lower in reading (35th percentile compared to 46th).

Although WCHS opted to not include Mission-specific goals in their current charter contract, their Part B discusses the school's academic performance on state accountability measures, describing them as mission-specific goals.

Public Education Commission Performance Framework

| Walatowa High Charter | 2017-2018 | 2018-2019 | 2019-2020 * | 2020-2021 |
|---|---|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Category I. Academic Performance Framework | | | | |
| Indicator 1 Components of School Accountability System | Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) Standard | 43.45 Points (Lower Middle) | | Unable to Review - COVID |
| Indicator 2 Subgroup Performance | Not Applicable | Pending | | Unable to Review - COVID |
| Indicator 3 Mission Specific Goals | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | | Not Applicable |
| 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 applicant | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard |
| Indicator 1b Educational Program: state assessment requirements | Working to Meet Standard | Working to Meet Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Unable to Review - COVID |
| Indicator 4a Students & Employees: protecting the rights of all students | Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Working to Meet Standard | ASSURANCES |
| Indicator 1c Educational Program: protecting the rights of students with disabilities | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) Standard | Working to Meet Standard | Working to Meet Standard |
| Indicator 1d Educational Program: protecting the rights of English Language Learners | Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) Standard | Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) Standard | Working to Meet Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard |
| Indicator 4b Students & Employees: attendance, retention, and recurrent enrollment | Working to Meet Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard |
| Included in Indicator 4b | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | | | |
| Indicator 2a Financial Mgmt & Oversight: meeting financial reporting and compliance requirements | Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) 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 | Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) Standard | Does Not Meet Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard |
| Indicator 3a Governance & Reporting: complying with governance requirements | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) Standard | Working to Meet Standard | Working to Meet Standard |
| Included in Indicator 3c | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | | | |
| Indicator 4c Students & Employees: meeting teacher and other staff credentialing requirements | Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Does Not Meet Standard | Working to Meet Standard |
| Indicator 4d Students & Employees: respecting employee rights | Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Working to Meet Standard | ASSURANCES |
| Indicator 4e Students & Employees: completing required background checks / reporting ethical violations | Working to Meet Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Working to Meet Standard | ASSURANCES |
| Indicator 5a School Environment: complying with facilities requirements | Working to Meet Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | ASSURANCES |
| Indicator 5c School Environment: complying with health and safety requirements | Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) Standard | Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet) Standard | Working to Meet 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 | Not Applicable | | | |
| Indicator 1e Educational Program: meeting program requirements for all PED and federal grant programs | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | ASSURANCES |
| Indicator 1f Educational Program: NM DASH Plan | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Not Applicable | Unable to Review - COVID |
| Indicator 2c Financial Mgmt & Oversight: responsive to audit findings | Working to Meet Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) 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 | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard |
| Indicator 2e Financial Mgmt & Oversight: staffing to ensure proper fiscal management | Working to Meet Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Working to Meet Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard |
| Indicator 2f Financial Mgmt & Oversight: meeting obligations timely / appropriate internal controls | Working to Meet Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Working to Meet Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard |
| Indicator 3b Governance & Reporting: complying with nepotism and conflict of interest requirements | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | ASSURANCES |
| Indicator 3c Governance & Reporting: meeting obligations timely / appropriate internal controls | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | Meets (or Exceeds) Standard | ASSURANCES |
| Indicator 5b School Environment: complying with transportation requirements | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | ASSURANCES |

Note: The rating for Indicator 3.a. (complying with governance requirements) was changed from *Meets or Exceeds* (the rating given in the 2020-21 Annual Report) to *Working to Meet Standard*.

Organizational Performance

The chart above provides the charter school performance over the charter contract term. Over time, the school has reduced the number of *Does Not Meet* indicator ratings from seven (7) in 2017-18 to five (5) in 2018-19, three (3) in 2019-20 and one (1) in 2020-21.

In the most recent year, 2020-21, of the current contract, WHCS received one rating of *Does Not Meet* in Indicator 2.c. (responsive to audit findings) for having two repeat findings. In the same year, the school earned three (3) *Working to Meet Standards*. The school has not demonstrated improved compliance on Indicator 2.a. (financial reporting and compliance) over the term of the contract. However, the school has demonstrated improvement with two other Organizational Indicators. In 2018-19 the school received a *Falls Far Below* for indicator 1.c. (protecting the rights of students with special needs) because two students had an overdue evaluation, which the school has been able to complete, thus resulting in a *Working to Meet* rating for the following two years. Similarly, for indicator 4.c. the school has hired a certified ELA instructor to remedy prior performance.

The teachers have all taken on additional responsibilities which has led to an overall feeling of more collaboration according to the staff. The teachers mentioned appreciating the ease in bouncing ideas off each other, joining forces to keep students on track and feeling an ownership in their impact on the students. s

Financial Performance

WCHS 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. The school's business manager has been serving in this capacity throughout this contract term and at no time during the contract did the school move from quarterly reporting status.

