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**Charter Schools Division
Final Renewal Recommendation
December 1, 2023**

School Name: New Mexico School for Arts

School Address: 500 Montezuma Ave, Santa Fe, NM 87501

Head Administrator: Eric Crites

Governing Board Chair: Michael Kaplan

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.

CSD Renewal Recommendation

The Charter Schools Division (CSD) recommends that New Mexico School for the Arts (NMSA) be renewed for a term of five years without conditions.

Part B: Progress Report

The schools' narratives in Part B are rated Meets Standard, 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	Meets the Standards
1.b. Mission-Specific Goals	Meets the Standards
Organizational Performance	Rating
2.a. Educational Program	Meets the Standards
2.b. Financial Compliance	Meets the Standards
2.c. Governance Responsibilities	Meets the Standards
2.d. Equity and Identity	Meets the Standards
2.e. Tribal Consultation	N/A
2.f. Other Performance Framework Indicators	Meets the Standards

1.a. Student Outcomes

NMSA made substantial progress toward achievement of the department's standards of excellence and student performance standards. NMSA outperformed 89.4% of high schools for a Vistas designation of Spotlight in school year 2021-2022. The school's proficiency rates in reading, math, and science were 73%, 24%, and 77% respectively, exceeding statewide proficiencies in reading and science. (Statewide: reading 34%, 25%, and 33%.) The school's 4-year graduation rate of 95% in 2021 exceeds the state average of 77%. The school also has a 95% student retention rate and a 100% college acceptance rate over the contract term.

Leadership, teacher, and the governing board focus groups discussed NMSA's reliance on PSAT and SAT data to adjust curriculum and classroom instruction. Leadership discussed how the staff frequently did data analysis and problem-solving to address how to improve student success in the areas of underperformance. Teachers in the focus group discussed differentiated classroom instruction and the use of Universal Design to make sure each student's individual learning needs were met.

The PED released 2022-23 [Vistas](#) data publicly in November 2023. The overall Vistas score is provided below, as well as the school's 2022-23 proficiency and growth rates compared with the district where the school is located and statewide data. The school moved from a designation of Spotlight to Excellence, indicating it rates among the top 10% of schools across the state.

2022-23 NMVistas Score: 81

2022-23 Designation: Excellence

2021-22 NMVistas Score: 67

2021-22 Designation: Spotlight

2022-23 PED Accountability Data	Proficiency			Growth	
	ELA	Math	Science	ELA	Math
New Mexico School for the Arts	88%	37%	78%	14%	13%
Santa Fe Public Schools	38%	23%	30%	5%	1%
New Mexico Statewide	38%	24%	34%	4%	0%

Graduation Rates			
NMSA	4-year	5-year	6-year
2021-22	≥95% cohort 2021	88% cohort 2020	86% cohort 2019
2022-23	≥95% cohort 2022	≥95% cohort 2021	88% cohort 2020

Note: Some percentages are labeled ≥ to mask data due to student population size.

Source: NMVistas.org

1.b. Mission-specific Goals

The school exceeded its mission-specific goal every year that data were collected during the contract term. NMSA’s mission-specific goal is that all 12th grade students who have attended NMSA for six or more consecutive semesters will demonstrate proficiency as measured by individual arts department rubrics for a creative, collaborative department project that illustrates competency in their arts discipline, personal expression through their art form, and the ability to produce and carry out a comprehensive project. To exceed this goal 80% or more of students needed to demonstrate proficiency in their arts discipline. In the school year 2019-20, 100% of students met the goal, in 2020-21, 91% of students met the goal, in 2021-22, 98% met the goal, and in 2022-23, 95% met the goal.

2.a. Educational Program

New Mexico School for the Arts (NMSA) has a demonstrated record of meeting all standards of the school’s unique educational program as they are defined in the performance contract. Substantial evidence provided in NMSA’s Part B of the renewal application in addition to observable evidence and documentation collected by the Charter Schools Division (CSD) during the renewal site visit on October 13, 2023, verify that NMSA’s Educational Program, as defined in the contract, is being implemented with fidelity. NMSA is a VISTAS Spotlight School and has a 100% college acceptance rate.

Part B of NMSA's renewal application and all focus groups verified the equal opportunity strategies used in the student admissions process, the first component in NMSA's contractual Education Program. The student focus group included students from Pecos, Española, Corrales, Taos, Las Vegas, and Santa Fe, and the narrative in [Part B](#) explained that NMSA had students from a total of 39 different counties and Pueblos representing all three congressional districts. Many students shared specific examples of how the school supported commuters; one student approached the CSD team after the focus group and explained that the school's safe and welcoming environment and committed staff had "saved her life." Leadership, the governing board, and teacher focus groups all discussed and verified the transition to the new admissions process and offered compelling evidence that it had made the process significantly more equitable and inclusive. Part B's narrative explains how the revised admissions process no longer requires students to prepare a performance piece or to compile a portfolio of work, a practice that clearly gave families with more disposable income an advantage. Instead, students participate in a three-hour workshop where they demonstrate their passion and aptitude for the art form that they wish to study at the school. According to the chart provided, it does appear that student population numbers diversified, even after only one year after the implementation of the revised admissions process; the Native American population grew from 2% to 5% and the Caucasian student population decreased by almost half. Still, the school has room for growth in reflecting the state's population.

