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**Charter Schools Division  
Revised Final Renewal Recommendation  
December 3, 2024**

**School Name:** The ASK Academy

**School Address:** 4550 Sundt Road NE Rio Rancho, NM 87124

**Head Administrator:** Edward Garcia

**Governing Board Chair:** Mistie Williamson

**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.

## Renewal Recommendation

The Charter Schools Division (CSD) recommends renewal for five years without conditions.

### 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.

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

*\*Results from 2023-24 Vistas data were released on 11.12.24. The ASK Academy received a designation of Spotlight in school years 2022-23 and 2023-24.*

#### 1.a. Student Outcomes

Over the course of the charter term, the ASK Academy has far outperformed the district and state in reading and math. The school has earned the designation of Spotlight both years that NM Vistas assigned ratings, and has been awarded additional distinctions of Excellence in English Language Arts, Math, and Science. Their Vistas score increased from 76 to 87. The school's data in this section demonstrates growth in PSAT, SAT, ACT, AP, and iMSSA scores for all years with the exception of a dip in SAT and iMSSA math scores in 2023-24. However, the school has instituted a number of adult actions to address the dip in math and keep student proficiencies growing. For example, they have changed their math program to include more hands-on, offline math learning and problem solving, have employed new math teachers, including an instructional math coach, and are actively working to create more engaging, high-quality materials for math instruction. The school offers tutoring daily on Fridays, as well as during the rest of the week for students who cannot attend Friday tutoring. Peer-to-Peer tutoring has also been particularly successful and popular among students.

With the school's high proficiencies and growth mindset, continuously learning and applying new ways to support student progress, the school earns a rating of Meets the Standards in this category.

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

The ASK Academy has met or exceeded their mission-specific goals every year of the contract, earning them a rating of Meets the Standards.

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

The educational program at The ASK Academy focuses on STEM through a model of Project-Based Learning. Following the return from covid, the school has put heavy emphasis on hands-on, authentic project-based learning, therefore, abundant professional development opportunities for teachers have been provided. The students, teachers, and the leadership team concur that PBL is motivating for students and inspires them to take ownership of their learning, which is further highlighted in their “SLATE”, or student-led, conferences. In student focus groups, scholars share how they enjoy the process of learning, and feel challenged yet supported. During classroom observations, CSD witnessed very dynamic PBL in action, and happy, engaged students. While STEM has been a focus, the staff has also invested in reading and language progress, which is evident in the school’s high proficiencies. Students confirmed that the Friday tutoring sessions are extremely helpful, not only academically, but also on a social-emotional level: the small-group and individualized support helps them develop a comfortable, positive rapport with teachers and fellow students. The school successfully creates a professional atmosphere, referring to students as “Scholars,” teachers as “Project Managers,” and the Head Administrator as the “CEO,” which has the effect of students feeling as if they are taken seriously as Scholars and rising to meet greater challenges at ASK. Career Pathways are a key component of the educational program, as students are offered clear guidance and steps toward career/college goals, especially in BioMed and Engineering fields. Furthermore, Fundamental Connections addresses students’ social-emotional needs, and students confirm that they feel genuinely valued, supported, and respected at ASK. The school also has a very active PSC, Parent Support Committee.

The ASK Academy earns a rating of Meets the Standards in this category. ASK has not only implemented their educational program with fidelity, but they have also gone above and beyond, finding new ways to improve their programming every year.

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

In the first year of the charter term, The ASK Academy had a Working to Meet and Does Not Meet on their financial performance framework indicators; however, the school promptly turned this around and ever since then, they have earned Meets the Standard on all financial indicators. The school has had very few audit findings, and has maintained finance and audit committees throughout the charter term. The school’s foundation has also maintained a fairly clean record, with only a few audit findings. Based on the last three years’ ratings, the school would have a Meets the Standard for finances, but when the first year of the contract term is included, the overall rating for this section is Demonstrates Substantial Progress.

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

The governing board has done an excellent job of meeting requirements throughout the charter term, as they have completed all training hours every year except for FY23. They had only one late notification over the course of the charter. With only two Working to Meet performance framework ratings over the past four years, the overall rating for this section is Demonstrates Substantial Progress.

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

ASK is being intentional about equity on a curricular level, implementing Culturally and Linguistically Responsive teaching and learning, and planning CLR training. Project-based learning appears to tie in well with CLR. Student voice and choice are encouraged, and are a key part of PBL. Project themes sometimes focus on equity, such as food insecurity and water insecurity.

In the school year 2022-23, the school received a complaint, specifically connected to Social-Emotional Learning and diversity and inclusion (the complaint has since been resolved). Ever since then, the school has worked hard to evaluate systems, school culture, and find ways to improve. One area that has improved substantially is the Equity Council, as they have developed systems to help students, promote equity, and build community amongst staff and families. Stakeholders in focus groups shared that equity conversations go beyond the Equity Council, for example, they recently adopted a Social-Emotional Learning program titled, "Making Caring Common" (from Harvard Graduate School of Education), which focuses on developing empathy and kindness. The Parent Support Committee has also participated in powerful conversations with the Equity Council, school leadership, and Project Managers. The school is proud of the collaboration across all stakeholders for the benefit of the students.

The school does not provide free lunches, which would improve equity for students and families. They currently have a contract with a food truck for meal services, but are looking for ways to offer the meals free of charge.

As the school continues to work toward greater equity, the rating for this section is Demonstrates Substantial Progress.

### **2.e. Tribal Consultation**

The school does not fall under the Indian Education Act (NMSA 22-23A) or the 6.35.2 NMAC definition of a "historically defined Indian-impacted" school.

### **2.f. Other Performance Indicators**

During the renewal visit, CSD obtained more clarity on the school's plans to address participation rates (1.b.), as well as accounting (2.b.). Participation rates are being addressed in conjunction with attendance, as the staff works hard to build supportive relationships with families, deliver engaging programs, and cultivate a safe, welcoming community within the school. ASK leadership is taking a close look at adding transportation, as well. For financial

indicator 2.b., the school hired an in-house business manager the second year of the contract, who is ensuring that the finances are not only balanced, but also allocated systematically toward improving student outcomes.

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

**Renewal Site Visit Attendees**

October 9, 2024

**CSD Team:** Cheryl Rowe (Lead), Dr. Brigette Russell, Kelli Renken and Lucy Valenzuela  
**Remote CSD Team:** Martica Davis, Kenneth Norris, Director Corina Chavez  
**School Leadership:** Ed Garcia, Patrick Kelly, John Keelin, Jenice Vasquez, Bill Barrett  
**Governing Board:** Michael Smith, Gary Feger