

BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
OPEN PUBLIC MEETING

-and-

NEW SCHOOL APPLICATION MEETING
EQUIP ACADEMY OF NEW MEXICO

August 14, 2024

9:00 a.m.

Jerry Apodaca Education Building, Mabry Hall
300 Don Gaspar Avenue
Santa Fe, New Mexico

-AND-

Via Zoom Webinar

REPORTED BY: Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219

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1 APPEARANCES
 2 COMMISSIONERS:
 3 PATRICIA GIPSON, Chair
 4 STEVEN J. CARRILLO, Vice Chair
 5 TIMOTHY E. BECK, Secretary
 6 REBEKKA BURT, Member
 7 STEWART INGHAM, Member
 8 K.T. MANIS, Member
 9 MICHAEL TAYLOR, Member
 10
 11 STAFF:
 12
 13 CORINA CHAVEZ Director
 14 Charter School/Options for
 15 Parents and Families Division
 16
 17 BRIGETTE RUSSELL Deputy Director
 18 Charter School/Options for
 19 Parents and Families Division
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 21 LUCY VALENZUELA Technical Assistance and
 22 Training Specialist
 23 Charter School/Options for Parents
 24 and Families Division
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1 THE CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. I'm
 2 going to call to order this meeting of the Public
 3 Education Commission. It is Wednesday, August 14th,
 4 and it is 9:09 a.m.
 5 I'm going to ask Commissioner Beck to
 6 please call roll.
 7 SECRETARY BECK: Chair Gipson.
 8 THE CHAIR: Here.
 9 SECRETARY BECK: Vice Chair Carrillo.
 10 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Here.
 11 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Ingham.
 12 COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Here.
 13 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner
 14 Clahchischilliage. Not here.
 15 Commissioner Brauer. Not here.
 16 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Manis? Not
 17 here. Commissioner Manis?
 18 Commissioner Armijo? Not here.
 19 Commissioner Taylor.
 20 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Here.
 21 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Burt.
 22 COMMISSIONER BURT: Here.
 23 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Manis. Not
 24 here.
 25 We have seven here, seven present.

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1 THE CHAIR: So I guess I just need to
 2 double-check and make sure. Cindy has no problem
 3 hearing us; correct?
 4 (Reporter cautions re
 5 microphone usage issues.)
 6 SECRETARY BECK: I apologize. There are
 7 six present and four not present.
 8 THE CHAIR: Thank you. I'm going to ask
 9 everyone to please stand now for the Pledge of
 10 Allegiance and the Salute to the New Mexico Flag.
 11 (Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to the
 12 New Mexico Flag conducted.)
 13 THE CHAIR: Does anyone have the -- I
 14 didn't open the folder with the mission. Did anyone
 15 open the folder of the Mission and Values?
 16 Thanks.
 17 (Commissioner Burt recites Mission
 18 and Values.)
 19 THE CHAIR: Thank you. We are on to Item
 20 No. 2 -- 3 -- 2 -- sorry -- which is the Approval of
 21 the Agenda.
 22 And we do have to move the Consent Agenda
 23 to today, because it has the minutes in it. And we
 24 have to approve the minutes of our last meeting at
 25 our first meeting. So that's the only change I have

6

1 for the agenda.

2 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Armijo.

3 THE CHAIR: I need a motion.

4 SECRETARY BECK: Oh.

5 COMMISSIONER BURT: I move to approve the

6 agenda, moving the Consent Agenda to the next item.

7 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Second.

8 THE CHAIR: There's a motion by

9 Commissioner Beck and a second by Commissioner

10 Carrillo. Well, if K.T. is not listed as here, we

11 can just do voice.

12 SECRETARY BECK: K.T., are you there?

13 THE CHAIR: All in favor?

14 (Commissioners so indicate.)

15 THE CHAIR: Opposed?

16 (No response.)

17 THE CHAIR: Hearing no opposition, the

18 motion passes.

19 We are now on to what is Item No. 3, which

20 is the Consent Agenda. (Item No. 6 on Meeting

21 Agenda.)

22 COMMISSIONER BURT: Move to approve the

23 Consent Agenda.

24 SECRETARY BECK: Second.

25 THE CHAIR: There is a motion by

7

1 Commissioner Burt and a second by Commissioner Beck.

2 All in favor?

3 (Commissioners so indicate.)

4 THE CHAIR: Opposed?

5 (No response.)

6 THE CHAIR: Hearing no opposition, the

7 motion passes.

8 We are now on to Item No. 4, which is

9 Discussion and Possible Action on New School

10 Applications. (Item No. 3 on Meeting Agenda.)

11 And our first applicant group today is --

12 I want to make sure that I have the full name --

13 Equip Academy of New Mexico.

14 So welcome, everyone. And because of some

15 traffic issues, and some concerns about individuals

16 perhaps not being able to be here for public

17 comment, we're going to move around just -- like to

18 give a little more time for folks to be able to be

19 here.

20 So -- actually, we already have tribal

21 input first, anyway. Do you want tribal input

22 third?

23 (Off-the-mic discussion.)

24 THE CHAIR: So what potentially changes is

25 those folks that are online signing up for public

8

1 comment, we will need to open that window

2 differently, because it's already been closed. But

3 we should reopen it.

4 (Off-mic consultation with Ms. Barnes.)

5 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: I would suggest that

6 we have all the public comment that are on Zoom

7 right now, start with that like we normally would,

8 because they're there; they've probably been there

9 since a quarter to 9:00. And those people who are

10 driving up that are stuck in traffic, we'll see them

11 come in, and we can, at the Chair's discretion, you

12 either take them when it's appropriate.

13 (Inaudible), though, 'cause...

14 MS. MELISSA BROWN: So are we starting

15 with Public Comment? Or not --

16 THE CHAIR: We're just doing those people

17 that are online.

18 MS. MELISSA BROWN: We have five

19 speakers -- five people signed up for Public Comment

20 online.

21 THE CHAIR: I apologize. I have a little

22 thing that I have to say. I forgot.

23 So we are now moving to our Discussion and

24 Possible Action on New School Applications. I

25 wanted to note a few things regarding the record we

9

1 will consider for each school.

2 The full documentation of the New School

3 Applications is posted to the PEC website, under

4 2024 New Applications page.

5 For each school, the record of the

6 application process that we will consider is:

7 1, the Application, which includes the

8 executive summary, the application, appendices,

9 facilities, 910B5 budget;

10 and, 2, the peer review analysis.

11 3, the Input Hearing transcript;

12 and, 4, the final PED recommendations.

13 I wanted to note two other things.

14 We have also uploaded into the PEC meeting

15 folder the letters that went to each school with

16 questions raised on their application. That will

17 also be considered part of the record.

18 And, 2, the CSD lead and the list of peer

19 reviewers is uploaded to the PEC drive for

20 Commissioners to review, Folder 4, 2024 New

21 Application folder on our Google Drive.

22 Next year, the chart of this information

23 will be included in the documents listed above.

