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SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
GOVERNOR

**Charter Schools Division
2022-23 Annual Report
January 19, 2024**

School Name: Explore Academy Las Cruces

School Address: 850 N. Telshor Blvd, Las Cruces, NM 88011

Head Administrator: Karen Casedy

Governing Board Chair: Clara Welles Raley

Business Manager: Katie Rarick¹

Authorized Grade Levels: K-12²

Grade Levels Served: 6-9

Authorized Enrollment Cap: 1000

2022-23 End of Year Enrollment: 169

Contract Term: 2021-2026

Waivers: none

Mission:

The mission of Explore Academy - Las Cruces (EA-LCS) is to provide all students, regardless of background, with a personalized educational experience through the power of student choice, allowing each student to create a personalized and engaging educational pathway in preparation for college.

¹ Change notification and supporting documentation needed for business manager.

² Grade level and enrollment cap changes submitted to CSD on 3.24.23.

Educational Program:

5.1.1 Per its mission, Explore Academy will offer shorter learning modules (seminars) through which students will receive concentrated instruction over a smaller subset of academic standards. At the conclusion of each term, students will take an exit exam in each seminar to determine whether students have reached the required proficiency levels for each standard assessed for that seminar.

5.1.2 The school's choice-based philosophy of education provides students the freedom to choose from a set of seminar-versions. Since seminars are often offered in various versions, taught by different teachers, students will have the choice in the specific theme through which they will receive the instruction over the content of those seminars. Thus, the different versions through which each seminar is offered will be unique in their focus and instructional approach, thus allowing students to choose how they want to learn the content through a set of discrete options. This extends across all core and elective (PE, art) content areas, as well as into the school's unique upper division seminars.

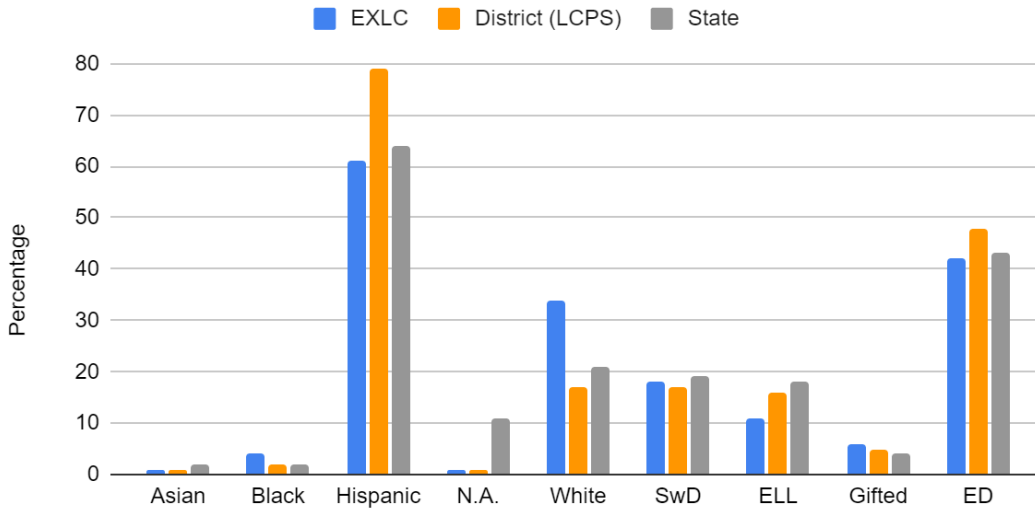
5.1.3 Explore Academy students will have daily academic flex periods, allowing them to complete homework, collaborate, attend tutoring, pursue credit recovery, attend school meetings, visit teachers (and case managers in the case of special education students in compliance with their Individualized Education Plans,), and complete make-up work as needed.

5.1.4 The school's staff will be provided with time for professional collaboration, such as in professional learning communities, to function as a forum for the sharing of best practices/instructional strategies, data analysis from seminar/exit exams, creation/modification of future exit exams, analysis of student satisfaction data, creation/modification of future seminars, etc. This collaborative component will be essential in allowing teachers to work together, share their experiences, and streamline their efforts as they work to implement this innovative form of education.

5.1.5 The school encourages parent involvement in all areas of its operation. The school will communicate with parents through its website and a monthly newsletter for the dissemination of general information, and as needed via phone and/or email for individual student cases (academic, behavioral, etc.). Parents will have the ability to monitor student progress through the parent portal component of the student information system.

