BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION STATE OF NEW MEXICO

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL HEARINGS
DAY THREE
December 11, 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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JOB NO.: 9246N (CC)

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1 INDEX TO PROCEEDINGS 1 THE CHAIR: Good morning, everyor	ie.
PAGE 2 Welcome back. Seems like we're having an	attrition
3 6. CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWALS, Continued 3 rate here.	
4 g. The ASK Academy 7 4 We're on day three of our renewal	
5 1 Public Education Department Evaluation 7 5 hearings. It is Wednesday, December 11th.	It is
6 2 Tribal Input 12 6 8:03 a.m. And our first school that we have	
7 3 School Comments 13 7 The ASK Academy.	ир із
	2001
11	1001
9 5 PEC Questions 49 9 Division will give their report and their	
10 6 Vote on Renewal 90 10 recommendation.	
11 h. Sandoval Academy of Bilingual Education 91 11 Then, if there is we have on the ager	
12 1 Public Education Department Evaluation 92 12 "Tribal Input." If there's anyone that wants t	
13 2 Tribal Input 97 13 I don't remember, honest I don't think you	ı're
14 3 School Comments 97 14 tribally impacted. But we have it on for ever	yone.
15 4 Public Comment 114 15 And then you'll have your opportunity	
16 5 PEC Questions 129 16 present whatever you want to.	
17 6 Vote on Renewal 153 17 Then we'll have public comment, and to	then
18 i. Tierra Encantada Charter School 154 18 we'll do our questions.	
19 1 Public Education Department Evaluation 155 19 Yeah. So before before you speak for	or
21 3 School Comments 162 21 your last name, and just identify the role that	-
22 4 Public Comment 185 22 hold with the school, and then we're good for	r the
23 5 PEC Questions 192 23 rest of the time.	
24 6 Vote on Renewal 256 24 So, Commissioner Beck, if you'll take	
25 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE 258 25 roll.	
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1 SECRETARY BECK: Chair Gipson. 1 years without conditions. 2 THE CHAIR: Here. 2 The recommendation is based on the record 3 SECRETARY BECK: Vice Chair Carrillo. 3 of the school's performance over the course of the 4 VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Here. 4 contract term, the renewal application, which 5 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Brauer. 5 highlights adult actions and programs in the service 6 6 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Present. of student progress, and verification of those 7 7 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Manis. programs and adult actions during our renewal site 8 8 visit and annual visit. (No response.) 9 9 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Armijo. Over the course of the charter term. The 10 10 (No response.) ASK Academy has far outperformed the district and 11 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Taylor. 11 state in reading and math. The school has earned a 12 12 designation of Spotlight for all years that (No response.) 13 13 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Burt. NM Vistas has assigned ratings and has been awarded 14 14 additional distinctions of excellence in English COMMISSIONER BURT: Here. 15 15 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Ingham. language arts, math, and science. 16 16 Even with their excellent academic record, COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Here. 17 17 SECRETARY BECK: Secretary Beck, here. the school leadership and staff continuously look 18 18 We have one, two, three -- we have seven. for ways to improve. 19 For example, when the school experienced a 19 Oh, I'm sorry. 20 20 Commissioner Clahchischilliage. dip in math proficiencies, they quickly responded by 21 COMMISSIONER CLAHCHISCHILLIAGE: Okay. 21 changing their math program to include more 22 22 I'm here. hands-on, off-line math learning and problem 23 23 SECRETARY BECK: We have seven. So there solving, employed new math teachers and an 24 24 (inaudible) math coach, and they are actively is a quorum. 25 25 working to create more engaging, high-quality THE CHAIR: And before we begin, I'll just 9 7 1 1 ask if anyone feels they need to recuse themself. materials for math instruction. 2 2 (No response.) The school provides abundant support for 3 3 THE CHAIR: Okay. scholars by offering tutoring daily on Fridays, as 4 4 MS. CHERYL ROWE: Good morning, Chair well as during the rest of week for students who 5 5 Gipson and Commissioners. My name is Cheryl Rowe, cannot attend Friday tutoring. Peer-to-peer 6 R-o-w-e, Authorizing Practices Administrator for the 6 tutoring has also been particularly successful and 7 7 Charter Schools Division. popular among students. 8 8 The school has had solid financial and I'm here to provide the PED evaluation for 9 The ASK Academy. 9 organizational performance over the term. 10 10 CSD conducted our renewal visit to The ASK In the first year of the charter term, The 11 11 ASK Academy had a Working To Meet and Does Not Meet Academy on October 9th, 2024. Dr. Brigette Russell, 12 12 Lucy Valenzuela, Kelli Renken, and I visited the on their financial performance framework indicators. 13 13 school in person. And Martica Davis, Ken Norris, However, the school promptly turned this around, and 14 14 ever since then, they have earned Meets the Standard and Director Corina Chavez joined remotely. 15 15 on all financial indicators. The ASK Academy opened in 2010 with the 16 16 In terms of governing board performance Public Education Commission as their authorizer. 17 17 This is their third renewal application with the they have met nearly all standards, with the 18 18 exception of some Working To Meet ratings in the PEC. 19 19 The ASK Academy emphasizes STEM through school year 2022-'23, which, again, they quickly 20 20 turned around. project-based learning, 21st century technology, 21 21 The overall fiscal and organizational research programs, relationship building, and a 22 22 performance reflects healthy, conscientious partnership program engaging scholars in the 23 23 management over the course of the term. learning process. 24 24 The Charter School Division recommends The school's ratings on Part B of the 25 25 that The ASK Academy be renewed for a term of five renewal application are as follows:

They Met the Standards in student outcomes, mission-specific goals, and the educational program.

