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Charter Schools Division
Revised Preliminary Renewal Analysis and Recommendation
November 8, 2023

School Name: School of Dreams Academy

School Address: 906 Juan Perea Road, Los Lunas, NM 87031

Head Administrator: Michael Ogas

Governing Board Chair: David Watling

Contract Term: 2019–2024

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:

- (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.

Preliminary Renewal Recommendation

The Charter Schools Division (CSD) recommends renewal with the condition that the school and foundation's financial compliance be more closely examined and improved.

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 2023 Charter School Renewal Application.

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

*Pending 2022-23 overall Vistas score and Priority Schools designation.

1.a. Student Outcomes

For 2021-2022, School of Dreams Academy received a New Mexico Vistas score of 42. The average score for New Mexico districts is 53. The school is identified as a school requiring More Rigorous Intervention (MRI) for its graduation data. The school has previously been identified as a school requiring Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI). CSI schools that do not satisfy exit criteria within an identification cycle become identified as MRI. MRI schools failing to satisfy exit criteria within the identification cycle will have demonstrated persistent failure, requiring PED action. Cohort 2022 graduation data, which has not yet been finalized and so cannot be included in the report, does indicate significant improvement from Cohort 2021.

The school’s 2021-22 proficiency rates for reading, math, and science were 27%, 17%, and 20% respectively, compared to statewide proficiencies of 34%, 25%, and 33%, per New Mexico Vistas Data.

The PED is releasing 2022-23 [Vistas](#) data publicly at 5:00 PM on November 1, 2023. The data were provided to CSD the morning of November 1 so it could be incorporated into this report. Overall Vistas score was not available prior to the public release, but the school’s 2022-23 proficiency and growth rates, compared with the district where the school is located and statewide data, are:

2022-23 PED Accountability Data	Proficiency			Growth	
	ELA	Math	Science	ELA	Math
School of Dreams Academy	27%	12%	23%	-1%	-6%
Los Lunas Public Schools	37%	26%	29%	2%	-3%
New Mexico Statewide	38%	24%	34%	4%	0%

1.b. Mission-specific Goals

SODA’s Mission Goal reads as follows: Each year, 75% of students in grades K-5, enrolled on the 40th and 120th day, will earn a “Level 3 out of 5 within a Mastery Grading Scale” or higher on a minimum of three (3) STEAM courses. AND 75% of students in grades 6-12, enrolled on the 40th and 120th day, will earn a “C” or better on a minimum of four (4) STEAM elective courses.

Based on reported data, the school has failed to meet this goal for years 2 and 4 of the charter contract term if we are looking at the result literally as the goals are written. Based on reports from the school, it does not expect to meet the goal for 2023-24, citing a typo in the way they were written and an inability to offer middle grade (6-8) students a minimum of four (4) STEAM electives.

SODA submits that the inclusion of “elective” was never intended and is, in essence, a typo that they missed when reviewing their contract language. As it is impossible for students in grades 6-8 to even take four (4) elective courses in any given semester, because required coursework does not allow room for this, CSD agrees that the school intended all STEAM courses rather than electives, and using this benchmark, the school is meeting the goal.

2.a. Educational Program

There is observable evidence as well as documentation to verify that the Educational Program, as described in the contract, and explained in [Part B](#) of the school’s renewal application is being implemented with fidelity at the secondary level. School of Dreams Academy (SODA) utilizes a blended or hybrid learning program. Elementary students are provided all their classes in person, however a more rich STEAM based program at the elementary level is a growth area for the school. The upper grades utilize the Imagine Learning online learning program for all of the school’s core classes. There are a variety of STEAM based elective classes that are offered in person and online for students in the upper grades. The school integrates an advisory model for more individual student support, and many students and families feel this is a safe learning community.

Classroom observations provided evidence of the school’s educational program. There were STEAM based projects displayed in classrooms across the Elementary campus and students engaged in some hands-on learning activities during classroom instruction. Students in the upper grades were observed in learning labs completing their Imagine Learning coursework and in other classrooms engaging in hands-on STEAM and agricultural based electives.