Demographics as reported in STARS 2022-23 End of Year (EOY)

Enrollment by Subgroup EOY 2022-23



Source: STARS Enrollment Subgroup Percentages with Averages

Academic Performance

Academic Performance Framework Indicators	2022-23 Score (100 points possible)
1: State Accountability System: NMVistas Overall Score	49
2: Subgroup performance: high, middle, and low-performing quartiles	unavailable
3: School-specific Goals: if two goals, average of points on each	75
Overall Academic Score: average of indicators 1 and 3	62

State Accountability System:

State and federal statute mandates accountability for all public schools. This section provides a snapshot of the school’s academic performance according to data collected by the Public Education Department (PED) for the 2022-23 school year.

The New Mexico State Accountability System ([NMVISTAS](#)) gives every public school in the state an overall score. For 2022-23, NMVistas scored schools according to the following designations:

- School of Excellence: Schools performing in the top 10% of all schools on the NMVistas school index.

- Spotlight School: Schools performing in the next 15% of all schools on the NMVistas school index.
- Traditional School: Schools performing below the top 25% of schools and not designated for additional supports per the following designations.
- Targeted Support and Improvement School (TSI): Schools serving a student group that falls below the cutoff for CSI schools (described below).
- Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI): TSI schools serving a student group that is performing in the lowest 5% of all schools.
- Comprehensive Support School (CSI): Title I schools that are:
 - o performing in the lowest 5% of Title I schools in New Mexico as identified by the school index score;
 - o have an average four-year graduation rate less than or equal to 66.67% over the past three years;
 - o a Title I school that was previously identified as ATSI due to low performing subgroups that has not demonstrated sufficient improvement in those subgroups over 3 years; or
 - o the department may identify additional schools as CSI schools as deemed necessary.
- More Rigorous Intervention (MRI): Schools not exiting CSI status after 3 years receiving support.

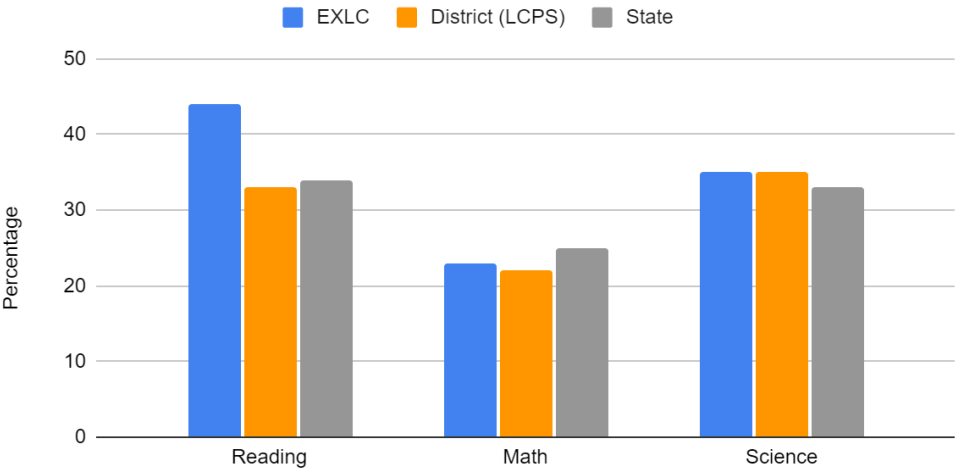
Details and criteria for each type of designation are provided on the [NMVISTAS](#) web page.

For the school year 2022-23, **Explore Academy Las Cruces** received a designation of **Traditional**.

