

BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL HEARINGS  
DAY TWO

November 13, 2024

8:00 a.m.

Mabry Hall, Jerry Apodaca Education Building

300 Don Gaspar

Santa Fe, New Mexico

AND

Via Zoom Webinar

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2	<p>1 APPEARANCES</p> <p>2 COMMISSIONERS:</p> <p>3 PATRICIA GIPSON, Chair</p> <p>4 STEVEN J. CARRILLO, Vice Chair</p> <p>5 TIMOTHY BECK, Secretary</p> <p>6 ALAN BRAUER, Member</p> <p>7 REBEKKA BURT, Member</p> <p>8 SHARON CLAHCHISCHILLIAGE, Member</p> <p>9 STEWART INGHAM, Member</p> <p>10 K.T. MANIS, Member</p> <p>11 MICHAEL TAYLOR, Member</p> <p>12 PED STAFF:</p> <p>13 CORINA CHAVEZ Director</p> <p>14 Charter School/Options for</p> <p>15 Parents and Families Division</p> <p>16 BRIGETTE RUSSELL Deputy Director</p> <p>17 Charter School/Options for</p> <p>18 Parents and Families Division</p> <p>19 LUCY VALENZUELA Technical Assistance and</p> <p>20 Training Specialist</p> <p>21 Charter School/Options for Parents</p> <p>22 and Families Division</p> <p>23</p> <p>24 MISSY BROWN Technical Assistance and Support</p> <p>25 and Training Administrator</p> <p>Charter School/Options for</p> <p>Parents and Families Division</p> <p>NICOLA DAVIS Technical Assistance and</p> <p>Training Coordinator</p> <p>Charter School/Options for</p> <p>Parents and Families Division</p> <p>CONSUELO CONSTANTINE Liaison to PEC</p> <p>COUNSEL TO THE PEC:</p> <p>JULIA HOSFORD BARNES, ESQ.</p> <p>Barnes Mediation and Law, PC</p> <p>200 W. DeVargas Street, Suite 7</p> <p>Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501</p>	4
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1 Clahchischilliage.

2 COMMISSIONER CLAHCHISCHILLIAGE: Here.

3 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Brauer.

4 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Present.

5 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Manis.

6 (No response.)

7 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Armijo.

8 (No response.)

9 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Taylor.

10 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Here.

11 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Burt.

12 (No response.)

13 SECRETARY BECK: Secretary Beck.

14 There are one, two, three, four, five --

15 there are seven present.

16 Let's go back to the school. So if you

17 want to do the introduction.

18 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Madam Chair, members

19 of the Commission, thanks for having us. We're

20 excited to present about the school and answer any

21 questions you may have.

22 My name is Rafe Martinez, M-a-r-t-i-n-e-z.

23 I'm the executive director. Should I have everybody

24 introduce themselves?

25 THE CHAIR: Yeah, that would be helpful.

7

1 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Starting from this

2 side.

3 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning,

4 Madam Chair, members of the commission.

5 THE CHAIR: Back away from the microphone.

6 We get yelled at.

7 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is

8 Laura Vasiliauskas. My last name is

9 V-a-s-i-l-i-a-u-s-k-a-s. And I am a coordinator of

10 special education and a mentor teacher for the deaf

11 and hard of hearing.

12 FROM THE FLOOR: Madam Chair and members

13 of the Commission, good morning. My name is

14 Kimberly Moya. I am the ASLA board chair. My last

15 name is M-o-y-a.

16 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning, Madam Chair

17 and members of the Commission. My name is Stephanie

18 Lovato, L-o-v-a-t-o. And I am the director of

19 curriculum and instruction. And the kids at the

20 school know me as the principal.

21 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning, Madam Chair

22 and members of the Commission. My name is Diego

23 Gonzales, G-o-n-z-a-l-e-s. I am a teacher's

24 assistant.

25 THE CHAIR: So first up is the Public Ed

8

1 Department. They'll do -- and then we'll do anyone

2 who's here for tribal consultation, if there's

3 anyone, and then you'll go.

4 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: Good morning,

5 Chair Gipson, Commissioners.

6 Welcome to the Public Education

7 Department, Sign Language Academy. My name is

8 Corina Chavez. I am the director of the Charter

9 Schools Division, and I'm here to provide the PED

10 evaluation for Albuquerque Sign Language Academy.

11 Albuquerque Sign Language Academy first

12 opened in 2010 with the Public Education Commission

13 as their authorizer. This is the third renewal with

14 the Public Education Commission.

15 The school's mission is to improve

16 educational outcomes for deaf, hard of hearing, and

17 hearing students in the Greater Albuquerque Area by

18 providing a rigorous, standards-based, bilingual

19 educational program, which utilizes American Sign

20 Language and English to achieve academic excellence,

21 support family involvement, and promote

22 multicultural community partnerships.

23 I often say that my first time around at

24 the PED, when I read charter applications, this was

25 the most impressive charter application in terms of

9

1 describing the need for this school. And over the

2 years, I've seen how it's grown and flourished under

3 some pretty stable leadership.

4 Sitting at the table, you know,

5 Mr. Martinez and Ms. Moya were part of the founding

6 team. And I'm sure there's other people that were

7 part of the founding team to open up this school.

8 So there's a lot of stability there and a

9 lot of growth and really excellent outcomes.

10 The renewal visit occurred September 10th.

11 On the team was Lucy Valenzuela who was the lead;

12 Missy Brown; me; Kristen LaVolpa; and remotely

13 participating was Martica Davis, Ken Norris, and

14 Betty Seeley.

15 Charter School Division recommends that

16 Albuquerque Sign Language Academy be renewed with a

17 charter contract term for five years with the

18 following condition. And I'll explain why we are

19 recommending this condition.

20 That the school provides a needs

21 assessment, systemic framework, and affirmation of

22 tribal consultation.

23 I just want to mention that although the

24 school has not yet been successful in conducting

25 tribal consultation, they have been reaching out,

<p style="text-align: right;">10</p> <p>1 and they are making several attempts to conduct the 2 tribal consultation and get guidance from the Indian 3 Ed office so that that can be memorialized in a way 4 that there is an expectation for schools that are 5 considered Indian-impacted.</p> <p>6 When we look at the school's population, 7 the school -- in Part A, we'll see that the school 8 serves, of course, a significantly higher students 9 with disabilities population, 59 percent versus the 10 district percentage of 23 and the State 19.</p> <p>11 With the Native American population, it 12 has fluctuated over the years. But it has surpassed 13 the limit that -- so the entire term, the school has 14 not been considered Indian-impacted, but it is now.</p> <p>15 So the academic outcomes over the term are 16 in Part A of the renewal application. And as you 17 know, we just got the 2024 assessment results.</p> <p>18 The school's Vistas designation, like last 19 year, is Traditional. The 2023-'24 Vistas score is 20 44.2. Last year it was 54.75. So there's been a 21 dip.</p> <p>22 The school is up in the reading 23 proficiency from 19 percent to 27 and from 5 percent 24 to 11 in math, and down in science from 17 to 25 15 percent.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">12</p> <p>1 that.</p> <p>2 Let's see. So the ratings for the school 3 are that the school Meets the Standards in terms of 4 mission-specific goals, educational program, 5 governance, equity and identity. They demonstrate 6 substantial progress in student outcomes, tribal 7 consultation, and the other performance framework.</p> <p>8 And in terms of the Failing to Demonstrate 9 Progress, that was with the financial compliance; 10 although, again, we feel like we have already seen 11 improvements in that regard.</p> <p>12 One of the issues with organizational 13 performance that was noted in the preliminary report 14 was that the school had a bilingual multicultural 15 annual progress report that was being flagged. And 16 as of yesterday, we understand that all issues have 17 been cleared. So that is the basis for our 18 recommendation that we feel like the pending thing 19 is that the school engage in the tribal consultation 20 along with the other documents that are part of 21 tribal consultation during this next charter term.</p> <p>22 And, Commissioner Beck?</p> <p>23 SECRETARY BECK: I got a little question. 24 On Page 4 of 18 -- 25 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: On which</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">11</p> <p>1 When we look at the financial and 2 organizational performance ratings over the charter 3 term, there are a number of financial ratings that 4 did not -- that were not green; they were Working to 5 Meet or Does Not Meet Standard.</p> <p>6 However, when we conducted the site visit 7 to the school, the site visit team was able to see 8 what the school wrote about. Although the school 9 has had twelve findings over the course of the 10 charter term, including five findings in the most 11 recent audit, leadership recognized that there was a 12 lack of effectiveness in business management during 13 this charter term, and they acted swiftly -- excuse 14 me -- what? Okay.</p> <p>15 So, basically, we saw the school act 16 swiftly to make changes in the financial management 17 team at the school. And we see them working closely 18 with the head administrator to correct the practices 19 that resulted in audit findings. And as you know, 20 it takes a while for the audit findings to catch up.</p> <p>21 So we feel like we have seen process 22 improvement actions that the school has put into 23 place. And that was confirmed when we visited the 24 school. And I think with this next audit, which 25 will be released in February or March, we'll see</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">13</p> <p>1 document?</p> <p>2 SECRETARY BECK: Part A, the renewal. 3 Under Academic Performance, obviously, No. 1 is 4 pending. No. 3 was 75. The overall academic score 5 was 55.5, 54.75. And on this year's Vistas report, 6 the overall score went to 44.2.</p> <p>7 And you said they improved from, I think, 8 from 5 percent to 11 percent in math proficiency. 9 They improved in reading proficiency and down a 10 little bit in science proficiency. But yet the 11 overall went down to 44 from 55.</p> <p>12 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: Right. 13 SECRETARY BECK: How did that -- I guess 14 Cheryl could probably answer that question.</p> <p>15 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: Cheryl maybe has 16 studied exactly how Vistas is working and could 17 provide some -- good question.</p> <p>18 SECRETARY BECK: Clarification on that. 19 MS. CHERYL ROWE: So, sorry. Hi. This is 20 Cheryl Rowe, R-o-w-e.</p> <p>21 We don't have insights into exactly how 22 the scores were quantified. However, there is a 23 note on Vistas saying that the point totals from 24 School Year '22-'23 and '23-'24 cannot be compared 25 due to changes in the business rules.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">14</p> <p>1 So a dip, a change from last year to the 2 previous -- anyway, two years ago to last year, 3 they're basically saying it's not apples to apples, 4 if that makes sense. 5 SECRETARY BECK: Okay. So I can assume 6 since they went up in reading, went up in math, had 7 the same mission goal score, that -- and they went 8 down just a hair in science, that they did better. 9 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: So, Commissioner 10 Beck, the mission goals wouldn't be taken into 11 consideration for the Vistas score. It has its own 12 separate scoring rubric that takes a look at things 13 such as attendance, as well as proficiency and 14 growth. 15 SECRETARY BECK: So your score of 54 from 16 last year is not what I'm seeing on Page 4 of 18 on 17 Part A; correct? Because that hasn't -- 18 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: Because that has 19 not been released. So the 54 -- 20 SECRETARY BECK: The '22-'23 school year 21 has all been released. 22 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: Right. So 54.5 23 was the score in '22-'23. And yesterday, we got the 24 Vistas score of 44.2 for the '23-'24 school year. 25 SECRETARY BECK: Real quick. 44.2. And</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">16</p> <p>1 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: Not five years. 2 They should have been doing this for the past year 3 or two years that I have been aware of, yeah. 4 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: And one last 5 question. Are they -- because I see that the school 6 has a Meets on being responsive with reporting and 7 things of that nature. So I'm assuming that they 8 have been responsive to -- is this something that 9 they were aware of that they needed to do that long 10 ago? Or is this something that has been in 11 conversation over the last couple of years? 12 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: So we gave them 13 Demonstrates Substantial Progress, because they had 14 not been doing the -- the tribal consultation. I 15 think that for schools in Albuquerque in particular, 16 schools where it's not obvious that they are located 17 on tribal land or that they have a higher percentage 18 or that they're attempting to provide indigenous 19 education, that because they meet the population 20 threshold, they get categorized that way. And I 21 feel that there's been some lack of clarity around 22 the expectations for those schools. 23 Also, the schools on the list have changed 24 from year to year, and the -- and the perennial 25 question is, how do you conduct tribal consultation;</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">15</p> <p>1 No. 1 last year was 34.5; right? And the year 2 before was 36, on Page 4 of 18. Because we just got 3 that Vistas score. 4 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: That's right. 5 SECRETARY BECK: That's all I want to 6 know. I'm just real happy that they improved 7 significantly. 8 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: And we haven't 9 recalculated the performance framework score. 10 You're right. So, actually, the Vistas score went 11 up from 34 to 44. That does make sense. 12 SECRETARY BECK: Okay. Thank you. 13 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Thank you, 14 Madam Chair. This is a super quick clarification. 15 Director Chavez, in terms of the tribal 16 consultation, I saw that the school currently has 17 21 percent students who identify as Native American. 18 Did the school -- I guess what I'm trying 19 to say -- I don't know how to say this in a positive 20 way, so sorry about this, team. 21 Like, did they miss -- did they just hit 22 this threshold, and now, moving forward, they need 23 to do this? Or was there something that happened 24 that you all saw like they should have been doing 25 this for, like, five years?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">17</p> <p>1 right? 2 So we originally planned to have tribal 3 consultation as a session at the Charter Schools 4 conference. We advertised it. And then that got 5 canceled, the training that was scheduled for the 6 charter schools conference in the summer. 7 I know that both ACES and Albuquerque Sign 8 Language Academy were looking forward to learning 9 about that responsibility at our conference, but it 10 got canceled at the last minute. 11 So I know that Mr. Martinez and -- has 12 since received some guidance from the current Indian 13 Education Assistant Secretary with the list of who 14 to contact and which tribes should be contacted. 15 And so what I have witnessed is some 16 immediate action since receiving that additional 17 technical assistance and information. 18 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Okay. Thank you. I 19 just wanted to note, real quick, I think, 20 historically speaking in New Mexico, there have 21 typically about 22 or 23 districts that have been 22 considered Indian-impacted school districts. And 23 that was not changing very much over the course of 24 time immemorial until recently. 25 I just wanted to shared that was something</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">18</p> <p>1 that was important for me to understand, Ms. Chavez, 2 and it's just worth noting. I just wanted to make 3 sure that I just mention that. So thank you. 4 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: Yes, I'm done. 5 Thanks. 6 THE CHAIR: So I -- is there anyone online 7 that we can identify here for tribal consultation? 8 (No response.) 9 THE CHAIR: Okay. All right. So now it's 10 the opportunity for the school to present whatever 11 you wish. 12 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Okay. Madam Chair, 13 members of the Commission, thank you for, again, 14 having us here. 15 So what we're going to do. We have a 16 presentation set up, starting with a quick video 17 just to capture -- see our kids, if you've never 18 been there. It's -- that's something in and of 19 itself. 20 And then I'll do a quick presentation 21 about the school. And then we'll take comments and 22 answer questions. So I'll hand it over. 23 (PowerPoint presentation with comments.) 24 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Yeah. So we get to 25 the presses -- so just so you know, you're going to</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">20</p> <p>1 came to us, it was a lot of turbulence to get him 2 going, just as a person. We discovered he was deaf, 3 and it started us on this journey of what to do and 4 how to educate a young man -- or a child -- who 5 didn't quite fit. 6 And the reason he didn't fit was this was 7 the landscape before ASLA. 8 There were really three schools of thought 9 around deaf education. So the first one was 10 Presbyterian Ear Institute, which -- it was a little 11 private preschool that specialized in oral deaf 12 education. And that was -- to shrink it down, not 13 to simplify it too much -- to shrink it down, their 14 mission is to -- they adhere to this idea that the 15 night that the -- sorry -- that the -- the world is 16 98, 99 percent hearing. So for a deaf person to 17 have access to a fruitful existence, they need to 18 exist in the hearing speaking world. So their 19 mission is to teach deaf students how to read lips 20 and enunciate to act as hearing as possible. 21 What they didn't tell us was that 22 methodology doesn't fit all kids, all deaf kids. So 23 Ben didn't fit because he was deaf-plus. He was 24 deaf plus multiple disabilities. Thomas did not 25 fit, because he was profoundly deaf. And profoundly</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">19</p> <p>1 get the distilled version of this. I can talk for 2 hours about the school. I'm very proud of what we 3 have done, what we continue to do, and our growth 4 from starting with 36 kids to 160-plus. 5 And the video shows a lot. But I think it 6 shows our kids in their native habitat, in the 7 community that embraces them and embraces everything 8 that they bring. 9 So today's presentation -- sorry. You all 10 are into this. I'm going to delve into the 11 beginnings of the school, because I think it's 12 relevant that the Commission understands our 13 beginning, why we started, how we struggled to get 14 going, like, the fight to stay alive, and then now, 15 in the present, how we flourish. 16 I think -- so with that, directing 17 everyone's attention to the prezzie, or to the 18 presentation. 19 In the beginning, there was -- Missy has 20 to get my cues here -- there was Ben and there was 21 Thomas. So Ben is my son. He's my ticket into this 22 journey. And Thomas, underneath, is Ms. Moya's son. 23 And so they were born to us -- well, I'll 24 speak -- speaking for myself. We didn't have any 25 prior connection to the deaf community. So when Ben</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">21</p> <p>1 deaf kids don't flourish in that way. 2 So we got our walking papers. Sorry to 3 PEI for listening. We've since mended that fence, a 4 little bit -- a lot, actually. 5 We were sent to the New Mexico School for 6 the Deaf, which was the public system; right? 7 So that was -- we learned a lot there. 8 And just so you know, we fought to get Ben into that 9 system as well. They weren't set up to -- to 10 readily accept students who were deaf with multiple 11 needs. That's just kind of not their thing. 12 But public. So we had a leg to stand on 13 in getting him in there. 14 And when we did, it was beautiful. So the 15 way the School for the Deaf is set up, the main 16 campus is in Santa Fe. There's their main hub. But 17 they have existing preschools throughout the state, 18 so Albuquerque being the biggest. And then they 19 have -- at that time, there was ten, fifteen kids, 20 maybe. 21 Las Cruces has one connected to an 22 existing elementary school. And that's small; it's 23 two to three kids a year. 24 They have the same construct up in 25 Farmington. And then in the last ten years they</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">22</p> <p>1 built one in Gallup. So -- and the idea is that it  2 adheres to the 1870s model of deaf education is you  3 teach -- you identify these kids, and then you, upon  4 entering this -- the K-through-12 education world,  5 you pull them into one spot, which is the School for  6 the Deaf here in Santa Fe.</p> <p>7 So that's -- that was the existence back  8 then. We obviously would never have sent Ben to  9 Santa Fe. But at that time, too, they didn't want  10 him to go. He was -- they were good serving us, and  11 we were good not sending him to Santa Fe.</p> <p>12 So that was the backdrop for why we  13 started talking about -- and then, well, I guess the  14 other -- one thing real quick -- is APS existed.  15 But that system was just broken. And anything to do  16 with it -- actually, the people who helped us start  17 the school were all from APS. They all jumped in  18 the pool with us, and we started the talks about --  19 let's see here -- one more time -- about the  20 what-ifs and the why-nots.</p> <p>21 And so we started talking about why can't  22 my hearing child go to school with my deaf child?  23 And what if we did this? And why can't we try that?  24 So that was the impetus. That was the beginnings of  25 the school.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">24</p> <p>1 So at the time, we thought writing the  2 charter and getting it approved was hard work. And  3 then it happened; right?</p> <p>4 So unbeknownst to us at the time, we  5 thought we were just doing the right thing by our  6 kids. But we ended up starting something that ended  7 up being pretty dang unique, nationally unique. Our  8 mission sign language as a -- through a dual  9 language prism, using sign language connecting the  10 hearing and the deaf world, is something you won't  11 see anywhere in the state, for sure, but probably  12 anywhere in the country.</p> <p>13 So -- okay. So -- keep going. One more.  14 Oh. So this is -- yeah. What we ended up  15 creating was this, this idea of greatness; right?  16 And I think -- so the two quotes up there.</p> <p>17 At the time, I was working with an  18 organizational expert around how to do some things  19 with the school. And he had a sister up in  20 Washington State who was an interpreter.</p> <p>21 And so he shared the story of the school  22 with her, and she was, like, "Wow, who is this?"</p> <p>23 This is the quote: "Who is this deaf  24 education expert that's creating this beautiful,  25 crazy, cool school?"</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">23</p> <p>1 And so we wrote the charter. And all  2 due -- I have to -- oh, something to mention.</p> <p>3 I don't want to go deep into this. But --  4 so every dollar of deaf education -- every dollar  5 committed to deaf education runs through the School  6 for the Deaf. That is the way the system runs.  7 It's its own branch of government. Even though it's  8 not, it is.</p> <p>9 So we had talked to the powers at that  10 time to do something in Albuquerque, and there was  11 just no appetite for that. So we -- that's how we  12 came to be; right?</p> <p>13 And so we wrote the application. And we  14 got it approved. Opening in 2010 was our first  15 year. A ton of credit to the lady in that picture  16 with me, which is my wife. I have to go home  17 tonight.</p> <p>18 But she -- she -- so Director Chavez said  19 it's one of the best applications she's ever read.  20 Jen wrote it. My wife, Jen, wrote it. She was  21 the -- we all contributed pieces of it, and then she  22 penned it in one voice. And she is an amazing  23 writer and a mama bear, as is Ms. Moya. They were  24 the fire behind the inferno coming. So...</p> <p>25 And then this is where the work started.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">25</p> <p>1 And his answer was beautiful. He says,  2 "Honestly, it's a bunch of good-hearted folk who  3 don't know they shouldn't be doing it."</p> <p>4 Underneath that is from Robert Frost about  5 "The Road Less Taken." Sorry. We really have  6 veered off the main path to create something of  7 beauty. I'm even more proud to say this from  8 New Mexico. Being a native kid, I'm pretty proud  9 that it's coming out of this state. So...</p> <p>10 Keep going.</p> <p>11 So the turbulence. So we did come to a  12 crossroads in our existence. I think there was some  13 debate amongst original founders about what the  14 school needed to be. And I think there was a  15 faction of us -- not us -- not me/us. Them/us.  16 About creating an NMSD South. And I don't think  17 that was ever -- our intent was to create something  18 that existed somewhere else in a new place.</p> <p>19 What we were trying to create was  20 something great that accepted the kids that were  21 being left out at a significant rate all over the  22 place.</p> <p>23 And that's what we have created. And so  24 when we came to this space of this crossroads, there  25 were hard decisions that had to be made. I brought</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">26</p> <p>1 in some more experts, national experts, to help me 2 figure this out. And one of the guys, Larry 3 Myatt -- the quote up there is a guy from Boston. 4 Speaks great Spanish. And he comes in, and he 5 worked with my team at the time. 6 He said, "I don't know, Coach. Do you 7 have any names of any good curanderos?" 8 I said, "Yeah, no." That's a bad one. 9 So it was a bit of a blood-letting to have 10 some hard conversations with folks who didn't want 11 to adhere to the idea that we are here to serve all 12 kids. So we were at a crossroads. 13 And at that time, though, we -- I learned 14 a lot. I learned a lot about myself; I learned a 15 lot about my school and what public education is, 16 about what makes a charter school flourish. So team 17 is everything, and so is leadership, the people up 18 here invited to present as well as the people 19 online. They have -- they understand that the 20 school stands for something that is about embracing 21 all folk and making sure that everybody has the 22 ability to do the right thing through leadership and 23 through the discussion about doing -- being better. 24 And that's a quote I did pull from -- 25 "Progress is neither automatic, nor inevitable.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">28</p> <p>1 done that. 2 And the other thing is -- that's our 3 mascot, Honey Badger Bold. 4 But the other thing is we see ourselves as 5 bigger than maybe we are. But I don't think that. 6 I think we're pretty big. 7 So our ethos is intact. 8 We're dedicated to partnerships. So I 9 will say this. We have a national profile. We've 10 been featured in national publications through the 11 Century Foundation. Avenue PM is -- that's 12 connected to our mission-specific goals. But we've 13 been working with Penn State and University of 14 Minnesota in a historic progress monitoring school 15 that's normed to deaf reading. 16 And we actually now have the opportunity 17 to acquire the rights to that whole system outright, 18 which is exciting for us. I have been working with 19 the likes of Harvard University and the PEAR 20 Institute; of course, UNM and New Mexico State. We 21 thrive in partnership. And we are not afraid to 22 step into it and figure out how to do it, even if it 23 doesn't look clear at the beginning. 24 So different by design. 25 So, look. There's a lot of tenets of</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">27</p> <p>1 Every step toward the goal of justice requires 2 sacrifices, suffering, and struggle, and the 3 exertion and passionate concern of dedicated 4 individuals." 5 I think it capt- -- that quote captured 6 us. The people up here, I think, and the people 7 behind the scenes are passionate about the school 8 and I think it shows with our growth. 9 I will say, after 15 years, we've figured 10 some things out. And I think -- we're not perfect, 11 dot, dot, dot, yet. We work hard. We really work 12 hard. And we are dedicated to correct anything that 13 we're noncompliant with. Sorry. And we will get 14 better. 15 And I think we really understand how being 16 different and being distinctly deliberately 17 different, we have figured some things out. 18 So, first, coming out of that struggle, we 19 got better. And so I think our ethos is rooted in 20 this idea of -- you'll see -- well, some of our 21 staff were in it -- Honey Badger Bold bracelets. 22 It's what we believe; right? In order to 23 create something different and great, you have to be 24 willing to be -- step into the abyss, into the 25 unknown, not knowing if there's a net. And we've</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">29</p> <p>1 belief around educational reform nationally. And 2 here's all the -- here's all the buzz words. I 3 think what we've done really well is figure out how 4 to apply concepts to the needs of our population. 5 And I think -- so it's what separates us. 6 So we do fall under a lot of umbrellas: 7 Special ed, dual language ed, project-based 8 learning. We have a strong social-emotional student 9 support team. We have our hands in a lot of 10 pedagogy that fit the needs of our kids. 11 And then I want to spend a little bit of 12 time here. 13 So we have been an ungradeable school for 14 a long time. It's not because I'm saying that. 15 That's the truth. 16 When the school grading system got first 17 created by Dr. Goldschmidt -- Pete Goldschmidt and 18 Cindy Gregory -- we met with them back in those 19 days. They deemed us an ungradeable school. For 20 the longest time, we were the only TBD, nongraded 21 school in the state because of two legal factors. 22 One of them is our population of 23 one-percenters. What one-percenters are, without 24 having to read all those, those are kids with mostly 25 diagnosed developmental disabilities, intellectual</p>



30

1 disability and things like that. So these are the  
 2 kids that qualify to take the alternative  
 3 assessment, the DLM. So we have a high number of  
 4 those students.  
 5 And we have a high number of  
 6 two-percenters. And the two-percenters are a little  
 7 more difficult to identify. They're the ones that  
 8 have significant learning disabilities. They're  
 9 considered C- or D-level -- most of our kids are  
 10 D-level -- D-level designation in special ed. But  
 11 they're still required to take the end-of-year  
 12 summative assessment. We have a high number of  
 13 those guys as well.  
 14 So when you -- so because of those two,  
 15 you know, concrete statistical factors, the doctors,  
 16 Goldschmidt and Gregory, said, "Yeah, you're not --  
 17 you don't fit into the formula."  
 18 And that's kind of been the story of this  
 19 whole school since the beginning. We don't fit the  
 20 formula.  
 21 So if you take a look at the two  
 22 upside-down triangles there, the triangle on my  
 23 left, which is the -- with the most orange, that's a  
 24 typical construct of a public school, where the  
 25 majority population, probably 75 to 85 percent of

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1 the population, is considered general ed, regular  
 2 ed; right? And then the special ed monikers are  
 3 underneath, and then when you get to the  
 4 one-percenters and two-percenters. Those are  
 5 self-explanatory. Those are the ones that, in a  
 6 bigger system, are statistically negligible. So,  
 7 you know, people don't pay -- formulas aren't built  
 8 to those guys.  
 9 This triangle on the other side -- and  
 10 actually, Missy, if you could click it, like --  
 11 there you go -- so it pops up.  
 12 Those are actually our numbers right now.  
 13 So we have -- of 160 kids, that's our breakdown.  
 14 So we have 45 students. 28 percent of our  
 15 student body are one-percenters. So 28 percent are  
 16 one-percenters. We have 30 percent of  
 17 two-percenters; right? And then we have -- the A-B  
 18 special ed population, those kids have learning  
 19 disabilities, but through modification and  
 20 accommodations, they're able to perform well on the  
 21 standardized assessments, okay?  
 22 And then we have a few kids that have come  
 23 to us anew, so they're being evaluated for special  
 24 ed, because they're significantly below grade level.  
 25 And our regular ed, or our general population,

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1 hovers around 31 percent, okay?  
 2 Those are actual statistics. So you can  
 3 see in a concrete way, it's not just me saying we  
 4 don't fit. We don't fit.  
 5 And then -- so you can -- I just said --  
 6 so A-B levels are -- with accommodation and  
 7 modification, can take the test. Then through  
 8 deaf -- oh, hit the other one. Yeah, there you go.  
 9 And then -- and this is one point I  
 10 want -- and through questions and answers, I will  
 11 defer to probably Laura on this. But special ed  
 12 tenets and deaf ed tenets are not the same. Deaf ed  
 13 falls under the umbrella of special ed, because  
 14 that's where it goes.  
 15 There are a lot of differences that are  
 16 rooted in language and teaching the deaf who don't  
 17 have, you know, access to phonics and -- a phonetic  
 18 base, that kind of stuff. There are a lot of things  
 19 that are different. So they're not the same thing.  
 20 So we can talk more about that. Okay.  
 21 And then before -- that's okay. But -- so  
 22 one of my favorite movies is A League of Their Own;  
 23 right?  
 24 A quote from there: "It's supposed to be  
 25 hard. If it wasn't hard, everyone would do it."