24 Thanks.

25 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Okay. So we have five

10	<p>1 speakers online. Please remember to spell your 2 first and last name. And you will have two minutes. 3 You'll hear a chime when your time is up 4 and I will start timing you once you have spelled 5 your name. So I'm promoting D'Val Westphal. 6 FROM THE PUBLIC: Well, good morning, 7 Commissioners. And I appreciate your time this 8 morning. I am D'Val Westphal. That is D'V-a-l 9 W-e-s-t-p-h-a-l. 10 I'm with the Greater Albuquerque Chamber 11 of Commerce, and I am also a westside resident and a 12 proud mother of a charter school graduate. And so 13 I'd like to share on two fronts why Equip Academy is 14 a win. 15 From the Chamber standpoint, businesses 16 want great schools and great options for their 17 employees. And we all know that New Mexico school 18 performance measures are not what they should be. 19 It's essential to expand the offerings with 20 high-performing charters like Equip which are more 21 targeted and more nimble in delivering the education 22 that our student bodies need. 23 And from a parental standpoint, we won the 24 lottery twice, I tell you, first, when our child got 25 into an elementary charter, again, when he got into</p>	12	<p>1 Thank you for your time this morning. 2 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Next we have Zahin 3 Huq, I think. 4 FROM THE PUBLIC: Hi. My name a Zahin Huq. 5 It's spelled Z-a-h-i-n H-u-q. 6 I'm the student data manager at Rosalyn 7 Yalow Charter School, located in The Bronx, 8 New York. I had the pleasure of working with 9 Ms. Herrera, where she displayed excellent 10 leadership and dedication as the director of 11 assessment for our school. She wore many hats. 12 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Missy, can we stop 13 for a second, please? 14 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Sir, can you please 15 pause? 16 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: I want to begin 17 again when all of us, everyone sitting at this dais, 18 can actually listen to public comment. And also 19 because I just can't help myself, there are six of 20 us here right now, which I know makes a quorum, 21 which is great. There are three jobs we were 22 elected for: Approve charters, (inaudible) policy 23 (inaudible). 24 Three jobs. And for me, personally, I 25 don't care if people are upset with me for saying</p>
11	<p>1 a college-prep mid-high-school charter. Getting him 2 to school every day for 12 years was a huge 3 challenge. We had to drive from far northwest 4 Albuquerque to the center of town for five years and 5 all the way to the Pit for the next seven, and it's 6 a sacrifice a lot of parents can't make. But we 7 were able to, and it was so worth it. 8 Our son graduated with 45 college credits, 9 got his bachelor's at UNM in three years, his 10 master's in a year. And at age 21, he is set up in 11 a great new job with a wonderful future. And that's 12 because he went to great charter schools, where 13 tutoring and support are the norm, where every child 14 gets the tools that they need to succeed, and where 15 failure is simply not an option. 16 What the school landscape looks like is 17 one of the first questions businesses ask when they 18 consider New Mexico. And it's the question parents, 19 new and native, ask as well. 20 Every New Mexico child deserves the 21 education that our son received, an education very 22 similar to what Equip is going to offer, and, 23 finally, on Albuquerque's westside. 24 Please approve this charter and make a 25 great education an option for more of our students.</p>	13	<p>1 this. I'm upset that we don't have ten people 2 present today. 3 THE CHAIR: It's not the -- 4 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: And I said I don't 5 care if people are mad at me. I just felt that I 6 had to get that -- to say it. It is what it is. 7 THE CHAIR: I don't know why at this 8 moment in time. It doesn't fit anywhere in the 9 agenda. 10 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Zahin, you can 11 continue. You have the full two minutes. 12 FROM THE PUBLIC: Shall I start again from 13 the beginning? 14 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Yes, please. 15 FROM THE PUBLIC: I'll spell my name out 16 again. My name is Zahin Huq, Z-a-h-i-n H-u-q. I'm 17 the student data manager at Rosalyn Yalow Charter 18 School, located in The Bronx, New York. I had the 19 pleasure of working with Ms. Herrera, where she 20 displayed excellent leadership and dedication as the 21 director of assessment for our school. 22 During her time here, she wore many hats, 23 most notably in ensuring that special education 24 students received the tailored support they needed 25 to thrive, especially in an urban environment like</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">14</p> <p>1 The Bronx.</p> <p>2 Not only did she provide assessment and</p> <p>3 accommodations, she also took charge of our response</p> <p>4 to intervention team, where she meticulously crafted</p> <p>5 student groupings and schedules based off of</p> <p>6 data-driven insights, which I got to work with her</p> <p>7 firsthand. This targeted approach allowed for</p> <p>8 effective small-group and one-to-one instruction,</p> <p>9 which Ms. Herrera closely monitored to ensure</p> <p>10 measurable growth.</p> <p>11 What truly sets her apart is her</p> <p>12 unwavering commitment to student success and her</p> <p>13 ability to foster a culture of excellence and</p> <p>14 inclusion. Her leadership extended beyond</p> <p>15 assessments, where she was key in building</p> <p>16 collaborative teams and creating an environment</p> <p>17 where every student, regardless of their challenges,</p> <p>18 had the opportunity to succeed.</p> <p>19 To this day, here at Rosalyn Yalow, we</p> <p>20 still feel the lasting impacts from her work. Her</p> <p>21 vision and hands-on approach are exactly what</p> <p>22 Equip Academy of New Mexico needs. As the lead</p> <p>23 founder, she will bring the same level of</p> <p>24 dedication, innovation, and proven results that have</p> <p>25 already made a significant impact in the lives of</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">16</p> <p>1 Not all families on the westside have the</p> <p>2 means to commute across the river. And students on</p> <p>3 the westside deserve a quality education which will</p> <p>4 benefit our residents and Albuquerque as a whole.</p> <p>5 I thank you for your time and urge your</p> <p>6 approval for Equip Academy of New Mexico. Thank</p> <p>7 you.</p> <p>8 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Thank you.</p> <p>9 Next we have Sean Duncan. I can see that</p> <p>10 you've unmuted, Sean, but we can't hear you. Are</p> <p>11 you speaking?</p> <p>12 While Sean figures out his audio, we'll go</p> <p>13 to Sylvia Maser.</p> <p>14 Just be warned, Sean, I still have you on</p> <p>15 to speak.</p> <p>16 FROM THE PUBLIC: I apologize, guys. I</p> <p>17 think my audio was messed up for a moment.</p> <p>18 MS. MELISSA BROWN: We'll go with you,</p> <p>19 Sean, and we'll go with you, next, Sylvia. So,</p> <p>20 Sylvia, you might want to mute yourself.</p> <p>21 FROM THE PUBLIC: Thank you so much for</p> <p>22 the opportunity to speak this morning.</p> <p>23 My name is Sean Duncan. My name is</p> <p>24 spelled S-e-a-n. Last name is D-u-n-c-a-n.</p> <p>25 It's a pleasure to talk this morning,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">15</p> <p>1 many students here in The Bronx to New Mexico.</p> <p>2 I'm confident that under her leadership</p> <p>3 Equip will become a beacon of opportunity and</p> <p>4 achievement for all students. So I implore you all</p> <p>5 to please approve this charter for New Mexico.</p> <p>6 Thank you so much.</p> <p>7 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Next we have Melissa</p> <p>8 Sanchez.</p> <p>9 FROM THE PUBLIC: Good morning,</p> <p>10 Commissioners. My name is Melissa Sanchez.</p> <p>11 M-e-l-i-s-s-a S-a-n-c-h-e-z. And I am president and</p> <p>12 CEO of the Albuquerque Westside Business</p> <p>13 Association, as well as a westside resident.</p> <p>14 After attending a focus group, which was</p> <p>15 put on by Equip Academy, I was quite impressed by</p> <p>16 the community engagement and input received.</p> <p>17 Education is so important to our</p> <p>18 community's economic prosperity. And our businesses</p> <p>19 want to hire local talent. We can all agree that we</p> <p>20 want to keep our kids here in New Mexico.</p> <p>21 Due to the rapid growth in population on</p> <p>22 the westside, we are challenged with the lack of</p> <p>23 infrastructure. And we believe that Equip Academy</p> <p>24 will not only be a perfect addition to our</p> <p>25 community, but a necessity.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">17</p> <p>1 members of the Commission. I'm the cofounder and</p> <p>2 school leader at THRIVE Community School here in</p> <p>3 Santa Fe.</p> <p>4 The reason why I wanted to speak today is</p> <p>5 because I've had the pleasure of getting to know</p> <p>6 Mercy over the last year, and her team, including</p> <p>7 many members of her board, as well as the mission,</p> <p>8 vision, and programming that's being offered for</p> <p>9 Equip Academy.</p> <p>10 Throughout my time working with Mercy and</p> <p>11 her team and getting to know them, I was really</p> <p>12 impressed by just how much initiative was taken to</p> <p>13 learn about the process, the humility that was</p> <p>14 brought in learning new things throughout the</p> <p>15 charter application, and understanding all the</p> <p>16 dynamics that go into running a high-performing</p> <p>17 charter school.</p> <p>18 And at this time, I really think that</p> <p>19 there's just a need for strong and tenacious leaders</p> <p>20 in our schools. And I think Mercy really fits that</p> <p>21 bill, along with the vision that she and her team</p> <p>22 have developed.</p> <p>23 And I know how rigorous this process is,</p> <p>24 having gone through it just a few years ago. And</p> <p>25 knowing that the questions that have been asked are</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">18</p> <p>1 hard ones and that the bar is high, I believe firmly 2 that Mercy and her team are ready to deliver on the 3 promises that exist within their charter in the 4 community that Mercy grew up in and is ready to give 5 back to in a way that I think is going to be 6 transformative.</p> <p>7 So I urge the Commission to consider 8 approving this charter. And I hope to look forward 9 to working with Mercy and her team as a member of 10 the charter school community in the future.</p> <p>11 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Thank you. And then, 12 finally, Sylvia.</p> <p>13 FROM THE PUBLIC: Yes. Can you hear me? 14 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Yeah. Sorry, that was 15 me, Sylvia. I did the wrong -- I was trying to mute 16 Sean, and I muted you. So I apologize.</p> <p>17 FROM THE PUBLIC: Okay. Is that better? 18 Thank you very much for giving me this platform to 19 speak.</p> <p>20 My name is Sylvia Maser, S-y-l-v-i-a 21 M-a-s-e-r.</p> <p>22 I am with Global Give-A-Book, a 501(c)(3) 23 nonprofit, promoting youth literacy by giving 24 award-winning books to children in need. I am here 25 to support Equip Academy of New Mexico.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">20</p> <p>1 THE CHAIR: So every -- all the players 2 have arrived. So we can just continue with public 3 comment, the live public comment.</p> <p>4 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Okay. We have at 5 least nine people in the room, some of whom are 6 signed up before they were able to come. So there's 7 another sign-up sheet that's still going around. So 8 if you feel like you're not prepared -- and then I 9 have the microphone up here.</p> <p>10 So if you'll please just come up here. 11 And, again, you need to spell your first and last 12 name, and I'll start the timer. And our first 13 speaker is Rachael Swards.</p> <p>14 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning, Commission. 15 My name is Rachael Swards, R-a-c-h-a-e-l 16 S-e-w-a-r-d-s. Can you tell I'm thrilled to not be 17 sitting there right now?</p> <p>18 But I am here as a founder and executive 19 director of Solare Collegiate Charter School, which 20 is in Albuquerque.</p> <p>21 And I am here -- I have great reverence, 22 respect. This is like the Super Bowl for charter 23 schools right now. So I really enjoy this process 24 and felt moved to be here today to speak in support 25 of Equip Academy.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">19</p> <p>1 Building strong enduring relationships 2 with our partners is vital to Global Give-A-Book, as 3 these collaborations are a cornerstone of our 4 ability to reach and impact diverse communities 5 effectively.</p> <p>6 We plan to contribute award-winning books 7 to children to improve literacy rates and foster a 8 love of reading among students, aligning with 9 Equip Academy's mission.</p> <p>10 Equip Academy is important to the growth 11 and enrichment of our children in New Mexico, 12 especially the westside of Albuquerque. I have 13 attended focus group meetings and have been 14 exceptionally impressed.</p> <p>15 Again, I am extending my support and 16 recommendation for the approval of Equip Academy of 17 New Mexico. Albuquerque needs a school that 18 prepares students to live out their greatness and 19 reach those full potentials. I am confident that 20 Albuquerque families will benefit tremendously from 21 Equip Academy of New Mexico.</p> <p>22 Thank you.</p> <p>23 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Thank you. That 24 concludes the people who are signed up on Zoom to 25 make public comment.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">21</p> <p>1 I wanted to talk about the two 2 responsibilities that we have as charter schools. 3 And that's to innovate public education, which we 4 talk about a lot in our work. But the second part 5 is to then share and replicate what we're doing. 6 That's something we spend less time talking about as 7 charter school leaders. And this is something that 8 I think Equip Academy is ready to bring to the 9 table, particularly under the leadership of Mercy 10 Herrera.</p> <p>11 I want to speak to my experience in 12 meeting Equip Academy and Mercy, specifically. We 13 met about a year ago. She visited Solare 14 Collegiate. We sat down. We talked about 15 programmatic elements, about process, what it looks 16 like to go through that charter school application, 17 what that looks like to both communities.</p> <p>18 What we also spent a lot of time talking 19 about is program. What can we do to support one 20 another? We're in the process of opening our 21 elementary school. So I had just as many questions 22 for Mercy as I think she had for me as to what it 23 means to open a charter school in New Mexico.</p> <p>24 So we discussed a lot of things. We 25 talked about school politics, how to create program,</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">22</p> <p>1 how to manage (inaudible). We talked about 2 structured literacy at length, because that is 3 something that is new to me, and I wanted to learn a 4 lot from her.</p> <p>5 And I left that conversation as if I had 6 built a partner very quickly in the movement. This 7 can be very vulnerable work, running a standalone 8 charter school. This is somebody who I see, 9 personally, as a partner in a school that is a 10 partner.</p> <p>11 We have calls pretty frequently on the far 12 southwest quadrant of Albuquerque. We have folks 13 looking for an elementary school north of us off of 14 Unser (inaudible) area. North of Central is a 15 really important location for charter schools that 16 we've not been able to fulfill yet.</p> <p>17 And so I -- I guess that's basically all I 18 wanted to say, that I think, in addition to all the 19 great academic things that I know you're going to 20 hear from the other nine folks out here, that Mercy 21 is somebody who's invested in the charter school 22 movement in our state of New Mexico. She's an 23 active participant already. We see her 24 participating in (inaudible). 25 (Reporter cautions re microphone usage.)</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">24</p> <p>1 schools in California, not just schools serving 2 similar populations. All schools in the state of 3 California.</p> <p>4 I share this to say that I know what is 5 possible for all kids, and I know how incredibly 6 difficult and challenging this work is and how 7 essential it is, and how we have a responsibility to 8 do it.</p> <p>9 That's why I believe in Mercy Herrera. 10 That's why I believe in the Equip Academy team. 11 That's why I believe in their school model, not 12 because of simply on faith, but because it is 13 proven, it is based in evidence, it is based in what 14 serves student needs.</p> <p>15 Every child in New Mexico deserves to 16 attend a school that puts students at the center, 17 where instruction of the students is strategic and 18 data-driven and based on learning science.</p> <p>19 This is not a gamble that we can take with 20 children. They deserve what is proven to work, what 21 is proven to support their success and their 22 opportunities.</p> <p>23 Like Mercy, I want to make sure that I 24 talk about the work that's being done, and I'm not 25 going to apologize for that. It's emotional work.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">23</p> <p>1 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Next in the room we 2 have Jane Henzerling. 3 (Off-mic question by speaker.) 4 THE CHAIR: Could the record please 5 reflect that Commissioner Manis has joined us? 6 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning, Madam Chair 7 and Commissioners. My name is Jane Henzerling. 8 J-a-n-e H-e-n-z-e-r-l-i-n-g. 9 And I work with Excellent Schools 10 New Mexico. 11 I'm also the founder of a K-through-8 12 charter school in San Francisco that we started in a 13 community that had some of the lowest student 14 achievement results in the entire state of 15 California. More than 85 percent of our students 16 were eligible for free and reduced lunch. More than 17 70 percent were English Learners. 18 And in our founding process, we actually 19 had a school board member ask us why we were going 20 to start a school in that community because she 21 said, quote, "Those kids will always (inaudible)." 22 Well, she was wrong. Our school, serving 23 a tiny population that few people believed in, in a 24 community where expectations had been low for 25 generations, performed in the top 10 percent of all</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">25</p> <p>1 It takes passion. And it takes brains. We have to 2 have both of these things in order to be successful, 3 and that's what this team brings. 4 Thank you so much for your work and your 5 dedication to this process and your commitment to 6 holding a high bar for charter schools in 7 New Mexico. 8 MS. MELISSA BROWN: There are tissues on 9 the table. 10 Next we have William Ruhl. 11 FROM THE FLOOR: Thank you, Chairman, 12 Counsel. My name is William Ruhl. W-i-l-l-i-a-m, 13 last name R-u-h-l. I am the present chairman and 14 founder of For God's Glory Alone Ministries, a 15 501(c)(3), here in New Mexico. 16 I've known Mercy for probably almost 17 25 years. She entered into our southwest school of 18 ministry back in the early 2000s, transitioned there 19 over to the University of New Mexico. 20 I had the honor to write her a letter of 21 recommendation entering into linguistics and 22 diversity at that school. She received several 23 honors from her time there. 24 She then contacted me later on to write 25 another letter of recommendation, which I was</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">26</p> <p>1 honored to do for her time at Yale University. And 2 when she came back into New Mexico, her family got 3 in touch with me, and I was surprised that she was 4 back, but delighted that she was bringing her 5 talents back home. 6 I live on the west side of New Mexico in 7 the very area that is going to have this charter 8 school. Although I don't have any children of that 9 age anymore -- they're all in their 40s -- I highly 10 recommend this school to be set up in that area. I 11 know many, many families that are having to travel 12 across the city to meet the educational needs that 13 they desire. I know many families that are coming 14 together in teaching their children at home that 15 would like to have this type of a facility available 16 to them. 17 So I highly recommend them. I know Mercy 18 is steadfast in what she does. She has overcome all 19 kinds of adversity and has always looked ahead, not 20 behind. And so I highly recommend that you approve 21 Equip Academy here in New Mexico. 22 Thank you very much. 23 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Next we have 24 Isaiah Holtry. 25 FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. Good morning. My</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">28</p> <p>1 I felt like the school system neglected him and gave 2 up on him due to his disability, not knowing how to 3 deal with him. He couldn't hear us speak until he 4 got older, and that was really hard and affected him 5 (inaudible). 6 After attending one of Mercy's focus 7 groups for Equip Academy, one thing that was so 8 powerful is how they will communicate to the 9 students. 10 It is important as a parent -- as a 11 parent, I was never spoken to or informed about 12 anything that made me feel like my son was getting a 13 better education. And I do see that this school 14 will give the students not just the clarity, but the 15 parents. And the more you make aware the parents of 16 what's going on, they'll have a better chance of 17 teaching and learning and feeling whole. I didn't 18 feel whole. 19 Now, this son is 27, my youngest is 23. 20 And I want a better chance for my granddaughter 21 who's seven. 22 So I ask that you approve. And it's just 23 not (inaudible). It's very much in need. Thank you 24 very much. (Microphone issues continue.) 25 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Next, we have Spring</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">27</p> <p>1 name is Isaiah Holtry. It's I-s-a-i-a-h, last name, 2 H-o-l-t-r-y. 3 And I just wanted to say my name is Isaiah 4 Holtry, and I'm a (inaudible). And what I love 5 about Equip Academy is how the kids will visit 6 college. As such as a young age, having kids think 7 about the future early will get them more 8 comfortable with the idea of college and what they 9 want to become. 10 I do not have any kids yet. I'm only 23. 11 But when I do have kids, I would like to send them 12 to my auntie's school, because she's a really smart 13 and brilliant person, and she has good ideas. And, 14 yeah, just wanted to say that. 15 MS. MELISSA BROWN: You all have been 16 told. 17 Next we have Julia Silva. 18 FROM THE FLOOR: My name is Julia Silva. 19 J-u-l-i-a S-i-l-v-a. I'm a mother to two sons. 20 I've lived in New Mexico my whole life. 21 One of my sons had severe learning 22 disability. And growing up my son did not get the 23 care or the attention to detail or the support that 24 I didn't even know he needed. 25 It wasn't spoken to me or spoken to him.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">29</p> <p>1 Zamora. 2 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning, 3 Commissioners. My name is Spring Zamora. I'm 4 S-p-r-i-n-g Z-a-m-o-r-a. 5 I have four kids, and I'm a stay-at-home 6 mom. My goal in life -- my goals in life were to 7 make sure that my kids are safe and healthy and that 8 they have the best education possible. 9 I grew up in Albuquerque and didn't have 10 the best education myself. This is not what I 11 wanted for my kids. 12 We made the decision as a family to move 13 to Rio Rancho and pay more, as it had better school 14 ratings. 15 If a school like Equip Academy was in 16 Albuquerque, we would have lived there. I would 17 have sent my kids there. 18 I now have a grandbaby that will be one in 19 September. And if Equip Academy is approved -- and 20 it should be, because our community is in desperate 21 needs of a school that centers reading -- I will 22 send my grandson there. 23 Thank you. And I also believe in Mercy. 24 THE CHAIR: Senator Maestas. 25 FROM THE FLOOR: Thank you, Madam Chair.</p>