Proficiency

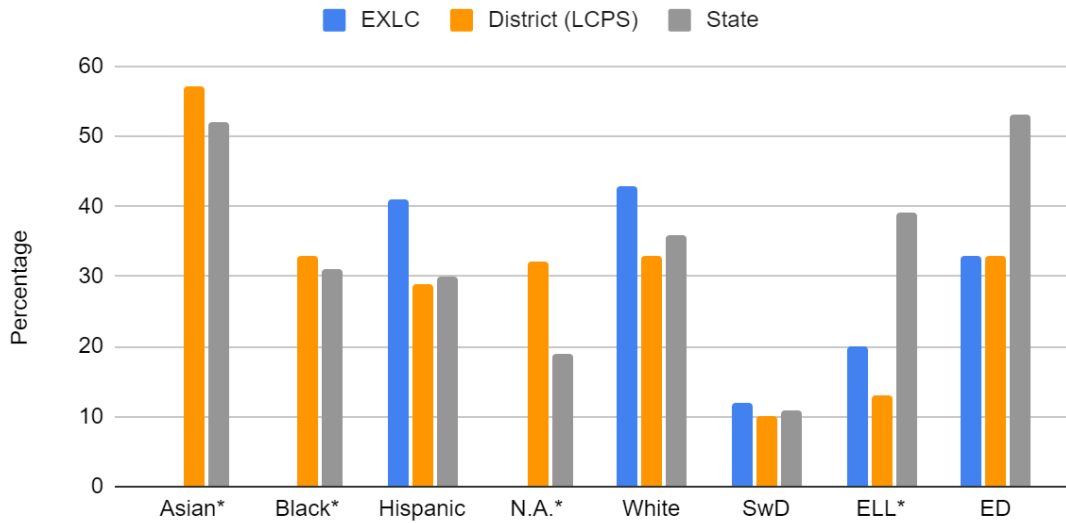
Because science is assessed only in grades 5, 8, and 11, schools that do not serve these grades do not have science proficiency data.

Percent of Students Proficient in Core Subjects 2022-23



Source: NMVistas.org

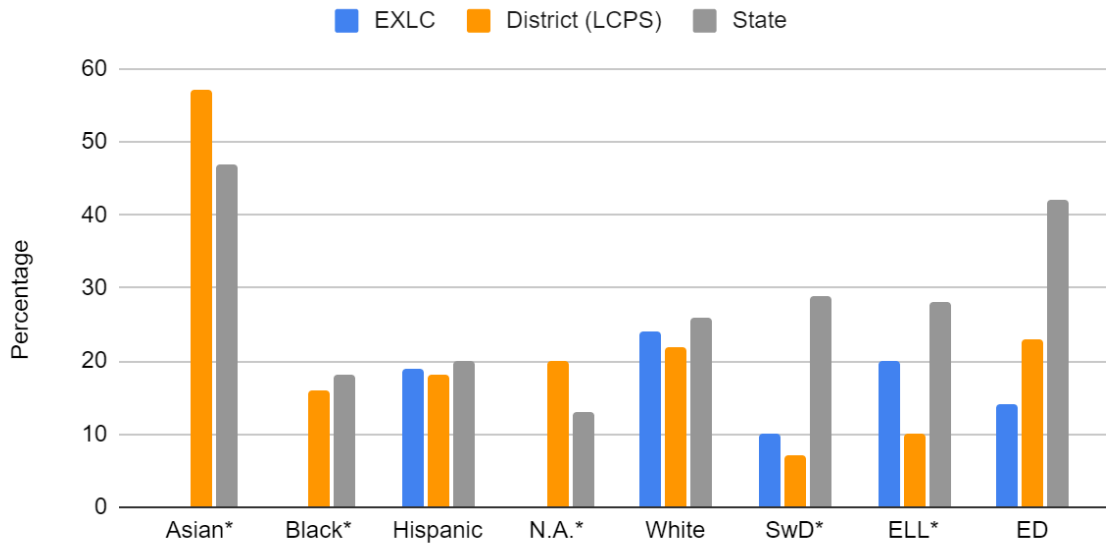
Percent Proficient in Reading by Subgroup 2022-23



Source: NMVistas.org

***Note:** Asian, Black, and Native American reading data masked due to population size. Reading proficiency for ELL population indicated on Vistas as $\leq 20\%$, also masked due to population size.