33

1 And then the "hard" is what makes it  
 2 great; right?  
 3 I believe that. We've earned our stripes.  
 4 So what you see there is the continuum  
 5 of -- when you get into the world of  
 6 developmental -- or organizational development and  
 7 tasks, you know, outcomes, you go through the system  
 8 of forming, storming, norms, and performing.  
 9 We've lived all these. To a point where I  
 10 think we've learned some things, we're here to  
 11 declare ourselves. Not to be a braggart, I want us  
 12 to be your flagship. I do. I think we've earned  
 13 the right to say -- stand up here in front of you  
 14 and say, "We've figured some things out," and not be  
 15 ashamed of that; right?  
 16 Our next -- the last bullet up there is  
 17 our next project.  
 18 And so we know now that our students are  
 19 getting to the age where they're aging out of our  
 20 system. And the programs -- there's nonexistent  
 21 program beyond that.  
 22 So we're flirting with ways to build out  
 23 an adult program that mimics what we've created in  
 24 the K-12 space. So the possibility of working with  
 25 higher ed. We are funded with some major

<p style="text-align: right;">34</p> <p>1 contributors, Kellogg, Anderson Foundation, things 2 like that, to build out something that goes beyond 3 the K-12 space. 4 So with that, we stand for questions. 5 Actually, I know. I think we have -- 6 THE CHAIR: Oh, sorry. 7 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: -- comment people, 8 right? Or public comment. 9 SECRETARY BECK: We have public comment. 10 MS. MELISSA BROWN: We do indeed have 11 public comment. 12 We have eight folks, some online and some 13 in the room. Shall we start with the online? 14 THE CHAIR: Yeah. 15 MS. MELISSA BROWN: All right. We'll 16 start with Kelly Hargrove. Please remember to spell 17 your last name for the court reporter and try to 18 keep your comments to two minutes. 19 FROM THE PUBLIC: Okay. Good morning, 20 Madam Chair and members of the Commission. My name 21 is Kelly Hargrove, H-a-r-g-r-o-v-e. My husband and 22 I are the proud parents of two special needs kiddos 23 that attend Albuquerque Sign Language Academy. 24 Our little ones are Bella and Tristan, and 25 they are seven and eight years old.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">36</p> <p>1 works together as a team to make sure she gets it. 2 Her favorite thing is going to school. I am amazed 3 at the progress she has made. 4 Learning the way she does at Albuquerque 5 Sign Language Academy will greatly impact her 6 future. 7 And when our little boy started 8 kindergarten at ASLA, I wasn't sure if they would 9 let him continue or kick him out. But what they did 10 was learn what made Tristan Tristan. 11 They worked hard to make school a safe 12 place, a place where this little boy, whose life 13 started out being neglected and abused could thrive. 14 They take the time to not only come up with 15 educational plans for my kids, but they invest in 16 them. They love and nurture them, even on the bad 17 days. 18 Albuquerque Sign language Academy is truly 19 a unique school that is giving my children a chance 20 to learn and grow, a chance that all children should 21 have, a chance to shine. 22 Thank you. 23 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Thank you. Next we 24 have Kelly Helgeland. 25 FROM THE PUBLIC: Good morning, everyone.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">35</p> <p>1 In their short lives, they have faced many 2 hardships, medical challenges, behavioral 3 difficulties, and social dysfunction, to name a few. 4 After years of working with therapists 5 through early intervention, we knew that they would 6 need specialized education. Our daughter, Bella, 7 has 22q Deletion Syndrome, and is diagnosed with 8 hearing loss plus multiple needs. 9 Our son has fetal alcohol syndrome. And 10 although he is hearing, he has been diagnosed 11 nonverbal. 12 The summer before Bella started 13 kindergarten, we sold our home in Farmington, 14 New Mexico, to move to another state, because we did 15 not know of a school in New Mexico that would meet 16 our family's needs. 17 After only a year in Arizona, we found 18 ourselves back in New Mexico after a family tragedy. 19 We were desperate to find a solution for our kids' 20 education. 21 Finding Albuquerque Sign Language Academy 22 was a godsend. At Albuquerque Sign Language 23 Academy, our daughter, who has so many struggles, 24 has reached many milestones. 25 Bella needs a lot of support, and ASLA</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">37</p> <p>1 My name is Keli Helgeland, H-e-l-g-e-l-a-n-d. And I 2 am the mother of two daughters who attend ASLA. 3 When my youngest daughter, Paige, who has Down 4 Syndrome, was nonverbal and heading into 5 kindergarten, I began to look into where she would 6 be attending elementary school. 7 After finding out our APS home school, 8 which my older, normal developing daughter, Penny, 9 attended could not accommodate Paige, I was told 10 Paige would have to attend a hub elementary school 11 separate from her sister Penny. I toured the school 12 and quickly learned that APS could not meet my 13 daughter's needs as I envisioned. 14 I also intended to find a school where 15 both of my daughters could attend together and could 16 accommodate both of them. 17 I expressed my frustrations to a mother I 18 met while our children attended the same pediatrics 19 therapy clinic. 20 My friend told me all about the 21 Albuquerque Sign Language Academy, where her son 22 with verbal delays attended. She raved about their 23 mission, their passionate teachers, and their 24 leadership. 25 I contacted the school that day and was</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">38</p> <p>1 assisted with the lottery process, and much to my 2 delight, both of my daughters were selected to 3 enroll for the upcoming school year. Paige was 4 entering kindergarten, and Penny was entering second 5 grade. 6 ASLA changed the lives of our entire 7 family. The school has given our whole family a way 8 to communicate with our nonverbal daughter, whose 9 main communication is sign language. Paige has 10 learned many words that have helped her communicate 11 with me, her sister, extended family, and the world. 12 Paige has made more friends that I can count at 13 school. 14 Paige and her friends communicate with 15 each other through ASL and verbal words here and 16 there. She has had the opportunities to maintain 17 friends through communication which most of us take 18 for granted. She can be a part of a community at 19 ASLA where she is loved, valued, and not overlooked. 20 Paige has grown more in communication and 21 confidence than I could ever imagine. I cannot 22 imagine where they would be if she did not learn ASL 23 and have the support of her caring teacher, the 24 staff, and the administration. 25 ASLA has also done wonders for Penny, who</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">40</p> <p>1 volunteer opportunities around the city. 2 I, along with my five siblings and many 3 in-laws, have taken several ASL classes offered by 4 the school. We have all used it at one time or 5 another in our community. 6 The difference the school is making has -- 7 the difference the school is making has an 8 insurmountable impact on the ability to love every 9 member of our community through communication. 10 Thank you. 11 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Next, we have Rosita 12 Rey. Please try to limit it to two minutes. 13 FROM THE PUBLIC: She will need the video 14 on. I don't know if she has the permissions. 15 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Okay. Hold on. 16 FROM THE FLOOR: Thank you, Madam Chair. 17 MS. MELISSA BROWN: I'm promoting you to 18 the panel, Rosa. If you want to accept that, then 19 you can turn on your screen. 20 FROM THE PUBLIC: Hello, Madam Chair. My 21 name is Rosa Rey, and I wanted to talk about my 22 experience with my three children. 23 I have two children that are older that 24 have already attended ASLA. And my oldest daughter, 25 she was the first of the group to be able to attend</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">39</p> <p>1 is now in sixth grade. She is at or above grade 2 level in all her academic subjects. In addition to 3 academics, Penny is learning a skill our world 4 desperately needs: compassion. She learns, plays, 5 eats lunch, and rides the bus with children of 6 different abilities, creating understanding and 7 patience for one another which so few of us have. 8 She'll be fluent in ASL when she graduates 9 eighth grade. She is learning a language that makes 10 the world of difference for those who only use ASL 11 as a form of communication. 12 Penny has made an impact on her community, 13 even at a young age. She has translated for people 14 we have met in stores and restaurants, helping 15 interactions and making experiences more inclusive. 16 Teaching hearing children ASL is an 17 invaluable gift to our community to bridge the 18 communication barrier between hearing people and 19 those in the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. 20 The school gives back to the community in more ways 21 than the students. 22 ASLA often gets asked to perform the 23 National Anthem for major sporting events in 24 New Mexico, letting our students be seen and heard 25 by the community. The school also participates in</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">41</p> <p>1 the school back in 2010. My second-to-oldest 2 daughter, she attended the school later and started 3 as a kindergartener. 4 My daughter, she became fluent in sign 5 language, meaning she was able to fluently 6 communicate with me. And I thought maybe sending 7 her to NMSD would have been the better bet for her. 8 But we found later that she wasn't a priority 9 student and able to be accepted in NMSD despite 10 having a deaf mother. 11 When ASLA was founded, I learned about the 12 school, and my daughter was able to attend that 13 school, and it was the right place. 14 And my oldest daughter picked up sign 15 language and became fluent with me, and also my 16 second oldest daughter, and they were able to 17 communicate with me fluently. 18 My oldest daughter has already graduated, 19 and she is on her way to college. And my 20 oldest-to-second (verbatim) daughter is becoming an 21 interpreter in her college. She's able to 22 communicate with me and various family members. And 23 I have another daughter who will soon be going to 24 college. And she's going to receive her major. 25 When she came to ASLA, her education was</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">42</p> <p>1 very rich. The teachers taught her a wonderful 2 education, and I'm extremely proud of her. 3 And I have my youngest daughter, who is 4 seven. She really struggled with her speech therapy 5 until we went to ASLA. That's when I noticed that 6 she's made tremendous improvements in her speech 7 through her education in ASLA. And I'm very 8 grateful for my daughters to attend ASLA. And now 9 my oldest two daughters are very successful in the 10 world. They have wonderful jobs, and it's because 11 of the programming at ASLA. 12 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Thank you very much. 13 FROM THE PUBLIC: Of course. Thank you. 14 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Next we have Jennifer 15 Martinez. 16 FROM THE PUBLIC: Good morning, 17 Madam Chair and Commissioners. My name is Jennifer 18 Martinez. M-a-r-t-i-n-e-z. 19 I am one of the founders of the 20 Albuquerque Sign Language Academy and also a parent. 21 I am just sitting here in awe. I can't 22 believe it was 16 years ago that I sat across the 23 table from Corina and cried because we were just so 24 desperate to create this school and have this model 25 for our son, Benjamin.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">44</p> <p>1 special needs is really tremendous. 2 So thank you all again for the work that 3 you do in supporting charters. 4 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Thank you. Next in 5 the room, we have Serenity Hardy. And do you want 6 to hand her the microphone? 7 THE INTERPRETER: I'll be voicing for her, 8 Madam Chair. Thank you. 9 FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. I'm so tired. I 10 apologize. Do I go ahead and start? Do you mind 11 holding this for me? Thank you. 12 Hello. Madam Chair And members -- oh, I 13 forget. Hello, Madam Chair, and hello, members of 14 the Commission. I'm so tired. I'm sorry. 15 Hello. My name is Serenity Hardy. And 16 this is my sign name. (Indicates.) 17 I live in Albuquerque, and I'm a 18 sophomore -- oh, forgive me. I'm 16 years old, and 19 I'm a sophomore. And I moved to the new school, 20 ASLA, because at my old school, it wasn't a good fit 21 for me. And my new school is wonderful. It's been 22 such a great fit. 23 I'm calm now, I'm able to take it easy as 24 well as work really hard. And I feel a lot better. 25 I changed schools because my old school</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">43</p> <p>1 And, you know, this other interesting 2 thing happened. I like to say I birthed the school, 3 and then I birthed our second son, Matt. And so we 4 had Ben. Ben is intellectually disabled, hard of 5 hearing, needs ASL, needs lots of support. 6 And then we had Max. And Max was at the 7 other end of the special ed spectrum. He was 8 typically developing, gifted, specifically, you 9 know, especially in math. 10 And so, you know, that was sort of the 11 moment where it was, like, "Well, I guess we're 12 going to see if this model is going to work." 13 And so Max and Ben attended ASLA together. 14 And, you know, I'm happy to report that everything 15 we put down in paper and sort of the vision we had 16 for the school was able to come to life. 17 And both of my kids at opposite ends of 18 the spectrum were beautifully served, wonderfully 19 served, and just really felt a part of a community. 20 And I would just like to echo what Keli 21 said, in that our regular ed students are really -- 22 they're learning ASL. They're getting a good 23 education, but they're also becoming, I believe, 24 better people. They're witnesses, and they're 25 compassionate, and care of the other children with</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">45</p> <p>1 told me -- I had friends at my old school that 2 recommended ASLA. And they would talk about all the 3 things they've learned, like budgeting and 4 agriculture. And I thought, that seems really 5 interesting. I should go ahead and try that. 6 And I feel like I really like it now. And 7 I've met so many new people and new friends. 8 And at my old school, we didn't go on 9 field trips. It was boring. And so now we go out 10 into the community all the time, and we go to a 11 bunch of different places. We meet a lot of 12 different people. We learn so much. 13 And I love my ASL class. I love 14 socializing with my friends at lunchtime. And I 15 don't like living in the dorms. And so my parents 16 and myself, all three of us, are really proud of 17 myself and what I'm doing here. 18 And I'm learning so much. I'm learning 19 literacy and math. And every year I'm here, I 20 learn. And, of course, it's fun. And it also 21 depends on my attitude. Thank you so much. 22 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Thank you. Next, we 23 have Senaida Muniz. 24 FROM THE FLOOR: Hello, Madam Chair and 25 members of the Commission. My name is Senaida</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">46</p> <p>1 Muniz, and I am a sixth-grade student at the 2 Albuquerque Sign Language Academy. I have been here 3 for seven years. 4 I have a sister, Micayla [ph], who is 5 deaf. She just turned 18 and goes to Del Norte High 6 School. Excuse me. 7 I come to the ASLA -- she came to the ASLA 8 until she was in the ninth grade. 9 I want to be able to communicate better 10 with Micayla, which is why I come here. She has 11 been teaching me ASL ever since I was little. I 12 knew some sign language when I was in kindergarten. 13 When I started learning here, I became more fluent 14 and more as I learned more. 15 Sometimes I am signing in a conversation 16 and don't even realize that I am signing. There 17 have been times when I have had to help my mom 18 communicate with Micayla since she doesn't know as 19 much sign as I do. 20 If my mom doesn't know how to say 21 something -- wait -- how to say something, she calls 22 me over to interpret for her. Most of the time, 23 Micayla does know what she's saying, so she doesn't 24 need me anymore. 25 My mom knows more sign now, so I don't</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">48</p> <p>1 lip-reading, too. He is getting so much better at 2 sign. 3 If our entire family did not know ASL, 4 Micayla wouldn't be able to talk to us. She might 5 feel left out and sad because she wouldn't know how 6 to talk with anyone. It would be complicated for 7 her. 8 Coming to the ASLA is helpful, because it 9 is a school where I can learn sign language. I am 10 learning from Ms. Ellie, Brandy, and Danielle, a 11 teacher and educational assistants who work at the 12 school. They are deaf or hard of hearing. There 13 are also kids who use ASL so I talk back and forth 14 with them. 15 I am an ASL-4, which is the highest level 16 for middle school and high school students. I am in 17 that class because I'm good at sign. I like 18 communicating with teachers and friends and learning 19 more sign every day. 20 My favorite thing about school is my 21 friends. We all know sign language because we have 22 deaf or hard-of-hearing family members or someone in 23 our family has special needs. It is important for 24 us to know another way to communicate. 25 I know I come to the school for my sister.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">47</p> <p>1 need to help as much, unless she's busy and needs to 2 tell Micayla something. 3 My sister, Malaya [ph] and brother Xavier 4 came to ASLA, too. They're older than both me and 5 Micayla. One is 24, and one is 20. 6 Xavier doesn't use ASL as much as he used 7 to, but still talks to Micayla. Malaya knows a lot 8 of signs. She signs quite a bit with Micayla when 9 they see each other. 10 Yesenia is my little sister who is in 11 fifth grade. She knows sign, but she is still 12 practicing and learning. This school is good for 13 her because she is learning more and will get 14 better. I feel like she will get ten times better 15 as she gets older. Yesenia and Micayla talk every 16 day. Sometimes I don't understand what Yesenia is 17 signing, but Micayla says she understands. 18 My little nephew, DJ, comes here too. He 19 is six years old and started coming here last year. 20 He is getting so much better at signing. He is with 21 kids and teachers who help him learn ASL. 22 We teach him sign at home, too, so he can 23 communicate with Micayla. When DJ and Micayla are 24 talking, he will sign and use words. Micayla 25 usually understands him, because she is good at</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">49</p> <p>1 But I also have a disability, too. I don't feel -- 2 I don't feel different from others, because there 3 are other kids with disabilities at our school. 4 As I have gotten older, I realize that 5 people take care of me and help me, but I can also 6 help them, too. 7 Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the 8 Commission. I appreciate your time in hearing about 9 our school from my perspective. 10 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Thank you. 11 So now, I have Diego Gonzales and Ashley 12 Watcher. I don't know if you guys were both wanting 13 to make public comment. They're on the desk. 14 Sorry. That's why I'm making sure. 15 That concludes public comment. 16 THE INTERPRETER: No. Diego is not making 17 public comment. 18 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Beck? 19 SECRETARY BECK: Yeah. So my term is up 20 in two years. I'm 69 now. And this kind of thing 21 makes me think I might want to go -- go back and do 22 this again. 23 We all went -- one, two, three, four -- to 24 your -- the assembly and your award and all that. I 25 thought I was doing that thing again. And it was</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">50</p> <p>1 beautiful.</p> <p>2 I mean, you went through exactly what you</p> <p>3 were telling us about. And it's -- it's a wonderful</p> <p>4 story. It's great.</p> <p>5 But I'm going on 71. And you, my friend,</p> <p>6 look very healthy. But -- the "but" is if something</p> <p>7 would ever happen, what do you ever -- you're a very</p> <p>8 strong advocate. Yeah. And you're very strong for</p> <p>9 the school.</p> <p>10 And what we look at is maintaining the</p> <p>11 consistency of the school through time. And I just</p> <p>12 want to know what -- what is it? A transition plan?</p> <p>13 Succession? I was trying to remember the word.</p> <p>14 Yeah. That would be great.</p> <p>15 But I have nothing but a world of positive</p> <p>16 for you. But things could change. And so I'm just</p> <p>17 curious, if you do have a succession plan and what</p> <p>18 that might look like.</p> <p>19 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Madam Chair, members</p> <p>20 of the Commission, Commissioner Beck, absolutely.</p> <p>21 No -- so I'm glad you think I look healthy and</p> <p>22 young. I'm old and worn down inside.</p> <p>23 But, no. It -- I have a lot of time in</p> <p>24 the profession. And I am -- I do actively speak to</p> <p>25 the board around the day when I will walk away from</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">52</p> <p>1 them trained, shadow, be interns, so to speak, on</p> <p>2 the leadership level. So it is a big part of what</p> <p>3 I'm thinking. So I'm glad you asked the question.</p> <p>4 SECRETARY BECK: Good. Yeah. We saw with</p> <p>5 our own eyes the excitement of the staff, the</p> <p>6 interaction of the staff with the kids. It was</p> <p>7 beautiful. It was really incredible. You know,</p> <p>8 they're all pretty fired up for what they do, so, on</p> <p>9 Friday afternoon.</p> <p>10 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Yeah. Friday</p> <p>11 afternoon.</p> <p>12 SECRETARY BECK: I remember, in teaching,</p> <p>13 I wasn't very fired up on a Friday afternoon. But</p> <p>14 they seem to be.</p> <p>15 That's really all I have.</p> <p>16 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Yeah. Great question.</p> <p>17 SECRETARY BECK: No, no, no. It is not.</p> <p>18 This has to be the right distance, 'cause Cindy gets</p> <p>19 really mad at us.</p> <p>20 Ms. Moya, you're the board chair. Have</p> <p>21 you been the board chair, then, from the beginning?</p> <p>22 MS. LISA MORA: Madam Chair, members of</p> <p>23 the Commission, Commissioner Carrillo, yes, I have.</p> <p>24 I've been the board chair.</p> <p>25 So we talk about our school. And,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">51</p> <p>1 this.</p> <p>2 And it's -- and it's a -- it's personal</p> <p>3 for me, too; right? So I am -- we are taking our</p> <p>4 time and talking about succession deliberately and</p> <p>5 how to grow our own -- the story of this place is</p> <p>6 about growing our own.</p> <p>7 There were no pre-made teachers to fit</p> <p>8 into this place. So we -- that's what forged our</p> <p>9 partnerships with UNM and others, to create the</p> <p>10 prototype of a teacher that actually fits and works</p> <p>11 in a place like this.</p> <p>12 I'm proud to say we have almost</p> <p>13 90 employees, and we're fully staffed. I don't know</p> <p>14 if too many educational space places that can say</p> <p>15 that. Part of it, we built a really healthy,</p> <p>16 dynamic, caring place that people want to be a part</p> <p>17 of. It's also hard work.</p> <p>18 We work with kids that don't fit other</p> <p>19 systems. So for us to keep a staff, we're doing</p> <p>20 something deliberately right to do that. I would</p> <p>21 say that leadership is the same.</p> <p>22 So we are talking deliberately now about</p> <p>23 identifying who the next version of everybody up</p> <p>24 here is. And it's a -- it's going to be a process</p> <p>25 of one to two years to get people, you know, have</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">53</p> <p>1 literally, we call it the perfect storm. Because</p> <p>2 Thomas is 24; Ben is 21 now. And I was at the</p> <p>3 Preschool for the Deaf with my son in a parent group</p> <p>4 when Rafe and Jen walked in with Ben.</p> <p>5 And I knew Rafe from high school. He was</p> <p>6 a few years older than me, yeah.</p> <p>7 So I saw them, and I'm like, "Hey, you</p> <p>8 don't know me. I knew your sister," blah, blah,</p> <p>9 blah. We both were here.</p> <p>10 It literally started there, like, the day</p> <p>11 they walked in, and we were, like, "We've got to do</p> <p>12 something."</p> <p>13 Ben and Thomas can't go to Santa Fe on a</p> <p>14 commute daily for an hour in the morning, an hour --</p> <p>15 there's no way.</p> <p>16 So, literally, we say that this came</p> <p>17 together, was meant to be, the perfect storm. And</p> <p>18 we started -- I mean, at the kitchen table saying,</p> <p>19 "How are we going to do this? Do we commute? How</p> <p>20 do we do this?"</p> <p>21 So the boys would sit there -- and we were</p> <p>22 just watching them. And they didn't even know what</p> <p>23 each other was saying. And Thomas is looking at Ben</p> <p>24 and he goes, "I have no idea what you're saying, but</p> <p>25 you are cute, cute, Ben," you know.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">54</p> <p>1           So we knew we were meant to be here. We 2 knew this was supposed to happen. Hard work, tears. 3 I mean, we cry all the time; right? 4           But Rafe and I, Jen, we can't quit. 5 They're our kids. And now they're all our kids, you 6 know. It's the greatest thing that this little tiny 7 school that we created. 8           And the kids are compassionate, the staff, 9 amazing. They care. They -- we've got a stake in 10 the game; right? All of us now. 11          So I think for us -- and we do talk about 12 succession, because we both have been here this 13 whole entire time. "Who does it?" Well, all of 14 these great people that are coming behind us, they 15 see it. 16          And the great thing -- and Jen and I were 17 talking about this the other day. So my twins went 18 to school there, too. My twins are 21, getting 19 ready to graduate from New Mexico State and UNM in 20 May. And the work that they're doing and their 21 peers that they graduated with, they're coming back 22 to the school. They're giving back. Now they're 23 SLPs. Now, they're interpreters. Now they're going 24 to be teachers of the deaf. 25          They're, most importantly, good human</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">56</p> <p>1           they're all our kids, which is why we all do the 2 work, and people on school boards as well. On your 3 board, is it the same longevity in term -- okay. 4           Rafe, you're never on our agenda, and 5 there's a reason for that. You guys are just 6 humming along and doing great work. 7           So just thank you so much for what you 8 give to the children in our community. 9           Yes, ma'am. 10          COMMISSIONER BURT: Good morning. Good to 11 see you all. It's always -- it's always amazing to 12 connect with this school in any little tiny moment, 13 or for this morning. So I'm grateful. 14          When I think of this school and the way 15 it's formed, the way you operate now, to me, it 16 really is an exemplar of the intent of a charter 17 school. Like, it's exactly what charter schools, in 18 the purest form, are intended to be. 19          People in the community who see a space 20 where students are not being served and create a 21 charter school to serve students in a different way 22 than they have access to in a traditional 23 neighborhood school; right? 24          This is why I always say, to anybody who, 25 you know, is a charter school hater. I'm, like,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">55</p> <p>1           beings that see these kids with disabilities or not, 2 and they embrace them. And they're good little 3 citizens, and they take care of each other. 4           They're better for it 100 percent -- I'll 5 say it till the day I die -- because of those two 6 little boys, Ben and Thomas, who sparked this whole 7 thing. 8           And I couldn't be more proud. I'm 9 fortunate. I'm literally better because of the 10 people around me. Like I always say, I don't really 11 have any great skills, per se. But I can latch onto 12 good people. 13          Thank God for -- Mr. Rafe is amazing. I 14 think everyone at the school is amazing. And I 15 couldn't be more proud. 16          And we're always willing to get better and 17 do better and improve. And we just won't quit. 18 We'll never give up. We can't quit because they're 19 our kids. All of them are our kids. 20          VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: It's just amazing to 21 hear. 22          SECRETARY BECK: We've said you get along. 23          VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Well, it's just -- 24 when you use the phrase, "They're all our kids," I 25 think that all ten of us on this Commission feel</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">57</p> <p>1           even if you have an incredible neighborhood school, 2 it may not be the right fit for even a singular kid 3 in your family. 4           And what I love most about your school is 5 for the entire family, or for the parent in the 6 family, for a grandparent in the family. Like, that 7 kid now has a gap in their whole child education; 8 right? 9           And so that's, also -- you know, when I 10 think of whole-child education, I know that's what 11 you're providing. And the one thing I really 12 appreciate is you're not skipping together the 13 academic part of whole-child education. That 14 sometimes is like a false dichotomy, that it's one 15 or the other, that you can -- you kind of have to 16 choose if a student has access to programming or to 17 rigorous academics; right? 18          And so sometimes -- I know families often 19 have to choose. Well, I want them to have access to 20 this. But if I do that, their academics are going 21 to suffer. If I want them to have really high 22 academics, but then the programming of the 23 extracurricular stuff; right? So families are 24 always having to make some concession. 25          I feel like this is one school where a</p>

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1 family doesn't have to make a concession for anybody  
 2 in the family. It's so inclusive of the whole  
 3 family. And that's really special. And as you  
 4 know, nationally, it's special -- right? -- for lots  
 5 of reasons.  
 6 And I do -- I do also commend you all for  
 7 the commitment to continue improving. When I look  
 8 over at your last charter term, it's very rare to  
 9 see a yellow repeated, a red repeated; right? So  
 10 you always see kind of that growth.  
 11 So the only question I do have is about  
 12 the one indicator that you do have, that multiple  
 13 red, year over year. And I -- it does seem unlike  
 14 you to have something where it's, like, okay, this  
 15 year, it's a program, and this next year is a  
 16 program.  
 17 So can you talk about the licensure  
 18 indicator and why -- why that red keeps happening?  
 19 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Yeah, absolutely.  
 20 Madam Chair, members of the Commission, Commissioner  
 21 Burt, yeah. So, again, this does stem back to our  
 22 origin is that -- so the State was set up with  
 23 bilingual education in the world of Spanish. And  
 24 then the tribal languages that got certification  
 25 kind of from the pueblos; right? From the

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1 individual tribes.  
 2 And so when we came around, there was  
 3 nothing to fit ASL.  
 4 So we have been kind of working with the  
 5 Bilingual Department since the beginning, since our  
 6 inception, around what a bilingual certification  
 7 means for us. And being that we're the only  
 8 ASL-English dual-language school in the state, we  
 9 continue to work closely with leadership, Mayra and  
 10 others.  
 11 And then even before that, it was -- I  
 12 forget her name now -- whoever the -- no -- the  
 13 other people that were there before -- yeah, yeah --  
 14 to kind of figure out what it meant to be -- to have  
 15 a bilingual dual-language certification through --  
 16 COMMISSIONER BURT: Icela?  
 17 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: There you go.  
 18 So credit to PED in that, seeing our  
 19 uniqueness and saying, "Let's go forward and we'll  
 20 figure it out." For real. And it's always -- so  
 21 it's always been kind of a work in progress. So  
 22 there's still no bilingual certification that you  
 23 see in parallel to Spanish and the Native languages.  
 24 But we have done some things around own TESOL  
 25 endorsements.