Student membership at WCHS fluctuated a little from FY 2019 to FY 2020 which equates to an enrollment increase of 22% and the school saw a slight drop in 2021, settling in higher than the first year of the contract.

| Audit Year | Findings | Repeat Findings | Material Weaknesses | Significant Deficiencies |
|------------|----------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| FY 2020 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| FY 2019 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| FY 2018 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| FY 2017 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

As indicated in the table above, the school received fifteen (15) audit findings from 2017 to 2020, more than half were received at the beginning of the contract years.

Spending in schools with less than 100 students tends to be much lower than the desired goal of 68%, and nearly impossible to achieve, so it is no surprise to see classroom spending below 50%. The school's conservative fiscal management approach has allowed them to save nearly \$2 million which they intend to use to purchase a modular, permanent school building in the coming year.

WCHS receives the highest amount of impact aid funds of any state authorized charter school, totaling just over \$1 million from 2018-2021.

| | | Contract Years | | | | | |
|---|---|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | Actual | Actual | Actual | Actual | Budgeted | |
| | | General Fund - 11000- Amounts (in whole dollars) | | | | | |
| | | 2017-2018 | 2018-2019 | 2019-2020 | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | |
| Enrollment | | | | | | | |
| | 120D Student membership | 48 | 46 | 56 | 52 | 55 | |
| | 40D program units from final funded run | 177,435 | 142,574 | 164,344 | 174,538 | 168,33 | |
| Function | Function Name | Description of Expenditures | | | | | |
| 1000 | Direct Instruction | Classroom teachers, educational assistants, instructional coaches, textbooks, classroom technology | 292,545 | 351,686 | 278,774 | 264,415 | 420,170 |
| 2100 | Student Support | Attendance, social worker, guidance, health, psychological, speech & occupational therapy services | 8,575 | 1,620 | 2,648 | 33,956 | 120,242 |
| 2200 | Instructional Support | Library, instruction related technology | 620 | 7,434 | - | 1,392 | - |
| 2300 | Central Administration | Governance council, Office of Superintendent, community relations | 117,618 | 131,264 | 137,089 | 140,954 | 207,070 |
| 2400 | School Administration | Office of the Principal | 37,188 | 33,150 | 73,231 | 45,262 | 95,806 |
| 2500 | Central Services | Business management, administrative support, admin technology | 128,299 | 127,668 | 134,250 | 140,092 | 199,922 |
| 2600 | Maintenance & Operations | Building operations, maintenance, equipment upkeep, security & safety | 59,845 | 73,960 | 63,807 | 68,180 | 192,312 |
| 2700- 5900 | All Other Function Codes | Transportation, food service & capital outlay | 56,118 | 11,720 | 49,807 | 51,271 | 1,396,577 |
| Total | | | 700,807 | 738,502 | 739,605 | 745,522 | 2,632,099 |
| Total State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) Funding | | | 542,442 | 387,068 | 573,638 | 560,320 | 786,991 |
| Other Operational Revenue | | | 233,126 | 268,579 | 227,019 | 291,441 | |
| Carryover(Shortfall) | | | 74,761 | (82,855) | 61,052 | 106,239 | |
| How Funds Were Spent in Percentages of Total | | | | | | | |
| | Classroom | 43% | 49% | 38% | 40% | 21% | |
| | Administration | 40% | 40% | 47% | 44% | 19% | |
| | Other | 17% | 12% | 15% | 16% | 60% | |

The PED Operating Budget Management System (OBMS) showed the school regularly submits grant fund requests for reimbursements (RfRs). In 2020-21 there were just over 30 RfRs submitted totaling approximately \$125,000.

Governance

WHCS’s board has struggled with completing their training hours during the term of this current contract, with notable improvements made this school year. In the past, outreach to the school’s board of directors have gone largely unanswered. There were some issues with their school emails which have been fixed, however, no board members attended the scheduled virtual focus group meeting. Board members were asked for an alternative time but did not respond. The CSD has not been able to complete any board observations in part because of inconsistent board meeting dates and lack of communication. The school website directs people interested in attending the board meeting to email the Accounts payable staff member, who serves as administrative staff to the board. The school’s audit committee list two board members, one parent, a community member and the business manager. The school’s finance committee should only list the two board members. All the others would report to the finance committee and should not be considered as “members.” The finance committee oversees the business manager, so the inclusion of that position as a committee member counteracts a separation of duty. Finally, the school does need to update their annual OMA statement and I was unable to find a link to the Sunshine portal as is required by the PED.

| Board Members | FY18 | FY19 | FY20 | FY21 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Kenneth Sando | 7 | 0 | 6 | 8 |
| Stuart Gachupin | 0 | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| Ryszard Wasilewski | 0 | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| Danielyn Hardy | 0 | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| Corinna Yepa | 0 | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| Juanita Toledo | 0 | 0 | | |

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

The school’s educational program includes a focus on college preparation, emphasizing the value of culture, tradition of the local indigenous communities. Advanced coursework and local partnership help WHCS provide an integrated focus on academics, youth development, family support, health and social services and community development. WHCS has implemented a community school model that includes the two-generation approach and continuum since its inception. Substantial evidence during the renewal site visit suggests the school has implemented the educational program as stated.