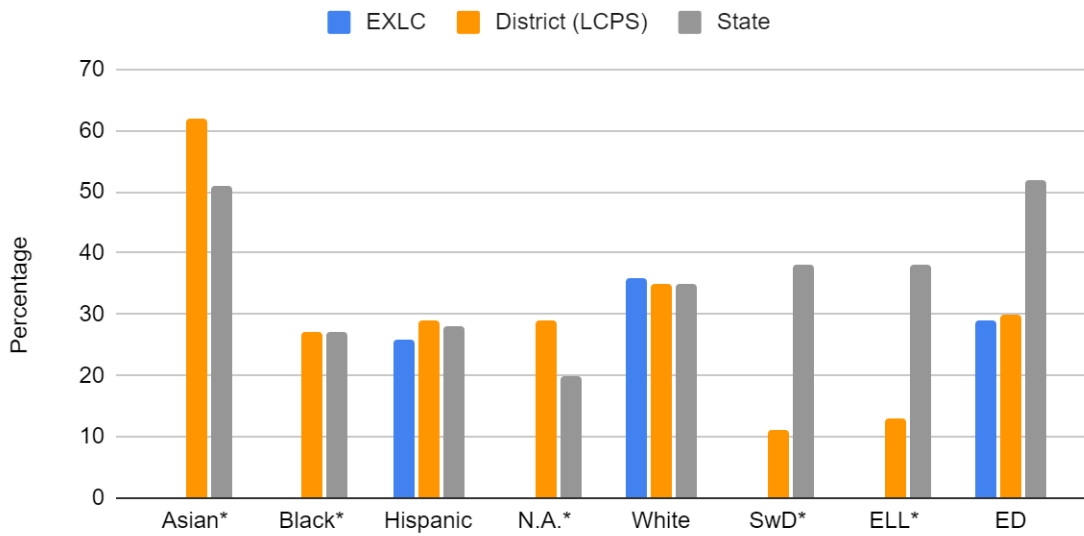
Percent Proficient in Math by Subgroup 2022-23



Source: NMVistas.org

***Note:** Asian, Black, and Native American math data masked due to population size. Math proficiency for ELL population indicated on Vistas as $\leq 20\%$, and Students with Disabilities as $\leq 10\%$, also masked due to population size.

Percent Proficient in Science by Subgroup 2022-23

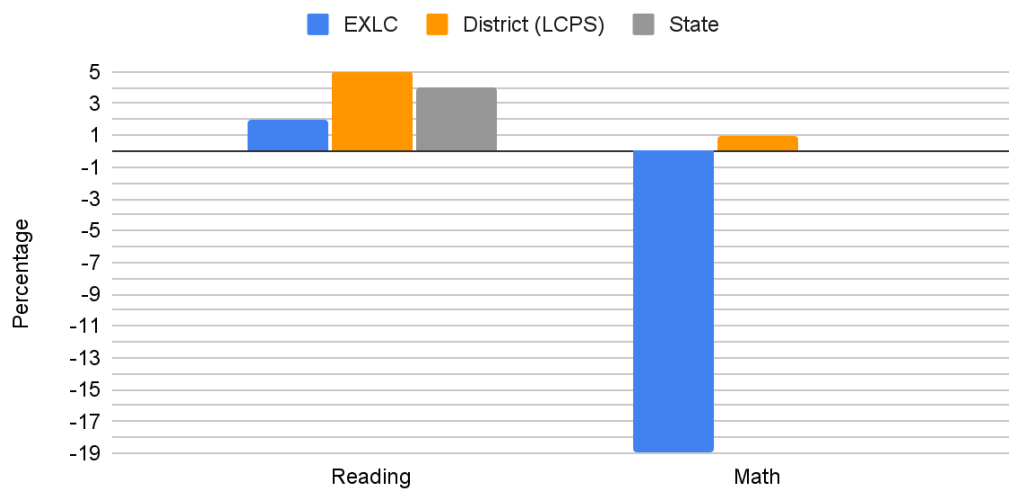


Source: NMVistas.org

***Note:** Asian, Black, Native American, and Students with Disabilities science data masked due to population size.

Improvement (Growth)

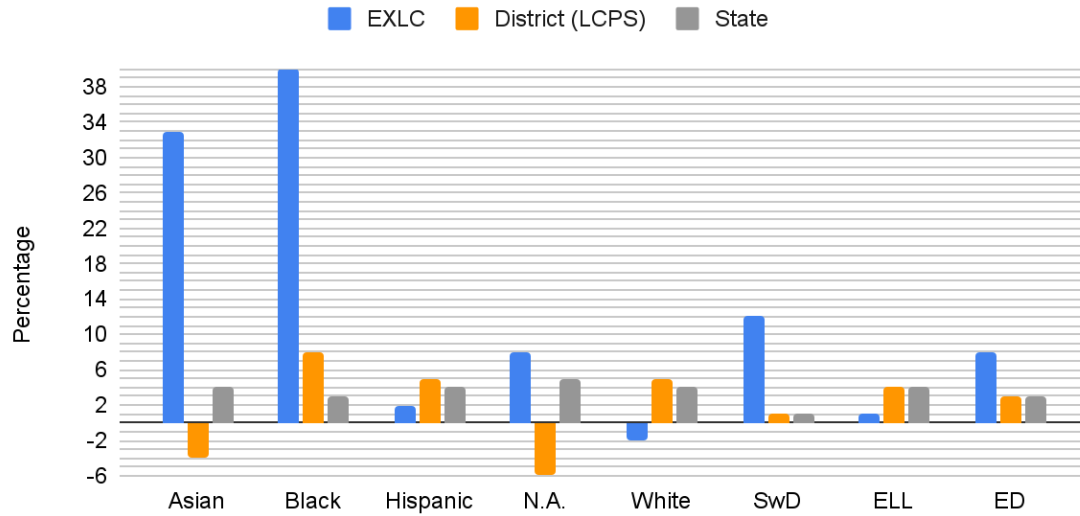
Percent Growth for All Students (2021-22 to 2022-23)