30	<p>1 Senator Antonio Maestas. A-n-t-o-n-i-o 2 M-a-e-s-t-a-s.</p> <p>3 Thank you for having me, Madam Chair, 4 honorable members. I -- I'm going to rush off after 5 I speak, because we're having a committee hearing 6 right now dealing with crime, which is kind of 7 important these days.</p> <p>8 But I felt it was important to drive up 9 here and make a few remarks.</p> <p>10 I have the honor of representing 11 Westsiders in the State Legislature for the last 12 18 years, the last two as a State Senator for 13 District 26. I think this school, with the 14 application and the credentials and the vision and 15 the leadership, stands alone.</p> <p>16 But the fact it's on the westside is 17 particularly wonderful for the following reasons. 18 The westside, just the way that APS builds out, 19 is -- takes decades to keep up with population 20 growth.</p> <p>21 As you recall, Volcano Vista came on line, 22 and then Atrisco Heritage came on line, decades 23 after they were needed, because West Mesa and Cibola 24 were busting at the seams.</p> <p>25 Now Volcano Vista and Atrisco Heritage are</p>	32	<p>1 How about Dominica?</p> <p>2 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning, Madam Chair 3 and members of the Commission. My name is Dominica 4 Chavez. D-o-m-e-n-i-c-a C-h-a-v-e-z. And I'm the 5 advocacy manager at New Mexico Kids Can. We are 6 proud to speak in support of Equip Academy of 7 New Mexico.</p> <p>8 As our state grows with an ongoing 9 education crisis, we know that solutions exist. And 10 access to a great school is one solution.</p> <p>11 Ms. Herrera and the founding board of 12 directors have created a plan for a great school 13 that will deliver exceptional results, advanced 14 educational equity, and eliminate disparities in 15 student outcomes.</p> <p>16 We strongly believe in Equip Academy's 17 potential to make a difference for students, 18 families, and the greater Albuquerque community.</p> <p>19 Thank you.</p> <p>20 MS. MELISSA BROWN: That is everybody that 21 is present. We have one person who has not arrived 22 yet.</p> <p>23 THE CHAIR: So I'm going to go back 24 briefly to No. i. for Tribal Input, and ask if 25 there's anyone from a tribal entity that wishes to</p>
31	<p>1 two of the biggest four schools in the state. The 2 other two are in Rio Rancho, which are in the 3 vicinity.</p> <p>4 When the population enrollment dipped due 5 to COVID, APS canceled the plans of building a new 6 high school by the football stadium on 98th Street. 7 That land is owned by the city and is now for sale.</p> <p>8 To have a school on the westside will 9 alleviate, not only the kids who go to this school, 10 but will alleviate the overall educational 11 infrastructure there on the westside, maybe dropping 12 school class size from 22 to 20.</p> <p>13 Granted, folks are going to be coming from 14 all over the city. But I think a lot will be coming 15 from the westside.</p> <p>16 But just in closing, Madam Chair, I think 17 that the leadership team that Ms. Herrera has put 18 together, her vision, the fact that she could be 19 anywhere in the country, but she's here with us here 20 in New Mexico, is tremendous.</p> <p>21 I look forward to this school getting off 22 the ground next year. And I ask that you approve 23 the school. Thank you very much.</p> <p>24 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Next we have Haley 25 Santistevan. Not here yet. Okay.</p>	33	<p>1 speak.</p> <p>2 (No response.)</p> <p>3 THE CHAIR: Okay. We're now on to the 4 applicants' portion. So you've got 20 minutes. 5 (Reporter cautions.)</p> <p>6 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Okay. The slide show 7 is up and ready. Timer is ready.</p> <p>8 MS. MERCY HERRERA: Madam Chair and 9 Commissioners, I just want to start off by saying 10 thank you so much for this opportunity to give a 11 second at-bat of our presentation to you today. And 12 also just want to extend from all of us our deep 13 gratitude for the work that you've done and the work 14 that you do to ensure that any school approved is of 15 high standard and high quality.</p> <p>16 And I know you all have done a tremendous 17 amount of work, especially with four schools. This 18 has been one of the hardest things I think that I've 19 ever done. And rightfully so. It should be. And I 20 would do it all again, because that's -- and my team 21 feels the same way. Because we believe in Equip 22 Academy and what's possible, and, more importantly, 23 we believe in New Mexico's children and what's 24 possible.</p> <p>25 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Perhaps you could</p>

34	<p>1 introduce everybody and have them spell their names, 2 and I'll start the timer.</p> <p>3 MS. MERCY HERRERA: Okay. Perfect. 4 So my name is Mercy Herrera, M-e-r-c-y 5 H-e-r-r-e-r-a. I'm the lead founder and proposed 6 head of school of Equip Academy of New Mexico. And 7 I've spent the past decade teaching and leading in 8 some of the highest performing public charter 9 schools in the country.</p> <p>10 And as a native of New Mexico, I'm 11 committed to bringing a high-performing public 12 charter option to our great state of New Mexico with 13 the fuller founding team.</p> <p>14 MS. MARY JONES: My name is Mary Jones. 15 M-a-r-y J-o-n-e-s. 16 I'm a partner at a law firm in 17 Albuquerque, a founding board member, and the 18 proposed chair of the Oversight and Compliance 19 Committee.</p> <p>20 MS. JANET LEUNG: All right. My name is 21 Janet Leung, J-a-n-e-t L-e-u-n-g. I bring over 13 22 years of finance and accounting experience as the 23 proposed treasurer, Finance Committee lead, and 24 Academics Committee member.</p> <p>25 MS. ALEJANDRA GRIJALVA: Madam Chair,</p>	36	<p>1 policy professional. I'm also our proposed 2 Vice Chair. I bring years of state education 3 policy, as well as community engagement experience, 4 and I'll contribute those to our audit and 5 governance committees.</p> <p>6 MS. REBEKAH RUNYAN: Good morning, 7 Commissioners. My name is Rebekah Runyan, spelled 8 R-e-b-e-k-a-h R-u-n-y-a-n. 9 I am the proposed business manager for the 10 school. I have over 15 years working with schools 11 in New Mexico in their finance, doing either 12 auditing -- I started out as an auditor for public 13 schools, and then now, I am a business manager for 14 public schools.</p> <p>15 MR. DANIEL IVEY-SOTO: Good morning, 16 Madam Chair, members of the Commission. My name is 17 Daniel Ivey-Soto. D-a-n-i-e-l. Last name, 18 Ivey-Soto, I-v-e-y S-o-t-o. I'm an attorney with 19 InAccord, P.C. I've been volunteering as the 20 proposed general counsel to the Equip Academy of 21 New Mexico. Thank you very much.</p> <p>22 MS. MARY JONES: Madam Chair, members of 23 the Commission, thank you for having us this 24 morning. I would like to begin this reading and 25 ground us in Equip Academy's mission and vision.</p>
35	<p>1 members of the Commission. I'm sorry. I was going 2 to say "committee." I used to work for LFC. My 3 name is Alejandra Grijalva, A-l-e-j-a-n-d-r-a 4 G-r-i-j-a-l-v-a, serving as the proposed board 5 secretary, Academic Committee lead, and Finance 6 Committee member. I'm an English Language Learner, 7 a native New Mexican, a first-generation college 8 graduate, and the mother of a two year-old, and I'm 9 very excited to bring -- contribute my knowledge 10 from nearly ten years of experience in the nonprofit 11 sector, serving our underserved communities in 12 Albuquerque, and experience in education policy and 13 budgeting from the New Mexico Legislative Finance 14 Committee.</p> <p>15 DR. RENEE DELGADO-RILEY: Hi. My name is 16 Renee Delgado-Riley. R-e-n-e-e D-e-l-g-a-d-o hyphen 17 R-i-l-e-y. 18 I have over 16 years of experience as an 19 educational researcher. I specialize in student 20 development theory. And I'm excited to serve as the 21 proposed board chair, as well as support the 22 academic committees and governance committees.</p> <p>23 MS. SARA FITZGERALD: Good morning, Madam 24 Chair and Commissioners. My name is Sara, S-a-r-a, 25 Fitzgerald, F-i-t-z-g-e-r-a-l-d. I'm a public</p>	37	<p>1 At the outset, we fundamentally believe 2 that every child has and deserves the opportunity to 3 live out their greatness, their unique special 4 gifts. And as a founding board, as a proposed 5 charter school, our commitment to the students and 6 to this community is to equip all children who 7 attend Equip Academy of New Mexico with the skills 8 and knowledge to achieve their greatness.</p> <p>9 Our educational approach is joyful. We 10 are high-engaging, interested, participative 11 members, and will foster the same in our school 12 environment.</p> <p>13 We celebrate student curiosity and 14 community through our literacy-based academic model. 15 And our joyful, engaging, high-expectation approach 16 prioritizes measurable, evidence-based academic 17 learning, celebrates student curiosity and 18 community, and reimagines what a successful 19 literacy-rich K-through-5 school can be on the 20 westside of Albuquerque.</p> <p>21 Our mission is to provide a top-tier, 22 inquiry-based college preparatory education. And in 23 doing this, Equip Academy of New Mexico will ensure 24 that K-through-5 students master the knowledge and 25 skills to dream audaciously, engage deeply, and</p>