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1 So we pay for our TESOL endorsements for  
 2 all our teachers.  
 3 Now, we did tie to Gallaudet University  
 4 initially for -- to get ASL proficiency scores from  
 5 them. But ASL is a really interesting dynamic  
 6 language. I'll defer to Diego on this. But being a  
 7 regional dialect. And regional bias did play into  
 8 that.  
 9 So what we're doing now, as is our way,  
 10 we're creating our own. So we're in the discussion  
 11 with some folk in the deaf community of New Mexico  
 12 to create a panel around our own proficiency in the  
 13 language. And that will be the next -- I think that  
 14 will be the phase -- for the project that the PED  
 15 can latch onto to declare that, then -- and then it  
 16 becomes replicable -- right? -- so that other  
 17 districts are able to use this panel around  
 18 proficiency in the language.  
 19 So a long way to say we're working on it.  
 20 And I think as people change, sometimes the story of  
 21 why we're in this spot doesn't -- doesn't get handed  
 22 off.  
 23 And so -- which has also been the story of  
 24 our existence; right? And so I think in the  
 25 bilingual department, that happens. So when new

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1 people change, they're, like, "Hey, you don't fit  
 2 this thing," and the red flags pop up. And we're  
 3 like, "No, no, no. Let me tell you the back story,"  
 4 and "This is what we're doing to compensate."  
 5 COMMISSIONER BURT: So the Licensure  
 6 Bureau shows that the staff is not TESOL-endorsed?  
 7 Like, what is the --  
 8 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Yes.  
 9 COMMISSIONER BURT: But that's what --  
 10 they weren't showing that they were, that they were  
 11 teaching a bilingual class but they didn't have,  
 12 like, the proper certification for it? Because it  
 13 wasn't in the system.  
 14 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Correct. Yeah. And  
 15 the other piece of that is is we get in new staff,  
 16 which we did, we on-boarded two new staff. We had  
 17 to get a waiver in place for. And then we pay for  
 18 their TESOL. So there's a timeline, I guess.  
 19 DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: Thank you, Chair  
 20 Gipson. I just wanted to clarify. Some of the  
 21 licensure issues were miscommunications that the  
 22 staff, the Licensure Division, has informed us that  
 23 the teachers were qualified to be teaching the  
 24 classes they were teaching.  
 25 And in a couple of cases, it was a



<p style="text-align: right;">62</p> <p>1 question of just an application to add a license had 2 to be submitted. But the teachers were already 3 qualified for it. So it was just sort of a 4 rubber-stamp thing. And so the school is clear now 5 about what they need to do.</p> <p>6 COMMISSIONER BURT: Okay. Thank you. 7 That's helpful.</p> <p>8 DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: Just letting you 9 know that CSD doesn't have concerns about unlicensed 10 or unqualified teachers.</p> <p>11 COMMISSIONER BURT: And that's what's 12 hard; right? Because when we see -- the only 13 information we have are that there are licensure 14 discrepancies and they're not resolved. So it's 15 always helpful to get more context, which it sounds 16 like, from the question that Commissioner Brauer 17 asked about the Indian Education Act, too, is, like, 18 if there's not clear communication or, like, the 19 dots aren't connected with PED divisions, then, you 20 know, I'm not in a place to hold a charter school 21 accountable for that.</p> <p>22 And so as long as it's being sorted out 23 and Charter School Division isn't concerned, then I 24 won't be, either. Okay.</p> <p>25 One of the things -- once again, this</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">64</p> <p>1 accountability framework is meaningful to you. 2 Because I imagine getting state assessment -- 3 getting the Vistas scores, getting A-through-F 4 scores -- like, all those are -- it's frustrating 5 when you get something, and you have a continuous 6 improvement mindset, but you're like, "Well, none of 7 this feels right, and, actually, we can't even use 8 it to improve, because it's not even an accurate 9 reflection of our school. It's not an accurate 10 reflection of what we can do. Like, it doesn't help 11 us to get better."</p> <p>12 I know it doesn't feel good. It's 13 frustrating when you're a teacher and your principal 14 comes in and they're like, "Do better." You're, 15 like, "What? I want to do better."</p> <p>16 Like, I want to -- like I said, when we 17 were really looking at the performance framework, I 18 can't tell how many times Chair Gipson and I brought 19 up Albuquerque Sign Language Academy, trying to keep 20 making it broad and create -- allow for creativity, 21 allow for schools to make an accountability 22 framework make sense for them. Hold them to a high 23 rigor, you know.</p> <p>24 And I know your -- I love the way you kind 25 of look at your students in a way that cannot be</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">63</p> <p>1 just, like, speaks to your -- you know, your 2 commitment to continuous improvement over and over 3 again, is that, "We're not perfect yet."</p> <p>4 And I always -- like, I love that growth 5 mindset, especially for 16-year-olds who maybe have 6 attitudes sometimes that -- and need to get better.</p> <p>7 But that growth mindset, I know it's 8 infectious; right? When it starts at the top, it 9 trickles down, and I appreciate that.</p> <p>10 So one of the things -- I know I talked to 11 you about this when we did come visit the school -- 12 is I'm really excited to see you flex the new 13 performance framework muscles a little bit. Because 14 I do think it's really a disservice. Because I am a 15 proponent of accountability. I know you are.</p> <p>16 Like, accountability is not a dirty term. 17 It really is supposed to help with that continuous 18 improvement; right? And kind of shine that -- like, 19 hold you to a mirror and see where those are, where 20 are we not perfect yet so that we can make an 21 improvement; right?</p> <p>22 Which I can see throughout your years that 23 when you get a yellow or red, you're able to fix it; 24 right?</p> <p>25 So I'm looking forward to a time when your</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">65</p> <p>1 captured from a state model; right? It just can't, 2 because we cannot replicate your school population 3 with any other school. So it would actually be 4 irresponsible -- right? -- to create a statewide 5 kind of policy based on your school alone.</p> <p>6 That would be -- that wouldn't make sense. 7 So I get it. But I do think we've really tried to 8 leave for some creativity. And I will say I've seen 9 you speak on the accountability model for years now. 10 I mean, when I worked at the PED -- I've heard you 11 come and speak on it so many times over the years.</p> <p>12 So your advocacy does matter, because I 13 think if you did not come up and have those 14 conversations year over year with, I can't imagine, 15 the level of frustration year over year, and to not 16 give up? I mean, I hope you do -- hopefully, it 17 does make an impact for you this year. And maybe it 18 took you ten years to get here.</p> <p>19 But, like, I do think -- we can't change 20 the state accountability system. We're not going 21 to. You're always going to have to have something 22 on that.</p> <p>23 But I do hope that at least there's a -- 24 like, a breath can be taken at the school, because 25 that's -- that doesn't have to affect whether your</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">66</p> <p>1 doors stay open or not. And I think that's a big 2 difference.</p> <p>3 And, once again, for us to be able to give 4 you an annual report that actually shows, like, 5 "Okay, yeah, we see that you're serving -- your 6 student groups are unique for your school compared 7 to other schools"; right? So we can look at your 8 student groups in other ways and be able to see you 9 actually served this student group really well.</p> <p>10 Where are your achievement gaps? You're 11 not perfect yet. There's going to be achievement 12 gaps. Where are those, and where can we help you 13 look at those and give you credit for what's going 14 really well at the school that's not being captured 15 anywhere else?</p> <p>16 I am looking forward to, I guess, the next 17 five years and being able to look and partner with 18 the school in accountability, because I know that's 19 our, like, main job is your accountability partner; 20 right? But being able to actually do it in a 21 partnership instead of being kind of top-down.</p> <p>22 And you can figure out how to be in our 23 system. And I'm hoping this may be the first time 24 that you don't have to work within a system. You 25 actually can create a system, and we can work with</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">68</p> <p>1 spread the word. I know the deaf community isn't 2 necessarily a teeny tiny community where everyone 3 knows. And so you getting out and making sure 4 people are aware of that word of mouth, that your 5 school is open, your school does have a place for 6 families, is so important.</p> <p>7 And I'm really excited for a bigger 8 building where you can serve more families who are 9 waiting, who do know about you, who need you, and, 10 just, you don't have the space for them yet. 11 Grateful -- I'm super excited for your next five 12 years. And I'm grateful to clear up the licensure 13 thing so we can move on.</p> <p>14 I'm going to support no conditions on this 15 school moving forward for this next term.</p> <p>16 MR. RAFAEL MARTINEZ: Commissioner Burt, 17 members of the Commission, Madam Chair, thank you. 18 I agree with everything you're saying.</p> <p>19 I'll say a couple of things, if I can read 20 my writing.</p> <p>21 Oh. So -- and this is to the entire 22 Commission.</p> <p>23 So we have been preparing for kind of 24 Option 3 for 15 years, just so you know. We've been 25 collecting our short-cycle data and have systems</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">67</p> <p>1 you on it. And I hope that feels a little bit 2 different moving forward than what you've 3 experienced for the last 15, 16 years, in always 4 trying to make yourselves fit into systems that are 5 not meant for you, that didn't consider you, you 6 know. And so I'm excited for that.</p> <p>7 And I do think that's -- I guess that's 8 where I'm just looking forward to. I love the -- 9 the example that you can provide of serving a whole 10 child in an authentic way and not choosing one way 11 or another of how to serve a child, serving an 12 entire family.</p> <p>13 And then the community outreach that you 14 have is -- I mean, it's really brilliant, beautiful. 15 And from the testimony that we got today, it makes 16 an enormous impact on children's lives.</p> <p>17 But not just the children, the families, 18 and then the community around them, the 19 neighborhood, the -- like, it's much bigger than 20 just yourselves. And I appreciate that you all 21 recognize that. And I know that's what drives you 22 is that it's bigger than just yourselves.</p> <p>23 So I'm just -- I'm grateful. I'm grateful 24 to be able to have this school here in New Mexico. 25 I'm grateful for the outreach that you do, that you</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">69</p> <p>1 to -- and aligned goals to that, because we never 2 considered ourselves a SAM school, meaning 3 supplemental.</p> <p>4 We didn't need to do more to prove 5 ourselves. But we do need it to be seen fairly; 6 right? And so I think the Option 3 gives us that -- 7 that opportunity for us to, you know, to show you 8 exactly how our students learn, prove it, and then, 9 you know, hand it over to you to make the right 10 decisions.</p> <p>11 So I'm excited about Option 3. We are 12 breaking ground on the new school -- actually, we 13 broke ground on the new school. It's a big hole 14 right now, but it's our hole. And it's a big one, 15 too. Oh, man, that's a big -- but it's exciting.</p> <p>16 And I think it just -- it just -- you 17 know, it says everything -- the one thing that I do 18 want to latch onto, I do believe the world is a 19 better place for the creation of this school. I do. 20 And the world needs the ASLA. It does.</p> <p>21 Like, if you were to come to our fall 22 festival or anything like that, you'd see what we've 23 created. The community is real. And so it's neat 24 to me that you acknowledge that; so...</p> <p>25 THE CHAIR: Sure. Has Option 3 been</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">70</p> <p>1 difficult for you to --</p> <p>2 MR. RAFA MARTINEZ: It hasn't been</p> <p>3 difficult. Like, we have our systems set up for it.</p> <p>4 It just hasn't been acknowledged. So we're ready to</p> <p>5 go.</p> <p>6 And it's not going to be -- it's not going</p> <p>7 to be a heavy lift for us. I know when we spoke</p> <p>8 about our school, we said it's a lot of work. But</p> <p>9 we've actually been engaged in it for the last</p> <p>10 fifteen years.</p> <p>11 THE CHAIR: Yeah. Commissioner Brauer.</p> <p>12 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Yeah. Thank you,</p> <p>13 Chair. Thank, Rafe and team. Let me start with a</p> <p>14 couple of questions -- a couple of comments, some</p> <p>15 questions, and probably some more comments.</p> <p>16 I am always just so moved by this school.</p> <p>17 Like, tears of joy when I hear your students talk</p> <p>18 and, just, the courage, the humor, just, like,</p> <p>19 self-awareness and just -- just that sense of, like,</p> <p>20 it's assuredness that we heard from both of these</p> <p>21 students today, as well as in the video, just deeply</p> <p>22 inspires me.</p> <p>23 And if you ever go to the school, if you</p> <p>24 haven't yet, if you haven't gone down La Bajada yet,</p> <p>25 you're -- shame on you, first off, Commissioner</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">72</p> <p>1 happening.</p> <p>2 I remember watching the first video that</p> <p>3 you showed me. And I saw different students and met</p> <p>4 your children. And then, Ms. Montoya, I went to Amy</p> <p>5 Biehl afterwards, and I met Thomas. He was in</p> <p>6 the -- like, her son went to Amy Biehl, which is one</p> <p>7 of our other schools.</p> <p>8 And it was just, like, just a profound day</p> <p>9 when I did those rounds the first time in some of</p> <p>10 those schools and to see the literal faces of</p> <p>11 students and seeing the joy and the leadership after</p> <p>12 his experience at Amy Biehl-- or at ASLA. It was</p> <p>13 super profound.</p> <p>14 Ms. Montoya, the idea of the skill of</p> <p>15 latching onto good people, like, that is probably</p> <p>16 the most important skill that we all need. And</p> <p>17 that's how you get things done. That's how you</p> <p>18 organize. That's how you start movements. And</p> <p>19 that's how you take care of, like, children's needs,</p> <p>20 but also create new opportunities that are going to</p> <p>21 make our world better. And so congratulations on</p> <p>22 that for finding you all.</p> <p>23 I have a question for Diego. I'd love to</p> <p>24 hear, if you're willing, just share a little bit</p> <p>25 about your experience being part of the deaf</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">71</p> <p>1 Carrillo. And, secondly, you have to do that before</p> <p>2 the end of the year. I think that -- and folks down</p> <p>3 south, too, it's such -- it's just such a place</p> <p>4 where you just -- you can -- you go into that school</p> <p>5 and you see students just thriving.</p> <p>6 And they're doing good things academically</p> <p>7 that are relevant. But also the joy -- and I don't</p> <p>8 know. I'm a sucker for the joy part. Like, if</p> <p>9 you're doing things that are important that are,</p> <p>10 like, rigorous, and you're having fun with that and</p> <p>11 everyone is part of this community -- it's just,</p> <p>12 like, a place that I just think is super special.</p> <p>13 And I hope that it's not just a special</p> <p>14 spot, but it ripples out to other communities in the</p> <p>15 way that you all have done that.</p> <p>16 Miss Montoya and Rafe, I think that -- I</p> <p>17 don't know, Rafe, if I ever told you this story.</p> <p>18 When I first -- when I was in Director Chavez's</p> <p>19 seat, I went to your school when it was in the</p> <p>20 Bernalillo County building downtown on Lomas. And</p> <p>21 it was stacked solid with students and resources.</p> <p>22 And it was -- there's a space where, like, you</p> <p>23 know -- I know I'm not the biggest person in the</p> <p>24 world, but I had to turn sideways to get into rooms</p> <p>25 and stuff. It was, like, a lot of stuff was</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">73</p> <p>1 community, especially your K-12 experience and how</p> <p>2 you, you know, found yourself at ASLA.</p> <p>3 MR. DIEGO MARTINEZ: Good morning,</p> <p>4 Madam Chair, and members of the Commission. I'm</p> <p>5 Diego. Obviously, you've all heard the amazing</p> <p>6 stories, the language. And language is key to the</p> <p>7 school.</p> <p>8 I am deaf, and I grew up in the City of</p> <p>9 Las Cruces. I am one of 14 children. And all of my</p> <p>10 siblings are hearing, and they do not know sign</p> <p>11 language.</p> <p>12 My parents speak Spanish. They do not</p> <p>13 speak English, and they do not sign.</p> <p>14 I remember growing up gesturing with my</p> <p>15 family to communicate. And I was moved around to</p> <p>16 four different elementary schools in Las Cruces</p> <p>17 because I was labeled as special needs. I didn't</p> <p>18 make any friends. I had no peers. I wasn't</p> <p>19 challenged to learn.</p> <p>20 I learned basic sign language, but not</p> <p>21 conversational sign language. It was very limited</p> <p>22 vocabulary. It was when I was 14, and I met a</p> <p>23 friend who told me about NMSD in Santa Fe. And I</p> <p>24 told my family that I was interested in going to</p> <p>25 NMSD, and they turned me down. They wanted to keep</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">74</p> <p>1 me with the family.</p> <p>2 But I needed something. I knew inside</p> <p>3 that I had a need to grow.</p> <p>4 And so I basically forced my parents to</p> <p>5 send me to NMSD at the age of 14. And when I went</p> <p>6 to NMSD, it changed my life, because language</p> <p>7 impacted me.</p> <p>8 Now I learn ASL more, and I realized that</p> <p>9 it was more important. And the basic sign language</p> <p>10 that I had learned in Las Cruces was not the same as</p> <p>11 conversational language, to interact with peers.</p> <p>12 I realized that I was very behind in</p> <p>13 education. I knew that I could read and write very</p> <p>14 limited things. But at NMSD, I was very</p> <p>15 embarrassed. I realized that I was behind, and I</p> <p>16 needed to focus on learning language to make</p> <p>17 improvements in myself.</p> <p>18 When I graduated, I went to Gallaudet and</p> <p>19 NMSU. And I went to another college in West Texas.</p> <p>20 And then I went on to work at a dental lab in</p> <p>21 Albuquerque.</p> <p>22 And I worked in the dental lab helping</p> <p>23 clean teeth for 22 years. And I felt like I had</p> <p>24 nothing to give. I felt like I didn't have meaning</p> <p>25 and purpose.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">76</p> <p>1 because as a deaf individual, I think that there's</p> <p>2 no excuse, just because they're deaf, that they</p> <p>3 can't do things.</p> <p>4 So I'm able to be in that space and use my</p> <p>5 perspective to do better. And there's a lot of</p> <p>6 hearing students at our school who do have deaf</p> <p>7 family members, and they don't really take signing</p> <p>8 seriously. And I tell them that there's no excuse.</p> <p>9 I'm a deaf individual. I know what you're saying</p> <p>10 clearly, but it's not good enough.</p> <p>11 And so I really take my role seriously to</p> <p>12 teach sign language and to teach them that sign</p> <p>13 language matters.</p> <p>14 And so I feel like I've found meaning.</p> <p>15 And I feel like I can speak for our deaf and</p> <p>16 hard-of-hearing staff that also work in ASLA. We</p> <p>17 all feel like -- let me try to find the right word.</p> <p>18 But it's almost as if we forget, like, we're deaf</p> <p>19 individuals in this work environment, because it's</p> <p>20 such a language-rich environment.</p> <p>21 And when we go out into the real world, we</p> <p>22 remember that we're deaf, because there's a lot of</p> <p>23 hearing people out in the world who don't take the</p> <p>24 time to talk to me. They kind of feel, you know,</p> <p>25 confused when I interact with them.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">75</p> <p>1 I was earning a living, yes; but I wasn't</p> <p>2 giving back in an impactful way.</p> <p>3 Then during COVID, the dental lab shut</p> <p>4 down, and I started to think about what my next path</p> <p>5 was.</p> <p>6 And so I had looked around. And that's</p> <p>7 when I had learned about Albuquerque Sign Language</p> <p>8 Academy. And I had considered trying to work there.</p> <p>9 So I sent my resume, I think, four times. And they</p> <p>10 called me, and they said, "Come on in."</p> <p>11 And four days later, they called me to go</p> <p>12 in, and I started to work.</p> <p>13 And it was a completely different world,</p> <p>14 especially compared to my dental lab. It was very</p> <p>15 clean. It was small. It was organized. And it was</p> <p>16 perfect. But being around children, I had to clean</p> <p>17 up after them.</p> <p>18 And I learned a lot. And I realized when</p> <p>19 the kids are signing, I really started to think and</p> <p>20 feel like I can give something more to the community</p> <p>21 and at ASLA compared to the dental lab, especially.</p> <p>22 So I've worked there for six years now.</p> <p>23 And I'm teaching these kids sign language. And I do</p> <p>24 push deaf and hard-of-hearing students more. And I</p> <p>25 feel like that's a better experience for them,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">77</p> <p>1 But when I'm in ASLA, I feel like it's a</p> <p>2 very warm environment, like, we're family. I'm able</p> <p>3 to talk to my bosses directly, and they also take</p> <p>4 the time to learn a lot about ASL.</p> <p>5 And ASLA has really helped, yes, children</p> <p>6 and families, but also the staff members who work</p> <p>7 there. We all feel like we have pride and high</p> <p>8 self-esteem, and we can give back to the community.</p> <p>9 And the coworkers that I work with, they</p> <p>10 feel great. I feel great. We're all able to</p> <p>11 collaborate and talk about our work, and we're</p> <p>12 excited to go to work.</p> <p>13 So I'm very grateful to ASLA, not only for</p> <p>14 the students and families, but also deaf adults who</p> <p>15 work as staff there. And I really love to go to</p> <p>16 work every morning. I wake up excited and full of</p> <p>17 energy.</p> <p>18 Before, when I worked at the dental lab, I</p> <p>19 didn't -- I don't know how I did that for 22 years.</p> <p>20 But the six years I've been at ASLA have been great.</p> <p>21 They have really flown by. And I'm grateful to</p> <p>22 share my experience and story. Thank you.</p> <p>23 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Thank you so much,</p> <p>24 Diego. Really appreciate that. Just a few other</p> <p>25 questions and maybe a couple of closing thoughts.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">78</p> <p>1 I want to thank you for, first off, 2 Ms. Moya, I apologize for calling you Ms. Montoya. 3 That's on me. My apologies. 4 Thank you, Commissioner Burt, for asking 5 the clarifying questions around the performance 6 framework, and I appreciate you all already 7 considering this. Because we really want to make 8 sure that all students count; right? All students 9 count. They're not in the -- they're not in 10 shadows, and we're not sure -- and I know you all 11 know. 12 But the story is worth telling. The story 13 has to be told. Talk about inequity, when we don't 14 see how all students are growing in a way that is 15 relevant, and that's where we do harm. So I think 16 that's -- I think that's so great that you all have 17 had a good fifteen years to think about what this 18 would look like. 19 And we know that you're going to do that 20 in conjunction with us and do something that really 21 works. So thank you for that, the work beforehand 22 and what's going to happen after today. 23 I have two kind of specific questions. 24 And, Rafe, I think I had asked you before at one 25 point.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">80</p> <p>1 having, you know, both high-schoolers as well as 2 your -- your alumni and other people who come to 3 your school figure out you can be a hub for getting 4 certification, and both the bilingual certification 5 for high-schoolers, but also how do we create more 6 young people who are ready to jump into teaching. 7 But as we -- as we know, like, having more 8 interpreters, having more people who are bilingual 9 in American Sign Language, like, creating that hub. 10 Not giving you more work to do as you -- to put in 11 that big hole that's up there. 12 But just thinking about how does that work 13 and how -- I just -- there is something that's ripe 14 for that, especially knowing that you are 15 considering what your students do next. And it 16 doesn't have to be, like, education. But, like, how 17 many -- I don't know the need, the demand for 18 interpreters. But I assume it's, like, pretty 19 great. And also teaching people like me who are 20 hearing ability, how do we go beyond the token 21 writing our names or signing our names? Just some 22 thoughts that I had around that. 23 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Thank you. 24 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: In terms of -- in 25 terms of the Indian Education Act part, are you all</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">79</p> <p>1 But do students get bilingual seals? Is 2 that possible for students to get a bilingual seal 3 at your school? 4 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Commissioner Brauer, 5 members of the Commission, Madam Chair, not yet. 6 It's in the works. There's been -- part of it was 7 we didn't have a high school for a long time, so it 8 was just kind of not on our priority list; right? 9 But then when we did partner with high 10 schools through some grant work, that was one of 11 their declarations. They would do that for us. And 12 they -- I've learned to quit imposing our mission on 13 other folk. It just never goes well; right? 14 And so, you know, no discredit to them, 15 but it hasn't happened yet. 16 I think now that we've really jumped in, 17 both feet, into our high school program and our 18 transition program, I think that is the next thing 19 that we will work on is seeing what it will be to 20 get the bilingual seal in ASL. 21 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: My mind, my creative 22 thoughts just kind of go to I wonder what it would 23 mean, similar to like, the Native Languages 520 24 license that is driven by tribes, pueblos, and 25 nations. I wonder how that would look in terms of</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">81</p> <p>1 feeling comfortable with next steps that you have 2 around doing tribal consultation? And did you all 3 receive any funding from Indian Education? 4 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Commissioner Brauer, 5 we did receive funding. It was kind of imposed on 6 us. We didn't realize our Native American 7 population was as high as it was. So money just 8 came. We were, like, "What do we do with this?" 9 Money is good. When we did figure it out, we did 10 use it appropriately. 11 I would say I don't worry about our intent 12 and our effort to reach out. I do worry that -- 13 that we -- kind of in our -- as is our story, we 14 don't fit the formulaic view of what that is 15 supposed to be. 16 So they assigned us to a group out of -- 17 is it Fort Wingate? It's even on the -- like, so 18 much closer to us; right? So as soon as they get in 19 touch with us, we've been reaching out to them 20 pretty persistently. And when they get back to us, 21 we'll do what they say; so -- 22 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Window Rock, 23 probably, from the Navajo Nation. 24 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Window Rock. That's 25 it.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">82</p> <p>1 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Fort Wingate is just 2 three miles up the road. Great. Thank you for 3 that. 4 This is another question. And I cannot 5 remember if I asked you, but it's connected to that. 6 Is there -- I am assuming, like, there are 7 different dialects in American Sign Language. And 8 are there -- and I could be absolutely wrong with 9 that. Is there, like, in different languages, 10 different -- like is there Spanish sign language 11 or -- 12 MR. RAFA MARTINEZ: It's Mexican sign 13 language; correct? 14 THE INTERPRETER: Diego says there's 15 accents. There's accents. 16 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: I was wondering, 17 like, with indigenous languages, if there is similar 18 things. That's through line that I'm going from 19 with that. More homework to do. I'm just curious, 20 both just trying to think about how do we create 21 something that -- and, again, not -- this is the 22 world as it possibly should be versus the world as 23 it is. So take this as that's where my mind goes. 24 Like, wow, you all have some tribal students at your 25 school. How do we create culturally responsive</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">84</p> <p>1 thinking about the opportunities for young people 2 that ASL provides, I think it's something that's 3 really great, and you taking that moral obligation 4 to provide that. 5 And so the last thing I'll share. 6 I -- of course, I'm with you all for a 7 five-year renewal with no conditions. 8 In terms of the potential next steps, too, 9 I know that you did not want to create a New Mexico 10 School for the Deaf South with ASLA. 11 I wonder, like, for the next five years, 12 like, what would it mean, like, not just focusing on 13 hard-of-hearing and deaf education, but, Rafe, 14 you've said this before, and I'm going to butcher 15 this idea. But, like, when you know the Americans 16 with Disabilities Act first came in, and we needed 17 to put ramps and sidewalks; right? 18 There's a -- academic process for this. 19 But, like, putting ramps in sidewalks is for people 20 in wheelchairs, but it also improves everyone's 21 lives. It makes things better for everyone. 22 And I know I've heard you talk about this 23 before. Like, what's right for students that fit 24 into one category is good for every student. 25 So I think that since we do have funding</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">83</p> <p>1 practices, both through their needs as young people, 2 and also with their tribal language? 3 Just this is how my -- and I know you're a 4 person that thinks in the clouds, too. But I was 5 thinking about how that could be connected in some 6 ways. 7 The final thing that I just wanted to say. 8 I -- Commissioners, I've had the chance to have some 9 students, a couple of years ago, when I first 10 started the Indigenous Farm Hub, one of our key 11 partners was the Albuquerque Sign Language Academy. 12 And one of our first farm-to-school grants we 13 received was to get young people out. 14 They had an outdoor education, 15 environmental studies program. It was so awesome to 16 have young people come out with their interpreters 17 to just enjoy, like, being outside, doing some good 18 work in terms of community and service and farming. 19 It was just so awesome to see students of 20 all different abilities, like, enjoy it, learn from 21 it. 22 And I hope Serenity was talking about that 23 this morning. I don't think she was talking about 24 the farm hub experience in her things. But I know 25 that Max was there. And it's just, like, just</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">85</p> <p>1 in the state now through CSP and expansion, I'm just 2 thinking about how do we consider not a South ASLA 3 or a West ASLA or a North ASLA, but wondering how 4 you all are thinking about providing more 5 opportunities for students, and thinking about what 6 that would look like, again, with direct, bulls-eye 7 deaf education. But also what's right for your 8 students is right for a lot of students. 9 And so I'm just think- -- that's where my 10 mind is stirring. 11 MR. RAFA MARTINEZ: Commissioner Brauer, 12 members of the Commission. So, Commissioner Beck, I 13 may not be retiring as soon as I thought. 14 SECRETARY BECK: That's a good thing. 15 MR. RAFA MARTINEZ: Well, I'll say -- so 16 what you're talking about, I think, is -- so 17 everything we build at the school kind of falls -- 18 has to be cleared through the prism of being 19 scalable and being replicable; right? 20 So I think what you're talking about is 21 replicating in different parts of the state, maybe 22 the country. 23 I do think we have done some things 24 that -- that aren't only able to happen at our 25 place, meaning they could and should happen in other</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">86</p> <p>1 places throughout the region; right? Now, the model 2 would change given the size of the city. I think 3 Cruces would be able to handle a model like ours, 4 outright, maybe Farmington. Roswell would be 5 interesting.</p> <p>6 But it would be -- but I do think we would 7 be able to think about how we would create something 8 like us in conjunction with an existing school. I 9 think you could do something of that ilk.</p> <p>10 It's an interesting conversation. Yeah.</p> <p>11 And I do think we -- as I said before with 12 you all, we want to be the flagship for charters. 13 But I would also say, in talking with Dr. Cage in 14 special ed, we want to be the exemplar, the model 15 school for special ed. We believe ourselves to be 16 in the discussion about being -- we are special ed 17 done right.</p> <p>18 And I'll credit it -- these two right here 19 that haven't said anything yet, head of program, 20 head of deaf ed, like I have two of the best 21 thinkers and workers when it comes to what special 22 ed needs to be, not just on paper to keep you out of 23 a lawsuit, but in service, so that all kids and 24 families are getting what they need.</p> <p>25 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Thank you very much.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">88</p> <p>1 And I, too, feel like I need to get back 2 into school and get my credentials updated and join 3 you all. That's how impressed I was with your 4 presentation and with what your accomplishments have 5 shown.</p> <p>6 And my question was answered earlier. I 7 was asking -- I wanted to ask if you were 8 coordinating or using Gallaudet University in 9 Washington, D.C., as a resource. And through the 10 conversations, I think there were two people who 11 indicated -- made reference to the school. So I'm 12 happy about that, because that school is amazing.</p> <p>13 So I'm just -- congratulations on 14 everything you've done, your progress in five years. 15 So I just -- like I said, my question was answered. 16 But I just want to add that I'm so impressed with 17 what you all have done, because this is a school of 18 communication. And I'm just sitting here listening 19 to what you have to communicate and how to 20 communicate that to a person who is not hearing.</p> <p>21 So I'm just overwhelmed with what you all 22 have done. So thank you so much and thank you for 23 your presentation.</p> <p>24 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Thank you.</p> <p>25 THE CHAIR: I think I should take -- make</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">87</p> <p>1 I think this could go beyond, you know, charter 2 schools. But thinking about every district school 3 has a need for this. And I think there's some great 4 opportunities and bridges to be built. And I just 5 would be remiss not to say that it's great to see 6 you, Ms. Fi [ph] -- I know every year we do the 7 science fair project down there, or science fair. 8 So I'm looking forward to making rounds again for 9 that. So thank you.</p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: (Inaudible due to simultaneous 11 speaking) all the time. Orange juice. It has the 12 most electrolytes. Commissioner Brauer brought that 13 back from the science fair last year.</p> <p>14 I just want to check and see if 15 Commissioner Clahchischilliage had her hand up. I 16 don't know if she still has a question or comment.</p> <p>17 COMMISSIONER CLAHCHISCHILLIAGE: Yeah. 18 Can you hear me?</p> <p>19 THE CHAIR: Yes, we can.</p> <p>20 COMMISSIONER CLAHCHISCHILLIAGE: Oh, 21 great. Okay. Yes. Thank you. I -- I just felt 22 that -- I just want to make a few comments. I'm so 23 impressed with what you all have done, and I'm very 24 impressed with where you've come, just listening to 25 the conversations.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">89</p> <p>1 my own video that has snippets of this and a number 2 of other of our renewal hearings, because I was 3 summoned to a meeting Saturday, this past Saturday, 4 to basically justify why charters exist.</p> <p>5 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Oh, wow.</p> <p>6 THE CHAIR: And this is certainly a school 7 that I always highlight. But saying it doesn't -- 8 people need to experience it more. They don't -- 9 you know, obviously, they don't get it, you know, 10 and are unaware.</p> <p>11 I'm from Las Cruces, so I get contacted 12 all the time. And I give people Rafe's information. 13 And then I'll see him and I'll say, "Did anybody 14 from Las Cruces call you?" Because there is -- you 15 know, there is -- it always appears there's an 16 express need in the community.</p> <p>17 But I think there's just that -- you know, 18 there's that speed bump that people need to just get 19 over, because it just seems insurmountable, to just 20 get it going, you know. And they just need that 21 little -- because my understanding was, I think even 22 like maybe two years ago, Cruces had no teachers of 23 the deaf left in the district.</p> <p>24 Because in Texas, my understanding, it's 25 easier to get certified in Texas. But because they</p>

