



STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
300 DON GASPAR  
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501-2786  
Telephone (505) 827-5800  
[www.ped.state.nm.us](http://www.ped.state.nm.us)

KURT STEINHAUS, ED.D.  
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM  
GOVERNOR

**Charter Schools Division  
2021-22 Preliminary Renewal Analysis  
November 1, 2022**

**School Name:** Albuquerque Collegiate Charter School (ACCS)

**School Address:** 1720 Bridge Blvd SW, Albuquerque, NM 87105

**Head Administrator:** Jade Rivera

**Governing Board Chair:** Tomas Garcia

**Business Manager:** Katie Rarick

**Authorized Grade Levels:** K-5

**Authorized Enrollment:** 360

**2021-22 End of Year Enrollment:** 147

**Contract Term:** 2018-2023

**Mission:** Within a structured and ambitious school community, driven by high-quality Instruction and Intensive academic supports, Albuquerque Collegiate Charter School educates all students for college graduation and life success.

**Educational Program as written in the contract:**

- The school has an intentional focus on literacy and math that accounts for the majority of the day.
- The school provides comprehensive professional development for staff, which includes an intensive summer training, and regularly scheduled internal and external professional development training sessions, data days during the school year, and teacher observations followed by coaching sessions.

### **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**

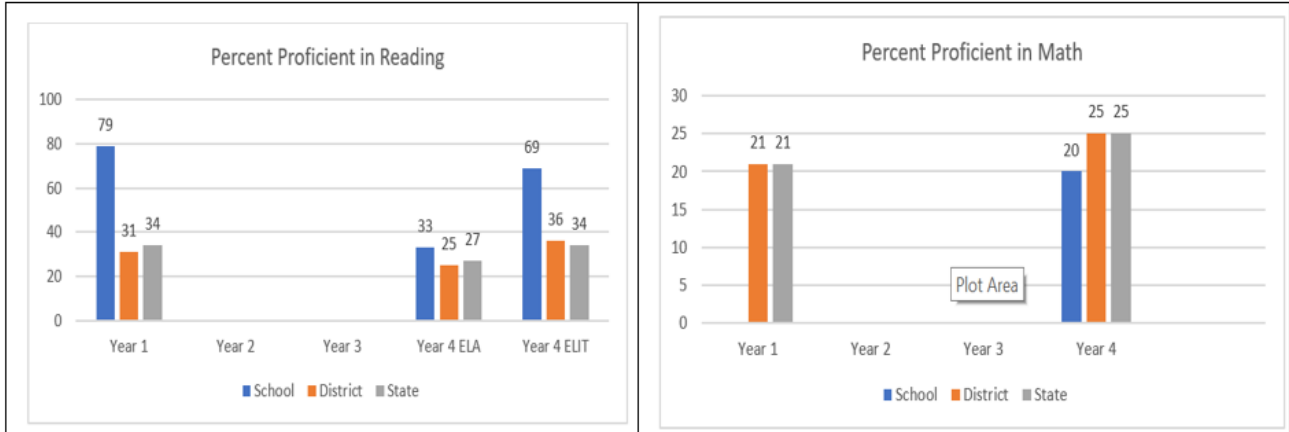
Part A of the Renewal Application is provided by the Charter Schools Division (CSD). All other parts of the application are provided by the school.

### **Part B: Progress Report**

The school's narratives in Part B are rated **Meets the Standards, Demonstrates Substantial Progress, or Failing to Demonstrate Progress** according to the rubric on pages 6-7 of the 2022 Charter School Renewal Application.

Part B: Progress Report	
Academic Performance	Rating
1.a. Student Outcomes	Demonstrates Substantial Progress
1.b. Mission-Specific Goals	N/A
Organizational Performance	Rating
2.a. Educational Program	Demonstrates Substantial Progress
2.b. Financial Compliance	Demonstrates Substantial Progress
2.c. Governance Responsibilities	Meets the Standards
2.d. Equity and Identity	Demonstrates Substantial Progress
2.e. Tribal Consultation	N/A
2.f. Other Performance Framework Indicators	Demonstrates Substantial Progress

**1.a. Student Outcomes**



**Note:** NMPED proficiencies were published as  $\leq 20\%$  and  $\geq 80\%$  with exact percentages given only for schools between 20 and 80%. The school’s math proficiency was below 20% in 2021-22 Science proficiency is not provided as the school did not begin serving students in grade 5 until 2022-23.

