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**School of Dreams Academy  
Response to Preliminary Analysis**

Dear New Mexico Public Education Commission,

School of Dreams Academy is pleased to offer this response to the CSD's preliminary analysis as part of the five-year renewal process. This has been a challenging five years with all the challenges the pandemic brought and schools trying to keep some semblance of normalcy throughout. I believe our entire school answered the call extremely well when faced with unprecedented odds. We were fortunate that the legislature of 2019 provided us with a \$485K capital outlay award. With the money we were able to upgrade our 11-year-old servers and computer capabilities. We also transitioned our school over onto 100% google platform and in the Fall of 2019 began implementing google classroom and changed over our entire email system to Gmail (including students). We also purchased new Chromebook for all secondary students and computer labs for the elementary.

How much did the school do?  
How well did the school do?  
Who is better off as a result?

When the pandemic hit, we were up and running with full virtual instruction within two days. It would have been sooner, but we needed to purchase 70 zoom licenses and train our staff. Every student, from PreK through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, kept their same schedule and classes resumed. Whether or not it was an "optimal" experience was overshadowed by the fact that we were there, with the students and families, providing them with stability and information. This carried over to staff with numerous zoom meetings and trainings to make sure they had the tools to provide as good an instructional experience as possible. We continued with our Early College Model and students continued to take Dual Credit courses virtually. Also, we set up 5 locations across the valley and bussed two meals daily where students could pick up food. This went on for the entirety of the shutdown. When we came back, then had to go virtual, then came back, then had to go virtual, we were able to pull off instruction with as little interruption as possible. One thing that I believe speaks volumes about our school and staff is during the pandemic, when many districts were losing enrollment, we grew by over 150 students. Finally, I think our entire community is better off because we have proven, over the years, to be a viable educational option for parents and their children.

Sincerely,  
  
Michael S Ogas

Below is School of Dreams Academy’s response to the preliminary analysis of our five-year renewal process.

School Performance as Reviewed by CSD	SODA Response
Educational Programs	<p>STEAM could be improved for elementary students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elementary students all participate in SODA STEAM days.</li> <li>• Elementary reading program is National Geographic.</li> <li>• Elementary students participate in dance and music weekly.</li> <li>• SODA hired a K – 12 STEM Coordinator to work with classroom teachers to provide quality science related experiences.</li> <li>• New format for standards-based report cards so we can better track STEAM related classes and activities.</li> <li>• This is an area that we are cognizant that we need to improve on and are doing so.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Acad. proficiencies, 2021-2022</i></p> <p><i>2022-2023</i></p>	<p><i>27% reading, 17% math and 20% science</i></p> <p><i>27% reading, 12% math and 23% science</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SODA has incorporated a school wide MLSS initiative.</li> <li>• Read 180 and Math 180 implemented at the secondary level.</li> <li>• Weekly PLC meetings at the elementary and secondary levels focusing on Reading, Math, and Science and use of data to improve instruction, using Unified Insights portal in PowerSchool.</li> <li>• All grades now require students to keep interactive notebooks for all subjects.</li> <li>• Special Ed., and ELL students receiving grade level instruction particularly learning to use “academic language”</li> </ul>



