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

School Name: Southwest Secondary Learning Center

School Address: 10301 Candelaria Road NE Albuquerque, NM 87112

Head Administrator: Lisa Mora

Governing Board Chair: Michael Hamel

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 Southwest Secondary Learning Center be renewed for a term of five (5) years with the following conditions which are based on criteria required by law for charter renewal:

Condition: Southwest Secondary Learning Center (SSLC) “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,” as academic growth has dropped in both ELA and Math, and the school maintained a designation of CSI, Comprehensive Support School for the past two years. Therefore, SSLC will demonstrate a record of continuous improvement in academic proficiency and graduation rates over the duration of the charter term. Using their 90-day DASH plans and annual Ed Plan, SSLC will present their academic progress at the June or July PEC meeting each year of the term.

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	Pending clarification from PED*
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	Demonstrates Substantial Progress

*School has disputed graduation rates in NMVistas. SSLC and CSD are seeking clarification with Accountability. See more under Graduation Rates table on page 3.

1.a. Student Outcomes

For 2021-22, Southwest Secondary Learning Center ranked above 65.5% of high schools statewide and had proficiency rates for reading and science (math was masked) of 41% and 48% respectively, compared to statewide proficiencies of 34% and 33%. The school received a designation of Comprehensive Support School and Improvement (CSI) for Graduation Rate

(includes all public high schools in the state, Title I, with a four-year graduation rate below 66.67% for at least two out of the past three years). The school's four-year graduation rate for the most recent cohort was 56%, well below the state average of 77%, and considerably lower for traditionally underserved groups. The five- and six-year rates reach 69% and 73% respectively, but still fall below 82%, the statewide average for both.

The school has created an academic dean position to monitor student data, including course completion data, and increased data points tracked to include more subgroups. Data are communicated weekly to staff and families, and monthly to the governing board. The school provided course completion data that show steady improvement.

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.

2022-23 NMVistas Score: 47 **2022-23 Designation:** CSI
2021-22 NMVistas Score: 50 **2021-22 Designation:** CSI Grad

2022-23 PED Accountability Data	Proficiency			Growth	
	ELA	Math	Science	ELA	Math
Southwest Secondary Learning Center	29%	10%	55%	-9%	-17%
Albuquerque Public Schools	40%	25%	35%	4%	0%
New Mexico Statewide	38%	24%	34%	4%	0%

Graduation Rates			
SSLC	4-year	5-year	6-year
2021-22	56% cohort 2021	69% cohort 2020	72% cohort 2019
2022-23	16%* cohort 2022	58% cohort 2021	71% cohort 2020

*Source: NMVistas.org and STARS. PED data does not match SSLC's records. SSLC reports a significant number of students who have graduated, yet are not recorded in PED systems as having graduated. Using PED graduation calculation methods, SSLC estimates the 2022-23 4-year cohort 2022 graduation rate at slightly above 60%. This issue is in the process of being investigated by the Bureau of Research, Evaluation, and Accountability.

1.b. Mission-specific Goals

The school met or exceeded its mission-specific goals every year that data were collected during the contract term.

2.a. Educational Program

The school is implementing the educational program described in the contract, with most of the core curriculum provided by Edgenuity and completed by students in person on campus in a computer lab with teachers on duty to provide assistance as needed. Students can recover credit when they fall behind, or complete credits more quickly than in a traditional program, enabling them to take more dual credit courses at CNM once their high school requirements are met. Most students are in person at least some of the time (86%), with a few students 100% remote (11%) or 100% dual enrollment at CNM (3%). Each student has a sponsor teacher who tracks student progress, offers support, and communicates regularly with families. Interviews with students, parents, and teachers confirm that this system works well and sponsor teachers are informed and active in support of students.

Overwhelmingly, students reported that Smart Lab, where they work on independent and group projects which they present to peers and teachers, was their favorite aspect of the school. Students, families, and staff all said that the model is not for everyone, but students who are motivated and learn to manage their time can thrive.

2.b. Financial Compliance

The school had no material weakness or repeat audit findings, and only a single significant deficiency finding in FY2019 with none in subsequent years.

The school has contracted with K12 accounting, which provides on-site staff for financial management. This includes an on-site assistant business manager who assists the business manager at K12 accounting. The assistant business manager is responsible for the accounts payable (AP), cash reports, and payroll. K12 has a financial manager who handles processing receipts, reviews AP, and payroll transactions and closely collaborates with the Head Administrator (HA) for any issues outside of AP and Payroll. The school focuses on segregation of duties as an internal control mechanism. They have a system of checks and balances with reviews of internal controls between the school and K12 accounting.

The school has a strong financial position with a high cash carryover. They are working on strategies to spend down excess cash to contribute to student success programs. The board is actively involved in financial oversight.

2.c. Governance Responsibilities

The school meets all governance requirements in all contract years. The site visit interview with board members showed a board that is extremely well-informed about all aspects of the school and takes an active role in school governance.

2.d. Equity and Identity

SSLC has an Equity Council and is actively engaged in outreach to middle schools around Albuquerque, which may broaden the demographic base of the school. The school has room to expand its enrollment (133 at 2022-23 EOY) and not exceed its enrollment cap (500) or facility capacity (246).

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

The only other indicator with a repeated Working to Meet rating was 4.b. Attendance and Retention. In 2022-23 the school’s attendance rate was 88%, retention 75%, and recurrent enrollment 77% (targets 95%, 80% and 70% respectively). The school’s application described strategies to improve attendance and retention.

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

Southwest Secondary Learning Center	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	Meets Standard	Not Reviewed	Meets Standard	Pending
1c Rights of Students with Disabilities	Working to Meet Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
1d Rights of English Learners	Working to Meet Standard	Not Reviewed	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
1e Meeting Program Requirements	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
1f NM DASH Plan	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2a Financial Reporting and Compliance	Working to Meet Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
2b Accounting Principles	Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
2c Responsive to Audit Findings	Working to Meet 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	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
3a Governance Requirements	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
3b Nepotism, Conflict of Interest	Meets Standard	Assurances	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
3c Reporting Requirements	Meets Standard	Assurances	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
4a Rights of All Students	Working to Meet Standard	Assurances	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
4b Attendance and Retention	Working to Meet Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Working to Meet Standard
4c Staff Credentialing	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
4d Employee Rights	Meets Standard	Assurances	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
4e Background Checks, Ethics	Meets Standard	Assurances	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
5a Facilities	Meets Standard	Assurances	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
5b Transportation	Meets Standard	Assurances	Meets Standard	N/A
5c Health and Safety	Working to Meet Standard	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): Dr. Brigette Russell (lead), Cheryl Rowe, Rachel Stofocik; **CSD (remote):** Kimberly Gonzalez

School Administration: Lisa Mora, Head Administrator; Denise Dixon, Academic Dean; Kristalyn Loftis, Business Manager

School Governing Board: Eileen Johnson, Vice President; Deborah Burns, Secretary; Danielle Parker