90	<p>1 were so close, they were just going and teaching in 2 Texas. Yeah. And I -- you know, I was unaware of 3 that. But that's what someone indicated to me, that 4 it's not worth going through when they can just, you 5 know, get in the car and work in Texas. 6 And at that time, it was even still a 7 little more money. So they lost their staffing. So 8 that's -- you know, it's -- it's heartbreaking when 9 you know that children aren't being served, because, 10 you know, the core of what you said always sticks 11 with me. We just want to make good human beings. 12 And you want people to be able to get 13 that -- you know, those steps along the way so that 14 they can be the best version of themselves. And 15 these children aren't. And that's, you know, very, 16 very discouraging. 17 I'm not trying to belabor the 18 accountability system. And you didn't really talk 19 much about it. But I see on the accountability 20 system, you have a overall college and career 21 readiness participation of zero percent. That just 22 seems ridiculous, because I know what you do with 23 your -- so how does that even happen? 24 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: Madam Chair -- well, 25 I'll tell you how it happens.</p>	92	<p>1 because we are seemingly getting traction with 2 having people revamp their thinking about what CTE 3 means in the world of disability. 4 So, as is -- again, as is our way, we're 5 going to forge the road, and others will be able to 6 follow it afterwards. But it does -- there's a good 7 side to that as well; right? Because when you kind 8 of walk into a place where no one has tread, you can 9 kind of create your own things -- right? -- your 10 often little diverse veers here and there. 11 And so I think we can do that. And that 12 should hopefully bode well for us extending into 13 adult education. Because we have already started 14 reshaping some of the curriculum that was connected 15 to adult ed coursework, but in an adaptive way. So 16 that work is already happening. 17 THE CHAIR: I appreciate that. But it is 18 mind-boggling -- 19 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: A little bit. 20 THE CHAIR: -- that we're at this point, 21 and no one has had (inaudible). So just -- I 22 don't -- I hate to think about all the people that 23 we missed, you know. That's where I sit. So thank 24 you. I appreciate it. Commissioners? Sure. 25 COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Okay. I don't want</p>
91	<p>1 THE CHAIR: Okay. 2 MR. RAFE MARTINEZ: We've jumped both feet 3 into the world of the CTE and post-secondary. And 4 so when you go to the CTE conferences and talk to 5 everybody, disability is not a consideration, 6 especially not disability where we're working with 7 the most profound disabilities. 8 It's -- it's -- the discussion is tilted 9 toward other demographics, to how to get more -- 10 then you fill in the blank -- women, minorities, 11 whatever, into the workforce. Disability is not a 12 consideration. 13 So what we're working through now, through 14 the Innovations Zone grant, working directly with 15 CTE programmers, is how to adapt some of the 16 curricular standards to meet the -- to write to a 17 space where they address special ed needs. And it 18 blew my mind that no one was doing that and it 19 hasn't been done. 20 So it's funny that we report zero, 21 because, basically, our entire high school and 22 transition program is CTE. I think this might be 23 the first year, actually. So maybe to defend PED a 24 little bit, this might be the first year that we 25 will actually code everybody into the CTE program,</p>	93	<p>1 to get into a long conversation. 2 Before I met my wife, I had no contact 3 with the disability community. And I've been 4 through a real transition in my life. And the idea 5 that you spoke about that our disabled community is 6 such an asset that -- and my wife right now is in 7 Chile doing a wheelchair outreach. 8 We've been involved in that ministry. 9 They have -- they brought a movie about a guy in 10 South Korea that -- he was a pastor that had a 11 profoundly disabled child that couldn't -- had very 12 few interactions with the -- with our world. 13 And that pastor said that that child had 14 had more of an impact on him than any other human 15 being on earth. 16 And so I just want to tell you guys, I am 17 so excited about your work. I do hope you will have 18 a profound effect on the special ed community. My 19 inaction with a lot of that in my work as a 20 construction manager and stuff was that it's exactly 21 as you said. They are addressing the law and doing 22 everything they can to avoid -- but they're not -- 23 they're not taking seriously the mandate that they 24 have to help the kids. 25 And it's so -- so discouraging to me,</p>



<p style="text-align: right;">94</p> <p>1 sometimes, going through what I went through at APS 2 and the -- because I built two special ed facilities 3 like I told you. And how that all interacted -- 4 that work was -- it was all -- it seemed very 5 fruitless sometimes. And what I see is your work is 6 fruitful, and I just want to thank you for that. 7 MR. RAFA MARTINEZ: Thank you. 8 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Maybe I missed it. 9 What's holding up the bilingual seal for your 10 school? 11 MR. RAFA MARTINEZ: Madam Chair, members 12 of the Commission, Commissioner Carrillo, good 13 question. I think it's -- I think it really is 14 getting the requirements of the bilingual seal that 15 exist in other languages and aligning it and then 16 figuring it out. 17 But one of the things in the whole world 18 of bilingual when it comes to ASL is not having a 19 sanctioning body to say that kids or adults are 20 proficient -- right? -- without having to go out of 21 state and then running into all kinds of different 22 roadblocks around deaf politics, deaf dialects, 23 regional dialects, things like that. 24 So a big part of our being able to create 25 the bilingual seal for the school is putting</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">96</p> <p>1 up here. 2 How do districts -- I mean, I know, by 3 law, we have to provide services to those that can't 4 hear. What do districts do, typically? 5 MR. RAFA MARTINEZ: Now you're getting to 6 a place that -- 7 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Okay. We won't go 8 there. Okay. 9 MR. RAFA MARTINEZ: I'll go back to the 10 way that deaf education is set up by the state. 11 Everything runs through one hose that goes through 12 the New Mexico School for the Deaf. The funding is 13 there, and services run outwardly from that one 14 hose, usually. That's the deaf ed world. 15 When deaf ed occurs outside of that, it is 16 housed under the special ed umbrella. So that's the 17 distinction. 18 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Okay. Thank you. I 19 want to thank Diego very much for sharing your 20 story. Very moving and very inspirational. 21 And I was standing in back just stretching 22 my legs for some of that. And just you -- I may not 23 know all of these things. But just the notion of 24 the regionalism and of dialects, and I think you 25 said accents?</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">95</p> <p>1 together the panel that I'm envisioning with 2 language experts that are homegrown to New Mexico. 3 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: There needs to be a 4 baseline. It would be something, I'm sure, that 5 would be rolled out in other places if we did it. I 6 would just encourage PED and CSD to offer whatever 7 assistance they can in helping you do that. I don't 8 want there to be any roadblocks that have to do with 9 us. 10 MR. RAFA MARTINEZ: No. Thank you for 11 that. I will say that. We have done a good job 12 over the last fifteen years of working well within 13 the bureaus. We do. And we -- and, you know, 14 whoever said it -- I do pull all my hair out about 15 some of the stuff that comes down, blaming PED for 16 that. But somewhere in there, people usually come 17 our way when they understand what we're doing, when 18 they see the school, when they actually pay 19 attention. 20 I think we make a good argument as to why 21 things need to be changed. And most bureaus have 22 come that direction. In fact, I think there's not 23 one that hasn't, including bilingual. 24 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Thank you. The -- 25 and I should know this. Because I was on the board</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">97</p> <p>1 I mean, it's just -- it's just 2 fascinating. And I know zero about any of it. And 3 it's just really fascinating. And I, just as -- as 4 Ms. Burt said, just so grateful. 5 MR. RAFA MARTINEZ: Thank you. 6 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Madam Chair, I was 7 going to make a motion, if that's all right. 8 THE CHAIR: Okay. Great. 9 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Thank you. I move 10 that the Public Education Commission approve the 11 renewal application for the Albuquerque Sign 12 Language Academy for a five-year term without 13 conditions. 14 THE CHAIR: Second. There's a motion by 15 Commissioner Brauer and a second by Commissioner 16 Gipson. 17 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Burt. 18 COMMISSIONER BURT: Yes. 19 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Taylor. 20 (No response.) 21 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Armijo. 22 (No response.) 23 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Manis. 24 (No response.) 25 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Brauer.</p>

98	<p>1 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Yes.</p> <p>2 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner</p> <p>3 Clahchischilliage.</p> <p>4 COMMISSIONER CLAHCHISCHILLIAGE: Yes.</p> <p>5 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Ingham.</p> <p>6 COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Yes.</p> <p>7 SECRETARY BECK: Vice Chair Carrillo.</p> <p>8 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Yes.</p> <p>9 SECRETARY BECK: Chair Gipson.</p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: Yes.</p> <p>11 SECRETARY BECK: Secretary Beck, yes.</p> <p>12 One, two, through, four, five, six --</p> <p>13 there are seven yes votes, for, and zero votes</p> <p>14 against. The motion passes. Congratulations.</p> <p>15 THE CHAIR: We'll take a ten-minute break.</p> <p>16 Oh, good. Yeah.</p> <p>17 (Recess taken, 10:10 a.m. to 10:32 a.m.)</p> <p>18 THE CHAIR: Welcome. And if you would</p> <p>19 just introduce yourself and spell your last name and</p> <p>20 your role, and then we're good for the rest of the</p> <p>21 time.</p> <p>22 FROM THE FLOOR: Perfect. I'm Mary</p> <p>23 Tarango. My last name is spelled T-a-r-a-n-g-o,</p> <p>24 rhymes with Durango. So easy to say. And we are</p> <p>25 here from 21st Century.</p>	100	<p>1 its second renewal with the PEC. They were an APS</p> <p>2 charter, but they renewed with the PEC five years</p> <p>3 ago.</p> <p>4 The school's mission is to provide</p> <p>5 out-of-school instruction, which they call OSI, to</p> <p>6 support -- to support connections between the</p> <p>7 community and stellar academics.</p> <p>8 The -- the CSD visited 21st Century Public</p> <p>9 Academy on -- I neglected to add this into my --</p> <p>10 thank you -- oh, gosh. Now -- sorry. That wasn't</p> <p>11 our recommendation.</p> <p>12 We visited 21st Century Public Academy</p> <p>13 on -- I don't have the date in front of me. But I</p> <p>14 was part of the -- the site visit team. It was my</p> <p>15 second visit to 21st Century.</p> <p>16 And the school is -- the school is</p> <p>17 implementing the educational program with fidelity.</p> <p>18 The school has just -- so I'm stealing the head</p> <p>19 administrator -- so, sorry. The CSD team lead was</p> <p>20 Lucy Valenzuela. I was part of the visit, as was</p> <p>21 our contractor, Kristen LaVolpa, who visited the</p> <p>22 school on September 9th, 2024.</p> <p>23 Thank you, Director Chavez.</p> <p>24 So the school's academics -- I'm stealing</p> <p>25 the school's thunder, because they wanted to make</p>
99	<p>1 Would you like me to introduce any of the</p> <p>2 other members here? Okay. So I'll pass the mic</p> <p>3 away.</p> <p>4 (Reporter cautions.)</p> <p>5 FROM THE FLOOR: I'm the principal, Jeremy</p> <p>6 Peckens at the school. Been there about 15 years.</p> <p>7 FROM THE FLOOR: My name is Laura Sedore.</p> <p>8 I'm the vice president of the governing council.</p> <p>9 Oh. S-e-d-o-r-e.</p> <p>10 FROM THE FLOOR: My name is Fatima</p> <p>11 Ceballes, C-e-b-a-l-l-e-s, and I'm here on behalf of</p> <p>12 the 21st Century PTA.</p> <p>13 FROM THE FLOOR: My name is Megan Herren.</p> <p>14 H-e-r-r-e-n. I'm a teacher and the student council</p> <p>15 adviser.</p> <p>16 MS. MARY TARANGO: And we have a variety</p> <p>17 of students here, and you will meet them later.</p> <p>18 THE CHAIR: Thank you. First, though is</p> <p>19 the (off-mic).</p> <p>20 DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: Thank you, Chair</p> <p>21 Gipson.</p> <p>22 For the court reporter, this is Brigitte</p> <p>23 Russell, deputy director of the Charter Schools</p> <p>24 Division.</p> <p>25 21st Century Public Academy is back for</p>	101	<p>1 this -- this announcement.</p> <p>2 The school has finally exited their ATSI</p> <p>3 designation that they have had since 2017. Now,</p> <p>4 seven years later, that designation, based on</p> <p>5 seven-year data, has -- has been removed, and the</p> <p>6 school is a Spotlight School.</p> <p>7 The school has been in the top 25 percent</p> <p>8 of schools for the past three years and would have</p> <p>9 been a Spotlight School were it not for that</p> <p>10 designation that was given in 2017.</p> <p>11 The school's proficiencies exceed -- I'm</p> <p>12 going to share screen and show current</p> <p>13 proficiencies.</p> <p>14 Vistas went -- Vistas, '23-'24, went live</p> <p>15 just yesterday.</p> <p>16 So the State was embargoing until</p> <p>17 yesterday. But ELA, math, and science proficiencies</p> <p>18 are higher than Albuquerque Public Schools and</p> <p>19 New Mexico as a whole.</p> <p>20 The -- the school has 57 percent reading</p> <p>21 proficiency for all students, 33 percent math</p> <p>22 proficiency, and 55 percent science proficiency.</p> <p>23 The cells that are shaded blue are the</p> <p>24 ones where the school has exceeded both Albuquerque</p> <p>25 Public Schools and New Mexico as a whole. And the</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">102</p> <p>1 school has exceeded both the district and the state 2 for -- for almost every unmasked subgroup as well as 3 overall. 4 In the renewal application, the ratings 5 are given, either Meets the Standards, Demonstrates 6 Substantial Progress, or Failing to Demonstrate 7 Progress. And I will omit the -- the usual 8 statement about the rubric and schools that fall in 9 between Demonstrates and Failing to Demonstrate, 10 because the school has not failed to demonstrate on 11 anything. They are either Meets the Standard or 12 Demonstrates Substantial Progress on -- on all 13 categories. 14 So for -- the school met the standard on 15 student outcomes, on educational program 16 implementation, on mission-specific goals, where 17 they have exceeded or met their goal for each year. 18 The mission-specific goal is, "Students will 19 participate in 18 OSIs..." -- again, that's Outside 20 School Instruction -- outings. And then the 21 students do a write-up, and there's a rubric and the 22 students have to score a certain -- a certain score 23 on the rubric in addition to participating in the 24 OSI. 25 The school is planning on keeping this</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">104</p> <p>1 They did not receive any Does Not Meet the Standard 2 ratings across the contract term. 3 And -- oh. What I did not read was the 4 most important part of the CSD's recommendation up 5 at the top. 6 The Charter Schools Division recommends 7 that 21st Century Public Academy be renewed for a 8 term of five years without conditions. Thank you. 9 SECRETARY BECK: Got a real fast question. 10 This school is the only school that I noticed on 11 Page 13 of 17 on Part A where they don't have the 12 Fiscal Year '24 cash amount. Says it's pending. Do 13 you know why that would be, why that wouldn't be 14 reported? It is on all the other ones. 15 DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: Chair Gipson, 16 Commissioner Beck, I would have to look into it. 17 Maybe Ms. Valenzuela, can you look into that and see 18 if you can figure out why? I suspect it was just a 19 reporting issue, that when PED -- when we went into 20 our finance system, OBMS, the data wasn't in there. 21 But we'll check and have that for you. 22 MS. MARY TARANGO: Mike, if you could 23 state your name, spell your last name, please, and 24 join us at the table? 25 MR. MIKE VIGIL II: Madam Chair, members</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">103</p> <p>1 mission-specific goal next time. But they would 2 like to modify it slightly for the younger 3 elementary kids due to logistics and transportation 4 issues. But they'll talk about that with you later. 5 The school also met the standards in 6 financial compliance. This was rated Demonstrates 7 Substantial Progress in the CSD analysis, but we 8 have just confirmed that the single Working to Meet 9 rating was an error on CSD's part, and all financial 10 indicators are Meets the Standard across the 11 contract term. So we're going to update that and 12 post the corrected final recommendation on the 13 webpage. 14 The final area where the school met the 15 standard was in governance. 16 The school earned a Demonstrates 17 Substantial Progress rating in two areas: Equity 18 and identity, and other performance framework 19 indicators. 20 Equity and identity, because the school's 21 culturally and linguistically responsive framework 22 inventory needs to be completed, and other 23 performance framework indicators because the school 24 received a Working to Meet Standard on a few 25 indicators here and there across the contract term.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">105</p> <p>1 of the Commission, my name is Mike Vigil, last name, 2 V-i-g-i-l, representing 21st Century as business 3 manager. When it comes to Fiscal Year '24 cash, 4 that's something that's still under audit. So I'm 5 not sure why it would be reported for other schools. 6 We can provide an estimate at this point. 7 And it should be based on budget itself. And I can 8 pull it up on my laptop right now if you actually 9 need a figure. 10 But, essentially, the school has been 11 within that 3 to 10 percent realm when it comes to 12 cash operationally. And I think the financial 13 indicators sort of prove all of that, that there's 14 not been an issue. But I honestly can pull it up 15 right now, if you'd like. 16 SECRETARY BECK: Yeah. I would kind of 17 like to see it, because you said they've been within 18 the 3 to 10 percent. I see, in Fiscal Year '22, you 19 were 1.99, and Fiscal Year '23, you were (audio 20 distortion). 21 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: So the report is 22 the unrestricted cash balance report for the fiscal 23 year. 24 SECRETARY BECK: Right. Every other 25 school has had that Fiscal Year '24 cash amount.</p>

106	<p>1 That's why I was curious.</p> <p>2 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: Right. We need</p> <p>3 to look into why it was not reported for this</p> <p>4 school.</p> <p>5 SECRETARY BECK: Yeah. No problem. Thank</p> <p>6 you.</p> <p>7 THE CHAIR: So I don't think -- I don't</p> <p>8 think there will be anyone. But is there anyone</p> <p>9 here for tribal consultation?</p> <p>10 MS. MELISSA BROWN: There is not.</p> <p>11 THE CHAIR: Okay. So we're on to Item</p> <p>12 No. 3, which is the school's opportunity.</p> <p>13 MS. MARY TARANGO: All-righty, then.</p> <p>14 Ms. Tarango again. Good morning, Dragons. Good</p> <p>15 morning, Dragon Trainers. Good morning,</p> <p>16 Commissioners. Good morning, CSD Division.</p> <p>17 Thank you very much for this opportunity</p> <p>18 to be here and thank you indeed for allowing us to</p> <p>19 exist.</p> <p>20 We are very proud and happy to be here.</p> <p>21 This is our 25th year as a school. And we have some</p> <p>22 people that would like to share some stuff with us.</p> <p>23 So we're just going to line them up here.</p> <p>24 So if you'll start with our</p> <p>25 vice president, and then PTA, and then Megan, and</p>	108	<p>1 success, social development, and overall well-being.</p> <p>2 At 21st Century Academy, we have seen this</p> <p>3 firsthand. Our school has fostered family and</p> <p>4 community engagement, creating a culture that values</p> <p>5 every voice and promotes the students' success.</p> <p>6 The school recognizes the respect and</p> <p>7 various backgrounds of cultures and experiences that</p> <p>8 make up the student body. When parents and teachers</p> <p>9 and community members come together, we create a</p> <p>10 school that reflects the rich diversity of New</p> <p>11 Mexico itself.</p> <p>12 We would like to thank the New Mexico</p> <p>13 Department of Education for your support and</p> <p>14 dedication to our students by rechartering</p> <p>15 21st century Public Academy. You will strengthen</p> <p>16 bonds, creating a brighter, more inclusive future</p> <p>17 for our children, where they not only excel</p> <p>18 academically, but also as members of the community</p> <p>19 that reflects what truly New Mexico is about.</p> <p>20 Thank you.</p> <p>21 FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. Good morning. My</p> <p>22 name is Megan Herren, and I have been teaching at</p> <p>23 21st Century Public Academy for the past ten years.</p> <p>24 Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share a</p> <p>25 few words with you today as we look to renew our</p>
107	<p>1 then we'll line up the kids behind them; okay? Go.</p> <p>2 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. Laura</p> <p>3 Sedore. I'm vice president of the governance</p> <p>4 council. I've been with the school for</p> <p>5 approximately four years. I started off during the</p> <p>6 pandemic on a Zoom, and eventually got very involved</p> <p>7 in the school. It seems like every other day, I'm</p> <p>8 over there now.</p> <p>9 It's a great school. The kids are -- it's</p> <p>10 lovely. In fact, I brought some Australian friends</p> <p>11 on a tour there last week, and they were quite</p> <p>12 impressed also.</p> <p>13 And it's a magical school. The name</p> <p>14 "Dragons" is perfect. And very proud to have served</p> <p>15 on their board and will continue to for hopefully</p> <p>16 several more years. Thank you.</p> <p>17 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is</p> <p>18 Fatima, and I am a 21st Century PTA member. It's my</p> <p>19 fifth year as a PTA member at the school. And mine</p> <p>20 is more of a little scripted thing.</p> <p>21 So it's -- we know that students face new</p> <p>22 challenges and opportunities. And research</p> <p>23 consistently shows that when families and</p> <p>24 communities are actively involved in child's</p> <p>25 education, it positively impacts their academic</p>	109	<p>1 school charter.</p> <p>2 The process is more than a formality. It</p> <p>3 is a reaffirmation of our commitment to students,</p> <p>4 families, and the community that we proudly serve.</p> <p>5 As a teacher here, I have the privilege of</p> <p>6 witnessing the impact of our school's unique focus</p> <p>7 of out-of-school instruction, our OSIs. We're not</p> <p>8 just learners within the four walls of a classroom,</p> <p>9 but explorers within our community.</p> <p>10 Our school was founded 25 years ago in the</p> <p>11 belief that learning does not happen in textbooks or</p> <p>12 in a traditional classroom setting. We believe in a</p> <p>13 hands-on setting, when students engage directly with</p> <p>14 the world around them.</p> <p>15 Our charter has helped us organize</p> <p>16 meaningful and educational experiences that take our</p> <p>17 students into local businesses, museums, historical</p> <p>18 sites, natural reserves and parks, and even local</p> <p>19 government offices.</p> <p>20 Each place that we visit offers a unique</p> <p>21 learning opportunity that connects our curriculum to</p> <p>22 real-world context and helps our students to see how</p> <p>23 knowledgeable -- how knowledge applies to intangible</p> <p>24 ways.</p> <p>25 I teach social studies. And one of my</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">110</p> <p>1 standards is to teach how people can become U.S. 2 citizens. So I teach them about the naturalization 3 process. We talk about the struggles that minority 4 groups have faced in our history to obtain 5 citizenship, and I even give them the test that is 6 required during that process.</p> <p>7 But being able to go on an OSI to see the 8 oath of citizenship in the Downtown Convention 9 Center allows our students to watch people with 10 diverse backgrounds and life experiences commit to 11 becoming citizens of our country and gives students 12 a profound understanding of what it means to belong, 13 to participate, and to engage in their community. 14 They get to see firsthand the emotional weight of 15 that moment, the pride, the relief, the hope of new 16 citizens and their families.</p> <p>17 These are powerful lessons that can't be 18 captured in a textbook, but they understand through 19 witnessing a ceremony and feeling the atmosphere of 20 the occasion.</p> <p>21 Many of my students go away from this 22 experience with a deeper respect for the rights that 23 they have as citizens and an understanding of the 24 privileges and responsibilities that citizens -- 25 that citizenship entails.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">112</p> <p>1 understand the responsibility that comes with this 2 trust, and we are committed to providing structured, 3 safe, and educational outings that align with our 4 school learning goals.</p> <p>5 As a teacher, I see firsthand how this 6 approach can change a student's view of the world 7 and their place within it. We are proud of what we 8 build here, a place where learning does go beyond 9 the classroom, where education is an adventure in 10 discovery, and why students learn not only from 11 textbooks, but from the world itself.</p> <p>12 Today, I ask you for your support in 13 renewing our school's charter. Let's continue to 14 provide an education that inspires curiosity, builds 15 connections, and prepares our students for the 16 complex interconnected world that they're going to 17 inherit.</p> <p>18 Thank you.</p> <p>19 MS. MELISSA BROWN: I want to remind all 20 the kids to please spell your last names; okay?</p> <p>21 FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Carla 22 Vargas, V-a-r-g-a-s. I am currently an 23 eighth-grader, and I'm in student council, and I'm 24 president of student council. 25 I have been to the school for four years.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">111</p> <p>1 We see a positive impact on student 2 engagement, curiosity, and critical thinking when we 3 bring education into the community, as seen in our 4 Spotlight designation from NMPED.</p> <p>5 Our students don't just read about 6 history. They walk the paths of our ancestors at 7 Bandelier National Park and the Petroglyphs.</p> <p>8 They don't just study ecosystems; they 9 experience them at Rio Grande Natural Center, and 10 the Valle de Ora National Wildlife Refuge.</p> <p>11 They don't just write calculations on the 12 whiteboard. They get to visit local restaurants and 13 food trucks to talk to business owners about supply 14 and demand.</p> <p>15 These immersive learning builds not only 16 academic knowledge, but also the life skills that 17 come from navigating the world outside of the school 18 walls.</p> <p>19 Our teachers and staff work tirelessly to 20 ensure that our students don't just meet the 21 standards, that they exceed them.</p> <p>22 Of course, these OSIs require flexibility, 23 planning, and trust from our community. When 24 renewing our charter, you're allowing us to continue 25 creating these transformative experiences. We</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">113</p> <p>1 A few things I appreciate about the school 2 is gives us a private school education for a public 3 school price. The teachers care about us and make 4 the academic work challenging so we can grow 5 academically.</p> <p>6 We also have an amazing support system. 7 You can talk to any teacher, staff, and more. Our 8 school is a very safe place for students to learn 9 and have several cameras inside and outside the 10 building. There is always an adult with us at all 11 times. And we have gates. Who can compete with 12 that?</p> <p>13 We have also a bunch of sports, and most 14 charter schools don't have as many sports as we do. 15 We have volleyball, basketball, tennis, track &amp; 16 field, and way more. The sports I do are track &amp; 17 field and tennis, and I love how the coaches help us 18 and want us to be the best athletes we can possibly 19 be.</p> <p>20 The school has helped me so much 21 academically and personally. I have made a ton of 22 friends, and it's just a great community and 23 environment to be surrounded by.</p> <p>24 Thank you. And have a wonderful day. 25 FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. I am</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">114</p> <p>1 Cassidy Hoagstrom, H-o-a-g-s-t-r-o-m. I am in 2 seventh grade, and I am vice president of the 3 student body. And through my three years going to 4 this school, it always surprises me how amazing the 5 learning system is. 6 They really -- they really encourage you 7 to get to know your peers. In my old school, it was 8 like we were all acquaintances that knew each other 9 by name. But here, we have to really learn to work 10 together through, like, music class and a bunch of 11 group projects. And that is -- and that provides a 12 lot of experience that you can use in adulthood, 13 because you always need to work with your peers 14 around you. 15 And there is also an amazing hands-on 16 ledger experience. Like, in seventh grade, we are 17 currently learning about infectious diseases. And 18 later, we are going to dissect a mushroom to learn 19 more about fungi. 20 In most schools, they would just open a 21 textbook, and you learn about it that way. But, no, 22 we get to do it this way, which is a lot more fun 23 and a bit more inclusive. Thank you so much. Have 24 a great day. 25 FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. I'm Ella Word,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">116</p> <p>1 What I like about the school is the 2 principal and the learning. Good teachers. I do. 3 FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is 4 (incomprehensible) Gutierrez. G-u-t-i-e-r-r-e-z. 5 What -- the best thing about the school is 6 that we have high education, and also I feel safe. 7 FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Nikai 8 Alvarez. L -- I mean A-l-v-a-r-e-z. My favorite 9 about this school is music. And that's it. 10 FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Michael 11 Álvarez. A-l-v-a-r-e-z. My favorite part about 12 this school is that there's loads of coaches and 13 other games and sports to play, and the coaches help 14 you walk through every step of the way. 15 FROM THE FLOOR: My name is Noah Baca. 16 B-a-c-a. I remember when I first came to this 17 school, I was not doing well. Then the teachers 18 truly helped me grow and advance in so much. I also 19 found myself. I figured out how to connect with 20 people as well. 21 The teachers here are not just robots. 22 They are real people. And it is amazing to know 23 that, because the connections you can make at this 24 school are awesome. Every day I love getting to 25 know that I will be able to have fun, joke, joke</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">115</p> <p>1 W-o-r-d. I'm in sixth grade, and I'm secretary of 2 student council. I think that the school is great 3 and -- because we have a hands-on learning 4 experience, and OSIs give you a lot more -- a lot 5 more learning experience than other schools would 6 instead of just a textbook, like Cassidy said. 7 This school is way more -- is a lot better 8 way to experience things by going to places instead 9 of just watching them on a screen. 10 Thank you. 11 FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. I am Sam Lerner, 12 and I am -- Sam Lerner, L-e-r-n-e-r. And I am 13 public relations in student council, eighth grade. 14 At our school, grit is the foundation for students. 15 It's encouraged by administrators and teachers in 16 each grade. 17 Grit means putting an effort in everything 18 you do. You can be responsible in turning in 19 assignments on time or not giving up when things get 20 tough. And grit can help a student's behavior, 21 which can result in more engaging interest in 22 school, because grit isn't some rule, but a way to 23 improve your moral being. 24 FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Tito 25 Trujillo, T-r-u-j-i-l-l-o.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">117</p> <p>1 around, while also getting my stuff done. 2 But I have found what I want to do in 3 the -- like, side classes, I guess. I have found 4 who I truly want to be when I'm older. I found who 5 I am. And it's amazing getting to know that there 6 are people who truly care about you, rather than 7 just sit at their desk and tell you what to do. 8 It's amazing. 9 I -- I was really bad at math. But now 10 I'm in the algebra class for eighth grade, which is 11 awesome. That's a huge achievement for me. I'm 12 happy. 13 Yeah. This school is great. I like it. 14 Oh, yes here. 15 FROM THE FLOOR: I'm (inaudible) Dundas, 16 D-u-n-d-a-s. 17 Throughout the three years I've been to 18 the school, I have seen a lot. In my other school, 19 I went through it being told what to do and learning 20 like that. But in this school, I learn through 21 interactions with people and things. 22 So no matter where I am or what I'm doing, 23 they turn it into a learning opportunity for not 24 only me, but for everyone. And every mistake brings 25 me closer to learning the correct things instead of</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">118</p> <p>1 being a mistake to be ashamed. I'm proud of the 2 mistakes I make and the things I learn from them. 3 FROM THE FLOOR: My name is Iona Dundas, 4 D-u-n-d-a-s. 5 And when I first came to the school, I was 6 nervous, and I thought I wasn't going to make 7 friends. But this school is a community. And all 8 the teachers, like, know your name and connect with 9 you. 10 Unlike other teachers who you're just 11 another student in their many classes, in this 12 school, you're a person, an individual who they are 13 happy to get to know. 14 And going on the OSIs, we learn so much 15 that maybe it would just go over our head if we were 16 to just learn them from a textbook. Thank you. 17 FROM THE FLOOR: I like the teachers -- 18 oh. My name is Carlos Trujillo. I'm in seventh 19 grade. T-r-u-j-i-l-l-o. 20 I like that the teachers are supportive of 21 us and the -- if you need help with anything, the 22 teachers will help you. Like, my PE teacher said 23 that they would help me with any subject that I need 24 help with if I'm having trouble with it. 25 FROM THE FLOOR: My name is Donovan</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">120</p> <p>1 from Public Comment? 2 MS. MELISSA BROWN: We had all the public 3 comment during their -- 4 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thanks. So thanks once 5 again. We appreciate it. I do have an update. So 6 that the cash amount is \$350,313. The percent 7 increase is (audio distortion) percent. The target 8 is 7.59. And the day's cash on hand is 27.6. 9 Commissioner Brauer. 10 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Just a real quick 11 point of clarification as we were going through 12 that. I started investigating other Part As, I 13 think, or the final recommendation, I can't remember 14 which one. It seems like there was a little bit of 15 a -- the school only had unrestricted. And in the 16 other schools, it was all operational. I was just 17 curious why that was and any other schools that 18 might be in that category. 19 DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: Chair Gipson, 20 Commissioner Brauer, that was just a word that was 21 omitted. It's the same OBMS report cited as a 22 source in all the Part As. And so it should have 23 been consistent. 24 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Okay. Thank you. 25 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Beck?</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">119</p> <p>1 Torrez, T-o-r-r-e-z. This is my second year here. 2 I'm in seventh grade. What I really like about this 3 school is all the programs that you can do and how 4 it's really immersive. 5 MR. JEREMY PECKENS: Thank you, students, 6 for all that. That's great. We do have a video 7 presentation to go along with our segment, if I 8 believe that's cued up. 9 (Video is played.) 10 MS. MARY TARANGO: Just so you know, that 11 is our rock band playing the music in the 12 background. Those are our kids playing. 13 (Video is played.) 14 MS. MARY TARANGO: Thank you for this 15 interruption. And may I have a drum roll, please? 16 (Video is played.) 17 MS. MARY TARANGO: So congratulations, 18 students. I didn't know if you knew this. This was 19 just public yesterday. So congratulations to you. 20 Congratulations to our Dragon Trainers. Thank you 21 so much for your time. And this is me dropping the 22 mic. 23 Any questions, we are here at your 24 pleasure. 25 THE CHAIR: So, Missy, do we have anyone</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">121</p> <p>1 SECRETARY BECK: Congratulations on being 2 a Spotlight. We love that. We love that 3 Dr. Russell and I disagree a little bit. I say 4 42 percent of our schools are Spotlight. She says 5 37. So I like my number better. 6 But congratulations. That's wonderful. I 7 just have a few quick questions. 8 As a Spotlight, what I saw was a big 9 variance in reading. It was kind of wild that last 10 year, you had 67 percent. The year before -- that 11 was an 18 percent increase from the year before. 12 And now it went to 57 percent. 13 Do you have any idea what that 14 vacillation -- why that would vacillate so much? Is 15 there anything you could kind of point to that would 16 do that? Because the math is pretty consistent, you 17 know. I mean, you went from 36 to 34, but the year 18 before, you were at 1. That's real consistent. 19 I just thought the reading was kind of 20 unusual. So if you have any thoughts on that. 21 MS. MARY TARANGO: Absolutely. And, 22 Mr. Peckens, you can comment as well. What happens 23 is when -- you know, we're a charter school. And 24 our enrollment is very consistent for the most part. 25 But then the word gets out. And we added</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">122</p> <p>1 quite a few special education students, which, of 2 course, within their IEP, are lower performing as 3 well. 4 So our numbers increased in that area. 5 But their growth -- what would be interesting to 6 compare, you know, if we had that time, was the 7 growth model, which is what we hang our hat on. How 8 did those students grow within MAPs in our 9 short-cycle assessment. That, naturally, was going 10 to bring your overall test scores down. But the 11 growth component again is what we focus on, because 12 you can drill down to individual students. 13 Now, I would like to comment on the math 14 thing, because we do offer algebra as a high school 15 credit. And that is how it is listed. And we have 16 to have a high school certified instructor. 17 When they go to take the test for NM-MSSA, 18 it is the eight-grade math test. I being a math 19 person, math teacher, knowing the way you teach and 20 respond in math in algebra is very different in 21 eighth grade, we feel overall -- and we've talked 22 with Lynn Vasquez about that -- is when are we going 23 to be able to test those kids? 24 We're not the only school in the state 25 that offers algebra for a high school credit. We</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">124</p> <p>1 SECRETARY BECK: I'm a conservative 2 finance guy, too. I -- I appreciate that. 3 And then just a real quick -- I guess we 4 would call it a holistic question. That off -- OSI, 5 off-campus instruction, how does -- just real 6 quickly, you don't have to go into detail. But how 7 does that fit into -- because as a teacher for 8 13 years, I finally gave up on field trips. 9 Everybody had to sign this, do this, do that. I 10 said, you know, if they're putting that many 11 roadblocks in, forget it. 12 How does that interface with your in class 13 instruction? 14 MR. JEREMY PECKENS: I'm happy to answer 15 that, because it's been a core of our school forever 16 since we started. The teams meet. They have a 17 common prep twice a day, the grade-level teams. So 18 all four grade-level teachers plan and collaborate 19 at the very beginning of the year all the OSIs that 20 they have planned for that year. 21 They meet, they come up with their 22 curriculum, and they design the instruction so it's 23 fitting; it's not a separate thing. It's not an, 24 "Oh, now we have to go do this OSI, now it's back to 25 instruction."</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">123</p> <p>1 don't think that's a fair assessment. We try to go 2 back and review. That's not our purpose. Our 3 purpose is to push them forward. 4 We really feel that math score -- we're 5 working on that to get it higher. We think it would 6 be higher, if they were actually tested in algebra. 7 SECRETARY BECK: Great. Appreciate that. 8 Second question. You were working on that 9 facility across the way. Can you give us a status 10 on that, where that is? 11 MS. MARY TARANGO: What we decided as a 12 governing council -- right? -- they ultimately make 13 that decision -- is we're going to wait. I guess 14 it's kind of public that I'm -- am going to retire 15 at the end of the year. Our enrollment is not where 16 we want it to be. While we've saved and we have 17 money to move forward, right now, we don't think the 18 atmosphere or our finances are in a position where 19 it would be a good decision to enter into that new 20 building. 21 We still have a good relationship with the 22 owner. And when we're ready, he's ready to move 23 with us. But it's kind of on hold right now. But 24 we are going to purchase rather than lease the dirt 25 where the playground is.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">125</p> <p>1 It's part of the instruction. There's 2 always three components to every OSI. There's the 3 pre-teaching, the experience, and the post-teaching. 4 The pre-teaching is the teacher's time in preparing 5 the experience -- the students for the experience 6 and showing them how it connects with what they're 7 doing, what they're already working on. Then the 8 experience. And the post-teaching is feedback from 9 the kids. They do the assignment, and the teacher 10 makes the connection to what they're already 11 learning. 12 So it is part of the instruction. It's 13 not separate. In fact, we don't even use the word 14 "field trip." It's kind of a bad word around our 15 school, because that's not what it is. 16 SECRETARY BECK: Great. I appreciate 17 that. 18 And that goes first through eighth; right? 19 The whole way through? 20 MS. MARY TARANGO: Yes. But part of that 21 pre-teaching and part of the post-representation is 22 in all four core subject areas. Each teacher has a 23 component they have to pre-teach and follow up after 24 the OSI, each OSI. 25 SECRETARY BECK: I like that teacher</p>