In the first year of operation, ACCS was a Spotlight School, received a Designation of Excellence, and had an overall standing of 89 according to the NM System of School Support and Accountability. In school year 2018-2019, ACCS had a 79% reading proficiency. While the state does not have data for school years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, in the most recent year, ACCS’s proficiency scores were: ELA: 33%, Math: 17% (both below state and district averages, especially in math), and ELIT: 47% (above the state and district averages).

In ACCS's renewal application, and as evidenced during the renewal site visit, the school uses several progression and assessment tools to determine students' learning needs. iStation and STEP have been utilized every year since the school's opening. STEP, an involved reading assessment, where a highly-trained teacher sits with each student one-on-one for 30-60 minutes, is administered monthly to determine an individual's reading aptitude. Students ideally progress "3 STEP levels" each school year; the school exceeded this goal the first year but as further explained below, it was harder for students to progress as expected when online learning was in place. In lieu of the state's assessment, ACCS provides iStation reading data and STEP data in Part B of the application to demonstrate student progress.

In 2018-2019, iStation results show that ACCS students' reading proficiency was well above state averages (statewide, kindergarteners had reading proficiency of 38% and 1<sup>st</sup> graders a reading proficiency of 35%). ACCS had 90% of kindergarteners reading proficiently and 73% of first graders proficient in reading. Additionally, in that first year of operation, the average STEP levels of growth was at 4.1 (again, the expected growth level in this program is 3 levels of growth).

In March of 2019-2020, the last verifiable iStation data for that school year because of the COVID pandemic, 68% of ACCS students were proficient in reading compared to the state's 23%. In addition, students averaged 1.9 in STEP levels of growth.

In 2020-2021, iStation data is not reliable due to the pandemic-caused instability of in-person attendance; however, during in-school days, STEP was administered and the average STEP level of growth was 2.3. ACCS's Part B and the teacher focus groups confirmed that because of the hybrid learning model, executing the school's robust reading program was more challenging; as a result, the school did adjust STEP goals at the BOY and instead of striving to average 3 levels of growth in STEP, the school aimed for 2.5 levels of growth. Thus, they were just short of their goal in a school year where most schools in the country struggled to reach proficiency and growth goals.

Finally, in 2021-2022, results in iStation show a 69% reading proficiency rate for K-2 compared to the state's 27%. In the most recent year of the contract, the average STEP levels of growth was 2.7, showing that the school continued to show growth in STEP despite the previous years' obstacles.

ACCS's intentional focus on literacy is verified in annual site visit reports, in the renewal application and in the observations and interviews conducted during the renewal site visit on October 5, 2022. The student schedule shows three literacy blocks for all grades, the discussion of the STEP program was emphasized by all focus groups, and the classroom observations demonstrated the teachers' strong commitment to strengthening students' literacy skills. ACCS does not have reading proficiency rates as high as the first year of opening; however, the school has remained committed to intensive literacy instruction and student monitoring. Additionally, the school provided supplemental data-with a higher proficiency in reading as compared to the state, district, and neighboring schools. Parent, teacher, and head administrator (HA) focus groups all stressed that neighboring schools had lower proficiency rates. The school did not provide comparative data about specific neighborhood schools in their application.

ACCS's math results *do not reveal a demonstrated record of meeting all standards* in each of the years in the contract term; *however*, Part B describes the implementation of targeted and

individualized math instruction. Teacher and HA focus groups acknowledged the school's math deficiencies and that the school had a lot more assessment and data points in literacy to understand student needs. As a result, the renewal application and site visit showed evidence of the school's intent to augment their math program. The school now uses Cognitively Guided Instruction or CGI and HA and Teacher interviews all reiterated the school's intentions to increase differentiation in the math classes to better meet each student's individual needs.

