



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
300 DON GASPAR
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501-2786
Telephone (505) 827-5800
www.ped.state.nm.us

ARSENIO ROMERO, PH.D.
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
GOVERNOR

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

School Name: Solare Collegiate Charter School

School Address: 8801 Gibson Blvd SW Albuquerque, NM 87121

Head Administrator: Rachael Sowards

Governing Board Chair: Mike Wallace

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 Solare Collegiate be renewed for a term of

five (5) years with the following condition which is based on criteria required by law for charter renewal:

Condition: While Solare Collegiate has demonstrated substantial progress, academic growth has dropped slightly in math, and the school maintained a designation of TSI, Targeted Support and Improvement. Therefore, Solare will demonstrate a record of continuous improvement in academic proficiency over the duration of the charter term. Using their 90-day DASH plans and annual Ed Plan, Solare 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	Demonstrates Substantial Progress
1.b. Mission-Specific Goals	Demonstrates Substantial Progress
Organizational Performance	Rating
2.a. Educational Program	Demonstrates Substantial Progress
2.b. Financial Compliance	Demonstrates Substantial Progress
2.c. Governance Responsibilities	Demonstrates Substantial Progress
2.d. Equity and Identity	Demonstrates Substantial Progress
2.e. Tribal Consultation	N/A
2.f. Other Performance Framework Indicators	Demonstrates Substantial Progress

1.a. Student Outcomes

Students at Solare Collegiate Charter School are slightly below the state average in ELA and Math but are consistently showing growth in their summative state assessments. For the 2021-22 SY on the NM-MSSA state assessment Solare scored slightly below the state average with scores at 24-27% in ELA compared to the state average of 33-36%, and math scores of 22-24% compared to the state average of 25-33%. However, the school team provided evidence that their scores are outperforming those of the schools in APS’s Learning Zone 2 (a community with a long history of low academic performance) and their students are making improvement. Moreover, the school has implemented specific adult actions to support students in increasing proficiency in reading and math, such as the implementation of FOCUS and DEAR for intentional skill development support.

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: 44

2022-23 Designation: TSI

2021-22 NMVistas Score: 26

2021-22 Designation: ATSI

2022-23 PED Accountability Data	Proficiency			Growth	
	ELA	Math	Science	ELA	Math
Solare Collegiate Charter School	33%	22%	22%	8%	-1%
Albuquerque Public Schools	40%	25%	35%	4%	0%
New Mexico Statewide	38%	24%	34%	4%	0%

1.b. Mission-specific Goals

Solare Collegiate Charter School’s Mission Specific Goal set at 80% proficiency based on the school’s “Value Rubric” grading system has not been met in any year of the contract term, however school data suggest student growth. The school is scoring at 56-57% proficiency and as a result has implemented many adult actions to get students closer to their target percentage. The school has supported teachers through professional development to implement high quality rigorous instruction with a focus on oral literacy. The school hopes to see the school gradually increase their proficiency ratings over the next contract term.

2.a. Educational Program

Solare Collegiate Charter School demonstrated evidence of meeting the majority of aspects described in their educational program as defined in the contract and outlined in [Part B](#) of their renewal application. There was observable evidence of the school’s educational program in classroom observations and in focus groups. Students engage in student led learning and oral literacy practice in their classes. The school also offers a “Focus Block” in order to support students with individual needs and time for “community circle” to build peer to peer and teacher to peer relationships. Most notable was the school’s “Sundial Habits” behavior system which was observed in all classrooms and discussed in all focus groups.

Oral literacy skill development and practice were observed in classes in which students would speak publicly to share their ideas and were asked to collaborate with their peers. The school's unique "Sundial Habits" aspect serves as the school's social emotional and behavior intervention system. Students use the language within the sundial chart regularly in class and even with their families. Each day in class students reflect and uplift their peers based on how they demonstrated the "Sundial Habits".

Across all focus groups it was evident that the school provides multilayers of support for students and families. Families and students feel the school has contributed greatly to their academic progress and social emotional development. The school uses data to inform curriculum and professional development offered to teachers, and teachers feel supported to implement the education program. The school also implements extended day and year programming.

It was evident that Solare is still developing the Spanish and New Mexico Programming aspect of the educational program. Leadership and the Governing Board expressed interest in developing a Bilingual certification pathway for students to support this educational programmatic aspect. They intend to work with Language and Culture to begin offering this at the school.

2.b. Financial Compliance

Over the contract term the school and its foundation have had audit findings in every year except the first, including material weakness and repeat findings. The number of findings has decreased from a high of five in FY 2020 to one in FY2021 and two in FY2022. Material weakness findings decreased from two in FY2020 to one in each of the last two years.

The school recognizes that its foundation did not have adequate and necessary financial policies and procedures in place in its start-up year, which created issues related to the construction loan. The Foundation will develop improved accounting procedures, including an annual financial close, work with the lender for compliance in all areas of finance, and hire an accountant experienced with public school finance.

2.c. Governance Responsibilities

The school has maintained full membership in its governing board throughout the contract term, but has had untimely notification of vacancies during two years of the contract. All board members completed the required training in the first year of the contract, but during the second and third years all training hours were not complete. In year four, the school adopted a more holistic board training model, in lieu of segmented board training hours, working with a PED-approved consultant to provide day-long training at the annual board retreat. This resulted in all training being complete.

2.d. Equity and Identity

Solare Collegiate Charter School established an Equity Council initially in SY 19/20. It was active until it dissolved at the midpoint of the 2022-23 school year. However, through diligent efforts

to actively recruit staff, students, and parents to serve on the Equity Council, it has now been reestablished and is scheduled to meet on December 15, 2023. The school has made progress on their Equity in Action items and currently has a CLR Framework that informs their instructional practices.

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

Solare has demonstrated substantial progress on the indicator of state assessment requirements; they have provided intervention strategies to increase state assessment participation. The school has since updated their accounting policies for the 22-23 SY in order to ensure the school does not have additional audit findings moving forward. In addition, Solare’s Governing Board has transitioned to a “Board Retreat Style” in order to ensure that all board members can effectively complete their required board training. Lastly, the school has implemented attendance intervention strategies such as incentivizing students and communicating with families in order to increase the school’s attendance rate.

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

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

Source: CSD Internal Monitoring

Site Visit Participants

CSD (in person): Cheryl Rowe (lead), Dr. Brigette Russell, Lucy Valenzuela, Kristen LaVolpa; **CSD (remote):** Kimberly Gonzalez

School Administration: Rachael Sowards, Head of School; Jazmyne Brown, Associate Head of School; Tiffany Orr, Dean of School Culture; Kaitlin Pyke, SPED Coach and Teacher; Faith Montano, Science Coach and Teacher; Sarah Tawwater, SS Coach and Teacher; Val Saavedra, ELA Coach and Teacher; Brianna Clark-Lovato, Math Coach and Teacher

School Governing Board: Michelle Cassias, Secretary; Mike Wallace