Focus groups communicated overwhelming support for the school, families mentioned they feel safe at SODA and feel that the school goes above and beyond to ensure their child is getting the academic and social support they need to be successful. Teachers state that the school has many community connections and these connections are used to support the school's Project Based Learning STEAM electives. Students discussed many of their agricultural and STEAM elective courses as the highlight of their day, and shared many rich learning experiences they have participated in.

It is evident that the online learning platform paired with the STEAM based electives works for the school, but there are some areas of growth. The learning model has afforded many students the opportunity to obtain numerous college credits through dual enrollment due to the flexibility the program provides. Some focus groups mentioned that the hands-on aspect of the STEAM program, specifically the arts and sciences are growth areas for the school, which may be attributed to the school's online learning platform.

2.b. Financial Compliance

School of Dreams Academy (SODA) and its foundation have had a combined total of 33 audit findings over the past four fiscal years, with ten of these in FY 2022. Twelve of the findings have been material weaknesses, and 18 have been repeat findings, they have also had disclaimer opinions in prior audits. In FY22, SODA faced 10 audit findings, some of which were recurring issues between the school and its foundation. The school is currently on a financial correction action plan (CAP) with the CSD.

In collaboration with the Vigil Group, which took over business management in FY 2019, the head administrator took proactive steps to address these findings, outlined the school's workflow for managing finances. The focus was on processes for receiving invoices, obtaining approvals, managing cash receipts, payroll and purchase orders with the goal of improving internal controls and preventing future discrepancies.

The Foundation has recently contracted with a Certified Public Accountant who specializes in non-profit financial bookkeeping and reporting to remedy the status of the Foundation's accounting.

The school has made notable efforts to improve performance and outcomes by increasing communications among financial staff and ensuring expenditures are aligned with the budget, ensuring proper processes are followed prior to purchases, and that expenditures are made to prioritize educational improvements.

An area of specific concern regarding the Foundation's support, is the large Foundation debt, status of the facility project and status of the note for the lease purchase agreement. Head Administrator Mike Ogas is working on a detailed explanation of the foundation's financial status as the school submits its application to the PSFA for a new school building.

Mr. Ogas served as the foundation's Executive Director until October 27, 2023, when the foundation board unanimously voted to remove him from this role to ensure that there is a clear division of duties and no conflict of interest. Prior to his removal, Mr. Ogas as Executive Director signed a contract with John Jennings, the new foundation's accountant. Foundation President P.J. Walker has since signed a new contract with the accountant.

2.c. Governance Responsibilities

SODA has had stability on its governing board throughout the charter terms, with most members in place up until the most recent year when the school recruited new members with less constraints on their time and/or who could commit to training and meeting attendance. In 2023, when new members were recruited, the school was late in providing notification to the CSD.

Board members failed to complete the required training hours during fiscal years 2020, 2021, and 2022 but all board members completed the required training in FY 2023.

2.d. Equity and Identity

School of Dreams Academy has an Equity Council, and its staff has received professional development in Culturally and Linguistically Relevant instruction. The school reports that the Equity Council currently has five members and includes staff, parents, and students.

School of Dreams Academy has developed a plan to support equity and identity initiatives, which includes plans for further professional development and technical assistance pursuits, as detailed in the school’s renewal application.

The school provides daily transportation, breakfast, and lunch meals to students.

2.e. Tribal Consultation

The school does not fall under the Indian Education Act (NMSA 22-23A) or the 6.35.2 NMAC definition of a “historically defined Indian-impacted” school.

2.f. Other Performance Indicators

1.d. Rights of Students with Disabilities

School of Dreams Academy has been rated, “Working to Meet” for years 1, 3 and 4 of the current charter term. The school was placed on a corrective action plan for 2022-2023 by the Special Education Bureau, however the terms of the plan have been satisfied and the school is currently in good standing.

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