Source: Assessment, Research, Evaluation, and Accountability Bureau of PED

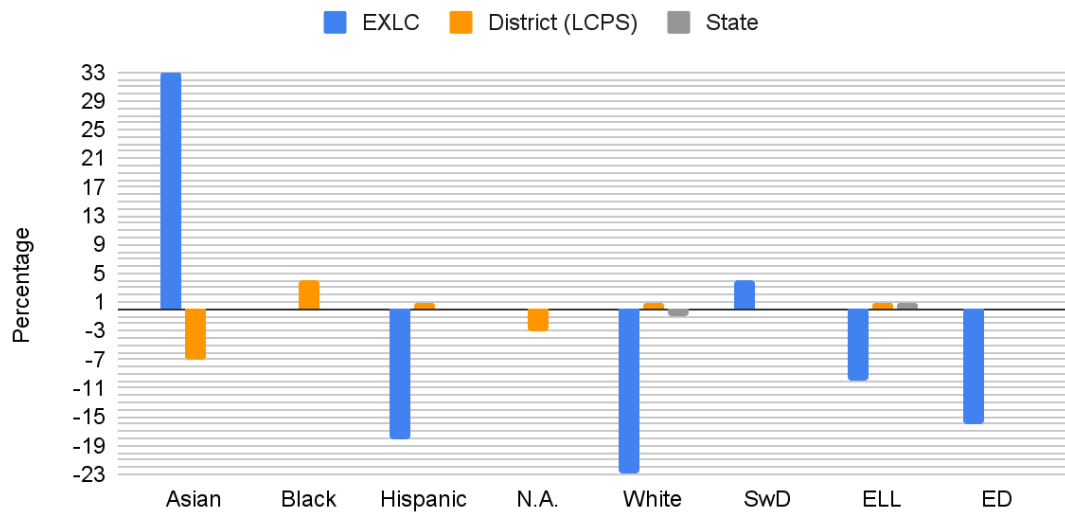
***Note:** Math growth was 0% for the state for SY2023.

ELA Percent Growth by Subgroup (2021-22 to 2022-23)



Source: Assessment, Research, Evaluation, and Accountability Bureau of PED

Math Percent Growth by Subgroup (2021-22 to 2022-23)



Source: Assessment, Research, Evaluation, and Accountability Bureau of PED

English Learner Progress (NMVistas): ≤ 20% (masked due to population size)

High School Graduation

Data refer to prior year cohorts, with the most recent 4-year graduation data available for the 2022 graduation cohort, 5-year data for the 2021 cohort, and 6-year data for the 2020 cohort. The 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year graduation rates for these years are provided with comparative data for the state and district. The 4-year rate is then disaggregated by ethnicity and student group.

Note: graduation data not available yet for Explore Academy Las Cruces as they served grades 6-9 in SY23.

Mission-Specific Goals

Goal 1: At the end of each term, 70-80% of students will pass* 80% of the standards-based exit exams administered as a measure of proficiency on each seminar’s specific required standards and skills.