<p style="text-align: right;">126</p> <p>1 collaboration. I wish we had more of that where I 2 taught. Thanks. That's my questions. 3 THE CHAIR: I just want to say thank you. 4 And thank you for all those greens on our reporting 5 system, especially the financial piece. 6 Commissioners that weren't here when they came to 7 us, there were, like, 22, 23 audit findings, that -- 8 when they came over from APS. Because Mary actually 9 came down to Las Cruces to meet with me, and I did 10 some investigation on the school. And I thought, 11 holy crap, you know. Look at all these audit 12 findings. 13 Everything else looked good. But it's 14 like, oh, my God. And a lot of it was, I think, 15 issues with APS, perhaps. 16 But they've worked really hard to get 17 things right. And that -- and that was just, like, 18 baggage to the -- you know, the journey they were 19 taking and the success that they were -- they were 20 having. 21 So I truly do appreciate that. And I 22 really appreciate, in the application, you were 23 talking about your middle school teachers only have 24 two preps, and that's really -- a lot of schools 25 don't do that. And teachers are bogged down with</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">128</p> <p>1 And APS really -- just going to say this 2 out loud -- did them very poorly. 3 And I tried to help out there. Both my 4 partner and I, Rich Miller, were both really trying 5 to get involved. And the administration would not 6 let us. And then they exited and infuriated much of 7 the folks at APS. 8 And they -- when they were building their 9 facility now, I was really hopeful that they would 10 allow me to support them. But they wouldn't allow 11 that. 12 I've got to say, I'm so proud of you guys. 13 I am so proud of your school. And I am so thankful 14 that you guys are doing your work. 15 Mary, I'm thrilled for you that you're 16 going to retire. But that's really -- that's -- 17 maybe you should come be a Commissioner. I don't 18 know. 19 MS. MARY TARANGO: I don't think I could 20 handle that. 21 COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Anyway, I think your 22 school is magnificent, and your mandate. And we've 23 had several schools at this renewal time that have 24 just shown amazing resilience and innovation. 25 And that's what we're all about. I just</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">127</p> <p>1 three and four preps in some cases. 2 And it just makes it very challenging. 3 And the fact that they have -- if I'm correct, 4 everyone has at least an hour -- every elementary 5 schoolteacher has at least an hour every day. And 6 that doesn't happen in a lot of elementary schools. 7 It only happens when the kids go to their 8 specials, you know. And so it's not every day. You 9 know, you have some schools where teachers have 10 their preps all on Friday, you know. And it just 11 doesn't -- it's just not sound. 12 So the school's commitment to making sure 13 that their staff is appropriately supported shows in 14 everything that's done here. 15 So thank you. 16 Commissioner Ingham. 17 COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Yeah. I just -- my 18 first interface with 21st Century was probably -- I 19 think it was before your time, Mary, when they were 20 at the -- I was the construction manager. I got 21 told to go, because they were at a facility, what 22 used to be the car dealership, and they had their 23 classes in garages. And there was a lot of 24 complaints from the Fire Marshal and there was all 25 sorts of stuff.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">129</p> <p>1 know that this is going to transform public 2 education eventually, when they start recognizing 3 that they could -- they can learn from you, not be 4 offended by you. 5 So I really want to thank you for your 6 diligence here and just love you guys. Thank you. 7 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Brauer. 8 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Madam Chair, you 9 stole what I wanted to say. I wanted to say that 10 one thing, Mary, I just thought about in five years' 11 time, just working with you and your team and 12 figuring out a pathway here, and how beautiful that 13 worked out. I think this is a storybook -- not 14 ending, but, you know, it's a great part of the 15 story of 21st Century, and seeing the due diligence 16 you all did over the last several years to have a 17 clean slate. And your finances, as you built the 18 building and completed construction, that beautiful 19 gym -- that was the last time I was at your school 20 to see the gym opening -- it's just like a 21 beautiful, beautiful way to go out on top, Mary. 22 Congratulations on the retirement. I know 23 you still have a lot of work to be done and still 24 more work after retirement, I'm sure. Just wanted 25 to share from my perspective, I'm really proud of</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">130</p> <p>1 the school.</p> <p>2 I've had a chance to have a few of your</p> <p>3 students who moved on to other schools, like, work</p> <p>4 at our -- work at our farm as interns. And it's</p> <p>5 just really great to see the impact of our students</p> <p>6 and our schools beyond the paper. I like to see</p> <p>7 them as leaders. And so congratulations on that.</p> <p>8 And thank you so much, the student leaders here, for</p> <p>9 all that you do and the courage and the confidence</p> <p>10 that it takes to come up in front of a bunch of</p> <p>11 strangers to do what you did today.</p> <p>12 And so I know it takes a lot of courage to</p> <p>13 do that, and it was so great to hear the diverse</p> <p>14 voices from each and every one of you. So</p> <p>15 congratulations.</p> <p>16 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: We haven't even met</p> <p>17 yet, and now you're going to leave.</p> <p>18 MS. MARY TARANGO: We've seen each other</p> <p>19 from afar.</p> <p>20 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: It's exciting. You</p> <p>21 know, when education people retire, they don't</p> <p>22 retire. They move on to something else in</p> <p>23 education. Kids are in our blood, doing the best we</p> <p>24 can on behalf of all our kids.</p> <p>25 Best of luck to whatever is next. It's</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">132</p> <p>1 wouldn't mind being in person.</p> <p>2 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: I'm an in-person</p> <p>3 fan. The connections that you make (inaudible) want</p> <p>4 when you're speaking with someone.</p> <p>5 MS. LAURA SEDORE: It's really hard to do</p> <p>6 a Zoom. Everybody is trying to second things at the</p> <p>7 same time because you miss that. But, no, it's a</p> <p>8 great group. We have continuity.</p> <p>9 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: You're rarely, if</p> <p>10 ever, on our agenda, so that always bodes well. So</p> <p>11 thank you very much.</p> <p>12 MS. LAURA SEDORE: Thank you.</p> <p>13 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: All the students</p> <p>14 that spoke, thank you very much. This seemed like a</p> <p>15 theme that resonated through all of you, the</p> <p>16 support -- like, the personal support that you get</p> <p>17 from your teachers.</p> <p>18 It's not just a matter of getting through</p> <p>19 the day. They're -- and it's not even like</p> <p>20 following an SEL program. It's they're generally</p> <p>21 interested in who you are. If they see you having a</p> <p>22 bad morning, they're going to connect with you and</p> <p>23 say, "Hey, whatever" -- you know, whatever it takes.</p> <p>24 So that was something that resonated</p> <p>25 through. And it's just -- it's so important when</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">131</p> <p>1 really clear that part of the success of the school</p> <p>2 is the continuity.</p> <p>3 Jeremy, you've been there 15 years,</p> <p>4 obviously, from the beginning, Mary. That's huge.</p> <p>5 So I'm wondering -- I believe it's Laura Sedore, the</p> <p>6 vice president of the board. What's the continuity</p> <p>7 like on your board, just curiously?</p> <p>8 MS. LAURA SEDORE: We pretty much stay</p> <p>9 quite a while. It seems like, currently, there's</p> <p>10 two members that have been here the entire time that</p> <p>11 I've been there. And for a board, I find it to</p> <p>12 be -- the one thing -- I have been on other</p> <p>13 boards -- is that people do show up for the</p> <p>14 meetings, always, which is, as anybody who has been</p> <p>15 on a board, that's not always the case.</p> <p>16 So, yes, we definitely have continuity and</p> <p>17 a bunch of diverse people, interesting diverse</p> <p>18 people. And it's a great board to be on. Thank</p> <p>19 you.</p> <p>20 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: I'm happy to hear</p> <p>21 that. Just curiously, because you said they show</p> <p>22 up, are you doing your meetings on Zoom?</p> <p>23 MS. LAURA SEDORE: We've done -- we are</p> <p>24 doing them on Zoom. As long as I've been on the</p> <p>25 board, they've been on Zoom. I'm retired, so I</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">133</p> <p>1 people are able to have that experience.</p> <p>2 The grit -- I can't remember which young</p> <p>3 man said grit was important. There you go. And the</p> <p>4 resilience. Where you were and where you had are</p> <p>5 now, congratulations for being a Spotlight School</p> <p>6 and looking at the progress you've made in all the</p> <p>7 different areas. That's huge.</p> <p>8 The OSI -- I'm going to use the "F" word,</p> <p>9 field trip. I remember when we used to go to the</p> <p>10 opera every year. There are things we didn't do in</p> <p>11 school. We went to the zoo every year. The</p> <p>12 Shriner's Auditorium in Los Angeles was where the</p> <p>13 opera was.</p> <p>14 Of course, my son was in school.</p> <p>15 Everything was cut out by the time there was an</p> <p>16 elementary here.</p> <p>17 And then when I was on the board in Santa</p> <p>18 Fe, getting the kids off campus to do something once</p> <p>19 a year, at the Lensic here in Santa Fe, it was just</p> <p>20 so laborious. And the money aspect of it. You</p> <p>21 know, our foundation up here, Partners in Ed, it</p> <p>22 seems like most of what they did was just money for</p> <p>23 field trips. And I think a foundation should do a</p> <p>24 hell of a lot more than that.</p> <p>25 The OSI, that just sounds incredible, a</p>

134	<p>1 great way for instruction to happen.</p> <p>2 There's a school down south, Aldo Leopold.</p> <p>3 What's their motto? "get out from behind the desk,"</p> <p>4 or something? Or, "Think out of the desk."</p> <p>5 Again, just getting out of the classroom</p> <p>6 and being innovative and creative in how you learn.</p> <p>7 So I love that you do that. And, clearly, your</p> <p>8 students love that aspect as well.</p> <p>9 Curious, because I'm not very familiar</p> <p>10 with Albuquerque, I don't -- I don't get down La</p> <p>11 Bajada that much unless the Demons are playing, the</p> <p>12 Santa Fe High Demons. Then I go everywhere.</p> <p>13 Where do kids go after your school? Just</p> <p>14 curious. Like, where -- what high school do they</p> <p>15 often go to? What are they looking for -- you're</p> <p>16 giving them this incredibly enriching experience,</p> <p>17 and all of a sudden, it's ninth grade someplace</p> <p>18 else.</p> <p>19 MS. MARY TARANGO: Yes, it is. And I'm</p> <p>20 proud to say, even before I became the head</p> <p>21 administrator at 21st Century, I led the Valley</p> <p>22 Academy for ten -- eleven years. And I went to</p> <p>23 recruit students at 21st Century because of their</p> <p>24 high academic performances that they had, to get</p> <p>25 them to come to the Valley Academy.</p>	136	<p>1 name. It seemed like you wanted to say something.</p> <p>2 You're in eighth grade; right? Where are you going</p> <p>3 next?</p> <p>4 FROM THE FLOOR: I want to apply to go to</p> <p>5 the Public Academy for Performing Arts. My father</p> <p>6 works there and specializes in the performing arts,</p> <p>7 which, thanks for our Associate of Arts classes, I</p> <p>8 have found that I want to do music, which that's the</p> <p>9 main reason why I'm going.</p> <p>10 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: That's outstanding.</p> <p>11 When you mention that music is part of what you do</p> <p>12 regularly, and the young man, Mr. Álvarez, mentioned</p> <p>13 music.</p> <p>14 I'm so fortunate -- a lot of us probably</p> <p>15 are -- at a time when music was just taught</p> <p>16 regularly in elementary and junior high school. It</p> <p>17 wasn't a pullout or anything. It was something that</p> <p>18 you did all the time. And so I'm excited for you</p> <p>19 Noah. Best of luck.</p> <p>20 FROM THE FLOOR: Thank you.</p> <p>21 THE CHAIR: We've got kazooes.</p> <p>22 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: There's a school up</p> <p>23 here. You probably know of it. Acequia Madre up</p> <p>24 here, where they have the violin program. It's</p> <p>25 generously funded by somebody. Every kid, grade</p>
135	<p>1 So our students are recruited across the</p> <p>2 state. We have students here that are going to</p> <p>3 Sandia High School, or, you know, applying to be in</p> <p>4 their IB Programme.</p> <p>5 They are recruited by the private sector.</p> <p>6 We have some going to Sandia. We have some of our</p> <p>7 fifth-graders have already applied to the Academy,</p> <p>8 to Bosque. To Sandia Prep, we have some, you know,</p> <p>9 that are leaving to go there.</p> <p>10 But our eighth-graders are looking at</p> <p>11 high-performance opportunities, you know, next gen,</p> <p>12 which is, you know, close to us, Ms. Herren did</p> <p>13 leave us, go there, and return to us, because she</p> <p>14 saw the benefit of what our kids brought to high</p> <p>15 school.</p> <p>16 The Valley Academy. They still come after</p> <p>17 our kids. It's not as prominent as it used to be.</p> <p>18 But our kids aren't just leaving us to go to any</p> <p>19 high school or their neighbor high school. Their</p> <p>20 parents are really looking at what the academic</p> <p>21 opportunities are for them all over the city.</p> <p>22 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Neat. Happy to hear</p> <p>23 that. You know, and I -- Noah, you were getting</p> <p>24 ready -- almost -- I just caught you as a deer in</p> <p>25 the headlights. You looked at me when I called your</p>	137	<p>1 three, gets a violin. Imagine what their math</p> <p>2 scores are; right? Music is so important.</p> <p>3 (Off-mic discussion.)</p> <p>4 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: All right. Thanks</p> <p>5 for all you do. This was the first time learning so</p> <p>6 much about your school. And just love what you're</p> <p>7 doing and your whole point of view of things.</p> <p>8 Thank you, students, again for being up</p> <p>9 here. We love when kids come up here.</p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Burt.</p> <p>11 COMMISSIONER BURT: Thanks. I mean, it's</p> <p>12 no surprise why students and families choose your</p> <p>13 school. I mean, it's a great model, really, really</p> <p>14 exciting.</p> <p>15 I did want to say, you know, Commissioner</p> <p>16 Beck said he had a hard time with field trips or</p> <p>17 getting out of the classroom. But that's the</p> <p>18 difference between working for a district school, a</p> <p>19 large district school, and a charter school. Like,</p> <p>20 you do have way more flex- -- that's exactly, once</p> <p>21 again, the purpose -- right? -- is to give that</p> <p>22 level of flexibility to do what's best for kids and</p> <p>23 cut through any of those red tapes that make it</p> <p>24 where it's hindering and hard and creates a bunch of</p> <p>25 policies.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">138</p> <p>1           Once again, just shows it's important to 2 have these other avenues for students so they can 3 get those opportunities. 4           I was actually telling Commissioner Brauer 5 I used to -- when I taught at a district school, I 6 took my eighth-graders on a field trip everywhere, 7 to UNM to go see a Popejoy play, because they have 8 those awesome Popejoy plays for students. 9           Students don't get the arts anymore. They 10 don't get to see plays. The school didn't even put 11 on any plays. Like, there's nothing. And it's so 12 hard -- it's so hard to get out of the school to get 13 out of the classroom. It's so expensive. 14           So for you all to have perfected it in a 15 way to where it's so much integrated into your 16 programming is really, really incredible. 17           And, yeah, like I said, it's no surprise 18 that students appreciate it, and the families are 19 choosing your school. 20           I am wondering why you don't have a 21 kindergarten, and if you ever would add a 22 kindergarten. Because I imagine that's kind of odd 23 for a family to know about you, even -- right? -- 24 like, to have a sibling who's a kindergartener, and 25 they have to go to another school to start and then</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">140</p> <p>1           grade; right? If they know about you and they 2 skipped out on -- they're going to want to come to 3 you for first grade. I just imagine that it's sad 4 for the kindergarteners who just made friends and 5 then they're going to move schools. 6           Actually, I wanted to stay congratulations 7 on a very easy renewal decision for me. Thank you 8 for making it so easy to fully support this school 9 continuing for the next five years. Happily want to 10 see that continue, especially knowing you're going 11 to have a transition. 12           I am hoping it goes very smoothly for you 13 all. You deserve to be able to move on and have 14 some great retirement years ahead of you. 15           I do know I just want to say, like, I 16 think the -- one of the parts that made me stress 17 out yesterday with a school that didn't plan that 18 transition well is there are kids that are having 19 their only second grade year next year. They don't 20 get to have a transition year with the adults; 21 right? 22           So I do -- I'm sure you all are going to 23 have a smooth transition. That's what I'm going to 24 hope for. But I hope you guys keep the kids in mind 25 that you can continue the continuity that you've</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">139</p> <p>1           come to you in the first grade. I'm wondering if 2 there's any plans from the board for the school to 3 add kindergarten at any point. 4           MS. MARY TARANGO: It just comes down to 5 space. We decided to add elementary, because kids 6 were coming to us lower and lower, and we wanted to 7 have that foundation. 8           Our elementary model that we had planned 9 in the new building, that has always been the plan. 10 COVID hit, and we couldn't financially move forward 11 with that. In the third, fourth, and fifth grade, 12 the plan is to have one teacher for science and math 13 and one for reading, language arts, social studies, 14 because as an elementary person, you're going to 15 teach to your strength; right? 16           And we have found that to be very 17 beneficial. But because we had to put that plan on 18 hold and not get into the new building, we only had 19 space for first grade. So we had one first, one 20 second, one third, and then we have the two fourth 21 and fifth, which are following that model. 22           COMMISSIONER BURT: All right. I'm just 23 going to keep hoping that you get that space. I'm 24 sure that's difficult; right? I'm sure that that's 25 a -- I'm sure people are happy to come in first</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">141</p> <p>1           built, and keep all those greens going moving 2 forward, and that the foundation is solid enough to 3 continue that. 4           So thank you, and thank you to all the 5 students for coming up. I know it's so scary to 6 speak, like, on a microphone to a bunch of 7 strangers. And you all did so well, so proud of 8 you. So thank you for participating in democracy in 9 this way. 10           And I hope you continue doing it in your 11 local community, at your city councils, at your 12 county commissions, at the state legislature. 13 There's lots of opportunities for you to speak out 14 on things that you care about and are passionate in 15 making decisions. 16           SECRETARY BECK: I was remiss. Thank you 17 students for coming. You guys were awesome. It is 18 kind of daunting to come before us. We're elevated 19 up here, you know, and all that. So thanks, guys, 20 for that. And we wish you the best. We wish you 21 the best at PAPA. 22           VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: I have a quick 23 question. Your attendance is not 67 percent, is it? 24 Right. So I just wanted to ask that, because 25 looking at all of this and all the schools we're</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">142</p> <p>1 going over -- and I would ask Dr. Russell and  2 perhaps Ms. Chavez, somehow PED needs to get to the  3 bottom of that, why so many of these attendance  4 numbers are just flat-out wrong.  5 MS. MARY TARANGO: I can explain that.  6 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Can you?  7 MS. MARY TARANGO: Okay. Absolutely.  8 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: It's not just your  9 school. It's --  10 MS. MARY TARANGO: (Audio distortion)  11 algorithm, we don't know why that went in. Still a  12 problem with Nova. What happens is we are the only  13 school in the state now that uses Rediker as our  14 student information system.  15 Last year, we had quite a battle.  16 Mr. Peckens was in the majority of that. We had a  17 couple of meetings. And Corina was there and other  18 schools were there. Our Rediker information system  19 was fine; right? All the information was fine;  20 right? We would capture pictures of that and send  21 it up.  22 It didn't convert into Nova. We didn't  23 have that problem until we went to Nova. Nova was  24 not accepting the attendance information.  25 So we started out last year with none.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">144</p> <p>1 question.  2 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: I just take credit  3 for getting them here when they first came in. I  4 will take full credit for that. I'm just kidding.  5 COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Yeah. I just  6 want -- I forgot to mention your social studies  7 program and your -- that taking kids through that --  8 that process. I just am -- that is something that's  9 so near and dear to me, because I know, my own -- I  10 had no civics. I had no understanding until I  11 started really having to deal with it, I had nothing  12 as background.  13 And you giving those kids that  14 understanding of both the facts that -- or what  15 immigrants and people that have to come and take  16 that test and how poorly most American citizens  17 would do on that test, I'm so thankful you're doing  18 that.  19 I appreciate that focus in your class.  20 Man, that just gave me a great feeling, that you  21 guys are making that and giving them that -- that  22 baseline understanding about what it is to be a  23 citizen in our United States. So thank you so much.  24 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: I'm ready for a  25 motion if you are. I'm ready for a motion.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">143</p> <p>1 Because they didn't have the attendance, they  2 couldn't do the NM-MSSA data. And we fought and  3 fought and fought.  4 We asked for the algorithm; right? And we  5 never received that. So we finally got ahold of  6 Lynn and went and got that remedied somewhat.  7 But, apparently, that's still not being  8 reported accurately. And we're running into that  9 problem yet again this year, because the 40-day  10 report is due. They extended it to today, and they  11 only had us at 57 attendance days.  12 So we continue to fight that. We thought  13 it was remedied. So we know exactly what's going  14 on. And one of these years, we're going to get down  15 to the bottom of it.  16 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: I would encourage  17 PED -- because the thing is, parents look at this.  18 They're choosing schools. And they look at this  19 data, and they see these numbers, and they're, like,  20 "What?"  21 So whatever they can do to remedy this as  22 quickly as possible and apologize for the egregious  23 error, great.  24 I'd love to make a motion if it's okay.  25 THE CHAIR: Well, I just have one</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">145</p> <p>1 I move that the Public Education  2 Commission approve the renewal application for the  3 21st Century Public Academy for a five-year term  4 without conditions.  5 COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Amen.  6 THE CHAIR: Second.  7 I thought you said "Amen."  8 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: You did say "Amen,"  9 but that's not a second.  10 SECRETARY BECK: That's not in Robert's  11 Rules.  12 THE CHAIR: There's a motion by  13 Commissioner Carrillo, a second by Commissioner  14 Gipson and an "Amen" from Commissioner Ingham.  15 SECRETARY BECK: We'll start out with  16 Commissioner Brauer.  17 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Yes.  18 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Manis.  19 (No response.)  20 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Armijo  21 (No response.)  22 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Taylor.  23 (No response.)  24 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Burt.  25 COMMISSIONER BURT: Yes.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">146</p> <p>1 SECRETARY BECK: Chair Gipson.  2 THE CHAIR: Yes.  3 SECRETARY BECK: Vice Chair Carrillo.  4 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Yes.  5 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Ingham.  6 COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Yes.  7 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner  8 Clahchischilliage.  9 COMMISSIONER CLAHCHISCHILLIAGE: Yes.  10 SECRETARY BECK: Secretary Beck, yes.  11 There are seven votes for and zero votes  12 against. The motion passes. Congratulations.  13 (Applause.)  14 THE CHAIR: Hold on. Hold on.  15 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Commissioner Taylor  16 did not unmute his mic.  17 THE CHAIR: Oh, okay. We'll go back to  18 clapping.  19 So we are recessed until 2- -- it says  20 2:15.  21 (Recess taken, 11:46 a.m. to 2:29 p.m.)  22 THE CHAIR: I'm going to call back to  23 order. We are on to our final school for the day,  24 which is Las Montañas Charter High School. So  25 welcome.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">148</p> <p>1 We also have the administrative leadership  2 team. Matt Sandoval, S-a-n-d-o-v-a-l. And our  3 business manager, Priscilla Cabral. C-a-b-r-a-l.  4 We have Sidney Robinson, R-o-b-i-n-s-o-n.  5 Sidney's our PE coach and our health occupations  6 pathway teacher.  7 We have our special ed director, Mr. John  8 Lee, L-e-e.  9 Any other adults?  10 We also have our -- our project-based  11 learning instructional coach, Michelle Altamirano,  12 A-l-t-a-m-i-r-a-n-o.  13 And we have some students with us as well,  14 Class of 2024 graduates. So this is their first  15 year in post-secondary.  16 Malachi Sanchez, S-a-n-c-h-e-z; and  17 Zeriyah Montoya, M-o-n-t-o-y-a. And we have three  18 current students, Grace Ayala, A-y-a-l-a. Hanfoosh,  19 H-a-n-f-o-o-s-h. We just call him Hanfoosh, but he  20 is Elijah Hanfoosh. And Caleb Thompson,  21 T-h-o-m-p-s-o-n.  22 Okay. Thank you. That is everybody.  23 THE CHAIR: You must be good at Wordle.  24 All right. First we'll do the Public Ed  25 presentation. Then we will pause. There probably</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">147</p> <p>1 I'll just ask you to introduce anyone  2 that's going to be part of the presentation today,  3 spell your last name for the record, your title, and  4 then we're good for the rest of the time.  5 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: Thank you, Chair  6 Gipson. And thank you for this valuable time you're  7 providing us.  8 My name is Caz Martinez. I'm the head  9 administrator. M-a-r-t-i-n-e-z. First name, Caz,  10 C-a-z. A lot of people get that spelling wrong.  11 It's very simple, but there it is. C-a-z.  12 And, yes, it is my real name from birth;  13 so -- and I have a lot of people that's going to  14 help me present to you all this afternoon.  15 To my right here is the school's board  16 president, Ms. Patricia Gonzales. Do you need me to  17 spell everyone's name or -- okay. G-o-n-z-a-l-e-s.  18 And then we also have Mr. Gabe Estrada  19 behind me, E-s-t-r-a-d-a.  20 Next to him, Ms. Claudia Salas.  21 S-a-l-a-s.  22 We have our -- our CTE and work-based  23 learning managers behind me here, Antoinette  24 Cisneros, C-i-s-n-e-r-o-s, and Jeffrey Waugh,  25 W-a-u-g-h.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">149</p> <p>1 won't be any tribal consultation, but there's time.  2 Then you'll have an opportunity to go. And then  3 we'll do public comment. So, Cheryl, are you doing  4 it?  5 Okay.  6 MS. CHERYL ROWE: Okay. Good afternoon,  7 Chair Gipson and Commissioners. My name is Cheryl  8 Rowe, R-o-w-e, Authorizing Practices Administrator  9 for the Charter Schools Division.  10 I'm here to provide the PED evaluation for  11 Las Montañas Charter High School.  12 CSD conducted our renewal visit to  13 Las Montañas Charter High School on September 16th,  14 2024.  15 Lucy Valenzuela and I visited the school  16 in person. And Dr. Brigitte Russell, Martica Davis,  17 and Ken Norris joined remotely.  18 Las Montañas Charter High School opened in  19 2007 with Las Cruces Public Schools as their  20 authorizer. The school changed authorizers in 2015,  21 when they renewed their charter with the Public  22 Education Commission. This is their third renewal  23 application with the PEC.  24 The mission of Las Montañas Charter High  25 School is to develop the academic potential and</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">150</p> <p>1 personal character of each student by engaging and 2 valuing the student, family, and community 3 partnership. 4 Students will work to prepare for and meet 5 the challenge of a post-secondary or workforce 6 environment for a globally diverse society. 7 The Charter Schools Division recommends 8 that Las Montañas Charter High School be renewed for 9 a term of five years without conditions. 10 The recommendation is based on the record 11 of the school's performance over the course of the 12 contract term, the renewal application, which 13 highlights adult actions and programs in the service 14 of student progress, and verification of those 15 programs and adult actions during our renewal site 16 visit and annual visit. 17 The school has been designated CSI Grad 18 for each year that Vistas designations have been 19 available. CSI Grad means that graduation rates are 20 below 67 percent. 21 In addition to graduation rates, 22 proficiencies in math, reading, and science lag 23 behind the district and state. However, from -- 24 however, from 2021-'22 to 2022-'23, the school's 25 Vistas score improved from 23 to 51, and they</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">152</p> <p>1 masked on Vistas for the past two years in math, 2 reading, and science. 3 The school has had struggles with 4 financial performance over the course of this 5 charter, as evidenced by their performance framework 6 ratings. 7 The school was on a financial corrective 8 action plan, which has been satisfactorily completed 9 and closed. 10 While the school acknowledges 11 deficiencies, they have taken responsibility and 12 show clear evidence of adult actions to rectify the 13 issue. For example, they hired a new business 14 manager who operates in-house, enlisted assistance 15 from a financial adviser and part-time business 16 specialist. And they are making ongoing efforts to 17 improve their financial standing. 18 They work closely with auditors and feel 19 confident the next audit outcomes will reveal 20 significant improvement. 21 The '23-'24 ratings in the financial 22 framework demonstrate improvement. 23 The governing board has consistently had 24 full membership, completed all training hours, and 25 reported changes on time. When CSD has met with the</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">151</p> <p>1 received a designation of Excellence in English 2 Learning Progress. 3 While Las Montañas Charter High Schools's 4 team acknowledges low proficiencies in graduation 5 rates, they have identified areas of growth, and 6 significant adult actions have been taken to improve 7 student outcomes. 8 The school serves a student population 9 with considerable challenges, including high poverty 10 rates, severe credit deficit, and chronic 11 absenteeism. 12 The school leadership and staff make a 13 huge effort to serve the students holistically, 14 making sure all their physical, social, and 15 emotional needs are met as necessary to academic 16 progress. 17 The PED has published Spring 2024 18 assessment results. The school's Vistas designation 19 is still CSI Grad. 20 Their Vistas score dropped slightly from 21 last year; however, according to Vistas, point 22 totals in School Year '22-'23 and School Year 23 '23-'24 cannot be compared due to changes in 24 business rules. 25 Las Montañas's proficiencies have been</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">153</p> <p>1 governing board, we have witnessed a very engaged, 2 functional board, who is highly dedicated to the 3 success of the school and the students. 4 The ratings on Part B of the renewal 5 application are as follows: 6 They Met the Standards on educational 7 program, governance responsibilities, and equity and 8 identity. They Demonstrated Substantial Progress in 9 student outcomes, mission-specific goals, financial 10 compliance, and other performance framework 11 indicators. 12 The school has been led by Caz Martinez 13 for the duration of this charter term. The 14 highlight of Mr. Martinez and his leadership team is 15 a culture of continuous improvement and growth 16 mindset in the service of doing what is best for 17 students. 18 School leadership and staff responded to 19 the COVID dip by augmenting social-emotional 20 learning, SEL programming, adding a counselor and 21 student success adviser and promoting in-person 22 learning as soon as it was safely possible. 23 Chronic absenteeism rose sharply after 24 COVID, which had profound effects on academic 25 outcomes. The school cited data which revealed a</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">154</p> <p>1 huge difference between remote and in-person 2 proficiency gains, prompting them to boost efforts 3 to encourage students to participate on campus and 4 provide more engaging relevant programming. 5 CSI Grant funds have been used to address 6 student attendance. 7 To increase student engagement, the school 8 has hired a contractor to facilitate PLCs on 9 project-based learning and integrating content 10 standards with CTE. 11 The school has made other enhancements to 12 their educational program in response to student 13 needs, increasing engagement and improving 14 attendance. 15 Las Montañas understands that a student's 16 basic needs must be met in order for them to access 17 learning. Therefore, the school offers free 18 breakfast and lunch for all students, clothing, 19 backpacks, hygiene items, and more. 20 For students with housing insecurity, the 21 school partners with community providers to address 22 housing needs. 23 The school has a strong emphasis on 24 building relationships and cultivating a welcoming 25 culture, which has been evident during every CSP</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">156</p> <p>1 So, Director Chavez, you and your team, 2 Cheryl, Lucy, the site visit members, did a 3 tremendous job in capturing who we are. And I find 4 that that happens with site visits from other 5 bureaus as well. 6 You know, we get these reports back we are 7 in CSI Grad designation, as was just, you know, read 8 off by the Charter School Division. So we get site 9 visits for that. We receive Family Income Index 10 funds; we get site visits for that as well. And, 11 obviously, our annual site visits and our renewal 12 site visits. 13 And every report comes back very similar. 14 It's really evident that people from PED and other 15 people from the outside -- outside of the school 16 community really see what is happening on our school 17 campus with our adults, with our students, with our 18 school community, that goes beyond, you know, the 19 data metrics that you see in Vistas and other 20 places. 21 We recognize those are low. We 22 acknowledge that. We know there is a lot of room 23 for improvement, and it's critical that we take 24 actions to make those improvements. 25 And we tried to highlight that in our</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">155</p> <p>1 site visit. 2 The students acknowledged in focus groups 3 the significant gains they are making at 4 Las Montañas in terms of credits, social-emotional 5 learning and support, and future opportunities. 6 A unique and extraordinary aspect of the 7 school is that students are exposed to numerous 8 experiences that help them not only envision a 9 bright future for themselves, but also offers a 10 concrete pathway to get there. 11 The spirit of the school reflects the 12 origins of New Mexico charter schools, serving 13 students in ways that traditional public schools do 14 not. 15 Thank you. 16 THE CHAIR: Do we have anyone for tribal 17 consultation? 18 MS. MELISSA BROWN: I do not see anybody 19 for tribal consultation. 20 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thanks. 21 You've got -- it's your time to shine. 22 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: Thank you, Madam Chair 23 and Commissioners. I'm just going to do a really 24 quick introduction and then move on to our 25 presentation.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">157</p> <p>1 application. We tried to highlight -- we're going 2 to try to highlight that in this presentation. And, 3 more importantly, you know, we're addressing that 4 day to day in the operations of our school, the new 5 initiatives that we're involved in, again, with CSI, 6 with the School Improvement and Transformation team 7 of the Priority Schools Bureau, we welcome that 8 professional development. 9 We welcome those extra funds to help us 10 out. We welcome the opportunity to network with -- 11 with other schools, including charter schools around 12 the state, to share ideas, share best practices. 13 We -- we are an Innovative Zone school as 14 well. So that is really helpful as far as 15 professional development, funding, and really just 16 getting the encouragement to be innovative and try 17 some different things, which is what we're in the 18 middle of doing right now. 19 And, again, I hope we can showcase that in 20 this presentation and throughout our application, 21 and that this -- you know, Madam Chair, you and the 22 Commissioners will -- will recognize and see that 23 we're not happy with our data, but we do do a lot of 24 things really well; and that is take care of our 25 students.</p>