		<p>special education licensed). However, we did not realize that people could only have a sped license, subsequently they were assigned to teach elementary grades (note: in years past you could not get a special education license unless you first had a regular ed elementary or secondary license). When we realized this error, it was too late. Future teaching assignments have been corrected and this error should not happen again.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With respect to shortcomings on the Financial Framework, SODA was proactive in placing ourselves onto a corrective action plan and submitted it to the CSD last spring of '23. This move has had a profoundly positive effect on our progress in this area. We expect a much-improved audit report this year.</li> </ul>
<i>Special Education CAP</i>	<i>Not completed in FY23</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This CAP should have been closed out in FY 23. This CAP resulted from a PreK, DD student whose IEP date was one day past his third birthday. SODA had scheduled the IEP prior to the child turning 3, yet the parent postponed the meeting, and we were not able to get them back till the day after the child turned 3. When we received the CAP, we immediately responded with the documentation required (twice) by the special education bureau. However, for some reason we were not cleared until this fall.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Governing board membership</i></p>	<p><i>Many board members turned over in early 2023. What was the reason for the changes?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For most of our school’s first 15 years, SODA had a very stable board with very little turnover. In 2023 we saw 4 of our 5 members move on. One member moved on to attend more to his international business. A second member is a medical doctor. He moved his practice to Albuquerque making it more difficult for him to make meetings on a consistent basis. A third member retired to spend more time with family and her church. And the 4<sup>th</sup> member moved out of state to be closer to his daughter who recently completed her PhD and began teaching in Missouri. We replaced these members and all new members have met their GC training hours through SY 24.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Reporting of vacancies and trainings</i></p>	<p><i>FY2023: Late filings and numerous training hours incomplete in FY20-FY22 (FY23 complete)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since we hadn’t had to fill a GC vacancy in many years, we were not experienced in filling out the necessary documents for adding and removing GC members. Because of the constraints above some of our GC members did not meet their training hours. However, currently all new GC members have met their training hours through SY 23-24.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Audit Findings</i></p>	<p><i>FY19: 9 findings, 8 repeat, 3 material weaknesses, 3 significant deficiencies and a disclaimed audit</i></p> <p><i>FY20: 6 findings, 5 repeat, 1</i></p>	<p>School of Dreams Academy has worked tirelessly over the past three years to work through the many audit findings. Many of the findings dealt with the School of Dreams Education Foundation. During FY 22 the foundation hired a Certified Public Accountant whose specialty is in Non-profit finances and reporting. The</p>

	<p><i>material weaknesses</i></p> <p><i>FY21: 8 findings, 3 repeat, 3 material weaknesses</i></p> <p><i>FY22: 10 findings, 2 repeat, 5 material weaknesses, 1 significant deficiencies</i></p>	<p>most recent FY 23 audit has been completed and even though I cannot divulge the outcome I can say with confidence that when the audit is released the PEC can anticipate a significant improvement in all areas previously of concern.</p>
<p><i>Foundation finances</i></p>	<p><i>What is the genesis of the large debt for the foundation? What is it made up of and how will it be paid off? Does the foundation receive funds from entities other than the school?</i></p>	<p>The School of Dreams Education Foundation incurred debt, for the school, when SODA moved onto the current 20-acre site in 2016. At the time the site was an old trailer park and required significant amounts of infrastructure work, including utilities and fiber optics. There were costs associated with architects, civil engineers, developers, and contractors. There needed to be significant site preparation to place the 34 portables which also needed varying degrees of significant repair. All in all, the debt incurred, by the foundation was for all these costs associated with the move which included adding elementary grades systematically over the subsequent 3 years.</p> <p>Currently, the foundation is in the best position ever to handle the debt through refinancing and covering any match the PSCOC may require when we get funding for our new building project (to be discussed below).</p> <p>Currently the school is in an approved lease purchase agreement with the foundation (the foundation holds the debt for the school).</p>

*Areas of Interest for Additional Information provided by PEC Commissioner.*

*Please describe your plan for educational progress overall during the next charter term given the performance set forth in the renewal application.*

**School of Dreams Academy will continue offering STEAM related instruction to all students grades PreK – 12. We are cognizant that we need to strengthen our STEAM related opportunities at the elementary level and have already taken measures to make that happen. At the secondary level we will continue to offer dual credit opportunities through our approved Early College High School Program. SODA will continue implementation of “Individual Learning Plans” for all students. As we plan for a new building, we are also working hard to create and implement CTE pathways that would both enhance our existing programs (robotics, agriculture, film making, etc.) and create new vocational training pathways (plumbing, electrical, construction, manufacturing, welding, coding, internships / apprenticeships, etc.). As mentioned in our renewal application, SODA was a leader in virtual / hybrid education as part of the NM Course Consortium during the pandemic. Our head administrator also represented New Mexico on the national Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance with representation from 20 states across the nation. Moving forward, SODA plans to propose, as part of our new contract, to be recognized as a regional virtual hybrid school with plans to serve Socorro, Valencia, Bernalillo, and Sandoval Counties. This regional model will allow us to allow students to take coursework online and come to SODA for CTE courses. This will also allow for a workable model for providing services for ELL and special education students in need of face-to-face instruction, counseling, and or more intense interventions. Having a regional presence will also make testing feasible by bringing student into SODA or meeting them at regional locations as needed.**