38	<p>1 pursue a life of purpose.</p> <p>2 Everyone here in front of you, we've all</p> <p>3 volunteered our time to do this. We are here, and</p> <p>4 we joined this team because we believe in this</p> <p>5 mission, and that our academic model can transform</p> <p>6 academic achievement on the westside of Albuquerque.</p> <p>7 I'd like to note that our mission</p> <p>8 strategically anchors the educational vision and</p> <p>9 goals in five key, actualized ways.</p> <p>10 Next slide, please.</p> <p>11 MS. SARA FITZGERALD: Thank you.</p> <p>12 So our model is designed to support all of</p> <p>13 our learners for the success of all students. And</p> <p>14 we'll do that in these five different ways.</p> <p>15 First is our inquiry-based approach which</p> <p>16 puts students at the time center of learning.</p> <p>17 That's going to allow them to really engage in a</p> <p>18 meaningful conversation with their teachers and</p> <p>19 others to allow them to own that learning.</p> <p>20 Second is the comprehensive literacy and</p> <p>21 language acquisition program we'll have. That is</p> <p>22 designed to meet the needs of all of our students,</p> <p>23 making sure that they build strong, successful, and</p> <p>24 foundational reading skills that are going to serve</p> <p>25 them for the rest of their time in school.</p>	40	<p>1 credentialed special education teacher for years 1</p> <p>2 through 3 and at least for years 4 through 5.</p> <p>3 Every year, as we evaluate student</p> <p>4 progress and needs, we will adjust our staffing</p> <p>5 models and budget accordingly to ensure appropriate</p> <p>6 services.</p> <p>7 A cornerstone of our special education</p> <p>8 program is our Student Assistance Team. This</p> <p>9 dedicated Student Assistance Team is responsible for</p> <p>10 monitoring and tracking the progress of all of our</p> <p>11 special populations.</p> <p>12 The SAT will meet weekly to ensure that</p> <p>13 students are making progress and receiving the</p> <p>14 necessary supports and accommodations that they</p> <p>15 require. And this team will play a crucial role in</p> <p>16 developing Individualized Education Plans and</p> <p>17 ensuring their effective implementation.</p> <p>18 Additionally, we'll be structured under a</p> <p>19 multilayered system of supports ensuring that our</p> <p>20 students are being served in their least restrictive</p> <p>21 environment following those IEP needs.</p> <p>22 MS. JANET LEUNG: As part of our proposed</p> <p>23 board's responsibilities and internal controls, we</p> <p>24 must monitor finances through the finance committee</p> <p>25 on a monthly and annual basis.</p>
39	<p>1 Third is our educator excellence. We want</p> <p>2 to support teachers to be highly effective in what</p> <p>3 they do, because it's going to have a strong impact</p> <p>4 on our students. And to do that, we'll make sure we</p> <p>5 have an emphasis on data and action planning to</p> <p>6 drive student learning.</p> <p>7 Fourth is our college preparatory culture.</p> <p>8 We're going to fuel college readiness through strong</p> <p>9 foundational skills and college exposure, because we</p> <p>10 know that many of the students that we plan to serve</p> <p>11 might not otherwise know that college is a</p> <p>12 possibility for them.</p> <p>13 And last is the rigorous curriculum that</p> <p>14 we've selected. It's nationally recognized. It's</p> <p>15 evidence-based, and it has content that is both</p> <p>16 representative and supportive of the diverse</p> <p>17 learners that we'll serve.</p> <p>18 MS. ALEJANDRA GRIJALVA: Okay. We share</p> <p>19 your commitment to ensuring that special education</p> <p>20 students receive the specialized services and</p> <p>21 supports that they need to be successful.</p> <p>22 We recognize that our submitted budget</p> <p>23 included special education services under contractor</p> <p>24 supports. And we have updated our financial models</p> <p>25 and plans to add at least one full-time equivalent,</p>	41	<p>1 This is to ensure that we are prioritizing</p> <p>2 the school's mission to serve all student needs</p> <p>3 through appropriate resource allocation.</p> <p>4 This includes special education, ancillary</p> <p>5 services, and English Language Learners, but it's</p> <p>6 not limited to just that list.</p> <p>7 Next slide.</p> <p>8 MS. MERCY HERRERA: I'd like to just take</p> <p>9 some time to really be focused on our literacy and</p> <p>10 rigorous curriculum selection.</p> <p>11 So Equip Academy's reading methods align</p> <p>12 with that of New Mexico's initiatives. And that's</p> <p>13 around Science of Reading and Structured Literacy.</p> <p>14 And we're going to dive into Science of Reading in</p> <p>15 the coming slides. But Structured Literacy is</p> <p>16 systematic and cumulative, which is what our program</p> <p>17 is.</p> <p>18 It's scaffolded and sequential, and it</p> <p>19 builds on one another. It's explicit. And even</p> <p>20 though we're an inquiry-based approach, we know,</p> <p>21 studies show, that teaching students to learn is</p> <p>22 through a direct method. And so we will use a</p> <p>23 direct, explicit method for teaching reading.</p> <p>24 It's diagnostic. It's a strong part of</p> <p>25 Structured Literacy. We have ongoing formal and</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">42</p> <p>1 informal assessments, and then there are multiple 2 elements that are included with that as well. 3 Next slide. 4 So this is just a quick snapshot of our -- 5 of our rigorous curriculum selection, first being 6 that of success for all, which we will delve into. 7 The next one is leveled books, which is 8 the top left illustration, through the Hyman book 9 selections. And, basically, this is a Level C. So 10 our Level B readers will be getting these C books to 11 ensure that they're feeling successful and both 12 challenged at the same time. 13 We'll also be using Being A Reader and 14 Being A Writer through Collaborative Classroom, 15 which is a supportive program that does align with 16 the initiatives here in New Mexico. 17 For math, we'll be using Leap, which some 18 of the highest-performing charter schools here in 19 Albuquerque and New Mexico use Leap, which is 20 improvement first, as well as some of the schools 21 that I've worked with across the country. 22 Next slide. 23 That is a lot of text. But we're going to 24 go into an actual lesson plan, just to kind of 25 ground us in what that looks like on a daily basis</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">44</p> <p>1 is taught to students as well as the definition. 2 And then Background Words. 3 So this is what's really supportive, 4 especially for our EL students and students with 5 special educational needs. 6 So this is embedded in the lessons daily 7 to support students that's aligned with the Science 8 Of Reading program. 9 Next slide. 10 And then there's the Partner Practice; 11 right? So we talked about phonological, phonemic 12 awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and now we're 13 looking at fluency. This is where students get to 14 independently read on their own, as well as do 15 partner work, where they give each other feedback, 16 which is the cutest thing that you'll ever see 17 around fluency. They'll have challenging sentences 18 and then a book as well. 19 Next slide. 20 And then, again, we've done phonemic 21 awareness and phonology, phonics, vocabulary, 22 fluency. And now we're focusing on comprehension. 23 So this program is really supportive when 24 it comes to, again, asking those inferential, 25 factual, and critical thinking questions for</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">43</p> <p>1 for students. 2 So the Science of Reading and Success For 3 All alignment, that's what we're going to -- that's 4 what I'm going to quickly go over. We know it's the 5 five principles of phonological and phonemic 6 awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and 7 comprehension. 8 Next slide. 9 So this is Appendix M in our application. 10 So you can see this is -- this lesson 11 framework is the structure for a daily -- when 12 supporting students, K to 2. 13 So we start with Hear the Sound. That's 14 the phonemic and phonological awareness piece. 15 We move into Stretch and Read, the new 16 sound. That's the phonics piece. 17 And then next slide. 18 We have the Shared Story, which is an 19 opportunity for the other three elements of Success 20 For All. This is just a quick preview. 21 Next slide. 22 And then we have the vocabulary -- 23 right? -- which is a contributing factor that really 24 supports students in their learning, especially all 25 students. So you can see here the vocabulary that</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">45</p> <p>1 students that are grounded in the text, 2 supportive -- that's been really supportive to help 3 them gain that knowledge and background and 4 understanding with the question and answer. 5 Next slide. 6 And I just want to look at data. As a 7 data-driven institution, Success For All has been 8 around since 1978 -- '87 -- excuse me. And you can 9 see it's -- Success For All is the blue bars. And 10 with the first slide, Success For All Baltimore, you 11 can see that they have continually outperformed in 12 terms of the control group. 13 And then the chart on the right, you can't 14 really see it. But it says "Students Retained." 15 The blue bar is Success For All. There is less 16 retention for students using Success For All over 17 the years, in comparison to the control group. 18 Thank you, Missy. 19 And then on the other side, it's students 20 in special education. So students are spending less 21 time within special education with Success For All, 22 because what we really want to get at is the skill 23 deficit versus the cognitive disability. And 24 students need an IEP to know exactly how we can 25 support them. We want to eliminate that possibility</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">46</p> <p>1 of a scale deficit. This program is really 2 supportive for that. 3 Next slide. 4 And then we also want to talk about 5 representation. Success For All is representative 6 to the demographics that we're supporting here. So 7 you can see one of their latest data pieces is 8 63 percent of students at Indian Oasis Elementary in 9 Tucson passed the AMES [ph] reading assessment, and 10 70 percent are reading on grade level, which does 11 coincide with one of our mission-specific goals. 12 It might seem lofty; it might seem 13 unobtainable to others. But we can see that it's 14 possible with a strong, rigorous curriculum and a 15 supportive structure for -- for students and 16 teachers. 17 Next slide. 18 And this is a -- this is the data we have 19 utilized within -- throughout our application, which 20 really -- which really looks at and compares the 21 data for elementary schools specifically. 22 So what was in our response for the peer 23 reviewers that a school isn't needed on the 24 westside, or that there are other performing 25 schools -- higher-performing schools, we can see</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">48</p> <p>1 so part of that sharing impactful assessment data is 2 fostering that informed decision-making, as well as 3 I lead a lot of strategic planning, helping people 4 stretch and grow to do this. 5 And the reason I'm framing this is because 6 I think all the data we've collected through this 7 entire process really points to a really good data 8 story. And I think that data story is telling us 9 something. And it would be really silly for us to 10 ignore this. 11 So I really firmly believe, as somebody 12 who's been in education for so long and someone 13 growing up on the Albuquerque westside, where my 14 mother sacrificed so much to send me to a private 15 school -- there were no charter schools when I was 16 in that age group. But I really believe 17 Equip Academy is not just another proposed charter 18 school. It really represents the collective 19 aspirations and demands of the Albuquerque westside. 20 The data here unequivocally shows that the 21 community desires a school like Equip. 22 As you can see from last month, we had 23 128 people show up for our community input hearing, 24 with 31 people speaking passionately about the 25 support, 14 people here driving up to Santa Fe,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">47</p> <p>1 here that when you look at just the elementary 2 schools within that area, we're looking at special 3 education are 5 percent proficient. That's 4 95 percent of students who are special education are 5 walking away without knowing how to read. That's 6 3 percent not knowing -- to be on grade level for 7 math. That's 97 percent of students. 8 If you look at our EL population, 9 18 percent of students are only proficient in our 10 targeted area after doing our percentages. Right? 11 And looking at our Hispanic population, that's 12 26 percent. 13 And so we know that more is possible. And 14 with your approval today, we're excited to support 15 in combating this. 16 DR. RENEE DELGADO-RILEY: So I'm an 17 experienced data -- equity center data and 18 assessment expert. And I've spent a lot of time 19 working in education helping people translate 20 complex data into actionable results. 21 Our work really focuses to use data on 22 programming, curriculum, policy, and really focusing 23 on prioritizing that equitable outcome. 24 So, really, I help a lot of institutions, 25 including my own, drive that meaningful change. And</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">49</p> <p>1 which we know is a long drive. 2 But it's really a clear indication that 3 the community is not only aware of our school, but 4 they're deeply invested in its success. 5 And in regards to our surveys, I'm a huge 6 quantitative researcher, but I'm also a qualitative 7 researcher. There are humans behind the numbers. 8 And it is important to contextualize that 9 experience, especially for our marginalized 10 populations. 11 But our survey alone, 97 percent of 12 respondents, which is the most positively skewed I've 13 ever seen in a survey -- and I've done probably a 14 million surveys in my time in this world -- is 15 they're demanding a high-quality elementary school 16 as extremely important on Albuquerque's westside. 17 This overwhelming consensus leaves us 18 little room for interpretation. Our community is 19 demanding this educational excellence. 20 We also had 136 letters of support from 21 families, businesses, organizations, community 22 organizations. And these aren't just endorsements 23 from the community, but they're really a 24 demonstration of the widespread support for a school 25 like Equip and the positive impact that it can have</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">50</p> <p>1 on the community.</p> <p>2 In regards to our focus groups and</p> <p>3 one-on-one meetings, the community consistently,</p> <p>4 245 people, have consistently demanded high-quality</p> <p>5 educational options on the Albuquerque westside.</p> <p>6 This feedback alone is a clear urgent need that a</p> <p>7 school like Equip is needed. This is not just a</p> <p>8 case of our school trying to fit into a community,</p> <p>9 but it is the community calling for people like us</p> <p>10 to meet their educational expectations.</p> <p>11 And, lastly, 107 organizations, from</p> <p>12 businesses, community groups that we've fostered</p> <p>13 relationships with, really have demonstrated that we</p> <p>14 already have a supportive network of people from our</p> <p>15 community. And this support really signals that</p> <p>16 Equip Academy has the potential to not just drive</p> <p>17 educational growth, but as well as long-term</p> <p>18 economic growth.</p> <p>19 Next slide, please.</p> <p>20 So as you can see from all this data,</p> <p>21 Equip Academy has demonstrated overwhelming support</p> <p>22 from multiple channels, from our focus groups to</p> <p>23 surveys to one-on-one meetings to our community</p> <p>24 input hearings. And it really makes it clear that</p> <p>25 this school could be essential for the community.