<p style="text-align: right;">158</p> <p>1           Because oftentimes no one else is taking 2 care of them. So they come to Las Montañas to be 3 taken care of. 4           When I say "taken care of," literally 5 anything that they need, we try to provide for them. 6           And, again, I think you'll see that 7 highlighted in the application and in this 8 presentation, and from the actual, you know, mouths 9 of our students that I brought with me today and 10 that you're going to see in the short video that I'm 11 going to play here in a minute. 12           So that's the -- bless you. That's the 13 quick introduction. 14           Also, the team behind me that I 15 introduced, you know, there's more that I couldn't 16 bring, you know. I couldn't bring the entire school 17 staff. But any questions that you may have that 18 pertain to that area of expertise or that area that 19 they're involved in, I'm going to let them answer. 20 Because I trust my staff. You know, I trust my 21 team. And it really takes all of us to accomplish, 22 you know, taking care of our kids. 23           So we're going to start by -- by 24 displaying a video that our audiovisual pathway 25 students produced, you know, wrote, created, filmed,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">160</p> <p>1           role in this video. They took it serious, from 2 reading and annotating your renewal application, to 3 giving each other feedback and sacrificing their 4 lunch to reshoot and edit. It really does solidify 5 how project-based learning and CTE can help our kids 6 progress academically, socially, and emotionally." 7           I thought it was important to share that 8 statement from the audiovisual CT teacher who is 9 also our ELA teacher, our language arts teacher. 10 So, Ms. Missy, please, thank you. 11           (Video plays.) 12           MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: Thank you for viewing 13 that. That last kid there, now has straight As. 14 And he freaks out if he has anything below a 95 in 15 any class, so -- and, yeah, a lot of work was put 16 into that, but we're very proud of him. 17           At this time I'd like to invite some of 18 the students up to kind of share their experience 19 directly. 20           FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. Sorry. This is a 21 little nerve-racking, but we got it. 22           My name is Malachi Sanchez, and I 23 graduated Las Montañas Charter High School in the 24 Construction Pathway program. And I'm now going to 25 college for the construction pathway. And I'm about</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">159</p> <p>1           starred in from top to bottom. It was all 2 student-developed and student-led. 3           There were, you know, a little bit of 4 imperfections. This is their first major project. 5 I do have to do a little bit of education to my 6 school community about -- about, like, I guess, what 7 a charter school is. Because they mentioned, "Well, 8 in public schools versus here..." -- so I have to -- 9 that's probably my -- my duty to make sure our 10 students understand, yes, we are a public school. 11 So forgive that piece as well. 12           But I did want to read a quick statement 13 from their teacher. 14           The last couple of days when they were 15 finalizing this, she was actually at an OSHA 16 training with the Construction Pathway students 17 because they work together. So they were literally, 18 like, on their own; not unsupervised, but for this 19 project, on their own creating this video. And I 20 wanted to read the message that she sent me last 21 night. 22           "This was the first time that I've seen 23 every single kid in my class collaborating with one 24 another without me having to force it out of them. 25 There wasn't a single one of them that didn't play a</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">161</p> <p>1           to complete my first semester. 2           And I would say that Las Montañas has 3 prepared me for everything I need to know in 4 college, because without their help, I would not 5 have known what I was doing. I wouldn't have been 6 able to finish the application, because they helped 7 me with all of it. 8           And before I came to Las Montañas, I did 9 not like school. I did not see myself graduating. 10 But after their help and their, just, understanding, 11 they changed who I was as a person and made me 12 better. Thank you. 13           THE CHAIR: Do you go to DACC? 14           FROM THE FLOOR: Yes, ma'am. 15           FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Zeriyah 16 Montoya, and I just graduated from Las Montañas last 17 year in 2024. 18           I -- before -- I'm sorry. Because of the 19 classes provided at Las Montañas, I am now studying 20 to become a teacher in the early development 21 classes. 22           I -- before I -- before I came to 23 Las Montañas, I was scared to use my voice because 24 everybody was -- didn't listen to me. And because 25 of the teachers at Las Montañas, I was able to</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">162</p> <p>1 raise, like, a bunch of things. Because of the 2 teachers listening to me, they listened to all of my 3 ideas and my experiences. And because of them, I 4 was able to talk to higher-ups in Las Cruces, 5 New Mexico, like the Lieutenant Governor. And 6 because of their help, I was able to do all of this. 7 And with the teachers, they treat the 8 school more like a family. And with their help, I 9 was able to do everything. Thank you. 10 FROM THE FLOOR: I'm Caleb Thompson. And 11 I had written the script for the beginning half of 12 that video. And that was my experience for 13 Las Montañas. 14 Our school has evolved and changed a lot 15 since I've been there. I've gone three years. And 16 I've grown up with these -- with these people and 17 with my classmates. And the experience that I have 18 had here has been like no other school. 19 The engagement, the focus on -- not only 20 on academics, but our -- our emotional health as 21 well, it's -- it's like no other. 22 The effort that they put into making sure 23 that we are okay is just -- it's great to me. A lot 24 of -- a lot of other schools, I feel like, try to 25 enforce too hard. "You need to do this." "You need</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">164</p> <p>1 When I wanted help, it wasn't deep enough for me. 2 Like, they were constantly busy with other 3 students, and you felt so alone. And it hurt the 4 person who I was. 5 But when I came to this school, it helped 6 my opportunities and know what person I was, because 7 I felt somewhat important, and I had done things I 8 never thought I could do. 9 I never think I would play volleyball. I 10 didn't think I would get such great grades as the 11 curriculum was more deeper and a little bit harder. 12 So I never think I would be like so 13 successful in school. I feel like this school 14 helped me with a lot. And one day maybe I will have 15 to be a teacher there or maybe even do, too, because 16 I like medical. But that's impossible. But we'll 17 make it happen somehow. 18 And -- and that's my experience. 19 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: Thank you, all. Good 20 job, everybody. 21 Madam Chair, I'm not sure how much time we 22 have. Okay. 23 MS. MELISSA BROWN: It's late in the day. 24 Like, I didn't start it quite -- but I believe you 25 have 17 minutes remaining.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">163</p> <p>1 to get this done or else you will fail." 2 That is not the -- that is not the case 3 here. It is okay to have a bad day. It is okay to 4 feel the way you feel. They will adapt, and they 5 will make the environment comfortable for you. And 6 that's been my experience at Las Montañas. 7 FROM THE FLOOR: My name Elijah Hanfoosh. 8 I'm a senior. I also helped make the questions with 9 the video and helped choose some of the people that 10 were interviewed. 11 I would like to say that my -- the school 12 has helped so many people graduate and has helped -- 13 like, myself, who didn't see myself graduating, or 14 even being a senior, in general. It really is 15 outstanding that -- to see the staff continue to be 16 dedicated to us. Thank you. 17 FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Grace 18 Ayala, and I am a junior, and this is my second year 19 attending Las Montañas. And I feel like the school 20 has helped me in a lot of ways with my education and 21 self-esteem. 22 In other bigger public high schools, I 23 felt very alone -- that's funny. I know I probably 24 said it wrong. I felt very alone since, like, I 25 wasn't, like, very close with the teachers there.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">165</p> <p>1 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: Yeah. That's plenty of 2 time. I don't think we'll take all of that. 3 But we can go and pull up the 4 presentation, please. 5 Just about 13 slides here. The next slide 6 there, Ms. Missy, if you would. Okay. 7 No, problem. We have 17 minutes. 8 Yes, please. 9 This first slide just goes over our 10 mission. And all of you are all aware of that. I'm 11 sure you read it in our application and the CSD 12 analysis. So we can move on to the next slide, 13 please. 14 Yeah. Since 2007, that was the year our 15 school was founded, you know, we've always been 16 serving students in grades 9 through 12 in the 17 Las Cruces area. 18 Many of our students do face significant 19 challenges, as you probably read in our application, 20 as is evidenced by, you know, being a Family Income 21 Index school. And just the need that our students 22 have, again, to -- to receive service and things 23 that go beyond traditional academics is very high. 24 So we've, you know, put an emphasis on -- 25 on that. Because we found that, you know, as you</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">166</p> <p>1 all know, if you don't take care of those basic 2 needs, they're not going to learn anyway. They're 3 not going to perform well academically. 4 So we'll get into a little bit more of how 5 we do that later -- later in the presentation. 6 I would like to highlight, on average, you 7 know, we're very high mobility. We -- it's rare 8 that we receive, you know, students straight out of 9 eighth grade, H-1s, although that number is rising 10 as the last couple of years have gone by, and, 11 hopefully, it continues to do so. 12 But, typically, you know, we -- students 13 enroll with us, you know, behind in credits based on 14 their age and where they should be in their grade 15 level. 16 And, in fact, we did an analysis this 17 year. And the average age of all students at our 18 school is 18 years old. And they're about one and a 19 half to two years behind in credit. 20 So, you know, that -- it's not an excuse; 21 it's just a fact. But that does play a factor in 22 our four-year graduation rate. 23 Our five- and six-year graduation rate is 24 about double our four-year, as evidenced by the 25 Vistas that just came out, I believe, yesterday.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">168</p> <p>1 you hear a lot about CTE, work-based learning, 2 internships. That's part of the Innovative Zone 3 program, which we are fortunate to be -- you know, 4 apply for, be granted that, that program, working 5 closely with CCRB. 6 So working with PSB, CCRB, and the CSD, we 7 feel that we have a lot of -- just like we support 8 our students holistically, I feel like we as a 9 charter are being supported holistically with 10 different bureaus in PED that will help us to get to 11 where we need for our students and for our 12 community. 13 Next, please. 14 We -- we really, you know, recognize our 15 weaknesses, as stated at the very beginning. So 16 we've -- through the Innovative Zone work and even 17 before that, the High School Redesign Network -- I 18 don't know. Some of you were here five years ago. 19 We talked about that. 20 That started this evolution. And it's 21 just progressed into Innovative Zones. So providing 22 more relevant curriculum for our students and giving 23 them the -- I guess, the vision, the personal vision 24 for themselves to see that opportunities are there 25 for a different kind of life than they're used to</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">167</p> <p>1 So, again, we're working all of those 2 things, and you'll -- you know, again, it's outlined 3 in the application and in a few slides here on this 4 presentation about what we're actually doing to 5 address -- address some of those things. 6 Next, please. 7 So this is just -- just a -- a summary of 8 the last three years at Vistas. 9 I do want to highlight that we did get 10 that Designation of Excellence for EL progress in 11 '22-'23, you know, that, as you can see there, we 12 are a CSI Grad designation. Again, we welcome 13 that -- that support from being in that designation, 14 Priority Schools Bureau. You know, we don't shy 15 away from it or say, "Oh, we don't need that." 16 We do need it. We do need that support. 17 That's a great bureau. Elisabeth Peterson-Nixon 18 (verbatim) and her team do a great job. 19 In fact, we were there this morning. We 20 had to leave early to come to the renewal hearing, 21 but we'll come back this evening and have a full day 22 with them, the schools in Albuquerque, as part of 23 that program. 24 And we are in the process of integrating 25 those graduate profiles, capstones. And, of course,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">169</p> <p>1 and that they grew up is our real kind of mission 2 and vision for our students, and getting them to buy 3 into that by creating project-based learning that's 4 focused on one of six CTE pathways, which is really, 5 really difficult to do. 6 This is really our first year of 7 implementation. It's been very hard on our 8 teachers. There's been a lot of work put into it. 9 Our PBL coach behind me, Ms. Altamirano that I 10 introduced earlier, is helping us work through some 11 of those things. 12 But it has increased that buy-in of our 13 students. It has allowed for better attendance, 14 increased enrollment. 15 We're currently at 210 students, where a 16 year ago, we were at 167. So the metrics that we 17 need to see that's going to lead to better 18 graduation rate, higher proficiency, and things like 19 that that are in Vistas. We see it happening, but 20 it's going to take a little bit of time, as you all 21 know, for us to really get there. But providing 22 that relevant and meaningful education and 23 experience for our kids is what -- is what we're 24 trying to do there. 25 And I'll let Mr. Sandoval here talk about</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">170</p> <p>1 the right part of that slide and the next slide or 2 two after this.</p> <p>3 MR. MATT SANDOVAL: Hello. So we started 4 looking at cross-curricular materials so that we 5 could integrate students' career pathways with their 6 English, with their math, to increase that 7 engagement, and at the same time also help decrease 8 our chronic absenteeism rate.</p> <p>9 And what we saw last year -- actually, we 10 can go ahead and go on to the next slide, please, 11 Missy.</p> <p>12 I can speak -- okay. So we had started to 13 see a decrease in our end-of-course pass rates at 14 our school. And that's when we went back to the 15 drawing board and started implementing all the 16 things Mr. Martinez just discussed.</p> <p>17 But last year, we also had two pilot 18 programs, where we implemented cross-curricular 19 material into a core content class. So we took the 20 student's pathway interest to hopefully increase 21 that engagement and integrated it with grade-level 22 standards in English Language Arts.</p> <p>23 We compared a standard English Language 24 Arts course to the cross-curricular course, and we 25 saw a 24 percent higher term pass rate when</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">172</p> <p>1 four years of school with us.</p> <p>2 And so within that, hopefully, by their 3 junior-senior year, they get into work-based 4 learning.</p> <p>5 The project-based learning is throughout. 6 And then capstone projects are their culminating 7 project that they will earn credits for any missing 8 credits, academic credits, that they have that we 9 can incorporate into those. And they will finish 10 with an exhibition of learning that they can get to 11 demonstrate that learning throughout their four 12 years.</p> <p>13 And then that, with that, I will let 14 Mr. Waugh continue on.</p> <p>15 MR. JEFFREY WAUGH: Madam Secretary, 16 fellow Commissioners, yes. So after they finish the 17 pathway -- we're looking at the first two years of a 18 strong curriculum on campus -- then they should go 19 into a certificate program or something, where 20 they're going to earn a certificate, a certification 21 so they can enter the workforce upon graduation.</p> <p>22 'Cause most of these students aren't going 23 to college, but then they are. They just don't know 24 it. And so once they have success on the job site 25 and with mentors, then they're able to move forward</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">171</p> <p>1 compared.</p> <p>2 We also saw a 14 percent higher pass rate 3 when we compared it to the construction -- with the 4 construction classes.</p> <p>5 So we've also seen an increase -- seen a 6 decrease in our chronic absenteeism rate and an 7 increase in our regular attendance, due -- that we 8 believe is due to the increased engagement and the 9 student buy-in.</p> <p>10 Because what we're doing is we're taking 11 something they're interested in, something they can 12 see the light in, and embedding the skills, the core 13 academic skills they need in something that 14 interests them.</p> <p>15 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: At this time, I'm going 16 to invite my CTE directors or managers to the table.</p> <p>17 FROM THE FLOOR: Good afternoon, Madam 18 Chair, Commissioners. So as we transitioned into 19 CTE and we offered pathways, you can see from the 20 slide that the six pathways that we do offer and the 21 way that we are aligning them to core curriculum is, 22 you know, we have come up with programs of study 23 to -- within each pathway.</p> <p>24 So each pathway is its own program of 25 study that the students will continue on through</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">173</p> <p>1 and actually get a job. And then someone is telling 2 them, "Hey, you know what? You should do this."</p> <p>3 And it's been really successful in what 4 we're doing. We have various partnerships. We have 5 Pinnacle. Pinnacle is a medical facility in town 6 where they'll do -- gosh, she does a lot -- 7 phlebotomy, pharmacy tech, dental assisting.</p> <p>8 He has a lot of those programs.</p> <p>9 We have Glitz, which is cosmetology, which 10 we're working with WIOA funds, so students can take 11 those classes without coming out of their pocket. 12 They'll be enrolled and going towards that 13 certification when they graduate.</p> <p>14 We have J. Paul Taylor. Our kids go there 15 and tutor. We send six kids a day to go work with 16 them.</p> <p>17 Those kids are paid, getting experience. 18 They're coming back and telling their peers of the 19 success that they're having.</p> <p>20 So the work-based learning part is 21 starting to come together. And with Ms. Salas doing 22 her social-emotional learning part, I can focus more 23 on their job-ready skills, and she focuses more on 24 them being ready emotionally. And I think that 25 partnership is really working in what we're doing at</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">174</p> <p>1 Las Montañas. Thank you.</p> <p>2 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: I think some of these</p> <p>3 things we already discussed and highlighted, just a</p> <p>4 little rundown of some of the things. The actions</p> <p>5 that we're taking to improve that buy-in, improve</p> <p>6 that engagement, which will improve attendance,</p> <p>7 which will improve proficiency, graduation rate.</p> <p>8 And more importantly and more importantly to us,</p> <p>9 we'll get students not only to graduation, but to,</p> <p>10 again, to see an opportunity for a different life</p> <p>11 than they may have never even knew was possible</p> <p>12 before learning some of these things and getting</p> <p>13 some of these certifications and being involved in</p> <p>14 different experiences in the community and with our</p> <p>15 industry partners.</p> <p>16 So, you know, to us, that's the most</p> <p>17 important thing. To see Malachi and Zeriyah both at</p> <p>18 deck in programs that they started with us is -- I</p> <p>19 mean, that's what we want to see. Yeah, it helped</p> <p>20 our graduation rate a little bit that they</p> <p>21 graduated.</p> <p>22 But the most important thing we want to</p> <p>23 see is their success, you know, their comfort, them</p> <p>24 contributing to our local community.</p> <p>25 Our industry partners are desperate for</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">176</p> <p>1 I'm going to be speaking towards the</p> <p>2 student learning community. This is a space where</p> <p>3 we created the learning space for adulting through a</p> <p>4 focused curriculum that addressed social-emotional</p> <p>5 learning, critical skills development, and college</p> <p>6 and career readiness.</p> <p>7 Our focus was to really get a buy-in on</p> <p>8 school a job, teaching students that this is where</p> <p>9 we come to work. "Where do we work at Monday</p> <p>10 through Thursday?"</p> <p>11 "We work at Las Montañas Charter High</p> <p>12 School."</p> <p>13 Really working on the professionalism,</p> <p>14 teaching them to really look at the job as we are</p> <p>15 here to get promotions. "How do we get the</p> <p>16 promotions?"</p> <p>17 "We're earning credits. The credits will</p> <p>18 get us the promotion."</p> <p>19 Our end game is going to be the paycheck,</p> <p>20 which we call "the diploma."</p> <p>21 And really focusing on teaching students</p> <p>22 how to work with all the bosses, which are the</p> <p>23 teachers. How do we teach them to go from one class</p> <p>24 to another class and prepare for the real world,</p> <p>25 where they're going to have to cooperate with a lot</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">175</p> <p>1 skilled workers, and we just think that if we're</p> <p>2 successful in our vision, then, you know, it's just</p> <p>3 going to make the Las Cruces area just a better</p> <p>4 place, and our individual students, again, will</p> <p>5 literally kind of break that cycle of poverty that</p> <p>6 they've been existing in their entire lives. So</p> <p>7 that's kind of why we do it.</p> <p>8 Next, please.</p> <p>9 I'm going to go ahead and invite Ms. Salas</p> <p>10 up to the table now and talk about -- the</p> <p>11 mission-specific goals in our contract that we just</p> <p>12 are ending right now is based on our student</p> <p>13 learning community, our social-emotional learning,</p> <p>14 and on a rubric. And, yeah, we did miss the goal by</p> <p>15 literally one student two out of the last three</p> <p>16 years in our ninth through eleventh graders.</p> <p>17 But she's done a tremendous job in getting</p> <p>18 us over the finish line with our seniors, and I'll</p> <p>19 let her talk about -- she does teach both levels.</p> <p>20 But I'll let her talk about that, some of the things</p> <p>21 that she's doing with our seniors specifically.</p> <p>22 MS. CLAUDIA SALAS: Good afternoon,</p> <p>23 Madam Chair and Commissioners. Thank you for having</p> <p>24 us today. How exciting I get to do the fun stuff</p> <p>25 and work with these kiddos behind us.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">177</p> <p>1 of people, personalities, attitudes, the everything,</p> <p>2 how to teach them to work with the grownups and</p> <p>3 focus on the skills that will help them to be</p> <p>4 successful in adult life.</p> <p>5 We focus on mindful practices, a yoga</p> <p>6 coach that comes on a biweekly basis from the</p> <p>7 community who shares her time with us for breathing</p> <p>8 exercises.</p> <p>9 We do a lot of Circles, where we have this</p> <p>10 opportunity to sit together and really share out,</p> <p>11 really focusing on the CRLI component of really</p> <p>12 bringing their culture into the classroom, making an</p> <p>13 emphasis of what they bring into the school and</p> <p>14 really using what they're bringing into the school</p> <p>15 to develop the curriculum and really focus on their</p> <p>16 needs.</p> <p>17 We have a big focus; as mentioned, the</p> <p>18 student-teacher relationship working with the</p> <p>19 bosses.</p> <p>20 We focus on developing peer relationships,</p> <p>21 communication skills, social skills, conflict</p> <p>22 resolution skills, relationship skills, and a new</p> <p>23 one this year, teen hygiene, and really reteaching</p> <p>24 those kind of skills as well, that when they get out</p> <p>25 into the world, it was important to focus on</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">178</p> <p>1 hygiene.</p> <p>2 We work with Workforce in our community</p> <p>3 with a curriculum based on career presentations,</p> <p>4 resume writing, interview skills. And the last</p> <p>5 couple of years, we added an etiquette luncheon,</p> <p>6 where we take them to Olive Garden. We teach them</p> <p>7 how to sit, eat in an environment that maybe it's</p> <p>8 for an interview, a scholarship opportunity, silence</p> <p>9 your phone, you know, all of those important skills</p> <p>10 that we think will help them in the future.</p> <p>11 We also, in looking at the</p> <p>12 social-emotional component, as you can see, the</p> <p>13 students spoke for it themselves. We want to make</p> <p>14 sure that all students are seen, that they're all</p> <p>15 heard. Student voice guides everything in our</p> <p>16 school right now.</p> <p>17 We have committees where we meet with the</p> <p>18 students. They pitch to Mr. Martinez any idea that</p> <p>19 they have. We involve them in the budget. We have</p> <p>20 a fiscal budget that was presented to us in the</p> <p>21 beginning of the year. We share it with them.</p> <p>22 They understand where money is allocated,</p> <p>23 where it's coming from. Hanfoosh here really wants</p> <p>24 to tap into the music fund. What are we doing for</p> <p>25 music? Let's tap into that.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">180</p> <p>1 room in our financial -- financials. We did have</p> <p>2 some issues through our charter term this go-round,</p> <p>3 beginning with our disclaimer of audit in the FY22</p> <p>4 year.</p> <p>5 So we were placed on a financial CAP as a</p> <p>6 direct result of that. We were told by our auditors</p> <p>7 it was a three-year process to kind of get that</p> <p>8 cleared off of our books.</p> <p>9 We did consult with a fiscal consultant,</p> <p>10 Ms. Betty Seeley, who kind of helped get me in the</p> <p>11 right space to get down to the issues and</p> <p>12 compliances -- compliance issues that we had and</p> <p>13 really reconcile whether we had those variances in</p> <p>14 our audit.</p> <p>15 So working with Ms. Betty Seeley, it was</p> <p>16 recognized that we did need to build our business</p> <p>17 office capacity. At the time, I was the only one</p> <p>18 kind of going around it, taking everything,</p> <p>19 processing, and doing all that.</p> <p>20 So we did hire a part-time Level 2</p> <p>21 business official. She was -- she was familiar with</p> <p>22 the work that we were doing and did work at another</p> <p>23 charter school. So it wasn't really reinventing the</p> <p>24 wheel there.</p> <p>25 She's definitely helped the business</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">179</p> <p>1 And they want to know questions like the</p> <p>2 vending machines, where does that money go, and</p> <p>3 having those conversations of how do we budget, and</p> <p>4 how do we use the money appropriately for student</p> <p>5 needs in our school.</p> <p>6 Our goal is to social and academic needs</p> <p>7 are being met, students are connected, loved, and</p> <p>8 cared for. And the biggest thing is bringing</p> <p>9 anything and everything they can bring to the</p> <p>10 learning experience from their own cultures and</p> <p>11 making everything they do relevant to their lives.</p> <p>12 Those are our focuses for this curriculum we have</p> <p>13 developed. Thanks.</p> <p>14 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: Commissioner Gipson,</p> <p>15 the rest of the Commissioners, I really want to put</p> <p>16 some context behind those mission-specific goals and</p> <p>17 let you know no matter where our contract goes next,</p> <p>18 we're going to continue our program, continue that</p> <p>19 curriculum and those services to our students.</p> <p>20 And then that takes us to our financial</p> <p>21 compliance piece of this presentation. And I'm</p> <p>22 inviting Ms. Cabral here, our school business</p> <p>23 official, to speak to some of these slides.</p> <p>24 MS. PRISCILLA CABRAL: Good afternoon. So</p> <p>25 I'd like to, obviously, address the elephant in the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">181</p> <p>1 office become more efficient, and, as a result of</p> <p>2 that, allow time for me actually to provide relevant</p> <p>3 information to our stakeholders, which includes our</p> <p>4 board and providing them accurate and relevant</p> <p>5 information, such as RFRs pending, budget adjustment</p> <p>6 requests.</p> <p>7 All of that has been put into a</p> <p>8 user-friendly kind of report that is presented</p> <p>9 monthly with visuals to really see where we're at</p> <p>10 with budget, and having tick marks to our</p> <p>11 allocation, and showing where we're at as far as</p> <p>12 RFRs and expenditures.</p> <p>13 So also going through and recognizing the</p> <p>14 changes that we needed to make in the business</p> <p>15 office, we did, you know, different trainings with</p> <p>16 our staff, our secretaries, anyone that is, you</p> <p>17 know, processing deposits, just general best</p> <p>18 practices in going through with our staff that</p> <p>19 handles that.</p> <p>20 And as a result of that, we did come off</p> <p>21 of our financial CAP and did receive an unmodified</p> <p>22 opinion in our last audit. So we believe that we</p> <p>23 are definitely on the right track and taking actions</p> <p>24 towards, you know, just improving our fiscal</p> <p>25 standing for the school.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">182</p> <p>1 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: We do again -- we 2 recognized that there's areas we need to improve. 3 So we've been taking action to try to address those 4 and making sure those improvements are made, which I 5 feel they have been. And you will see moving 6 forward, even in this last analysis from the Charter 7 Division, I believe they agree as well. 8 So last slide here. We're really 9 committed to just -- just really serving as a place 10 for students that need more opportunity, more 11 support in our community for -- an institution that 12 they can come to to get all of that; but also 13 addressing their academics, addressing their 14 post-secondary options. 15 And, like I said at the beginning, just 16 taking care of them. Whatever they need, whatever 17 that means as individuals, that's what we're trying 18 to do. 19 As I close out our presentation, you know, 20 I welcome any questions that you have, you know, 21 about specific populations, our English Learners, 22 students with IEPs, any of those, those special -- 23 or those groups of students that get categorized, 24 like, in Vistas. And we look at that. You know, we 25 are addressing all of those areas as well.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">184</p> <p>1 2015, and all for the better. They've really 2 provided a foundation for the children in the 3 community to exceed expectations. And the biggest 4 thing is they're providing opportunities. 5 A lot of the students in this area are, 6 you know, below poverty -- certain poverty levels, 7 and they just do not have the opportunity without 8 Las Montañas being able to offer these pathways. 9 I'm a business owner, and I interview 10 people all the time for positions. We see a very 11 big disconnect with education versus real-world 12 experience and work-related experience. 13 Las Montañas has been able to bridge that 14 gap for our community and for these children. And I 15 credit them for all their hard work that they're 16 doing. I see them put in the effort. 17 We've gotten to talk firsthand with 18 children they school to see them develop, to see 19 them grow. It's been a really, really great 20 experience. 21 And I'm -- applaud what Mr. Martinez and 22 his staff have done over the course of the last 23 decade to be able to improve the lives of these 24 children in the community. 25 Being able to shape and help kind of give</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">183</p> <p>1 And although we didn't address those 2 specifically in our presentation, again, we welcome 3 any questions that you may have regarding -- 4 regarding that or anything else. 5 And at this point, we are concluding our 6 school presentation. 7 Commissioner -- Madam Gipson and all the 8 rest of the Commissioners, thank you very much. 9 THE CHAIR: Thanks so much. Do we have 10 anyone for public comment? 11 MS. MELISSA BROWN: We have one person for 12 public comment, as soon as I can stop sharing my 13 screen, yeah. Where have my controls gone? I hid 14 them, and now I can't find my controls. 15 There they are. 16 So we have Lucky Gonzales. You can go 17 ahead and unmute yourself. 18 FROM THE PUBLIC: Thank you, guys, very 19 much. My name is Lucky Gonzales. I'm a business 20 owner in Las Cruces, New Mexico. And I have been 21 working with Las Montañas on several capacities 22 since 2015. 23 I wanted to touch basically kind of on my 24 personal observations of their growth and their 25 students. They have changed dramatically since</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">185</p> <p>1 our advice on the work-related pathways has been 2 great. There's nothing like being able to kind of 3 mold someone into how you prefer them to do specific 4 tasks. 5 And that's something that as an employer, 6 I'm very happy about getting a new generation of 7 employees that can kind of get it, that they 8 understand the fundamentals on they're educated. 9 But they also have that experience of being able to 10 work in a specific field. And having the community 11 be able to help shape that work experience is vital. 12 Every one of the staff members at 13 Las Montañas deeply cares about the students. And 14 it is very evident, as all of the testimony that you 15 heard before you today. And I cannot say enough 16 great things about what they're being able to do for 17 the community, and I'm proud to be a part of it. So 18 thank you guys very much. 19 THE CHAIR: Thank you. 20 MS. MELISSA BROWN: That concludes our -- 21 perfect timing. That concludes our public comments. 22 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thanks. 23 Commissioner Beck? 24 SECRETARY BECK: It's really -- these 25 hearings are really, really helpful, you know,</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">186</p> <p>1 because all we look at are numbers and letters. And  2 hearing the story behind it and what it means and  3 what you're doing, and that you recognize your  4 weaknesses and that you are actually doing specific  5 strategies to try to overcome those weaknesses is  6 great.</p> <p>7 And also just your heart. It's a calling  8 to really deal with what you -- how you deal with  9 all the challenges you have before you. It's pretty  10 impressive. And those kids were great. You guys  11 were awesome, really, super, I mean, coming before  12 us. And we're up here and staring at you and all  13 that stuff, that can be pretty intimidating. And  14 you guys did an awesome job. It's wonderful.</p> <p>15 So I'm really impressed, very much so. Of  16 course, I do have a few questions.</p> <p>17 So I noticed that you said that the  18 students come there about an average of 18 years old  19 and about one and a half years behind.</p> <p>20 And I understand the challenge with the  21 graduation rates.</p> <p>22 What I looked at in the most recent Vistas  23 was yes, you're right, that the -- the five- and  24 six-year doubled the four-year. But the five- and  25 six-year were still at 40 percent. And I'm</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">188</p> <p>1 work-based learning program and figure out a way to  2 keep them in school while getting them paid, then  3 that's going to be a win-win for them, for us in our  4 graduation rate, and trying to keep them engaged in  5 school and not let them drop out and give them the  6 opportunity to do that.</p> <p>7 SECRETARY BECK: Turning an aircraft  8 carrier one step at a time.</p> <p>9 Dr. Russell, you had something about that?</p> <p>10 DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: Yes. Thank you,  11 Chair Gipson and Commissioner Beck.</p> <p>12 I should also point out that PED's shared  13 accountability model means that if someone does  14 ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade at another school,  15 comes to Las Montañas as a senior, and Las Montañas  16 is the one that pushes them across the finish line,  17 those other schools where the student was  18 floundering get partial credit.</p> <p>19 So they're -- it's -- just the nature of  20 the model means that they're never going to get all  21 the credit for what they do right, and also going to  22 get some of the blame for what happens when kids  23 transfer elsewhere.</p> <p>24 SECRETARY BECK: Yeah. Absolutely.  25 Just a few more real quick things. I like</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">187</p> <p>1 surprised a little bit that there's not a uptick  2 from five to six, you know; 20, 40, 60. And I know  3 that under 67, you get the CSI designation.</p> <p>4 I'm surprised, especially with the quality  5 of these students that you have -- these guys are  6 great -- I'm surprised that the six-year isn't  7 higher than it is. Do you just have some rationale  8 behind that?</p> <p>9 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: Honestly, not really.  10 I think we do lose -- we do lose a number of  11 students as they -- as they get older, as they get  12 19 years old, 20 years old. And if they haven't  13 graduated by then -- as much as we try, Ms. Salas  14 works them directly. Coach has a lot of them in his  15 classes and on his teams, you know. Matt schedules  16 them and is kind of their counselor there.</p> <p>17 And this was all really before we had  18 Antoinette and Jeff to get them in -- in an  19 internship or work-based learning experience that  20 pays them. Because we do lose a lot of them to the  21 workforce at that age, because they become --  22 they're sole providers, either of themselves or  23 their family, or, you know, a lot of them end up  24 having children when they're 17 or 18 or 19.</p> <p>25 So we feel that if we expand that</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">189</p> <p>1 to do things fast here.</p> <p>2 The CTE pathways. You just started that;  3 right? Is this your first year for that? Is that  4 what you said?</p> <p>5 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: This is our first year  6 expanding into six pathways. Two years ago, we  7 started with construction, and we expanded to  8 audiovisual. And now we have basically added four  9 more. And that's kind of where we're landing right  10 now. We may expand in the next year or two to one  11 or two more; but, yes. Yes.</p> <p>12 SECRETARY BECK: That's wonderful. That  13 should really improve your chronic absenteeism for  14 sure. Absolutely.</p> <p>15 As an ex-teacher I'm sure that puts a lot  16 of pressure on the teachers. You know, I think  17 that's a challenge to them. But I'm sure they're up  18 to the task, for sure.</p> <p>19 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: Chair Gipson and  20 Commissioner Beck, the rest of the Commissioners, it  21 has. It's been a challenging year for our teaching  22 staff. There's been a lot of -- a lot of management  23 that we have to do and are still doing and still  24 trying to figure it all out.</p> <p>25 But, you know, everybody, like you</p>