*With regard to grant funding, you may have received, please provide a general description of how you spent the grant funds and the results that you believe were achieved.*

**Attached is a report outlining our grant funding, by program, and a listing of how the monies were budgeted within the respective grants. We will continue to apply for and take advantage of supplementary funding opportunities as they become available. We will also budget and spend the more common supplemental funds (IDEA, Title I, Title II, III and IV) with fidelity within the constraints of what these funds are allocated for.**

*With regard to the reduction in small school size adjustment and the ending of federal funding, please describe the plan for your school to support students, educational programming and the academic growth of your students.*

**NA ... School of Dreams Academy has not received small school size adjustment since before 2016.**

**With respect to federal funding which is ending (ESSER), School of Dreams Academy was very careful about budgeting substantial recurring expenditures to these funds. Initially, expenditures from these funds primarily focused on health and safety (air filtrations systems, PPE, some security, behavioral health etc.). We also used some of these funds to purchase more Chromebooks for student use during the pandemic. Later we hired staff to begin working with students to mitigate learning loss and work around issues related to reentry to school.**

*How does the graduation rate relate to the low proficiency rates? Are the students graduating ready to move on to the next stage in their careers or in higher education?*

**School of Dreams Academy is aware that there is a discrepancy between the graduation rates and academic proficiency scores. Our staff is looking closely at what may be the root causes for these numbers. The most current VISTAS report shows that our school has a College and Career Readiness rating of greater than or equal to 95% as well as a four-year graduation rate of 83%. The College and Career Readiness score stems in large part from our student's successful completion of dual credit classes which are graded by college professors. We feel that these two scores are more accurate representation of our school's academic performance. That is not to minimize the proficiency ratings in reading math and science.**

**To improve on the MSSA and ASR scores, we have implemented several interventions to address each area. At the secondary level, we began implementing read 180 and math 180 as well as concentrated support within our daily advisory. At the elementary level, our grade level PLC groups are working to more closely aligned instruction to the academic standards, set forth by the state of New Mexico. Also, at the elementary level, we have implemented a new standards-based report card system, which requires teachers to rate student proficiency within the academic standards on a more regular basis. We are also involved in the Near Peer tutoring program, which we believe will help students who are struggling academically, improve their skill levels and proficiency rates. Along these lines, we will continue to use continuous assessments such as Istation**



**and NWEA MAP to help our staff form individual learning activities where students are showing specific needs. NWEA MAP is administered three times per year at the beginning, middle and end of year. Istation is given monthly. Both provide staff detailed printouts of student progress. Additionally, we are making sure that our teachers all understand the importance of doing well on this test, so that they will help motivate their students to get past the “Does this count on our grades?” attitude to “We need to do the best that we can” attitude. Our goal is to see significant improvement in these proficiency scores beginning with the 23-24 school year.**

*Please describe the history of the foundation and school employees on the foundation board. How were any conflicts of interest addressed?*

**Membership on our School of Dreams Education Foundation Board has always been voluntary. In the past we have had school employees serving on the foundation board. Currently two of the three board members are not school employees. We never viewed this as a conflict seeing that no one was ever paid by the foundation and the sole purpose of the foundation has always been to support the school in getting a facility and obtain funding opportunities for the school (Meta). The foundation board is looking at expanding their membership to possibly five members and will seek people not employed by the school as new members are brought in. In our renewal application we explained that our school’s Head Administrator has been removed from the foundation board so as not to have the perception of a conflict of interest.**

*Please provide more information on the night school and where is the funding from.*