### **2.a. Educational Program**

Student, teacher, and parent focus groups as well as classroom observations verified that the school has *a structured and ambitious school community, driven by high-quality instruction and intensive academic supports*. Observations revealed this laser-focused on structure and to a very specific and results-oriented style of teaching. All teachers used repetition, call and response, data-driven data (as posted throughout the school), as well as incentives to motivate students to achieve their greatest potential. The highly scripted and practiced delivery of lessons presented in observed classrooms and then discussed in focus groups are evidence of the work done during the intensive summer training and during the school's daily informal and formal professional development sessions. Student behavioral expectations were consistent in each classroom and in each grade. Small group instruction and the use of technology exemplified the intentional and individualized supports to students.

Additionally, as explained in focus groups, the high academic and behavioral expectations at the school provide evidence that ACCS is deliberate in giving students the tools necessary to be prepared for *college graduation and life success*. Parents in the focus group explained that the rigor at the school was exactly as it was promised and that their children were already talking about postsecondary options and pursuits. The HA, teacher, parent, and governing board (GB) focus groups all mentioned the school's dedication to familiarizing students with college at an early age; the HA accented the importance of this work since the majority of ACCS students came from low-income households with little to no postsecondary connections. Classrooms were named after different colleges and universities and classes were addressed in school gatherings by the postsecondary institution selected to represent that class. The HA explained that the selection changed every year to represent a variety of both public and private options. ACCS has a demonstrated record of familiarizing students and families with colleges and the potential life success that comes with pursuing advanced degrees.

At this point, the school's proficiency results in math, as acknowledged by both the application and the HA and teacher focus groups, do not demonstrate the level of college readiness that the school wants ACCS students to achieve. The renewal application contains a narrative *describing specific actions being taken to improve math performance and outcomes* including: implementing a more rigorous math model (tantamount to the rigor of the ACCS literacy model), adding the use of NWEA MAPS testing, and concentrating on aligning math instruction and formative assessments with the rigor of the NM-MSSA assessment.

A final note regarding the *college and life success component* of the mission, ACCS does not have a concrete plan to track students beyond their time spent at ACCS. Both teacher and HA focus groups discussed fifth grade meetings to help students transition from ACCS to a middle school that best fits their individual needs. Additionally, student, teacher, and parent focus

groups all praised the school so much that one of the only comments regarding how the school could improve was by expanding beyond fifth grade.

There is demonstrated evidence that the Educational Program portion of the ACCS's contract is being implemented with fidelity. Regarding the increased class time for literacy and math, the class schedule provided, the discussions in Focus Groups, and the classroom observations underscored the school's systematic focus on literacy and math for most of the day. The student and parent focus groups highlighted the intense literacy program. Parents stated that their children knew what level they were at in STEP and how many levels they wanted to grow within the year. Students, similarly discussed their one-on-one monthly meetings with teachers where they read and potentially move up a level in STEP. Both students and parents complimented the school's administration and staff for making the school environment so welcoming and encouraging despite the implicit competitive component of posting each child's STEP level. Specifically, parents commented that students cheered each other on in reading level advancement. Math was not discussed as completely as literacy by any of the focus groups.

ACCS's Comprehensive Professional Development for staff was evident. The HA and teacher focus groups discussed the use of established systems for developing and training teachers; specifically, the HA mentioned using model practices from established groups and organizations such as Uncommon Schools and Vista College Prep in AZ. HA and teacher focus groups discussed the intensive three weeks in the summer dedicated to the STEP program, the school's discipline model, on the very uniform teaching style etc.; in the first few years, outside entities came to help train the teachers (Vista College Prep in AZ) and in the most recent years, the school could use their own instructors to train new staff. Documents reviewed during the site visit demonstrate the school's commitment to intense teacher preparation, including: Professional Development Plans, Teacher Data Days, documentation and recordings of teacher observations, coach feedback/debriefs and formal evaluations. New and Veteran teachers both lauded the school administration for the training and support present at the school. Teachers talked about the weekly observations as positive resources as they improved their practice.