<p style="text-align: right;">190</p> <p>1 mentioned earlier, has that calling. So we're 2 hanging in there, and we are figuring out. So, you 3 know, in another year or two, it's -- you know, 4 there's still going to be challenges. But I think 5 we're going to be flipping that aircraft carrier you 6 mentioned around a little bit more.</p> <p>7 SECRETARY BECK: Yeah. It takes some 8 time.</p> <p>9 Last thing I want to mention. On the 10 slide there when you were talk- -- the four little 11 slots, and the last one was success, it said, "More 12 time on campus."</p> <p>13 Do you have -- do you have online learning 14 as well as in-school? Or is it all on campus?</p> <p>15 <b>A. No, it's all on campus. I think what we 16 meant by that is decreasing that absenteeism rate 17 and getting the kids there.</b></p> <p>18 SECRETARY BECK: I get scared by that when 19 I see that. And your presentation was awesome. You 20 know, teaching the kids even how to eat properly and 21 dress properly and things, those are important to 22 business people.</p> <p>23 You know, I was -- I had my own business 24 for almost 30 years. And I have hired a lot of 25 people. And, you know, those little subtleties,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">192</p> <p>1 Because your inputs can be whatever they have to be 2 for your students; right? You have control of your 3 inputs.</p> <p>4 And it seems like you all are really 5 taking the time to toggle those inputs right now. 6 And I appreciate that. And I think that's smart.</p> <p>7 The path that you're on is logical; it 8 makes sense. It really does seem like the listening 9 to your students, really caring for the students, 10 where they're at and what their needs are is being 11 listened to and actually supported by those toggling 12 those inputs.</p> <p>13 So, I mean, creating those CTE pathways, 14 the internships, that's -- I mean, I will say, even 15 in a traditional public school, high school, those 16 things are important anyway; right?</p> <p>17 But especially when you know your students 18 are coming, and they need income, they need to be 19 able to work, they have to be able -- in order to 20 get their high school degree at the same time, to be 21 able to combine them for your students, it's 22 logical. But it also is a reflection that you're 23 listening to your students, that you're being 24 reflective of who they are, what their needs are. 25 And I appreciate that. I genuinely</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">191</p> <p>1 what a huge difference, huge difference.</p> <p>2 So that's great. I mean, being able to 3 train them in those little subtle aspects of that is 4 great. So congratulations.</p> <p>5 I'm done.</p> <p>6 COMMISSIONER BURT: Good afternoon. Yeah, 7 it was actually incredible learning about your 8 school. Just like Commissioner Beck said, it's a 9 total -- you did tell a good story on your 10 application. I will say, a lot was in here to be 11 able to get an idea.</p> <p>12 But to actually get the sense of your 13 school in a very different way was much better today 14 than just having to read about it.</p> <p>15 I am particularly -- okay. So, actually, 16 I'm going to get to, like, my more emotional stuff 17 at the end, so I can control myself later.</p> <p>18 But, okay. The one thing that I would say 19 that I really like is it feels like you're -- so 20 when I look at the charter school and authorizer 21 relationship, I think of it kind of as inputs and 22 outputs.</p> <p>23 You're in charge of the inputs. We look 24 at your output; right? And, to me, that actually 25 allows for a lot of opportunity for equity; right?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">193</p> <p>1 appreciate that.</p> <p>2 What that also allows for for me is to 3 really look at equity, not just in your school, but 4 overall; right? Because then I can look at, okay, 5 they're in control of their input. So what I want 6 to look at is are your outputs providing these 7 students equitable access to opportunities after 8 they leave your school; right?</p> <p>9 That's why those outputs to me are so 10 important, and why I do hold every school, 11 regardless of what their inputs might look like, I 12 want to see them having similar high outcomes. 13 Because students deserve that; right? It's a 14 disservice to be, like, "Oh, we're never going to 15 have good outcomes because of X Y Z"; right?</p> <p>16 So, once again, I see that the school is 17 really toggling, gleaning those inputs to make sure 18 you're getting better outcomes, and I appreciate it.</p> <p>19 The -- I have questions about -- so I 20 really do like the idea -- the inclusion of the CTE 21 pathways. It makes sense. And I really appreciate 22 it.</p> <p>23 I'm also reading about -- so I do know -- 24 I'm a former -- now former -- parent of Explore 25 Academy-Albuquerque. So I know the model very well.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">194</p> <p>1 And when I saw that that was a model that you were 2 taking and making your own in the school, I was -- I 3 kept going back and forth between being, like, why 4 would they do that -- you know, why, if you know 5 you're a reengagement school, why would you pick 6 that? 7 But then I was thinking about more maybe 8 it's good that they're doing the eight terms, 9 because it creates this urgency of attendance in 10 just a small period of time, and we can get you 11 through this term, get you a grade. And, you know, 12 if you're back and forth a little bit, we can fit 13 you in at any time kind of thing. 14 But then I also worry about if you have 15 high movement in the school, in and out of the 16 school, how complicated that gets for -- like, when 17 I think of what that transcript looks like, they're 18 complicated with this model, and then you have, 19 like, this extra movement. So it made me even 20 more -- like, maybe it's good; maybe it's really 21 bad. 22 So can you tell me how you've taken that 23 model and what are you doing differently at your 24 school than how Explore-Albuquerque might be doing 25 it? And are you seeing -- like, what are the pros</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">196</p> <p>1 they miss two weeks, they miss the -- like, they're 2 going to really have trouble with that term. But at 3 the same time, yeah, if they miss the term, get them 4 back in and get them going on the next one. So I 5 see the benefit. 6 MR. MATT SANDOVAL: With the terms and the 7 way the standards-based grading works, it does give 8 us time for either remediation or acceleration, 9 depending on the individual student's need. 10 COMMISSIONER BURT: Love that. Okay. 11 So then the other one is going to be how 12 are you -- how are flavors integrated in your 13 school? And is there any kind of overlap with, 14 like, flavors? Do you guys do, like, picking 15 majors? And do you -- 16 MR. MATT SANDOVAL: We spent an entire 17 semester last school year with our new students, or 18 any student that hadn't chosen a pathway yet. Those 19 students spent -- every day for one period, they got 20 to experience each pathway. So they were able to 21 make an educated decision on which career pathway 22 best fit their interests. 23 COMMISSIONER BURT: So is that -- like I 24 said, my knowledge is going to be how the high 25 school programming works at Explore. So I know</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">195</p> <p>1 and cons you've seen so far in implementing that? 2 The terms? The flavors? Like, how does that 3 integrate? And then adding the CTE, how is that 4 integrating? Is it part of the flavor category? 5 Are they picking majors at the school? 6 Those are my questions to get a better 7 understanding of. 8 MR. MATT SANDOVAL: Let's start with the 9 first one. Yes, we have a high mobility rate. 10 That's where I see the way we've modified it from 11 Explore is that's one of our greatest assets now, 12 because of our mobility rate and the stability we 13 see sometimes in our students. 14 So if we look at a traditional 15 semester-long high school schedule, and if they miss 16 two weeks in a row, three weeks in a row, that's a 17 deep hole they've dug, and they've likely blown the 18 entire semester. 19 If we break it down into these more 20 manageable terms, they are able to climb out of the 21 hole, because they've missed only a piece of it 22 rather than the entire semester. 23 What is your next question? 24 COMMISSIONER BURT: So I was thinking. 25 That was my back and forth. First, I was, like, if</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">197</p> <p>1 they -- they -- is your pathways the equivalent, in 2 my mind, to picking a major in their model? 3 MR. MATT SANDOVAL: Yes, very similar. 4 COMMISSIONER BURT: Okay. 5 MR. MATT SANDOVAL: So we've taken 6 flavor- -- the pathways have really taken flavors to 7 the next step, that next step, to do more for these 8 students. And the way we have it worked out is 9 these students are also getting to experience other 10 pathways. 11 So we, like -- when we're doing a project, 12 there's two different pathways working on that same 13 project. They have the same end goal, or a very 14 similar end goal. But the paths to get there are 15 very different. 16 So an example would be our construction 17 will be, say, building a pergola and doing 18 cross-curricular math, everything that -- all the 19 academic standards that tie into that. 20 So they're doing the physical build side; 21 whereas, our audiovisual team can work from the 22 other side in the graphic design, the marketing, the 23 sales, how could you move a product like that, how 24 could you market a product like that. 25 COMMISSIONER BURT: Yeah. And they're</p>

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1 using the same standards -- right? -- which is -- to  
 2 me, it's, like, so simple and so ingenious at the  
 3 same time, because kids are different. It's not --  
 4 MR. MATT SANDOVAL: It requires a  
 5 different way of thinking.  
 6 COMMISSIONER BURT: Yes, it definitely  
 7 does.  
 8 Okay. I think those are, like, my biggest  
 9 questions about the programming, just because I was,  
 10 like, trying to figure out how -- actually, maybe I  
 11 could ask you this, too:  
 12 When a student comes in, and they are a  
 13 year or two years behind in credits, if they come in  
 14 that term, or -- like, I am -- I'm worried about how  
 15 the credits are, like, transferring in and out of  
 16 other schools. Because I know that that's  
 17 complicated or can be complicated.  
 18 MR. MATT SANDOVAL: We have a good system  
 19 in place. We've had some experience with it.  
 20 The way it goes in and out is really no  
 21 different for -- than any other school, other than  
 22 the internal aspect, me and our registrar sitting  
 23 down and pulling credits -- what we call the credit  
 24 analysis, and making them fit into a traditional  
 25 transcript.

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1 COMMISSIONER BURT: Which I do know is  
 2 difficult. So I just had -- my eighth-grader at  
 3 Explore went to a magnet high school and they had to  
 4 create that traditional transcript and then give it  
 5 over. And, yeah, it's -- I know it's interesting.  
 6 MR. MATT SANDOVAL: We do it twice a year,  
 7 so we've gotten in the routine of doing it.  
 8 COMMISSIONER BURT: Yeah. I think those  
 9 are my questions about the program. I actually love  
 10 the thought of doing it in a totally different way.  
 11 Incorporating the CTE into it is very smart,  
 12 ingenious. And I love that you're able to make it  
 13 your own.  
 14 I want to go back to the question about  
 15 the online schools. Because in your application, it  
 16 did talk about online kids multiple times and  
 17 their -- their -- like, I'm, like, recollecting --  
 18 I'm not looking at it -- but especially, like, their  
 19 end-of-course exam pass rate was, like, compared to  
 20 the in-person students.  
 21 So it seems like you do have kids that are  
 22 online.  
 23 MR. MATT SANDOVAL: Especially coming out  
 24 of COVID -- a lot of what was referenced in there  
 25 were kids when we were coming out of COVID when

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1 students had the option to return to in-person or to  
 2 stay online.  
 3 COMMISSIONER BURT: Okay. So this -- the  
 4 last school year, this school year, there's no  
 5 online-only kids.  
 6 MR. MATT SANDOVAL: Online courses for  
 7 credit recovery for those seniors that need  
 8 Edgenuity.  
 9 COMMISSIONER BURT: But there are no kids  
 10 that are online exclusively?  
 11 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: There's a small, small  
 12 percentage, like, under ten students total. And  
 13 that's just because they have some sort of really  
 14 extenuating circumstance.  
 15 COMMISSIONER BURT: Which is fine. 504s  
 16 take care of that. IEPs take care of that. There's  
 17 always going to be extenuating circumstance for  
 18 anyone. Yeah. I was just wondering how integrated  
 19 it is to the programming. But it's not. It's an  
 20 exception if it's online-only. Got it.  
 21 Okay. All right. Now I'm going to get  
 22 into like my other stuff, because it is -- it is  
 23 really special the way that the school sees kids,  
 24 the way that it sees students.  
 25 And just to validate any of your students

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1 whoever felt like people weren't looking at them  
 2 with a lot of potential, people weren't looking at  
 3 them that they could be successful, you're right.  
 4 They weren't. I mean, that's true. That's valid.  
 5 And as a New Mexican kid with plenty of  
 6 aces [ph] myself, I always say I'm so grateful  
 7 people didn't treat me like a poor kid. I'm so  
 8 grateful that they didn't see me as a poor kid.  
 9 And I appreciate that you're giving that  
 10 experience to your students, because that is not --  
 11 I've heard legislators talk about students. I've  
 12 heard teachers talk about -- I've heard principals  
 13 talking about our kids coming with challenges --  
 14 right? -- and this negative, deficit-based, "There  
 15 is no hope. We are just in this cycle."  
 16 And it is really special and beautiful to  
 17 have the students feel seen for their potential and  
 18 not for where they've come from.  
 19 And so I am, just once again, grateful for  
 20 those inputs that you're providing. Because I  
 21 always have been so confused -- when I hear other  
 22 adults talk about that, about our New Mexico kids, I  
 23 mean, there's a lot of us. Almost all of us grow up  
 24 pretty poor in this state; right? I mean, that's  
 25 not a -- it is not an uncommon thing.