**In 2009 Governor Richardson started an initiative called “Graduate New Mexico, It’s Everybody’s Business”. The goal of the program was to bring back 10,000 dropouts back to school to get their HS Diploma. In 2010 SODA received seed money, from Graduate NM, to start a similar program which was staffed by two teachers working after hours. At that time any person who came back to school to try and get their HS diploma could be counted as a student and the school could get SEG funding. About 4 years ago the legislature capped the age of a qualified student at age 22. For the next couple of years, we didn’t have the program. However, last year there were a handful of students that reached out wanting to finish their diploma. We agreed knowing that we would not get any funding for these adults. The adult students were enrolled in a combination of online and project-based classes on a credit recovery sort of model. This was overseen by one of SODA’s administrators and took minimal staff hours. During this most current CSD review we were informed that we should look for an outside grant or funding source to separate this program from the regular SEG funded program. We are in the process of doing just that and have reached out to some of our business partners for possible funding. Even though we have not paid anyone additional dollars to work this program, we have, for the time being, suspended any additional activity for this program until we can obtain some supplementary funding. We don’t require much money to keep this program going so we anticipate bringing the program back after the Christmas break.**

*Please describe the history of the school buildings, the financing received for these projects in the past, debts taken on associated with any school building plans and plans for school buildings.*

**Below is a chronology of events regarding School of Dreams Academy's facilities:**

- **In 2009 SODA opened its doors and for the first two and a half months our school was housed on the campus of UNM-Valencia. The school paid a very small lease to UNM-VC.**
- **In October of 2009 we moved to the Riverfront property on Main St., in Los Lunas. We started leasing a 10,000-sf piece of a storefront facility and eventually grew to leasing both buildings with two portables in. Eventually our facility expanded to 25,000-sf. This was a straight lease with the owner.**
- **On or about 2012 we were included on the local district's SB9 and HB33 question and began receiving those funds regularly. We also received lease assistance dollars from the PSFA.**
- **In the spring of 2016, we were approached by developers and the Village of Los Lunas to consider moving to a 20-acre site by the Rail Runner. This is our current location.**
- **Our school's foundation incurred debt to pay for the move and development of the site, infrastructure and moving in 34 portables. This is when we began building out our elementary school and PreK program. The lease was paid for by the lease assistance monies from PSFA, HB 33 and Operational dollars. The plan was to increase enrollment and work on building a permanent facility.**
- **During this time our NMCI score was too high to request facility money from the PSFA, so we pursued private funding sources but were unable to agree to some of the offers because they contained caveats that we were unwilling to agree to.**
- **Around 2021 our PreK had grown to over 90 students and we heard that the PSFA had money for PreK facilities. We applied and were awarded just under \$5M for a PreK facility.**
- **During the pandemic we asked the PSFA to come back and reevaluate our facility because we know our Facility Condition Index score was at 83 (schools qualify for new buildings when the FCI score is above 60).**
- **Also, during the pandemic, the state approved a Lease Purchase Agreement between the school and foundation that is currently in place.**
- **The PSFA came out in November of 2021 and last December of 2022 we were informed that our new NMCI score was going to be #1 when the ratings come out in FY 23. At that time, we were told that to apply for a new facility (Standards Based Award), which we would qualify for, we would need to rescind the PreK award because a school district cannot have multiple PSCOC awards active at the same time.**
- **On or about this time the Village of Los Lunas gave us control over the entire 20 acres allowing us to move forward with revising our facility master plan to include developing the entire 20 acres.**
- **In October 2023 we met with the PSFA, and they informed us that we DID NOT have to rescind the PreK award. Instead, they recommended that we ask for a "conversion" of the PreK award to a Standards Based award to request funding to build the entire school. This was very good news!**

- **There is a “match” requirement on PSCOC awards so we have been working with a private institution to secure as much funding as possible that would both refinance the foundation’s current debt and pay for as much of the match as possible. We will also be asking the PSCOC to waive some or all the match requirements.**
- **That is where we are to date. We continue to meet with the financial institution to obtain funding for debt consolidation and the match. As soon as this is finalized, we plan to request the conversion of the PreK award to a standards-based award and move forward with building a new school.**

**In conclusion, School of Dreams Academy is looking forward to our renewal hearing scheduled for December 14, 2023, at 8:00 a.m.**