The site visit team was able to observe how the school incorporates experiential learning techniques through their Indigenous Program with Mr. Carlos Herrera with his drum making class. This activity took

them through all of the stages of hollowing out the cut logs, to stretching the hide over and decorating them. In the parent focus group, one parent mentioned having four drums at home from her older WHCS graduates and she will now have a fifth drum to add to the collection. We were able to ask Mr. Meek about the schoolwide phenomena-based teaching and learning (PhenoBL) capstone project “Stewards Building Wetland Habitats and Beaver Monitoring” in which the students observe changes in their local environment through the activities of area beavers. The students were observed to be very engaged in their drum making and were at a variety of stages. Mr. Herrera moved amongst the students guiding and encouraging them as he related to the site visit team the importance of maintaining their rich culture.

Dr. Wilkinson spoke on how the school has worked to respond to the pandemic which highlighted the need to better use technology, embrace flexibility and meet the needs of their community. The implementation of the Reading Plus program, which is required unless a student can test out and enroll in a dual credit course, has enabled the students to see significant personal gains in their reading comprehension. Many students already had learning gaps prior to the pandemic which were then exacerbated. The site visit team was able to meet virtually with the school’s Reading Plus consultant and see school specific (masked) data showing an incredible correlation between the number of sessions completed and growth in reading comprehension.

Though the school had instituted a hybrid model of teaching prior to COVID, the pandemic made evident to the WHCS team where they needed to bolster their understanding and use of technology. As a result the staff are all more integrated as a team in how they use test data and they are all driven to close the achievement gaps of the students. Starting school in July means that there isn’t much time for learning loss between school years and they are focused on how to take technology and adapt it to where and how the students learn best. As WHCS stated in their renewal application, “{our} community asset-based learning approach is rooted in Best Practices in Native education pedagogy. These place-based practices entail providing a culturally relevant curriculum to Native students’ lives by incorporating experiential learning techniques that bring meaning to local places, events and situations. Indigenous Best Practices integrate teaching methods and strategies that encourage innovation and kinesthetic problem solving rather than memorization. They also use information technologies, to direct self-learning and self-awareness, capture indigenous knowledge, and to create bridges to successful postsecondary opportunities.” The head administrator spoke of the success they are having particularly when younger siblings enter the school. The success of their elder siblings in the dual credit program is engaging the younger siblings to participate as well.

Due to the continuing global pandemic and the Pueblo of Jemez limiting access to the school, it was not possible to physically observe much of the community life that is reported on in the application. In interviewing the Dr. Wilkinson, the Head Administrator, he described the ways in which the school communicates and interacts with the Pueblo of Zia, Pueblo of Kewa, and the Pueblo of Jemez. The school works closely with all of the communities their students come from and have been able to secure access to mental health services through the Pueblo of Jemez for all of Walatowa’s students.

WHCS has not sat idly by during the term of their current charter. They have worked to ensure that their students and families are educated, fed, and emotionally supported. The parent, student, and teacher focus groups all spoke of the tight-knit, safe and supportive feeling the school provides. The attention to each student and family. One student mentioned that the initial choice to attend WHCS was only for the school’s proximity to home, but now feels they have learned more than they would have elsewhere. The teachers have also worked with their students to make room for learning and student work schedules and family responsibilities. Students in the focus group spoke of their gratitude in how the school works with them to support out of school commitments, such as employment, and one of them even returned for their senior year in-part for that reason. The school takes seriously their commitment to increasing reading comprehension and when students can experience the types of gains in comprehension that the data shows, they can feel more engaged and more empowered. The most recent available state data indicates that math proficiency for the lower and middle performing students is actually outperforming the district and state. The school leadership is focused on how to best meet the needs of each individual student, how

to bridge gaps, engage them in science, reading, math and their culture, while exposing them to the possibilities beyond high school. Over the term of this contract, the school has consistently decreased the number of *Does Not Meet* and *Working to Meet* ratings which is evidence that they not only focus on their student outcomes but that they are working to ensure compliance.

Students, teachers and parents all spoke of feeling a strong connection to the school, describe how it functions as an extended family and how it provides them with a sense of agency.