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">52</p> <p>1 they don't have to drive across the river. I did</p> <p>2 much of that in my life as well.</p> <p>3 Next slide, please.</p> <p>4 So, in sum, Equip Academy's foundation is</p> <p>5 really built on the community's expressed needs,</p> <p>6 aspirations, and demands. And chartering Equip is</p> <p>7 not just a response to the community's demands, I</p> <p>8 think it's a necessary step to fulfill their</p> <p>9 educational future.</p> <p>10 We want to thank you for your commitment.</p> <p>11 We want to thank the community. We are so grateful</p> <p>12 and sincerely thank you all for dedicating your time</p> <p>13 to this. I understand voluntary positions, and as</p> <p>14 Public Education Commissioners in New Mexico, you</p> <p>15 play an important role in shaping our educational</p> <p>16 landscape and providing more school options for</p> <p>17 students.</p> <p>18 We really appreciate your commitment to</p> <p>19 supporting the future of New Mexico. We're just</p> <p>20 grateful for your support, talent, and time today.</p> <p>21 So thank you.</p> <p>22 THE CHAIR: Thanks so much. Appreciate</p> <p>23 it.</p> <p>24 Director?</p> <p>25 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: Yes, I do. Thank</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">51</p> <p>1 So with that, because I'm a data nerd, I</p> <p>2 took the community input hearing transcript from our</p> <p>3 31 speakers and did a thematic analysis to look at</p> <p>4 what are the community voices saying.</p> <p>5 And they fell into four areas of buckets</p> <p>6 that really fall into these four areas. And I was</p> <p>7 doing some coding myself as people were talking, and</p> <p>8 they kind of fit into these codes as well.</p> <p>9 But the first two are inclusive education</p> <p>10 and visionary leadership.</p> <p>11 I can give you a moment to read some of</p> <p>12 these quotes. But, overall, our community is</p> <p>13 mentioning that not only Mercy and the team here</p> <p>14 have a lot of experience, but that we're -- we</p> <p>15 really are excited and visionary about doing</p> <p>16 innovative things in the educational realm, and</p> <p>17 we're really wanting to think about inclusive</p> <p>18 education.</p> <p>19 Next slide, please.</p> <p>20 And the second two -- so there's four</p> <p>21 buckets, total. But the second two were around</p> <p>22 educational quality and access and community and</p> <p>23 economic input.</p> <p>24 So community voices are really insistent</p> <p>25 that we need to meet these high-quality access so</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">53</p> <p>1 you, everybody. Thank you, Equip team, and people</p> <p>2 who drove up from Albuquerque. Appreciate it that</p> <p>3 you're coming to the PEC meeting. That's really</p> <p>4 meaningful.</p> <p>5 I want to go over a very quick timeline of</p> <p>6 the interactions between this school and what has</p> <p>7 happened to get them here today.</p> <p>8 So, in January, the applicant submitted a</p> <p>9 Notice of Intent. It was received on time. This</p> <p>10 year, at the Public Education Commission's request,</p> <p>11 Ms. Brown and I sat down with all applicants and</p> <p>12 gave the same message. Our message was, "Please</p> <p>13 respond as thoroughly as possible to each indicator.</p> <p>14 And there's no shame in postponing or reapplying</p> <p>15 next year."</p> <p>16 That has happened in the past.</p> <p>17 So then June 1 arrived. There was lots of</p> <p>18 training for the applicants. June 1 arrived. They</p> <p>19 submitted the application on time. It was complete.</p> <p>20 That application was reviewed by peer reviewers.</p> <p>21 Peer reviewers also interviewed the team. A</p> <p>22 preliminary analysis was sent to PEC and the</p> <p>23 applicants on June 28th.</p> <p>24 On July 8th, the response to the peer</p> <p>25 analysis was e-mailed to PEC. We received that from</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">54</p> <p>1 the school, and I'll talk a little bit more about 2 that in a minute.</p> <p>3 On July 9th, we held the community input 4 hearing at the Athletics Association in Albuquerque.</p> <p>5 On July 19th, the Public Education 6 Commission sent letters to the school. And the 7 final recommendation to PEC and the applicants was 8 sent on August 2nd.</p> <p>9 When we first received the response to the 10 peer analysis, it was quite extensive. Although the 11 applicants stated that there were factual errors, 12 they also provided additional information to extend 13 (verbatim) upon the application that they submitted.</p> <p>14 We sent it back to them, and then they 15 returned it, cutting out some of the information. 16 But what we're looking at is nearly 130 pages with 17 some areas that really do expand upon what was in 18 the application; they're called clarifications, 19 perhaps. But my understanding is there's no rewrite 20 or no corrections made to what was submitted.</p> <p>21 There are strengths in the application. 22 There is no doubt there are strengths in the 23 applicant team. And there's a lot of community 24 support for the school.</p> <p>25 Despite that, the CSD has concluded that</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">56</p> <p>1 could have just been a diagram. But it's unclear 2 exactly where the school will be.</p> <p>3 So when the Charter Schools Division did 4 the final review, we looked at thirty different 5 schools. We included charter schools, not just 6 regular public schools. And you'll see, at the end 7 of that final recommendation, the designation scores 8 and proficiencies: 11 were Spotlight. 14 were 9 Traditional. Only 6 had Priority Schools 10 designations.</p> <p>11 Is there room for growth and proficiency? 12 Absolutely. And New Mexico has invested time and 13 money to train schools in the Science of Reading. 14 We anticipate proficiencies for the elementary 15 students to increase.</p> <p>16 The charter schools we've visited over the 17 past year that took those trainings are seeing the 18 results. And although I am certain that Ms. Herrera 19 would make a great teacher coach, I'm not certain 20 that she would be coaching the teachers on the 21 Science of Literacy. Structured Literacy, the 22 curriculum that is mentioned in the application and 23 the description that we heard today, is a balanced 24 literacy approach. We have vetted this with the 25 literacy folks at the PED of the level (audio</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">55</p> <p>1 the original application, as submitted, is 2 inadequate. Forty out of the 51 indicators were 3 rated as either Approaches or Does Not Meet.</p> <p>4 CSD believes the peer review team did a 5 thorough job of reviewing the application and held 6 the school to a high rigor, as was expected of them 7 and described in the evaluation rubric.</p> <p>8 The application had to be detailed without 9 the need for further development and plans needed to 10 be reasonable and realistic.</p> <p>11 The second reason we're recommending and 12 saying that the school may not be in the best 13 interests of the community is because the 14 application has done little to assess the 15 educational options that could speak to the demand 16 or the need for the school.</p> <p>17 Generally, we have heard from multiple 18 entities who are in support of the school. However, 19 the location of the school is questionable. When 20 the applicants state that they will be west of the 21 Rio Grande and south of Paseo, it's unclear how far 22 south of Paseo.</p> <p>23 In one of the diagrams that was submitted 24 to the PSFA, there was actually a map that went all 25 the way into Corrales. I don't -- I think that</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">57</p> <p>1 distortion) do not meet that criteria.</p> <p>2 Additionally, the application cites polls 3 where people are calling for more charter schools. 4 And we know very little about who the pollsters 5 contacted and what they know about charter schools. 6 But the PEC and the CSD know plenty about charter 7 schools and what it takes to be a high-quality and 8 successful charter school in New Mexico. It isn't 9 easy.</p> <p>10 The application in Appendix J provides 11 proficiency data of students from New York City. I 12 worked in New York City with charter schools. And 13 guess what? They get free facilities. They also 14 get a lot more money per student. It's a vastly 15 different population.</p> <p>16 And I know that Ms. Herrera is from 17 Albuquerque, and she deserves tons of props for 18 that. But that's not necessarily the reason to 19 approve this charter school.</p> <p>20 New Mexico is under a lawsuit for 21 inadequate services for students with special needs. 22 I know the Commission cares about equity and 23 inclusion, ensuring that students' access is part of 24 the PEC's value statements. The application did not 25 meet criteria for instructional services and support</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">58</p> <p>1 for students with IEPs.</p> <p>2 I think this is really important and key</p> <p>3 to this application.</p> <p>4 In closing, I'd like to acknowledge that</p> <p>5 there were letters of support uploaded as part of</p> <p>6 the application, Appendix U, 134 letters. Several</p> <p>7 of them were based on a form letter with maybe one</p> <p>8 prospective parent. Most were from community</p> <p>9 supporters.</p> <p>10 Everyone agrees that there is a need for</p> <p>11 top-tier schools. Who wouldn't agree to that? But</p> <p>12 we won't know for years if this school would be a</p> <p>13 top-tier. So we asked for detailed plans in the</p> <p>14 application to demonstrate capacity.</p> <p>15 And, as stated previously, the school</p> <p>16 Approaches, but it Does Not Meet criteria overall,</p> <p>17 which is why we recommended they come back next</p> <p>18 year, and, between now and then, do a deeper dive</p> <p>19 into the literacy program that they wish to</p> <p>20 implement and the location of the school and</p> <p>21 engaging prospective parents.</p> <p>22 Thank you.</p> <p>23 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thanks so much. We're</p> <p>24 going to take a break. Ten minutes, yeah.</p> <p>25 (Recess taken, 10:22 a.m. to 10:38 a.m.)</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">60</p> <p>1 anything more thorough than that.</p> <p>2 I will tell you that every aspect that I</p> <p>3 see, as a 13-year teacher, was brought forward and</p> <p>4 brought forward very thoughtfully as well.</p> <p>5 One of the things that really stood out to</p> <p>6 me -- I don't know -- it was on Page 230</p> <p>7 something -- was -- was the slow (audio distortion)</p> <p>8 in how you're building your school.</p> <p>9 The 2025-2026 school year is only K</p> <p>10 through 1, 50 for kindergarten and 25 for first</p> <p>11 grade. It builds up to K through 5, I guess, in the</p> <p>12 '29-2030 school year, with 375, and then in the</p> <p>13 2030-2031 school year, it goes to 450, which is,</p> <p>14 again, under your cap that you've talked about.</p> <p>15 I also see that you've done a real deep</p> <p>16 dive into the needs of special education students.</p> <p>17 That's very obvious, which I think is critical in</p> <p>18 this situation.</p> <p>19 I remember distinctly in the community</p> <p>20 input hearing, when I asked you a specific question</p> <p>21 about what the lesson plan would be for first grade</p> <p>22 and fifth grade in terms of English language parts.</p> <p>23 And we had a little discussion about green chile.</p> <p>24 And it was obvious to me that you were very</p> <p>25 culturally responsive in terms of how you integrate</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">59</p> <p>1 THE CHAIR: So for Commissioners, even</p> <p>2 though the responses were put into Google Drive,</p> <p>3 they are now being put into the meeting materials as</p> <p>4 well. So it will be part of the responses that the</p> <p>5 applicant team has made to the community -- to the</p> <p>6 capacity interview, which we've seen in our Google</p> <p>7 Drive, but they haven't been any part of public</p> <p>8 documents. So they will be part of our meeting</p> <p>9 materials now; okay?</p> <p>10 So we are now on to questions, comments.</p> <p>11 Commissioner Beck?</p> <p>12 SECRETARY BECK: Thank you, Chair. I will</p> <p>13 say that I have no questions, since I asked them all</p> <p>14 before. But I do have some comments.</p> <p>15 This is the first time I've gone through</p> <p>16 this process. And I know Commissioner Ingham is the</p> <p>17 same, because last year, we didn't have anybody.</p> <p>18 So it's been a very interesting process, I</p> <p>19 think, for both Commissioner Ingham and myself.</p> <p>20 I will tell you I am in full support of</p> <p>21 Equip as a charter school. There wasn't any good</p> <p>22 football or golf on this weekend, so I amused</p> <p>23 myself -- I amused myself by re-reading the 259-page</p> <p>24 application. And I think it's the most thorough</p> <p>25 application I could ever imagine. I can't imagine</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">61</p> <p>1 New Mexico culture into your everyday lesson plans.</p> <p>2 I think it was tremendous.</p> <p>3 I think -- I differ with the issue of</p> <p>4 community input. I've never seen community inputs</p> <p>5 like that. You had stakeholders from every aspect,</p> <p>6 from organizations, from businesses, on the</p> <p>7 education side, individuals, families. My daughter</p> <p>8 and her family live on the westside, right next to</p> <p>9 LBJ Middle School. And she and her neighbors are --</p> <p>10 I'm probably talking too loud here.</p> <p>11 THE CHAIR: You're getting a little</p> <p>12 animated.</p> <p>13 SECRETARY BECK: Animated. For good</p> <p>14 reason. They have a need for a good-quality</p> <p>15 elementary school on the westside. They all say</p> <p>16 that. I've been to a bunch of their neighborhood</p> <p>17 parties, and they talk about that.</p> <p>18 And I want to go to what Senator Maestas</p> <p>19 said about catching up with the growth on the</p> <p>20 westside. That growth is there, and we're just</p> <p>21 trying to catch up.</p> <p>22 A famous Wayne Gretzky quote is, "Go to</p> <p>23 where the puck is going, not where it is."</p> <p>24 That's what we're looking at.</p> <p>25 I want to say that I also appreciate your</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">62</p> <p>1 aggressive expectations. I don't think they're out 2 of bounds. We're the 50th in the country. You can 3 look at all these proficiencies. These are 4 proficiencies based on us being 50th in the country; 5 okay?</p> <p>6 The NAEP, we were scared to death at 7 Sandia High School when that was coming in, because 8 we knew, unfortunately, that we had challenges 9 nationally.</p> <p>10 You guys are bucking that trend. And 11 maybe that's because it's your experience in 12 New York. You have a broader perspective of that. 13 That's very possible.</p> <p>14 But I love the aggressiveness with which 15 you've taken on your expectations.</p> <p>16 So I'm just going to say that I love your 17 passion. I love your tears.</p> <p>18 So I have no questions. I'm done, and I 19 fully support Equip. Thank you.</p> <p>20 THE CHAIR: Still trying to figure out if 21 I know where you stand on that.</p> <p>22 Commissioner Burt.</p> <p>23 COMMISSIONER BURT: I'll -- also, I don't 24 really have questions; even though I do love to hear 25 you talk about your school and about the proposed</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">64</p> <p>1 I think the pieces where I saw they're, 2 like, "Okay, well, maybe that does need to be done 3 differently," or, you know, sometimes you don't know 4 what you don't know until you learn it.</p> <p>5 Some laws, you don't know until you find 6 out; right?</p> <p>7 So I fully -- I have full confidence that 8 this team, in the Implementation Year, will figure 9 out exactly what needs to be done. And I have full 10 confidence going into the first year that -- like, I 11 mean -- I guess I think if you're perfect on the 12 application, you're Day Zero already. I would 13 expect you to be Day-One ready. So we have a year 14 of Implementation Year. And I can't imagine this 15 team not being one of the best Day One-ready 16 schools.