



November 15, 2023

Charter Schools Division
New Mexico Public Education Department
300 Don Gaspar Ave Santa Fe, NM 87501

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of Solare Collegiate Charter School, in response to the Preliminary Renewal Analysis provided by the Charter Schools Division. Please see notes below that provide additional information and context to the Preliminary Renewal Analysis. The Solare Collegiate team enthusiastically agrees with the Charter School Division's recommendation of a renewal for a period of five years, without conditions, as well as the overall preliminary analysis of the school. The school would like to clarify a couple items from the preliminary analysis.

Student Outcomes and Educational Program

The Charter School Division correctly points out that Solare Collegiate is presently performing slightly below the state averages, however the school team would like to acknowledge that our scores are outperforming that of the schools in APS's Learning Zone 2, a community with a long history of low academic performance. See below for a comparison:

	21-22 ELA	21-22 Math	21-22 Science	22-23 ELA	22-23 Math	22-23 Science
Solare Collegiate	25%	22%	19%	33%	22%	22%
Learning Zone 2 (grades 5-8)	21.6%	12.4%	16.2%	25.3%	12.7%	17.4%

Solare Collegiate strives to continue to make significant improvements in summative assessment outcomes-- with our summative data analysis showing that scholars who spend two or more years at Solare Collegiate are significantly more likely to be proficient on state assessments. For example, our 8th grade scholars who were at Solare for all four years had a 48% proficiency rate in ELA and 38% in math. Our community has a long history of poor academic performance-- but we are encouraged to see that with adequate time with our scholars, we can make significant academic progress.

1.b Mission Specific Goals

The school would like to note that the method of assessing this mission specific goal has been challenging as it was developed prior to the school's opening and didn't take into consideration the time needed to assess the mission specific goal, as currently outlined in the charter contract. In the event that we have a successful renewal, the school intends to work with the Charter School Division to develop a mission specific goal (and assessment of the



said goal) that strongly aligns to the school's mission and is more efficiently tracked in the day-to-day operations of the school.

2a. Educational Program

The school is excited that the educational program elements outlined in our contract are easily identifiable in the day-to-day operations of the school. We work really hard to make sure that our educational program is in alignment with the charter contract.

The Charter School Division reports that the Spanish and New Mexico Culture components are still actively trying to be developed by the school. We agree with this in regards to the Spanish language program. That said, the school has consistently had a New Mexico culture program since the school opened in 2019. Our direct instruction component of the New Mexico Culture program occurs each Friday morning, as well as special programs occurring more sporadically. In addition, as outlined in the charter application, Solare's New Mexico culture component has multiple layers-- self, school community, local community, and state. The first two components are deeply embedded into the day-to-day operations of the school, and those components are thoroughly described in the preliminary analysis by the Charter School Division. The school provided the Charter School Division with access to our NM Culture curriculum (current, as well as archived).

2b. Financial Compliance

The school would like to note that each of our audit findings were adequately addressed and corrected for each following a finding. The school team is excited to share the results of the most recent audit (22-23), when this information becomes publicly available.

2d. Equity and Identify

The Charter School Division stated in our preliminary analysis "Solare Collegiate Charter School established an Equity Council initially in SY 19/20, but it has since dissolved, and they are working to rebuild the equity council." This is not completely accurate. The Solare Collegiate Equity Council was developed in 2019-2020, and remained active during 2020-2021, and dissolved at the midpoint of the 22-23 school year. We have since reestablished the council, with our next meeting on November 17, 2023.

The Solare Collegiate team looks forward to continued partnership in education with the Charter School Division and the Public Education Commission. Any questions can be directed to the Head of School via email or phone. Thank you for your continued support, so we are able to support the scholars of Albuquerque's Southwest Mesa.

Best Regards,

Rachael Sowards

Rachael Sowards
Founder and Head of School