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**Charter Schools Division  
Renewal Analysis and Recommendation  
November 1, 2024**

**School Name:** Dził Dít'ooí School of Empowerment Action and Perseverance

**School Address:** PO Box 156 Navajo, NM 87328

**Head Administrator:** Kayla Begay

**Governing Board Chair:** Becki Jones

**Contract Term:** 2020–2025

**Statutory Renewal Requirements**

According to New Mexico Statutes Annotated (NMSA) 1979, Section 22-8B-12 K., a charter may be suspended, revoked, or not renewed by the chartering authority if the chartering authority determines that the charter school:

- (1) committed a material violation of any of the conditions, standards or procedures set forth in the charter contract;
- (2) failed to meet or make substantial progress toward achievement of the department's standards of excellence or student performance standards identified in the charter contract;
- (3) failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management;
- (4) for a charter school located on tribal land, failed to comply with ongoing consultations pursuant to the Indian Education Act; or

(5) violated any provision of law from which the charter school was not specifically exempted.

**Preliminary Renewal Recommendation**

The Charter Schools Division (CSD) recommends Dził Dit’ooí School of Empowerment Action and Perseverance (DEAP) be renewed with a charter contract term of five years, with the following condition:

Due to repeated audit findings and sub-par financial ratings on the performance framework over the charter term, DEAP “failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.” Therefore, school leadership and the governing board will provide a financial report and finance committee minutes to CSD quarterly, beginning in July 2025 (with final quarter FY24 information). The school leadership and governing board will improve financial systems and will continue to show consistent improvement on financial indicators and audit results over the next charter term.

**Part B: Progress Report**

The school’s narratives in Part B are rated **Meets the Standards, Demonstrates Substantial Progress**, or **Failing to Demonstrate Progress** according to the rubric on pages 6-7 of the 2024 Charter School Renewal Application.

<b>Part B: Progress Report</b>	
<b>Academic Performance</b>	<b>Rating</b>
1.a. Student Outcomes	Demonstrates Substantial Progress*
1.b. Mission-Specific Goals	Meets the Standards
<b>Organizational Performance</b>	<b>Rating</b>
2.a. Educational Program	Meets the Standards
2.b. Financial Compliance	Failing to Demonstrate Progress
2.c. Governance Responsibilities	Demonstrates Substantial Progress
2.d. Equity and Identity	Meets the Standards
2.e. Tribal Consultation	Meets the Standards
2.f. Other Performance Framework Indicators	Demonstrates Substantial Progress

*\* Results from 2023-24 Vistas data, scheduled to be released in November 2024, could change this rating in the final recommendation.*

**1.a. Student Outcomes**

Dził Dit’ooí School of Empowerment Action and Perseverance (DEAP) leadership and teachers have a strong commitment to the students of the community that they serve. The schools NM VISTAS rating for the 2022-23 school year was Traditional. The school does have low academic proficiencies (less than or equal to 10% math, 12% reading with a 3% decrease and less than or

equal to and 20% in science). School is aware that their academic data is low and is not meeting standards and during site visit, various adult actions were identified. School leadership and teachers have taken measures to establish a clear, data-driven path moving forward. School leadership has done professional development so staff can learn how to analyze data and then incorporate results into instruction. School leadership and staff hold weekly meetings to review data and create action plans on how to better support the students that are struggling. Teachers meet with students and share/review their scores with them. They use NM-MSSA, NWEA MAP for interim assessments; they are focused on increasing math proficiencies. They provide high dosage tutoring and have also created formative assessments (exit tickets for each class).

Located in the part of the state hardest hit by COVID, DEAP faced challenges including lack of electricity and bandwidth to provide online instruction. The school had to be creative in finding ways to meet their mission. When the state-wide closure went into effect, DEAP was proactive in getting hotspots to all families who did not have access to wifi and they were able to have daily communication with their students and families. Once COVID restrictions were loosened and school came back to in-person instruction, they noticed that their families and the community had to learn how to trust each other; they re-learned their historical traumas. The staff at DEAP had to build their foundation and build their relationships again. The first year back in person the school had to work to improve attendance, which had declined. Since then the school has prioritized the social emotional learning of their students and also worked on helping them heal.

The school is working on broadening success beyond traditional metrics through rigorous academic preparation, re-engaging students, dual enrollment, CTE and employing DEAP Alumni. As a small school, DEAP is able to focus more on individual students by creating work-based-learning, graduate profile and microcredentials. The school strives to impact students culturally and socially as well as academically.

### **1.b. Mission-specific Goals**

Throughout the contract term DEAP exceeded or met their mission-specific goals. During classroom observations, the site visit team observed mission-specific goals displayed on walls were clearly visible for all to see.