</p> <p>17 I just -- I don't see where that happens. 18 And based off the application, the amount 19 of not just passion, but data to support it.</p> <p>20 And, honestly, one of the things that I 21 think I'm most disappointed by in the recommendation 22 is the lack of belief in our own students. I see 23 this team believes in New Mexico kids that they can 24 do it, that they can score very high proficiency. 25 But I didn't see that in the recommendation team,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">63</p> <p>1 way in which this incredible board and head leader 2 will move into the future.</p> <p>3 So I'm going to kind of -- I'm going to 4 kind of take Tim's way of going about business.</p> <p>5 I fully support this school. And I'm 6 trying to pick my words wisely.</p> <p>7 It's not just the passion. I love -- it's 8 important to have it, not just Ms. Herrera, but 9 everybody. I mean, their expertise in this board is 10 astounding; I mean, absolutely astounding.</p> <p>11 I don't know -- I -- I mean, it says a lot 12 about Ms. Herrera to have these people come to -- 13 want to be on this board, want to serve this school, 14 and partner with her, says a lot about her because 15 of the quality of the board members that you have 16 found to come and start this school as well.</p> <p>17 I also -- I don't see this application -- 18 I don't know. I know there are parts that maybe 19 there were, a couple of places, where maybe this 20 could have been a couple of approaches.</p> <p>21 I do not expect perfection in a new 22 application. Like, that's insane to have it to 23 where it needs to be absolutely perfect. What's the 24 point of the implementation year if you're already 25 shown to be perfect on your application?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">65</p> <p>1 that -- you know, that a lofty goal is to be -- to 2 have high proficiency. It just was really 3 disappointing to see that that's the -- that was 4 what was against the school was, like, you had high 5 expectations for the students. So very 6 disappointing in that.</p> <p>7 I do believe in our students. And I'm 8 glad that you're back home. I do also agree you 9 could have gone anywhere. And I do not want a 10 single other person that is considering opening up a 11 charter school in New Mexico to see this process, to 12 go through this application, to see this team, and 13 be, like, "Why -- if they can't get approved, why 14 would I even try? Like, what's the point?"</p> <p>15 That -- it's -- it's astounding to me. 16 This is a great application, an incredible school, 17 massive amounts of data to support it. The 18 community outreach is the best I've seen, ever.</p> <p>19 I mean, you have taken that -- this year 20 that you've done your -- like, fellowship, I mean, 21 it is obvious you have taken full advantage of it 22 inside your own community; right? I mean, there are 23 people that will go and get -- have fellowships out 24 of state, and they have to spend a lot of time out 25 of state building what this looks like.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">66</p> <p>1 For you to do your fellowship here in 2 New Mexico in Albuquerque with the community you're 3 going to be serving, I mean, to me, it was a direct 4 reflection of the readiness of this application, of 5 this team, and of you, Ms. Herrera. 6 So, I mean I -- the application also is -- 7 or the recommendation is extremely tone-deaf to the 8 needs of the westside, extremely tone-deaf, like, 9 there's no consideration for the reality of what's 10 going on in westside Albuquerque based off of that 11 recommendation. 12 I was a far westside resident for many 13 years. My kids went to Antigua, so, like, one of 14 the further west, out on the mesa; right? There's 15 not a lot of options for far Westsiders. Do you 16 know what's going on? More apartments, more houses. 17 Less stores, less schools. More houses. 18 Albuquerque can only grow west; right? 19 You can't go north. You can't go to the east; 20 you've got the mountain. You can only go west. 21 It's going to get bigger and bigger out there. 22 So all being said, I am baffled by -- I 23 actually want to apologize for whatever feelings 24 this team had giving that recommendation. It's not 25 appropriate. I mean, I know that the PEC is</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">68</p> <p>1 So thank you. Thank you for doing this. 2 Thank you for the work. It is very well-seen. And 3 I very much respect the work that's been done and am 4 looking forward to supporting the school many years 5 into the future. 6 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Taylor. 7 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yeah. Thank you. 8 Thank you again for -- for being here. The (audio 9 distortion) of work and resources that you guys have 10 used to come up with this -- come up with the school 11 and the plan and go through the application process 12 is just remarkable. You know, I don't want to 13 belabor the accolades, but ditto what both 14 Commissioners that have spoken so far have said to 15 you, you know. 16 I -- I know that you guys -- I do want to 17 reiterate the fact that I love the idea that you 18 have lofty goals and that you have expectations. 19 And that's -- as Commissioner Beck said, good grief. 20 It's about time, you know. It's about time that 21 there are schools in New Mexico that set those lofty 22 goals and reach to achieve them. 23 So thank you for that. Thank you for your 24 vision and your expectations. 25 I know that you all know that upon</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">67</p> <p>1 separate, and we can make our own decision. 2 But to get a denial recommendation is 3 really shocking. And I'm really sorry for probably 4 the way that made you feel over the last couple of 5 weeks, because I do not think that that is 6 reflective of -- I do not see that being reflective 7 at all of our PEC values, at all. 8 That's all I'll say for now. But I -- 9 thank you for coming here. Thank you for the work 10 that you did. Thank you for the data. Thank you 11 for being so well-written and so well-structured. 12 I think, in the Implementation Year, 13 you're going to do another year of learning and 14 growing, more than what you already are at. 15 I'm fully supportive of this school. I 16 have high expectations for you guys, but I don't 17 even know if they're as high as you have for 18 yourself. 19 And that's what we need. We need schools 20 going -- and not learning how to do Structured 21 Literacy, going in day one and implementing, like, 22 that's where you're already at. I imagine this 23 school being a model for what the PED initiatives 24 are with the Science of Reading and with Early 25 Literacy.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">69</p> <p>1 approval -- which I anticipate is going to happen -- 2 but upon approval, you know, you got a long road, 3 you know. This next year is -- you think you've 4 done work so far; right? 5 But with the team -- with the team that 6 you have, the talents that you guys have, I just 7 don't anticipate any -- any issue. 8 And I guarantee that in five years, when 9 you guys come up for renewal, it's going to be one 10 of those that we're going to be talking about how 11 good y'all have done, how well y'all have done. So 12 thank you. 13 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Carrillo. 14 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Thank you very much 15 for being here, all of your board and all of your 16 supporters. It means a great deal to us when people 17 show up in person. I know sometimes people have to 18 Zoom in. But when you are here making a connection 19 with us, it means a great deal. 20 So there are people that spoke on your 21 behalf. And I weighed their comments very heavily. 22 I mean, D'Val Westphal with the Albuquerque Chamber, 23 Melissa with the Albuquerque West Business 24 Association, Sean Duncan with THRIVE. This is a 25 school that knocked it out of the park when they</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">70</p> <p>1 opened the doors, and they're continuing to do that. 2 And (audio distortion) if I didn't take a dig at the 3 district. And, of course, the district didn't want 4 the school. 5 So you have Rachael; it's so nice to see 6 you, Rachael. And, Jane, people with a lot of 7 experience in the private sector and business and 8 charter schools speaking on your behalf. 9 Mercy, you are clearly admired for your 10 work, your dedication, your knowledge. And so when 11 you were doing the piece a few minutes ago about 12 with the lesson plan, that was the coolest thing 13 ever. 14 I really don't remember how I learned 15 phonics and how I learned all my sight words and 16 everything way back then. It's a long time ago -- 17 not that long. When I heard you going over that, it 18 was so fascinating, the Science of Reading piece; 19 right? And getting the kids and their little brains 20 to be able to grasp the concepts. 21 I mean -- and I love the idea of what you 22 were talking about in terms of they demonstrate what 23 they know immediately by -- you know. And I was, 24 like, how (audio distortion) the fish or whatever it 25 was, the ball, whatever it was on the slide, making</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">72</p> <p>1 So, for example, one of our pieces is 2 going to be students practicing -- bringing -- 3 taking and bringing back their book baggies, which 4 is a crucial element to both at home and in-school 5 support. 6 So we're going to send them empty, and 7 we're going to practice that; right? That's an 8 opportunity for parents to get involved and know 9 why. 10 We're going to send a little note. It's 11 the clear bag, so that if there's a note, they can 12 see it. And students can practice reading. That's 13 one piece where we really support them. 14 But also for math, we're going to have 15 math night -- the cognitive guided instruction piece 16 is really difficult. It's really different. 17 Parents would come in and say, "I don't know what 18 this is" -- because we'll send work home -- "I don't 19 know how to help them." 20 We're going to have a gallery walk, where 21 parents come in and observe the students doing live 22 number stories, so that way families know what it 23 looks like, and have it videotaped and uploaded and 24 sent to parents who can't make it because they work. 25 So there's lots of opportunity. I think</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">71</p> <p>1 sure the comprehension is there. Because, for me, 2 actually, I was one of those people that was -- I 3 could read really well aloud. "Call on me, call on 4 me." 5 But could I comprehend what I was reading? 6 No. To this today, it's slow for me. I have to 7 read things twice. 8 And, yeah, so I appreciate that very, very 9 much. 10 The (audio distortion) away. Let's see. 11 I have a question. Accolades will come later. 12 You know, parent development, because it 13 seems like so much of what you're doing, because 14 that is so based in literacy -- right? -- do you 15 have a -- and this isn't a gotcha thing at all -- a 16 plan for parent development to be partners in the 17 reading? You have PDA for teachers; right? But 18 what about parents? 19 MS. MERCY HERRERA: Yes. There's multiple 20 opportunities for parents to come in and take 21 workshops for literacy. So we're going to do an LOL 22 night, which means Love of Literacy, and we're going 23 to look at what it looks like at Equip Academy for 24 their Structured Literacy program and support them 25 on how they're going to navigate students at home.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">73</p> <p>1 just -- and then there's also just the joy factor -- 2 right? -- which was, again, another piece that came 3 back from the community input, which is, "I went to 4 a school where we never did anything fun." 5 And so we have lots of fun opportunities 6 for parents to come and enjoy our -- our 7 community -- our community days. 8 So there will be grade-level days and 9 schoolwide-level days, where students get to -- 10 whether it's a little class cheer that they're doing 11 specifically, or a sight word awards ceremony. We 12 also have our published parties, where families can 13 come in and see the process of writing of their 14 students, from when it -- with their first draft to 15 their final draft looks like. 16 And that can be, again, a gallery walk, 17 where they go and look at the process where that 18 took place, or they can come and sit and be an 19 audience member as their students read aloud, as 20 part of the authorship, published piece, which is 21 reading your book out loud to those. 22 This is starting at kindergarten. 23 So there's lots of ample opportunity for 24 parents to get involved. I feel that parent 25 involvement is crucial to student success, to the</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">74</p> <p>1 most that they are willing and able to contribute. 2 So, yes. 3 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Sometimes (audio 4 distortion) 'Cause all of us remember how -- the 5 spaghetti dinners at school or whatever. But it 6 didn't accomplish anything; right? There's no ask 7 of parents or kids of anything -- oh, okay. 8 So I'm excited to hear about all of this, 9 the way you're engaging parents and kids. I'm 10 excited to hear about the kid in kinder reading from 11 his book. That's just huge. 12 So thank you for that. 13 There's a number of comments here that I'm 14 concerned about. 15 Need. I've always felt -- (audio 16 distortion) fill out these questionnaires, which is 17 just tedious. (Audio distortion) why do you think 18 you want more charters (audio distortion) all of 19 that. 20 It's just, like, the market determines the 21 need. Okay. We don't determine the need; okay? 22 And the need is determined in this case by 23 wanting schools that are performing better than 24 Albuquerque Public or Santa Fe, Alamogordo, 25 wherever.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">76</p> <p>1 "I can do this someday." 2 That's the way I feel with the way you're 3 approaching literacy and looking at colleges. 4 I really appreciate Bekka's comments. 5 When an application, I believe, is done this well, 6 (audio distortion) clearly going that direction, and 7 not approve it, what does that say to anybody else 8 that desires to do something different, to open a 9 charter and desires to make a difference? So, 10 obviously, I'm emphatically supporting the school. 11 What concerns me here in the comments, and 12 not just this, but over the years that I've been in 13 this Commission, the peer reviewers, I've never seen 14 so much red in Does Not Meet, where it just didn't 15 make sense. 16 Like, maybe -- did they have a bad day? 17 What were they thinking when they read these apps? 18 It's almost as though they took out personal biases 19 or something on the schools. 20 And I say that only (audio distortion) 21 something that we review later. We peer-review the 22 peer reviewers, because something seemed amiss this 23 year with their commentary. Like, they were just 24 missing the mark all the way around. 25 And, really, I'm very concerned about the</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">75</p> <p>1 Because just as Tim stated -- and I would 2 echo this emphatically -- when you compare 3 yourselves when you're No. 50 -- and even if you're 4 Spotlight or whatever, they're really not that good. 5 I've got all the scores in front of me, relative to, 6 like, other places in the country, what does that 7 say about us, that we just accept the lowest common 8 denominator of the need? 9 And I love that you're striving for more, 10 and all of you are passionate about that. So I 11 believe there's a need. Because I believe there's a 12 need for a school that focuses on literacy, that has 13 kids go around to colleges or go to your (audio 14 distortion) and say -- looking at all the other 15 people on campus, and they're so big, and they're so 16 tall and, they're looking at them with wide eyes and 17 admiration and kind of hoping on the future; right? 