## **2.b. Financial Compliance**

Funding is always a great concern for charter schools, especially those within their first five years of operation, which is evidenced by the operational cash balance fluctuations throughout the term. In its first years, the school received multiple audit findings, including one material weakness finding each year and two repeat findings one year. These findings resulted in fine tuning internal control policies and process improvements, the success of which is reflected in the school's most recent audit report.

As noted by the school, the most recent finding was related to the school's foundation, which is a component unit of the school and is currently in dispute with the auditor. It is important to acknowledge this finding relates to prior year financial statements and should have no bearing on the current and future years.

Student population at the school is increasing, and with that so do their expenses. The school has undergone facilities increase which accounts for the rise in rent and utilities expense in

maintenance and operations. ACCS has been strategic in using the COVID grant funding to absorb the cost of classroom expenses, which has allowed the school to use operational funds for non-classroom expenses in central services and food service operations. As the COVID funds expire, we will see a true leveling out of operational spending which will provide a greater opportunity for comparisons.

### **2.c. Governance**

ACCS has maintained a full and active governing board (GB), with eight current board members who completed all training requirements for 2021-22. During the GB focus groups during the renewal site visit it was clear that the Board is committed to the school, its staff, and its students. The two members discussed the school's commitment to improving access to a high-quality education particularly for the students in Albuquerque's southside. The GB, HA, and teacher focus groups all confirmed that data is shared regularly with everyone: parents, students, staff and board members.

### **2.d. Equity and Identity**

ACCS's renewal application and all focus groups confirmed the school's commitment to improving outcomes for students often considered "at-risk." In classroom observations it was clear that all students were treated with respect and compassion. The HA and teachers greeted each student as they entered the building with a handshake and a good morning. In all classroom observations, all students received small group instruction or one-on-one support depending on their needs, and all students were held to the same high expectations.

The school's application states that school leaders planned to better support ELs through additional interventions and small group instruction, however proficiency rates for this subgroup were lower than that of their peers. It appears in the schedule that the school does not have a dedicated English Language Development block to target support for EL students' proficiency in Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing in English as well as intentional instructional strategies for identified ELs; however, Part B of the school's application does state that upon an increase in the school's EL population, the leadership team created a plan to better support EL students through "additional intervention and small group instruction, aligned to the MLSS Tier 2 supports."

To comply with the Martinez-Yazzie mandate to provide culturally and linguistically relevant (CLR) instruction and to support and validate students' cultures, identities, and sense of belonging, the school has submitted its CLR Readiness Assessment but has not yet submitted a CLR Inventory or Framework for implementation of CLR objectives.

ACCS has an equity council; it is stated in the 2021-2022 annual site visit that an equity council was formed but that members lost interest and the council was dissolved. Part B of the renewal application states that the school does have an equity council and that the Martinez/Yazzie Readiness Assessment has been completed. At the renewal site visit, the HA stated that the school "reluctantly" participated in the required activity but that the school already did so much to address equity. The parent, GB, HA, and teacher focus groups confirmed that the school does offer intentional connections to family and community. The degree to which the school had created an equity plan is questionable. The HA focus group and the renewal

application verified the school’s partnership with Pacha Counseling Services for providing families with more social and emotional support.

Finally, it is recommended by the Center for Learner Equity that school leaders tackle the national and ubiquitous criticism of charter schools not being inclusive enough by developing and publishing “affirmative language related to the school’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.” All focus groups verify the school’s commitment to improving outcomes for student populations who often do not do well in traditional NM public.

The school’s lottery process as posted to the school’s website contains no non-discriminatory statement, as recommended by the CSD. Rather the school has an online enrollment system that requires a log-in name and password. It is unclear what additional data is collected after log-in.

**2.f. Other Performance Framework Indicators**

The school has earned three (3) repeat ratings of working to meet standard, and five (5) does not meet standard ratings over the course of their contract term. Of these ratings, 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d were covered in the above financial section.

Indicator 1d Rights of English Learners: For three of the four years monitored, the school received a working to meets standard for 1d, Rights of English Learners; in the most recent year monitored, the school received a Meets Standard.

Unrated Sections of Application	
Part D: Petitions of Support	Submitted as Required
Part E: Facilities	Submitted as Required
Part F: Change in Authorizer	N/A