Part B and the leadership focus group also verified that the new residential living space will be open to out-of-town students. These refinements and changes at the school are intended to further diversify the student population and to increase the percentage of students at the school representing each of the state's congressional districts. Part B and the teacher focus group also described the outreach activities to middle schools around the state to ensure that all students have equal access to the school and its unique program.

Academic teachers, the leadership team, and the students verified the rigorous academic program during the day and the adjustments that NMSA had made to ensure students could be successful in their core classes and arts-based classes. Teachers verified an advisory was in place, students discussed more project-based work, and all focus groups verified the social and emotional support provided by the school. The teacher and student focus groups did acknowledge that some of the core classes could be more consistent in expectations and possibly more rigorous; however, all focus groups demonstrated a school community model where continuous improvement is a part of daily practice and discussion.

The CSD team observed several examples of the intensive pre-professional instruction in the performing, creative writing, and music programs (Visual Arts students were on a field trip and Dance students were preparing off-campus for a performance that evening.) Student and teacher focus groups emphasized the exceptional opportunities that students have in the arts. One student mentioned working with a two-time Grammy winner. One classroom had guest speakers, a renowned cellist from Germany and a professional pianist who showed the students the potential for careers in music.

2.b. Financial Compliance

The school has had no significant deficiency, material weakness, or repeat audit findings in any fiscal year of the contract term. NMSA has a very engaged Governing Council who meet regularly and review documents and inquire about specific funds and purchases. Internal controls are tested and reviewed as needed, with daily interaction and communication with staff to address any issues as they arise.

2.c. Governance Responsibilities

The school meets all governance requirements in all contract years. The site visit focus group with the NMSA governing board revealed a board that is knowledgeable, seasoned, well-prepared, and active in school governance. The board discussed their active search for a more diverse board membership that better represented the student population.

2.d. Equity and Identity

NMSA’s narrative in section 2.d. of Part B of the renewal application, and all focus groups interviewed during the site visit, offered substantial evidence that NMSA has an active Equity Council in place. The leadership focus group discussed proactively recruiting council members to ensure that the entire student body was represented; currently, the membership represents the following communities: Indigenous, Latino, students with disabilities, artists, Asian, Pacific Islander, African American, and gender diversity. The NMSA Equity Council exists and its recommendations and decisions affect policies and practices within the school. Notably, the admissions process was altered to address inequities, the school hired a cultural liaison and established a cultural room, the Equity Council created and finalized an equity commitment statement, and finally the council ensured that essential clubs and groups were established at the school and that all students had access to a group that could give them a voice (Women of Color Collective, TransCloset, Native American, and LGBTQIA) .

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

No other indicators had a Does Not Meet Standard or repeated Working to Meet 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

Multi-Year Performance Framework Ratings

New Mexico School for the Arts	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Organizational and Financial Performance				
1a Mission and Educational Program	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
1b State Assessment Requirements	Not Reviewed	Not Reviewed	Working to Meet Standard	Pending
1c Rights of Students with Disabilities	Not Reviewed	Working to Meet Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
1d Rights of English Learners	Working to Meet Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
1e Meeting Program Requirements	Meets Standard	N/A	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
1f NM DASH Plan	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2a Financial Reporting and Compliance	Meets Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
2b Accounting Principles	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
2c Responsive to Audit Findings	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
2d Managing Grant Funds	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
2e Staffing for Fiscal Management	Working to Meet Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
2f Internal Controls	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	N/A	Meets Standard
3a Governance Requirements	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
3b Nepotism, Conflict of Interest	Not Reviewed	Assurances	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
3c Reporting Requirements	Meets Standard	Assurances	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
4a Rights of All Students	Not Reviewed	Assurances	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
4b Attendance and Retention	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Working to Meet Standard
4c Staff Credentialing	Not Reviewed	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
4d Employee Rights	Not Reviewed	Assurances	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
4e Background Checks, Ethics	Not Reviewed	Assurances	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
5a Facilities	Not Reviewed	Assurances	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
5b Transportation	Not Reviewed	Assurances	N/A	N/A
5c Health and Safety	Not Reviewed	Assurances	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
5d Handling Information	Meets Standard	Assurances	Meets Standard	Meets Standard

Source: CSD Internal Monitoring

Site Visit Participants

CSD (in person): Lucy Valenzuela (lead), Cheryl Rowe, Rachel Stofocik; **CSD (remote):** Kimberly Gonzalez

School Administration: Eric Crites, Head Administrator; Cindy Montoya, Art Institute President; Danielle Gothie, Curriculum and Instruction Specialist; Shell Welch, Counselor; Elizabeth Romero, Business Manager

School Governing Board: Michael Kaplan, Chair; Dolores Espinosa de Ortega