### **2.a. Educational Program**

DEAP's education program has a focus on four (4) pillars: Service learning for community action & leadership, Land based learning, Diné Empowerment Through Cultural Revitalization & Relevancy, and wellness & perseverance as well as connecting back to academics and building sustainability by investing in our team.

The School is committed to providing students with hands-on learning through land-based education. Through partnerships with land-based education programs, the School equips students with the tools—mentally and spiritually—to become lifelong learners. These experiences empower them to take the knowledge gained back to their families, promoting self-sufficiency through sustainable practices on their land. During the visit, students were actively engaged in both learning and hands-on activities. They expressed their enthusiasm for

learning about their culture through butchering projects, herb growing, and participating in walks and field trips that emphasize land-based education. These experiences not only deepened their connection to their heritage but also highlighted the importance of ecological knowledge for self-reliance and community well-being.

These initiatives also promote community wellness, foster Diné language and Navajo heritage and create opportunities for community leadership and action, as evidenced by the goals set by the staff and the successful partnerships that support student success. Throughout their contract term the school began to offer dual credit composition classes, but is also giving students opportunities to move forward in their education. They are able to offer internal literature through Diné College. Through their partnership with UNM Gallup students are supported with resources to ensure they are successful in their transition from high school to college life. DEAP is working with the College Career and Readiness Bureau to expand their CTE pathways which align with the schools mission. Their work based learning is also centered in their mission- students are learning life skills and sharing knowledge with the student body. The students have taken on many leadership roles not only at school but within their own family.

## **2.b. Financial Compliance**

The school has had a rating of Does Not Meet Standard on performance framework indicator 2.b. Accounting Principles every year of the contract term due to having a material weakness audit finding each year. The school's total number of audit findings has improved over the contract term, down from five findings in FY20 to a single finding in FY23, but that finding was a repeated material weakness. The audit has been free of repeated findings only in the first year of the contract, and the school has reported late to the PED School Budget Bureau in two out of four years. For these reasons, the overall rating for this area is Failing to Demonstrate Progress.

## **2.c. Governance Responsibilities**

Throughout the contract term the school has received three Working to Meet and one Does not Meet ratings. The Does not Meet rating was for the 2023-24 school year due to one untimely governing council member change notification. The other two Working to Meet ratings for indicator 3.a. were in the first two years of the contract term but were corrected in 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years. Adult actions have taken place to correct the governance responsibility ratings. The board is made up of six members.

## **2.d. Equity and Identity**

The school has an active and robust equity council. "DEAP takes equity and identity seriously, integrating these principles into every aspect of its school design, in order to protect the rights of all students". DEAP is in compliance with the Martinez-Yazzie mandates- Indian Education Act, Hispanic Education Act and Black Education Act.

The staff and leadership team at DEAP believes that "everything we do is equity". They know what their families/community needs are because they are always asking. They are strong advocates beyond the classroom for families. The schools policies are aligned with their culture values. School is very intentional- teaching students about everything.

## 2.e. Tribal Consultation

DEAP has established robust processes for ongoing consultations with tribal authorities, leveraging its unique position on the Navajo Nation and its commitment to serving Native American students. DEAP is one of the few schools in New Mexico that was created by the Navajo community itself, positioning it uniquely to address the specific needs of its students and families. DEAP has partnerships with the Department of Diné Education, Navajo Nation Department of Fish & Wildlife, Diné Plants Program and Dine College. They also meet with the Navajo Nation twice a year for consultation.

## 2.f. Other Performance Indicators

Adult actions have been described to correct the repeat findings on the financial section of their performance framework, DEAP received six (6) “Working to Meet” and five (5) “Does Not Meet” ratings on the performance framework throughout their contract term. The school has implemented a series of targeted improvement actions aimed at correcting their financial findings. To improve the effectiveness of governing board member trainings, the school has expanded opportunities for all members to accumulate their training hours year-round. This initiative is designed to enable all board members to participate in meaningful professional development. By doing so, they will be better equipped to serve the school community effectively. DEAP has not had any SPED, Office of Civil Rights or Attorney general complaints.

Unrated Sections of Application	
Part D: Petitions of Support	Submitted as Required
Part E: Facilities	Submitted as Required
Part F: Change in Authorizer	N/A

### Site Visit Attendees

October 16, 2024

**CSD Team:** Lucy Valenzuela(lead) and Bianca Olona-Elwell

**CSD Remote:** Kenneth Norris and Martica Davis

**School Leadership:** Kayla Begay (Head Administrator) and Kylee George (Head of School)

**Governing Board:** Becki Jones (Chair) and Joshua Allison