<p style="text-align: right;">202</p> <p>1           So it always makes me like -- get a 2 little -- not a little -- overly frustrated when I 3 hear adults say, "Well, the kids...," or "the 4 families," that also -- like, no. 5           And I always -- I've always been confused 6 with people who are like, "Well, we're never going 7 to get X, Y, Z, because our kids, or because the 8 families don't care," or whatever, which is just 9 nonsense. 10          And I love that you guys talk a lot about 11 adult actions. You talk a lot about it here, and I 12 appreciate it. Because that is how we need to talk 13 about it. And it makes sense that your student 14 culture feels that way, because if that's how you're 15 talking about it, they are going to sense that. 16 They're going to feel that. 17          And I always have been confused when 18 people are, like, "Well, we have kids who, most of 19 our community has these problems." Or, "They come 20 in and they don't have these skill sets," or -- and 21 I'm, like, "Okay. If you know that, provide it. 22 Like, do it, you know." 23          And I want to say, like, I'm especially -- 24 I loved the CTE teachers talking about the 25 collaboration you have between the SEL service</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">204</p> <p>1           expectations. We don't give them access to the 2 skill sets that they -- so what if they didn't get 3 them? Get them access to those skill sets so that 4 they can. 5           And I just appreciate it so much. Because 6 I just think of, like, every -- if every student had 7 the experience that your students get from their 8 teachers, if that was in every traditional school, 9 man, would schools change. Education would change 10 across our state, just from the -- that attitude and 11 the way that you're seeing your students as assets, 12 as potential, as capable, as able. 13          And so I just appreciate it. It's very 14 touching; it's very moving. And I'm just so happy 15 to continue supporting this school for the next five 16 years. 17          I will say. I would support a condition 18 on the financials, because I am grateful that, once 19 again, there's a lot of accountability internally. 20 And I -- but it's just too much. It's just too much 21 to ignore. And I don't have the data yet to show 22 that the efforts have actually led to those better 23 outcomes. Like, right now, I just don't have it. 24          So I would like to propose a condition on 25 financials, just to have that additional oversight</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">203</p> <p>1           providing, and then for you to say, "Now I get to 2 come in and just be, like, all right, we're getting 3 to work on CTE stuff. They're taking care of you 4 here. This is being provided for you." 5           So now I get to come and be, like, "All 6 right, we're getting to work. I know you're getting 7 taken care of in this way, so we're going to do the 8 other stuff, too"; right? 9           Because I also think, as a teacher myself, 10 I have that -- I mean, the good intention -- 11 right? -- of having students come to me and having 12 experiences that I remember having as a child, and 13 being, like, "Oh, my gosh. I know your home life is 14 tough. So you know what? Don't worry about not 15 having done your homework. Don't stress about it. 16 We've got you. It's fine." 17          And I didn't realize how enabling that was 18 to continuing the cycle. Like, I was keeping them 19 in the cycle by being, like, "Oh, you don't need to 20 learn how to do an essay. Just the kids in better 21 spaces than you, they have to, but you don't." 22          And I promise. I had good intentions; 23 right? 24          But that's how we keep kids in cycles 25 because we don't give them access to high</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">205</p> <p>1           and have those outcomes just be looked at. And as 2 soon as we can see that, like, toggling your inputs 3 have created those better outcomes, I'm happy to 4 move on past it. 5           But because right now I don't have it, I 6 don't want to be, like, "Oh, you gave me the good 7 news that it's going to be better." But if it 8 doesn't come to fruition, I want to have that 9 additional oversight until it does. 10          I'm so impressed. I'm impressed with your 11 students. That video was incredible. Good job on 12 that. That's so good. And awesome that you 13 happened to include the audiovisual pathway, to 14 where you have kids ready to do that and interested 15 in it. 16          And reading through the application, how 17 cool. I mean, it is serious business. And I see 18 that you all take it very seriously. And I'm so 19 grateful that you, as leadership, as a governing 20 board, you've been openminded to changing. Like, 21 "Okay. That's not working. Lets change it. That's 22 not working. Let's change it," you know. 23          And I think that's what a beautiful part 24 of being a charter school is, is being able to do 25 those.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">206</p> <p>1 It seems like you guys are really on a 2 great pathway moving forward. It seems logical to 3 me that I'll see those inputs. I imagine they're 4 going to have better outcomes, you know. When you 5 take care of those things underneath, the outcomes 6 just come. You don't even have to really focus on 7 those as much as, like, really diving into those 8 things and seeing if your little day-to-day 9 formative stuff is working; right? The outcomes 10 will speak for themselves. 11 So I'm just so grateful for all of you 12 coming, all of you speaking. The students, thanks 13 for coming back to talk about your old school. 14 That's so cool. 15 And thank you for the juniors, your 16 seniors. You all are -- I mean, it's incredible. 17 And I'm glad you're at -- I'm so happy that you get 18 to experience school and education this way. So 19 thank you. 20 THE CHAIR: Thanks. And I'm going to echo 21 a lot of what Commissioner Burt said, because this 22 school is -- it is that safe haven for so many 23 students in our community. 24 And starting from the redesign program, 25 they've been -- they're just, like, continually</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">208</p> <p>1 about. Because you've got a -- well, it says the 2 building capacity is, like, 600. There is no way. 3 And for many of our charter schools, they 4 would kill to be in that building. They would. 5 Because it's -- it's a nice building. But for 6 the -- their pathway forward, it has -- it has no 7 future for what they want to be able to do. 8 So can you talk to us a little bit about 9 what that's looking like? 10 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: Yes, Chair Gipson. 11 Thank you all for -- for your words, your questions, 12 I appreciate all that, first of all. 13 As far as the facility, we're working on 14 that, too, where we're actually pivoting potentially 15 away from that building to a -- a brand-new build 16 with potentially the help of some foundations in 17 Southern New Mexico that have expressed interest 18 in -- in helping us and aiding us in that -- that 19 endeavor. 20 We're talk- -- talking a lot of money and 21 a lot of foundations that have that kind of money in 22 Southern New Mexico. 23 We also have a Plan B, and we're working 24 with Las Cruces Public Schools, from whom we lease 25 our facility with right now, for some CTE-like maker</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">207</p> <p>1 pivoting. 2 You know, "We see the needs. We're going 3 to change. We're going to adapt." Excuse me. 4 I had the opportunity -- I guess earlier 5 this year, when the Lieutenant Governor came down, 6 and we did a tour of the school. And a lot of what 7 those presentations were, we had an opportunity -- 8 the AV kids did -- were there, and they were owning 9 their own work. 10 And it wasn't prompted by teachers. It 11 wasn't forced by teachers. It's here they are, and 12 the kids are speaking and owning their own work. 13 There was a -- I remember a group that had 14 just been to a competition for future teachers. And 15 they got to speak about what they had to do there 16 and the experience that they had. 17 And I went into what I'm going to loosely 18 call a wood shop, you know, because it's kind of on 19 the scary side, you know. 20 It -- no, it's like my garage, you know. 21 And that's actually -- my garage is probably a 22 little bit better. 23 So, you know. And that's no fault of 24 theirs. 25 So that's what I really wanted to talk</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">209</p> <p>1 space or a career tech center on that property, 2 because there's plenty of space on that land that is 3 vacant to build something like that that not only 4 will benefit our charter, but the district and the 5 community as well. 6 So there's, you know, work being done sort 7 of in the background right now that's coming to the 8 foreground a little bit more as it progresses. But 9 there's a lot of forever momentum around some 10 different opportunities we have to address that. 11 THE CHAIR: Do you get Perkins money? 12 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: We get Perkins money, 13 NextGen, yes, and Innovative Zones. We have 14 utilized some of those things to buy equipment and 15 get -- you know, get what we have, which, again, is 16 a little scary at times. 17 But now that work that you see what was 18 being done in that shop is being done at the 19 education home build on site, and those kids are 20 actually out in the field building a home right now 21 with professional homebuilders. 22 And then the lower-level students in the 23 construction program in year one and year two are in 24 that shop doing some basic things, and doing it -- 25 you know, they all have OSHA certification -- doing</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">210</p> <p>1 it in a safe way.  2 But we definitely -- or desperately --  3 need a career tech center to help us really realize  4 our visions.  5 THE CHAIR: I mean, if you ever get down  6 La Bajada and continue going down, yes, it is more  7 hours. It's an enriching opportunity to just  8 experience being in that -- that building. It truly  9 is.  10 It can be -- it's transformative for the  11 students, I know, that go in. But it could be  12 transformative for you as you go in and you talk  13 with the students and you -- you see actually how  14 the students are being serviced and recognized and  15 honored.  16 And they're -- and they said it. There  17 are so many places in their lives where they haven't  18 felt like they've been heard, they've been seen.  19 And this school fills that space 100 percent.  20 Thanks.  21 COMMISSIONER INGHAM: I just -- the  22 construction guy on the -- on the Commission here.  23 I kind of suffered with that myself. It took me a  24 long time to get to figuring out that that was my  25 passion was construction.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">212</p> <p>1 that living and know that it's really going to  2 benefit them in the future.  3 I started working as a laborer. I ended  4 up going back to school after 15 years and ended up  5 getting a construction degree. It was very  6 beneficial, just to say. It catapulted me quite a  7 bit by doing that.  8 So it is possible. And they need to know  9 that. But they need to have that high school  10 diploma to be considered later down the road. They  11 don't want to have to try and come back and get  12 that, because it's really hard.  13 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: Chair Gipson,  14 Commissioner Ingham, and the industry partner we do  15 work with, they do actually have an education  16 foundation and an education foundation board. So  17 they really value education, and they do encourage  18 our students to stay in school with us, and working  19 very closely with us and another traditional high  20 school from Las Cruces Public Schools.  21 And today, in fact, they had a luncheon to  22 celebrate all the students in that program. And,  23 yeah, they do stress staying in school. However, I  24 will be honest with you and say that they don't  25 really encourage them to go to post-secondary</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">211</p> <p>1 And I think one of the things that it  2 sounds like, for me, what would be a very tempting  3 thing for a young person is, the fact is right now  4 with the real shortage of construction workers and  5 people being willing to pay pretty good wages for  6 minimal painting [ph], basically, it's very tempting  7 for a young person to see that wage out there.  8 So I was wondering if your partners -- you  9 have some industry partners, and if they would be  10 willing to help your students get on a path where  11 they can -- where the employers encourage them to  12 keep with it and keep with the program.  13 And even if -- I don't know how you would  14 have to manage that in high school, whatever. But I  15 know that it -- as a person that's -- if you're  16 running on a very low income for your whole life,  17 and all of a sudden you get a big paycheck, it's  18 like, "Whoopee, I'm ready. I don't need any more of  19 this school business."  20 What we need is the employers, the people  21 that you're partnering with, is to stress that with  22 the kids, but with their other competitors and stuff  23 like that, that they would encourage your students  24 to stay with the path, given an opportunity to stay  25 with it so they can get their diploma and still earn</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">213</p> <p>1 education. They do want them to graduate high  2 school, and they want to get them immediately after  3 us and hire them directly and train them directly,  4 as opposed to, you know, doing what Malachi has  5 chosen to do, which is to go into the construction  6 program at the community college.  7 But at least they're encouraging them to  8 stay with us and get their diploma, yes.  9 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Thank you, Chair.  10 Thank you, team, Mr. Martinez. It's so great to  11 just hear and feel the impact that you all are doing  12 with your students.  13 Students, thank you so much for coming  14 here. It's just always, like -- like, the gem of  15 the work that we do here. It's just always -- it's  16 so great to hear from you all. And I just really  17 appreciate the entire -- hearing the entire gravity  18 of the work that you all do to support students.  19 I just have a quick question around the  20 CTE program as well. And it's something that -- I  21 did not go through a CTE program. I'm old enough  22 where I used to be called vo-tech. I don't know if  23 anyone else is that old. I think we all are; I  24 think maybe not everyone.  25 But although, I didn't. I was raised on a</p>

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1 farm, and I had to, like -- I just had to get busy.  
 2 And I didn't do a vo-tech program or a CTE program.  
 3 But my cousins did.  
 4 And in the old takings, you went -- you  
 5 got a certification in -- in high school, you know,  
 6 where you're a diesel mechanic at the end of the  
 7 experience. You're a firefighter at the end of the  
 8 experience.  
 9 I think a lot of times things have changed  
 10 a little bit from that. And I wonder, like, just  
 11 knowing how much work your students are doing and  
 12 knowing that there's a fragility that many of our  
 13 students have in terms of making up credit hours and  
 14 things of that nature, but also needing to, like,  
 15 support themselves, families, and become a -- for  
 16 lack of a better way, being useful and putting their  
 17 energy and their interest and their love and passion  
 18 in -- in motion as quickly as possible.  
 19 So I know that one of your graduates,  
 20 you're at DACC right now -- and I'm talking outside  
 21 of acronyms that I know of. I'm a norteño, so I  
 22 don't know Doña Ana Community College very well.  
 23 This is a long way for me to say. I think  
 24 in our state there's work to be done to make sure  
 25 that CTE programs are preparing students with, like,

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1 hard skills, that they're able to, like, join the  
 2 workforce immediately, whether it's a journeyman in  
 3 plumbing or in construction, so on and so forth.  
 4 And I was just wondering how you all are  
 5 thinking about that. Because I know that you're  
 6 doing a lot of work around creating more doors --  
 7 open doors, and not closing any doors during the  
 8 experience with your students. But I oftentimes see  
 9 that that's an area where you do all this work and  
 10 you might get Acrobat -- what is it? -- Microsoft  
 11 certification? I sometimes hear that in schools.  
 12 I'm, like, what does that even mean? Acrobat  
 13 certification? How is that going to change your  
 14 life? And I'm wondering how you all balance that  
 15 out.  
 16 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: Like I said earlier,  
 17 I'll let the experts handle some of these things.  
 18 MR. JEFFREY WAUGH: So, Chairman Brauer,  
 19 Ms. Gipson, I'm lost right now. Because I'm  
 20 thinking about --  
 21 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: I'm an American.  
 22 I'm not a Chairman Mao. I'm just kidding.  
 23 MR. JEFFREY WAUGH: That's an  
 24 interesting -- once we start looking at building up  
 25 the rigor, when you mentioned we can do these

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1 certifications before they graduate, we can. But  
 2 some of these issues that we're dealing with, like  
 3 you mentioned about funding and those, we're using  
 4 WIOA funds. We actually have the workforce in our  
 5 office. So she's actually sitting there with us.  
 6 So I think it was mentioned earlier about  
 7 kids that are dropping out. We're capturing those.  
 8 So I know they're not showing up.  
 9 And we've talked a lot about this. I know  
 10 there's kids that are dropping out. "But here's the  
 11 support before you leave." Because, "I know you're  
 12 going to walk out that door. But I need you to have  
 13 something before you move on, whatever that is." So  
 14 we have funds for those kids.  
 15 But ensuring that these kids come out with  
 16 a tangible CTE program is an interesting question.  
 17 Most of our community members aren't looking for  
 18 kids that can build cabinets, but kids that show up  
 19 every day, work hard, take constructive criticism so  
 20 they'll come back the next day and not just  
 21 disappear.  
 22 We're trying to build the rigor within the  
 23 classes, so when they start as freshmen and  
 24 sophomores, they do the simple certifications. So  
 25 with Coach Robinson's class, they're doing CPR,

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1 first aid. That's their first certification.  
 2 We'll do Stop the Bleed, and we'll get all  
 3 those ready so when they enter into DACC -- because  
 4 we are DACC's Workforce Innovation Funds for free  
 5 education. So we have a CNA program. Through them,  
 6 we'll have the CDL truck driving program as well for  
 7 them for free.  
 8 So those kids are getting their training.  
 9 But each kid is getting a certification, a stackable  
 10 certification on the way, so as soon as they  
 11 graduate, they can show those to an employer. But  
 12 like you said, those other supports of how do you  
 13 support your family while you're doing this, we've  
 14 worked with our SpEd department.  
 15 We have three kids currently going through  
 16 DVR; those supports will be there. We have two  
 17 students who we just realized the other day were  
 18 homeless or in foster care. So they have funding  
 19 until they're 27.  
 20 We have the WIOA funds, like, those are on  
 21 campus. So there's a lot of supports for these  
 22 students so get paid while they're earning a  
 23 certification, if that helps.  
 24 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: I think about --  
 25 thank you very much for that. I'm just -- I saw

<p style="text-align: right;">218</p> <p>1 that there's an entrepreneurial component, or a 2 pathway, and I think that's, like, really awesome. 3 I think that -- I just think about, like, 4 you know, like Commissioner Ingham said, like, when 5 you start getting money. I know when I first got my 6 five dollar-an-hour wages in high school, I thought 7 I was so rich and was on my way, you know. And also 8 knowing that that's great. And at the same time 9 also teaching our young people that they can be the 10 leaders. They can be the business owners. 11 And I think I just love that component, 12 and I think it's something that probably -- the 13 entrepreneurial or business component, I think it 14 can be intertwined into almost anything so that our 15 young people can leave. They can do their work and 16 build their skill set as cabinetmakers or 17 construction workers, but with the end in mind of if 18 they can do that, and if they have the hustle, they 19 can lead that. They can own the business, and they 20 can provide for their families. 21 I love what you all are sharing. I'm 22 excited to see what's going to happen in the next 23 five years. And thank you, students, for coming 24 today. 25 THE CHAIR: I don't understand it, so</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">220</p> <p>1 When I was in food and beverage for 2 years -- I don't know if you're familiar with it, 3 the Hilton and Buffalo Thunder or the Cowgirl here, 4 we would tell kids, "Look. If you want to go into 5 culinary, you can learn so much here and we'll help 6 you. If you don't, we'll help you in any way 7 possible to follow what it is you want to do." 8 But on the construction side doing that. 9 So that's one point. I'm going to be moving around 10 the place. 11 On your website, I'm looking into 12 pathways. There's one thing that is not there, and 13 that's culinary, because as a result of the Food 14 Channel and all this food mania, everyone thinks 15 they want to own or be in a restaurant. 16 You can get an entry-level job washing 17 lettuce any time you want. If it's in Santa Fe, 18 they're paying you 20 bucks an hour to wash dishes. 19 I'm not exaggerating. You don't have to speak 20 English or have any experience. There's such a need 21 just for people to come to work, and then come to 22 work for a second day; right? 23 I'm so glad that's not on there. So 24 thanks for that. 25 I'm curious about something. So we've</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">219</p> <p>1 maybe you can explain it to me, because when I look 2 at your new Vistas score, it gives you 21 percent 3 for your college and career readiness participation. 4 And I'm just trying to figure out how that happened. 5 So, you know, I just -- you know, someone 6 needs to be able to answer that for me. 7 For college -- overall college and career 8 readiness participation. No. 100 -- look up. 9 100 percent were successful of the 21 -- only 10 21 percent; see? I just -- you know. 11 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: Chair Gipson, I wish 12 somebody would explain that to me as well. 13 THE CHAIR: You know, just trying to 14 figure this out. Thank you. But at least 15 100 percent were successful. So celebrate that. 16 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: So a couple of 17 things. 18 Kind of -- well, not a couple, several, 19 all over the place. 20 First, in terms of the employers and 21 people coming out of the CTE program, the 22 construction and things like that, and having them 23 stay with it, employees can just offer a bonus. 24 "When you get your diploma, you get this kind of 25 bonus. You stay with us."</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">221</p> <p>1 talked a lot about CTE. Where are you doing the 2 New Mexico requirements for things like social 3 studies -- I know New Mexico. Where does that fit 4 in to a school such as this? 5 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: Yes, Chair Gipson, 6 Commissioner Carrillo. We embed those standards in 7 the core content areas in our project-based 8 learning. 9 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: We didn't discuss 10 that at all, which that's fine, because there's this 11 focus here. I just like to make sure some of that 12 stuff is getting done on a construction site, too, 13 because that's what we were talking about a lot. 14 I don't know if you're familiar with a 15 high school that I'm very happy to say that when I 16 was on the board, we allotted a lot of money for it. 17 It's called ECO, Early College Opportunity High 18 School. We built a house from design, plumbing, all 19 the stuff that's involved. 20 The kids at ECO, obviously, with 21 instructions, they built a house on property that 22 the district owned. I just thought that was the 23 coolest thing, from inception to somebody moving in, 24 you know. 25 Because all of the different aspects of</p>



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1 learning come into that. Business management -- the  
 2 whole shebang. I don't know if that's something  
 3 you're doing or if it was just something I was  
 4 remembering as being a part of.  
 5 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: It is something we're  
 6 doing right now. We started October 7th. The  
 7 foundation was just laid last week. The framing is  
 8 about to go up. It's actually a Habitat for  
 9 Humanity home as well. So that's another factor  
 10 that goes with what we're doing.  
 11 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: That's outstanding.  
 12 Good. I'm happy to hear that. Yeah. He is still  
 13 alive, Jimmy Carter. He just mentioned -- yeah. I  
 14 won't go into all that other stuff.  
 15 The housing. I wrote that down.  
 16 Board stability. So, Ms. Gonzales, we  
 17 haven't talked about the board at all. But we --  
 18 our experience, and my experience, certainly over  
 19 the last four years, is that where there are stable  
 20 boards, there are schools that flourish, where there  
 21 is a continuity in a board. And where there isn't,  
 22 they're always before us with one thing or another.  
 23 And sooner or later, they're at death's door.  
 24 And so tell me about your board, the  
 25 longevity of your board and if -- what you do to

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1 have all of you work well together.  
 2 If -- my perception is you probably work  
 3 well together or there are issues that would have  
 4 come to us.  
 5 MR. CAZ MARTINEZ: Chair Gipson,  
 6 Commissioner Carrillo, I just want to let you all  
 7 know that Ms. Gonzales was a parent member of our  
 8 board several years ago. And her kid graduated in  
 9 2022 -- 2022 -- and she's still on our board, even  
 10 though she does not have another child coming to our  
 11 school. So go ahead.  
 12 MS. PATRICIA GONZALES: Thank you,  
 13 Commissioner and chair. So just a little bit of  
 14 background from our board and from my perspective as  
 15 the board president. This is my first year as  
 16 chair.  
 17 You know, as Mr. Martinez said, my son did  
 18 come to -- we did come to Las Montañas by choice.  
 19 We had exceptionalities. We needed to figure out,  
 20 you know, where was he going to flourish.  
 21 And I interviewed a lot of schools. And  
 22 Mr. Martinez and crew were impressive. I have a  
 23 background in community health, in mental health  
 24 services.  
 25 So I wanted to get back into -- once he

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1 was in the school, I wanted to know how he was  
 2 doing. He wasn't a good advocate for himself, not  
 3 confident at all.  
 4 Day one, they were amazing.  
 5 So when it came time for him to graduate,  
 6 he went through Access of Redesign. So, for me, I  
 7 was the Nosy Rosy. I'm the nosy parent that wants  
 8 to advocate for my kid, because I know there were a  
 9 lot of parents that did not do that.  
 10 We didn't think he would graduate. So we  
 11 thought, okay, let's figure this out what's going to  
 12 work for him.  
 13 Las Montañas was fantastic. He had the  
 14 ability to graduate early based on the Access of  
 15 Redesign program. He pushed through COVID. I had a  
 16 COVID kid in high school who was very introverted.  
 17 He actually -- we convinced him to stay  
 18 and not actually graduate early, so that he could go  
 19 to the branch, so he could experience college, so he  
 20 could see what it was like. And the Access of  
 21 Redesign program, because of the flavors and the way  
 22 it had the turnaround, it was a very seamless  
 23 approach for him. It was easy for him to go into  
 24 college.  
 25 And I didn't think we were going to get

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1 there at all. So it was amazing.  
 2 As far as the board, you know, I did start  
 3 with the board as a member. Everybody has been on  
 4 the board almost the entire time I've been on  
 5 there -- I think five years? -- about five years  
 6 I've been on the board.  
 7 We had the board president step down last  
 8 year. And we had one -- I think we lost one board  
 9 member since I've been on, outside of the board  
 10 president.  
 11 I've worked with other colleagues of mine  
 12 that are on different board. That's how I figured  
 13 out. I wanted to be on a board. I wanted to figure  
 14 out how I could give back to the community since I  
 15 was no longer in community health at that point.  
 16 But I think our board, we keep it simple.  
 17 That's the way to do it. Sometimes as a board you  
 18 can get so intertwined and you can start digging and  
 19 digging and digging. And then you all get disputes  
 20 of what opinions are.  
 21 But I think our board keeps it simple. We  
 22 ask the questions. We ask the hard questions. I  
 23 never take my parent hat off. But it's -- I'm a  
 24 director. I'm a practice director by nature, by  
 25 career. So for me, the business analytics,

<p style="text-align: right;">226</p> <p>1 understanding processes and policies, on top of how 2 it's affecting the students, to me that's the 3 bigger -- I mean, it has to go hand in hand. 4 But I think our board asks the hard 5 questions. And I think that because, you know, with 6 Priscilla's assistance and Mr. Martinez's 7 transparency and being open to those questions -- 8 we'll ask questions on the financials. We'll ask 9 questions on the -- I was digging on the graduation 10 rates. 11 I kept questioning, "Why are we not 12 getting as many kids graduating?" And when I worked 13 with Mr. Martinez to understand the composition of 14 how we obtain students -- because not every student 15 went like my son's path; right? So I had to 16 understand that portion. 17 And it made me realize that the group of 18 teachers that we do have, you know, it's hard to 19 keep teachers motivated to continue teaching with 20 the population that we serve. 21 But I think as a board, we understand that 22 we're taking kids, and we're -- the school is really 23 looking at them holistically. We're not looking at 24 them as a number, as a graduate. We want to look at 25 them holistically.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">228</p> <p>1 moving into this new model -- I work in health care. 2 I'm always looking for medical assistants. I'm 3 looking for front office. I'm looking for nursing. 4 It is challenging in the workforce. To 5 see this and know that this school, it's a beautiful 6 thing because the workforce needs it. And because 7 they're pushing in such a great way of engagement, I 8 wish more schools would look at Las Montañas the way 9 we do. 10 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: That's a great 11 segue. Because we had somebody -- yes, we're making 12 boards a priority. This Commission has really 13 decided, because of our collective experience with 14 these schools, really doing what we can to prop up 15 boards and make them as successful as they can be. 16 One of the things that I had mentioned 17 this to Director Chavez was possibly in the next -- 18 it's in June -- our next conference, having 19 something where it's all successful boards are the 20 ones that are putting together the session so that 21 others can learn from you, because that's the best 22 way to progress in this area is to just teach out 23 your success. 24 So thank you for your board work, because 25 that's such an important piece. And sometimes</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">227</p> <p>1 As a board, that's what helps us maintain 2 our board. We keep that longevity. I think that's 3 why we've been successful as a board. 4 We ask the questions that are relative to 5 the community that are going to impact us. They 6 know I would -- I would ask a million questions 7 about how stuff was going in school, because all I 8 got from my son was like, "Yeah, it was good." And 9 that was the only response I would get. 10 So I would have to dig a little bit 11 deeper, and I would do that in session. 12 So I think that's a real success of our 13 board. We have some diversity on our board. We 14 have some law enforcement on board. We have 15 parents. We have -- we have some good diversity. 16 And I think, because we have that, it makes us all 17 really strong as a board and hold the school and the 18 administrator to the fire, because, you know, we're 19 in it for the right reason. We're in it for our 20 youth. 21 And so I think because of that, it's made 22 us successful. And this is where going into this 23 new -- I mean we went into Access and Redesign. It 24 was a whole new concept, a whole new model. We had 25 to learn these blocks and how it worked. And then</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">229</p> <p>1 people have no idea the commitment they're signing 2 up for on a charter school board. So thank you. Or 3 a Commissioner -- 4 SECRETARY BECK: Yeah. Absolutely. 5 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: A few things. I 6 love that you're sending tutors over to J. Paul 7 Taylor. That's totally cool, the more the better. 8 The more people we can train on education, the 9 better. They want to be teachers. Absolutely, the 10 better. The connection between job and emotion. 11 I think it was maybe Ms. Burt that was 12 talking about on one hand, you're making sure on the 13 holistic side that the kid is totally nurtured and 14 well taken care of, and then we're going to do this, 15 also, because they have to work together. One has 16 to be solid. The foundational piece in creating 17 young humans that are happy and healthy and 18 prosperous, and then learning their trade. 19 You made that funny comment earlier that 20 was in the movie about public schools. So for all 21 the students sitting here right now, when people ask 22 you, "Oh, my God, where did you go to school?" 23 You say, "Las Montañas." 24 And they say, "I didn't know you went to a 25 private school."</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">230</p> <p>1 That's when you say, "No. Charters in 2 New Mexico are public schools, versus a traditional 3 public school." 4 You'd be surprised how many people across 5 in the Roundhouse don't know. They think, "Oh, 6 you're just on the side of White kids in private 7 schools." 8 It's, like, "No, no, no, no. Do some 9 homework," because that's really upsetting when your 10 legislators are talking like that. 11 Board stability. So, Ms. Salas, I'm so 12 glad you came back because you walked out for a 13 minute. And Tim and I talked about this as well. 14 First, there was the young person that 15 talked about how the day went where you started with 16 some sort of a classroom meeting. Then you had 17 breakfast, and then you had the rest of the day; 18 right? 19 I think that's a really cool way to do it. 20 Because everyone's -- it builds community. When 21 people eat together, there's something special that 22 happens. You can tell I came out of culinary and 23 hotels and everything else. There's really 24 something special that happens. 25 I'm glad you do it that way. So I'm going</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">232</p> <p>1 How many of you have experienced the soft, 2 "Oh, yeah, I'm Steve," handshake. That goes so far 3 in construction. You're meeting your foreman. 4 You're meeting your boss. 5 Look them in the eye and extend the hand, 6 those soft skills. The soft skill of etiquette. 7 And it's just so important. So, like, for 8 Leo, it's, like, "Where does your napkin go?" 9 "Elbows. Elbows off the table. This is 10 not a horse's stable." 11 Just little things. I'm going to stop. 12 I'm touching on this stuff. 13 But it's so important. And I remember my 14 current -- my "job" job is I work with New York 15 Life. And I remember the interview I had with one 16 of the heads of this region. It was before 17 Thanksgiving. He said, "Can you come back for a 18 meeting after this meeting?" 19 I said, "I can't. I can't do it that 20 beginning of December." 21 He said, "Well, can you go to lunch right 22 now? Can you just, at least, can we go out to 23 lunch?" 24 And I know -- at this time when I joined 25 New York Life, Leo was about 12. I know that</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">231</p> <p>1 to -- 2 MS. CLAUDIA SALAS: My reference was about 3 how we usually would meet in the morning, and our 4 meeting be around breakfast. And our breakfast 5 would be delivered to the classrooms, and we would 6 eat as a community. We'd start, eat, talk pretty 7 quickly every morning, huh? But it was great start 8 to our morning every day. 9 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Working on soft 10 skills -- I'm going to rate this very personally. 11 So when my son was probably about four we would 12 start going out for gentleman's night. And -- 13 'cause his mother and I were really -- she's, Lord 14 have mercy -- she's from Dallas in the south and all 15 that stuff. We were together anyway. 16 But, anyway, so manners, etiquette. All 17 of these things are so important, and they're not 18 taught. And many people from many families, you 19 don't know -- it's not your fault. But someone's 20 got to teach you these soft skills. 21 And, like, for Leo, it was, like -- I'm 22 not exaggerating, even younger than four -- it's 23 like when we were introducing you to somebody, you 24 extend your hand and you look them in the eye. 25 Extend your hand and look them in the eye.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">233</p> <p>1 probably what Greg Yopez saw in me was how I spoke 2 with the server, how I sat at the table, how all of 3 these things that you're looking for, whether you're 4 in construction or whether you're in the hotel 5 business or whether you're in health care, how we 6 carry ourselves. 7 You build that self-confidence, which I 8 know you're really teaching at that school anyway, 9 because you're seeing the whole person. And so 10 they're going to feel more confident just as a 11 result of what you're doing. 12 So, Ms. Salas, I just -- I have a question 13 for you. I was just commending you and the school 14 on recognizing the importance of those soft skills. 15 And then for the students that are here, 16 it matters so much. 17 I mean, I've probably interviewed, in the 18 course of the hotel business, more than -- easily 19 250, 300 people. So I'll just tell you, when I wax 20 like this, when we opened Buffalo Thunder up here, 21 we're in the Pojoaque Valley; right? We 22 unfortunately happened the first week of the 2008 23 crash. 24 But we were hiring everyone in July. 25 We're having our Job Fair. Everyone from Northern</p>

234	<p>1 New Mexico and Pojoaque Valley and Española Valley 2 are coming.</p> <p>3 And, you know, this isn't -- it is what 4 is, you know, just calling it out.</p> <p>5 I said, "You guys are going to be stunned 6 like you've never been stunned as to the people that 7 are coming to look for work and how they're going to 8 come looking for work; okay? In T-shirts and jeans, 9 actually having their cell phone out during the 10 interview, in stiletto heels."</p> <p>11 I mean, all of these things, but nobody 12 ever taught these people, these young people, how to 13 go look for a job.</p> <p>14 And so we all went out for a drink after 15 the first day and were, like, comparing war stories; 16 right?</p> <p>17 But it's just so important, these small 18 things. So I just wanted to impress that upon you 19 that are sitting here.</p> <p>20 I want to thank you, Ms. Salas, for just 21 knowing that and taking the kids to Olive Garden; 22 that's so cool. And echoing what they've said, the 23 way you're seeing your students, and they feel seen.</p> <p>24 I didn't know anything about this school 25 until today except what was on paper. And I am just</p>	236	<p>1 THE CHAIR: There's a motion by 2 Commissioner Gipson, a second by Commissioner 3 Brauer. Sorry.</p> <p>4 Commissioner Beck.</p> <p>5 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Burt. 6 COMMISSIONER BURT: Yes.</p> <p>7 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Taylor. 8 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yes.</p> <p>9 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Armijo. 10 (No response.) 11 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Manis. 12 (No response.) 13 SECRETARY BECK: commissioner Brauer. 14 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Yes. 15 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner 16 Clahchischilliage. 17 (No response.) 18 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Ingham. 19 COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Yes. 20 SECRETARY BECK: Vice Chair Carrillo. 21 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Yes. 22 SECRETARY BECK: Chair Gipson. 23 THE CHAIR: Yes. 24 SECRETARY BECK: Secretary Beck, yes. 25 There are seven votes for, zero votes against. The</p>
235	<p>1 completely impressed.</p> <p>2 And that's why I love these renewal 3 hearings so much. The odds of my getting down to 4 your school, going that far past La Bajada, unless 5 the Demons are in a playoff, like, at Centennial or 6 something, yeah. Thank you. Thank you so much for 7 the scope of work that you do and caring for our 8 young people.</p> <p>9 Thank you.</p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: Okay. So I move that the 11 Public Education Commission approve the renewal 12 application for Las Montañas Charter High School for 13 a five-year term with the following condition: 14 That the school demonstrate that it is 15 improving its fiscal processes with a goal towards 16 reducing audit findings and repeat audit findings.</p> <p>17 The specific immediate actions needed 18 above will be outlined in the school's negotiated 19 performance framework.</p> <p>20 The first Annual Report will confirm 21 completion of the item listed above, or, if the 22 concern is not corrected, will identify the 23 Uncorrected Unsatisfactory Performance in each item 24 and will be subject to further PEC action.</p> <p>25 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: I second.</p>	237	<p>1 motion passes. Congratulations. 2 (Applause.) 3 THE CHAIR: We are in recess until 4 tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m. 5 (Proceedings in recess at 4:32 p.m.) 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25</p>



1                   BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

2                                 STATE OF NEW MEXICO

3  
4  
5                                 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

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

13            In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my  
14    hand on November 28, 2017.

15  
16  
17                                 *Cynthia Chapman*

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