During the first two years of the contract:

Performance Level	Target	Points
Exceeds Standard	At the end of each term, more than 80% of students, enrolled on the 40th and 120th day, will pass* 80% of the standards-based exit exams administered as a measure of proficiency on each seminar’s specific required standards and skills.	100
Meets Standard	At the end of each term, at least 60% of students, enrolled on the 40th and 120th day, will pass* 80% of the standards-based exit exams administered as a measure of proficiency on each seminar’s specific required standards and skills.	75
Does Not Meet Standard	At the end of each term, at least 50% of students, enrolled on the 40th and 120th day, will pass* 80% of the standards-based exit exams administered as a measure of proficiency on each seminar’s specific required standards and skills.	25
Falls Far Below Standard	At the end of each term, less than 50% of students, enrolled on the 40th and 120th day, will pass* 80% of the standards-based exit exams administered as a measure of proficiency on each seminar’s specific required standards and skills.	0

Rating: Meets >60% percent of students attained each term: Term 1- 76.56%, Term 2-80.70%, Term 3-74.24%, Term 4- 76.92% , Term 5- 65.15%, Term 6- 78.21%, Term 7- 65.63%, Term 8- 71.10%; **75 pts.**

Organizational and Financial Performance Framework

2022-23 Overall Rating: Meets Standard

Pursuant to the [PEC Performance Framework and Accountability System](#), schools receive ratings of **Meets Standard**, **Working to Meet Standard**, or **Does Not Meet Standard** for individual indicators in the framework. Explanations for any rating other than Meets Standard are provided below.

The school also receives an overall rating of either **Meets Standard** or **Does Not Meet Standard** for the year. If a school receives a **Does Not Meet Standard** rating for three or more indicators, it will receive an overall rating of **Does Not Meet Standard**.

If a school receives a **Does Not Meet Standard** rating, on any indicator, the CSD and PEC may conduct a closer review the following year on that indicator, and/or the PEC may require the school to submit a corrective action plan in order to specify actions and a timeline to correct the performance deficiency.

A school may receive a **Working to Meet Standard** rating on multiple indicators and still receive an overall rating of **Meets Standard**. If a school receives this rating across multiple years, the CSD and PEC may conduct a closer review the following year on that indicator, and the school will need to address the issue in its renewal application at the end of its charter term.

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

Explanation of 2022-23 Indicator Ratings

2.a. Q4 was 25 days late.

2.b. FY22 Audit reflects four (4) new unmodified audit findings. 2022-001 one (1) of which was a Material weakness.

2.e. 2 business manager changes in FY23.

3.c. Late business manager change amendment.

4.b. EOY: Attendance rate is 88% (**Attendance rate must be 95%**).

Site Visit Attendees

Tuesday, April 4, 2023

CSD Team: Lucy Valenzuela (Lead), Kimberly Gonzales, Kyle Wood (remote)

School Leadership: Karen Casedy, Head Administrator

Governing Board: Claren Mulhall, Dr Kim Knox



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K.T. Manis, Member
District 9, Hobbs

Steven J. Carrillo, Member
District 10, Santa Fe

January 22, 2024

Karen Casedy
Clara Welles Raley
Explore Academy Las Cruces
karen.casedy@explore.academy
c.welles@comcast.net

Dear Ms. Casedy and Ms. Welles Raley:

Thank you for all of your hard work to support children in New Mexico. As you know, the Charter School Division (CSD) has completed its annual report for SY 2022-2023 for your school and presented this report along with your responses to the Public Education Commission (PEC) at its January 2024 meeting.

As outlined in New Mexico rule NMAC 6.2.9.12 and 13², the PEC has accepted this corrected annual report. Further, as set out in the rule, the PEC asked me to provide you with notice that the PEC has issued an overall annual report notice of satisfactory performance. Thank you for this strong work.

In addition to the overall notice, the PEC has identified two areas of unsatisfactory performance related to

- academic growth in math on page 6 of the annual report and
- finances including the material weakness identified in the FY22 audit finding in indicator 2.b. on page 9 of the annual report.

Both items should be corrected by the next annual report.

The contract and all annual reports for the school are located here:

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/public-education-commission/charter-school-contracts/> You will work with your staff and board and report your progress the CSD through

² <https://www.srca.nm.gov/parts/title06/06.002.0009.html>

the annual site visit and report process to show your progress. If you are successful in improving the performance, CSD will report that in the next annual report, and the concerns will be identified as corrected. If you are not successful (which we hope will not be the case), the school may receive a notice of uncorrected unsatisfactory performance next year which could impact the rating for the school and the ultimate renewal of the school. Please note that the school is not being placed on the intervention ladder, but rather should work internally to correct these issues.

The SY 2022-2023 annual report and this letter will be made a part of the record of performance of the school. Please feel free to reach out to CSD or me with any questions. On behalf of the Commission, I thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

e/Alan Brauer

Chair, Public Education Commission