18 "This is where I get to be," you know. 19 Do you guys remember J.B., who used to 20 play basketball for Santa Fe Demons? 21 SECRETARY BECK: JB White. 22 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: JB White. He would 23 have gone into the NBA. I remember when he'd go 24 into the elementary schools, he'd high-five 25 everybody, because he was JB. And it was, you know,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">77</p> <p>1 part where they're saying that your reading content 2 is not aligned with New Mexico standards and 3 literacy frameworks and things like that. Maybe 4 it's New Mexico that needs to get realigned. When 5 we get our literacy rates and our success with ELAs 6 and special ed statewide, clearly, we're doing 7 something wrong. And (audio distortion) from others 8 around the country that are having success. And I 9 think that's something that also holds us back as a 10 state, this provincialism we have that we have all 11 the answers, you know? 12 No. Let's look outside of ourselves for 13 people that are knocking it out of the park; okay? 14 And I think that's super important. 15 I'm always troubled by this. Because if I 16 was around, I'm not going to sign a lease with 17 anybody until I know that I have a business. Even 18 when I was opening a private business here in 19 Santa Fe, it was very hard sometimes to make pitches 20 to venture capitalists to get money, because I 21 didn't have a lease. But I can't have a lease until 22 I have this. 23 I know that's also what the Implementation 24 Year is for -- just as Bekka said, "Do you think 25 it's hard now?" -- working out all the kinks.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">78</p> <p>1 That's what that year is for. I'm confident you'll 2 find the space to do what you need to do. 3 So I'm very excited about this school. 4 And I learned about this concept, I think it was 5 about eight, nine months ago, even, because I've 6 been friends with Jane through NMSA. And so she 7 told me what might be coming down the pike. 8 And it's down the pike, and I'm excited 9 about it. Thank you very much for the depth of your 10 presentation, your -- this is collectively your 11 presentation, your knowledge, your dedication to 12 kids and your dedication to New Mexico education. 13 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Ingham. 14 COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Okay. I said it 15 before. I feel like sometimes I'm the ignorant 16 person in the room. And so during this process, I 17 have to say I was just, like -- I couldn't figure 18 out what was going on here. And I still don't think 19 I understand how my -- what I got from your 20 presentations, how it was so disconnected with the 21 review and how, obviously, the reviewers had a whole 22 different expectation, and very much in line. 23 And I looked -- tried to look at this, and 24 I just could not put it together. 25 It's very refreshing to me -- because I</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">80</p> <p>1 So what is the -- where is the disconnect? 2 And now that disconnect is really scary to me for 3 those other schools. 4 And so I want to say I also am 5 emphatically in support of your school. I live on 6 the westside. I live south. But I honestly know 7 that you guys are going to do a great job. And I 8 sure hope we can foster new charter schools. I am 9 all about the idea of new charter schools coming on 10 board, because I think the charter school movement 11 is what's going to change education in New Mexico. 12 And if we make it so hard that we can't do 13 that, then we have lost that opportunity. And I 14 will be really -- I'll spend the rest of my time on 15 this Commission fighting back on that. 16 So thank you guys for your (inaudible). 17 There is a little hand -- maybe that -- 18 THE CHAIR: Well, I want to speak; so -- 19 so, you know, thanks once again. Because we are 20 asking a lot. We know that, you know. 21 And I don't think we've set the bar too 22 high. I don't. But -- so I'm going to answer a 23 little bit -- or at least speak to a little bit of 24 what you said. 25 I look at this as kind of like a little</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">79</p> <p>1 was very anxious about this -- that the rest of the 2 Commission is seeing the same thing. I have to say 3 there's -- this puts me in a very awkward position. 4 I think there are Does Not Meets that would be 5 important issues that you need to address. 6 I mean, what does it say that we're -- our 7 bar is so high that you can't get through? You 8 actually have support and some financial support. 9 There are schools that don't have that financial 10 support. 11 I thought our mandate was that they would 12 be community schools that could make a proposal that 13 could bring it to us that, no, it can't be perfect, 14 but that they bring it to us. And if you guys 15 don't -- aren't able to pass that bar, my God, what 16 is it going to take? 17 And I was -- I just was shocked, honestly. 18 And so I'm -- I'm going to say I am very 19 anxious about how to use the -- the reviews that 20 were passed on for the other schools, because I 21 can't -- now I know, from the reaction from every -- 22 that this was a perfectly appropriate -- which was 23 my opinion. Actually, my opinion was somebody's 24 inside here, because they know everything right to 25 say.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">81</p> <p>1 game and a test for myself. I read through the 2 application, and I do notes on the application. 3 Then when the capacity interview comes in, I look at 4 it and see where -- you know, where I was as 5 compared to them. I go back and say, "They saw 6 that," and it's, like, "No, I didn't see that." 7 So it's like, to me, that's what we have 8 to do. We have to look at and not just rely on 9 other -- you know, I did go back, and I relook, and 10 say, "I did not see that." 11 And sometimes it's, like, "Yeah, I really 12 didn't see it." 13 And other times, it's, like, "No." A lot 14 of it is interpretation. It is. 15 So it's -- and it takes a lot. It takes 16 three and four passes of this application to really 17 dig in and -- and see. 18 I will say that if you want to look at -- 19 not diminishing your application, but if you want to 20 look at Rachael's application, it's -- it rivals it 21 in terms of its thoroughness, because the passion is 22 there. 23 So I'm less concerned with the approaches, 24 because, to me, the approaches are they got it. 25 Yeah, they got it. And that's what the</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">82</p> <p>1 Implementation Year is working on. You've got the 2 base.</p> <p>3 I've seen capacity peer review reports 4 that have way more red. I wasn't alarmed by the 5 reds. I think we brought forward the concerns about 6 the budget. I am -- it Did Not Meet. The budget 7 Did Not Meet. And I fully agree with that. And we 8 talked about that at the community input hearing.</p> <p>9 And it's a challenge. It is. But, you 10 know, the areas where -- there weren't enough Does 11 Not Meets to -- to be alarming.</p> <p>12 And, like I said, the approaches can be 13 worked on. You know, would I have preferred more 14 greens? Maybe. And maybe if I was part of that 15 capacity team, there would have been more greens. 16 That's where you look at it, and you say, "No, I 17 really didn't see that. But I can see that 18 something is there."</p> <p>19 I have less input on -- I acknowledge that 20 there is apparently a need on the westside. I live 21 in a community that maybe I think we have two ZIP 22 Codes. So I'm not a ZIP Code person. We don't 23 identify by our ZIP Code. I don't understand it. 24 I'll never get it.</p> <p>25 So I leave that to the Albuquerque people</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">84</p> <p>1 out.</p> <p>2 I will say Rudolfo Anaya wrote a book, 3 "How Green Chiles Came To New Mexico." And it was 4 actually an acquaintance of mine, Nick Otero, who 5 illustrated the book. It's just a little book, but 6 it's a great little book, for little -- for littles, 7 not -- and it's actually one of my coffee table 8 books that we keep out. Excuse me?</p> <p>9 (Off-mic statement.)</p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. So 11 I think that's -- at this point, the only thing I 12 have to say.</p> <p>13 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: One thing. It's the 14 Columbo thing. I can't help myself. But it's based 15 on -- people remember Columbo.</p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: Re-runs.</p> <p>17 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: On the TV. Do you 18 remember that old broken-down Peugeot that he drove? 19 It was auctioned off for, like, some astronomical 20 amount.</p> <p>21 Anyway (audio distortion) in New Mexico, 22 this is where I just really -- I want districts to 23 learn from charters to be able to do all of this 24 work in districts. They can. They just have to 25 have the will to do it.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">83</p> <p>1 to figure that all out and say, "We're going to be 2 there. Fine." But I do hear. And I -- I know 3 Albuquerque enough to know that the westside is the 4 only place where you can really grow. So I think it 5 is important for the westside. I think it's really 6 important.</p> <p>7 There's areas in New Mexico where there 8 are charter deserts. So there's a disappointment in 9 me that this isn't someplace else, only because I 10 know the great need in so many other places.</p> <p>11 Does it take away from the need in -- you 12 know, the westside of Albuquerque? But it's, like, 13 come on. Can't we -- you know, we celebrate when 14 there's applications other places. And it's, 15 like -- you know. And I know it's hard.</p> <p>16 So I'm a huge fan of -- I started my 17 teaching with inquiry-based, you know. And it was a 18 tough sell for a lot of the teachers that had been 19 seasoned. And, you know, it's, like, "This is going 20 to be hard."</p> <p>21 And I was, you know, a brand new teacher, 22 so it was great.</p> <p>23 And inclusion. So I know how great it is 24 for kids that have those learning challenges.</p> <p>25 So I'm excited to hopefully see that roll</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">85</p> <p>1 And I have high hopes that maybe one day, 2 they're going to say, "Oh, you know what? We can 3 actually learn from these people. They're not 4 threatening."</p> <p>5 Anyway, that's it.</p> <p>6 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Burt.</p> <p>7 COMMISSIONER BURT: I'm going to make a 8 motion.</p> <p>9 I move that the Public Education 10 Commission approve the application for Equip Academy 11 for a six-year term, from 2025 to 2031, which 12 includes a planning year prior to opening. During 13 the planning year and prior to commencing 14 operations, Equip Academy must:</p> <p>15 No. 1, negotiate a contract with the PEC; 16 No. 2, obtain standing as an approved Board 17 of Finance; 18 No. 3, secure a facility that has 19 E-Occupancy; 20 And, No. 4, complete the Planning Year 21 Checklist.</p> <p>22 Equip Academy is approved on the condition 23 that the school is housed in a location on the 24 westside of Albuquerque. Once the applicant has 25 provided an E-Occupancy showing that the school will</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">86</p> <p>1 be located on the westside of Albuquerque, the 2 condition shall be deemed to be met, and the 3 westside school location will be incorporated into 4 your charter contract. 5 THE CHAIR: Thank you. 6 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Second. 7 THE CHAIR: Motion by Commissioner Burt, 8 and a second by Commissioner Taylor. 9 COMMISSIONER BURT: If I can just, real 10 quick. I just want to make sure -- I have full 11 confidence that you want to be on the westside. But 12 I do think -- just making sure. Like, that's the 13 community you reached out to. That's where you did 14 it. So just kind of ensuring that that's going to 15 be the community you end up serving. 16 That's the only -- otherwise, I wouldn't 17 have put a condition at all. 18 THE CHAIR: Any additional? 19 (No response.) 20 THE CHAIR: Roll, please. 21 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Ingham. 22 COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Absolutely and 23 emphatically. 24 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Burt. 25 COMMISSIONER BURT: Yes.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">88</p> <p>1 that we kind of saw the feedback in three different 2 categories that came in. 3 And given the first two categories, it 4 would have been easy for us to have disregarded the 5 third category, but we didn't. 6 As you heard, we did over 100 pages of 7 feedback. After we got all of this, we were spotted 8 with a number of things, including the budget; 9 right? 10 So the -- the third category, then, was 11 where we saw things in the feedback that, "Oh, yes, 12 we could improve, and we need to read this, and we 13 need to take a look at that." 14 But the other two categories that we did 15 see, one was where there was feedback that we got 16 that was, just frankly, flatout wrong. And just as 17 an example of that is that we were -- we had an 18 entire part about FMLA compliance. 19 And then we were told, "No, FMLA doesn't 20 apply to you. That's only if you have at least 50 21 employees." 22 Well, actually FMLA applies to private 23 businesses with 50 or more employees. All public 24 bodies, and, specifically, every single elementary 25 and secondary school in the country, regardless of</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">87</p> <p>1 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Manis. 2 COMMISSIONER MANIS: Yes. 3 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Taylor. 4 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yes. 5 SECRETARY BECK: Vice Chair Carrillo. 6 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Yes. 7 SECRETARY BECK: Chair Gipson. 8 THE CHAIR: Yes. 9 SECRETARY BECK: Secretary Beck, yes. 10 There are seven votes for, zero votes 11 against. The motion passes. 12 THE CHAIR: Congratulations. 13 (Applause). 14 THE CHAIR: Mr. Ivey-Soto. 15 MR. DANIEL IVEY-SOTO: Madam Chair and 16 members, if I could just comment on a couple of 17 things that came up from the discussion. And I knew 18 better than to say anything before you voted. 19 But... 20 THE CHAIR: Uh-oh. 21 MR. DANIEL IVEY-SOTO: But, no. There 22 was -- because there was some -- there was some -- a 23 fair amount of the commentary about the peer review 24 and the feedback process and whatnot. And I just 25 wanted to let you guys know, from our perspective,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">89</p> <p>1 whether public or private, are covered by FMLA. And 2 so -- and so whoever decided to put that we're not 3 covered by FMLA in the feedback, that was just, 4 blackletter law, wrong. 5 And so that was part of what we were 6 having to sift through. 7 There were also a few places where we just 8 simply have disagreements; right? And some of that 9 was, for example, whether we -- whether our -- our 10 literacy component comported with the State or not. 11 We thought it did. And we thought that we enhanced 12 beyond where it was. That was a disagreement. 13 But then there are also things like, for 14 example, in the -- in the staff -- the policy that 15 we had for people to be able to raise concerns about 16 members of the staff, we had -- so if you raise a 17 concern about any member of the staff, it goes to 18 the head administrator. 19 If you had a concern about the head 20 administrator, though, it didn't make sense that it 21 should go to the head administrator. But we didn't 22 want to burden the -- we were trying to figure out, 23 well, where would it go? We didn't want to burden, 24 necessarily, the -- the chair of the governing 25 board, given where -- where things may end up with a</p>