**School of Dreams Academy**

**Funds and Grants Summary**

**FY23**

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Purchases</u>
24101 Title I	\$ 184,156.00	Salaries and Benefits
24106 IDEA-B	\$ 14,000.00	Cengage Learning
24109 IDEA-B Preschool	\$ 46,835.00	Teacher Synergy, School Specialty, Lakeshore
24153 Title III	\$ 11,591.00	Prof Development / Materials
24154 Title II	\$ 70,886.00	PD and Course Reimbursement
24174 Carl D Perkins	\$ 7,407.00	CTE Supplies and materials
24189 Title IV	\$ 30,000.00	PowerSchool Upgrades H2 Academic Solutions, n2y,LLC,Trafera, Riverside Tech, Mental health Coach, Tree Experts, Fleming Chemical, Wizer Electric,
24330-ARP	\$ 595,784.00	Raptor Tech
24333 Near Peer Tutoring	\$ 50,000.00	Salaries and Benefits
24339 ARP Virtual Course	\$ 296,168.00	Imagine Learning
24346 ARP IDEA-B	\$ 28,961.00	Ancillary Services
24349 IDEA-B Preschool	\$ 2,583.00	School Equipment
25153 Medicaid	\$ 67,813.00	Salaries and Benefits
27107 Library Fund	\$ 9,100.00	Shelves
27149 Pre-K Initiative	\$ 151,799.00	Salaries and Benefits, Pre-K Supplies / Equip
27153 ELT Transportation	\$ 1,808.00	Transportation
27406 K5 Pilot	\$ 514,818.00	Salaries and Benefits
27414 Pediatric Autism	\$ 1,612.00	Materials and Supplies
27502 CTE	\$ 6,928.00	Supplies
28211 COVID Grant	\$ 55,263.00	Salaries and Benefits
29102 Private Grant	\$ 34,000.00	Meta Grant - STEM Research Lab
31200 PSCOC	\$ 406,984.00	Lease Assistance

**FY22**

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Purchases</u>
24101 Title I	\$ 119,810.00	Salaries and Benefits
24106 IDEA-B	\$ 167,265.00	Salaries and Benefits and Ancillary
24109 IDEA-B Preschool	\$ 20,912.00	SPED supplies
24153 Title III	\$ 11,393.00	ELL Teacher Survival Guide
24154 Title II	\$ 57,700.00	PD Course Reimbursement
24174 Carl D Perkins	\$ 6,656.00	Supplies
24301 CARES Act	\$ 1,149.00	HEPA Filters
24308 CRRSA	\$ 306,813.00	Salaries and Benefits, Instructional materials and Learning Systems PowerSchool, NC Pearson, Software, Mental Health and Wellness Coaching, Headsets, Radios, Printers, Air Filtration Upgrades, New split system HVAC units
24330-ARP	\$ 866,145.00	split system HVAC units
24333 Near Peer Tutoring	\$ 50,000.00	Student Workers / Tutors

27107 Library Fund	\$ 3,942.00	Materials and Supplies
27109 Instructional materials	\$ 46,996.00	Materials and Supplies
27149 Pre-K Initiative	\$ 140,000.00	Salaries and benefits
27153 ELT Transportation	\$ 3,701.00	Transportation
31200 PSCOC	\$ 79,962.00	Lease Assistance
31400 Special Capital Outlay	\$ 485,000.00	Network Infrastructure - Google School

**FY19**

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Purchases</u>
24101 Title I	\$ 144,575.00	Salaries and benefits
24106 IDEA-B	\$ 86,584.00	Ancillary Services
24109 IDEA-B Preschool	\$ 16,451.00	Materials and Supplies
24154 Title II	\$ 39,263.00	PD
24171 Carl D Perkins Special Projects	\$ 5,080.00	Materials and Supplies
24176 Carl D Perkins	\$ 10,350.00	Materials and Supplies
25153 Medicaid	\$ 20,000.00	Salaries and benefits
27103 Dual Credit	\$ 7,109.00	DC books
27107 Library Fund	\$ 3,942.00	Materials and Supplies
31200 PSCOC	\$ 199,229.00	Lease Assistance