1 hearing or not, or what the nature of a -- of an
2 investigation may end up being based on a complaint.

3 So we said it would go to the general
4 counsel.

5 Well, in the feedback we got, we were
6 simply told, "That is inappropriate," but no basis
7 for why it was inappropriate.

8 I can't find any basis for why it's
9 inappropriate. So that just simply seems to be them
10 substituting their judgment for our judgment.

11 And so -- and so that's where, in the --
12 in the -- and, of course, also remember, we get to
13 apply for waivers on some of these issues as well as
14 we go through this process. But that's where, in
15 the feedback, although we did take very seriously
16 where we could and provided over 100 pages of
17 feedback and reconstructed certain things, the
18 budget being the most tangible one, but a number of
19 other places where we massaged because we did see,
20 there were other places where, frankly, it did seem
21 like they were trying to substitute their judgment
22 for ours, or they just flat-out just got the law
23 wrong on specific areas. So we had to work through
24 some of that.

25 I just wanted to give that feedback back

1 to you, even as we did provide whatever meaningful
2 response back that we could.

3 THE CHAIR: Okay.

4 (End of audio.)

5 (Proceedings in recess at 11:21 a.m.)

1 BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
2 STATE OF NEW MEXICO

7 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

8 I, Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR, CCR #219, Certified
9 Court Reporter in the State of New Mexico, do hereby
10 certify that the foregoing pages constitute a true
11 transcript of proceedings had before the said
12 NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, held in the
13 State of New Mexico, County of Santa Fe, in the
14 matter therein stated.

15 In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my
16 hand on August 21, 2024.

19 _____
20 Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219
21 BEAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.
22 201 Third Street, NW, Suite 1630
23 Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102
24 License Expires: December 31, 2024

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16 hand on August 21, 2024.

17
18
19 *Cynthia Chapman*

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A

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