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They Demonstrate Substantial Progress in financial compliance and governance responsibilities; although both were very close to meeting the standards.

They also Demonstrated Substantial Progress in equity and identity and other performance framework indicators.

An area of particular growth is in terms of equity and identity. ASK is being intentional about equity by implementing culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning and tying it to project-based learning. The school has an active equity council which has led to improvements in English Learner support and programming.

In addition, the school recently adopted a social-emotional learning program titled "Making Caring Common" from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The parent support committee has also participated in meaningful conversations with the equity council, school leadership, and project

action and happy, engaged students. On account of the abundant support and the school's fundamental connections program, students report that they feel valued, supported, and respected at ASK.

I want to add that the school had a disruptive stink bomb evacuation the day of our visit, which led to an early dismissal for students. The incident was handled very well by leadership and staff, and I was surprised and impressed to see that so many students wanted to stay at school and speak to us in the focus group instead of going home.

And they didn't stay to complain about the school. They were very enthusiastic and positive. I thought this was a real testament to the committed, happy scholars at ASK.

Thank you.

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17 THE CHAIR: So assuming there's no one 18 here for tribal?

MS. MELISSA BROWN: If there is somebody on Zoom for tribal consultation, please raise your digital hand.

Nobody raised their hand.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

24 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Quincy, you're making 25 public comment -- are you making specific public

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managers, giving all stakeholders a voice in serving the needs of students.

Two exceptional features of the school are their growth mindset and their focus on real-world application of learning.

The school effectively creates a professional atmosphere, referring to students as "scholars," teachers as "project managers," and the head administrator as the "CEO," which has the effect of students taking themselves seriously as scholars and rising to meet greater challenges at ASK.

The school's career pathways offers scholars clear guidance and steps towards college and career goals, especially in bio-med and engineering fields.

Along with their STEM focus, they have bolstered efforts to serve students holistically, with social-emotional learning, project-based learning, and culturally and linguistically responsive learning, and have put more emphasis on improving reading proficiency so scholars can advance further in any subject area they tackle.

During classroom observations, CSD witnessed very dynamic project-based learning in comment? You're not representing a tribe or a

2 Native nation. Thanks. 3

THE CHAIR: Okay. So welcome once again. And whenever you're ready to start.

FROM THE FLOOR: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning to the members of the PEC. My name is Edward Garcia, G-a-r-c-i-a, and I am the chief

7 8 executive officer at The ASK Academy.

At this time, can I introduce my colleagues as well who will be a part of our presentation today?

FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is Janisse Vazquez. That's V-a-z-q-u-e-z. And I am the professional learning coordinator.

FROM THE FLOOR: And I am Patrick Kelly, K-e-l-l-v, and I am the chief financial officer.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. I'm Jeanne Forrester, and I am the chair of the ASK governing council. F-o-r-r-e-s-t-e-r.

20 MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Thank you. 21 So as mentioned by Ms. Rowe, The ASK 22 Academy is a sixth-to-twelfth-grade academy located 23 in Rio Rancho, New Mexico. ASK is an acronym for 24 "attitude, skills, and knowledge." 25

Our mission is shaping forward-thinking

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graduates to thrive in a dynamic global environment.

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Our current enrollment at the academy is 556 scholars. When we break that down between middle school and high school, there are 313 scholars in our middle school and 243 in our high school.

Our class size, on average, is about 25. When we bring that down a little bit more specifically, we see about between 15 to 20 scholars per high school class. And that's due to the way our pathways are set up, and I'll give you more information about that shortly.

And in our middle school classes, it's about 20 to 25, which really helps support our scholars with individual efforts one-on-one.

We offer two pathways at the academy: biomedical sciences and engineering.

Our sixth- through eighth-grade scholars take both of those pathways in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade to help them identify which pathway they would like to select from ninth through twelfth grade. Upon entering as freshman, they will pick either the bio-med or the engineering pathway going forward.

We have a video we would like to show you

earlier, allows us the opportunity to build the important relationships needed between scholars and project managers to help -- to help them better understand and grasp the content. The smaller class size also allows for easier circulation and that one-on-one even during the class period.

At The ASK Academy, our passing score is a 70 percentile to earn credit at the high school or to pass the course in middle school. We do have a requirement of 28 graduation credits, which is four more than the State requirement.

We are project-based-learning focused. When we introduce curriculum, we -- we use a project-based method to give our scholars a more hands-on approach to the curriculum.

Also, when we look at our curriculum in meeting State standards, it is future-focused. It's really trying to take those standards and see how that works in the real world or in what their pathway desire might be.

To do these great things, it's important that we train our project managers on effective implementation. We spend 102 hours yearly training project managers in professional development. We start with a week full of professional development

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And then we do two hours weekly on our Fridays from 10:00 to 12:00. That's the strength of the four-day schedule. Once again, not only are we there to support our scholars in any extra help, but to continue to support our managers to develop the best practices needed to implement the PBLI concepts, as well as the best teaching practices.

in July to start the school year.

The academy offers AP Honors courses. All of these courses are open enrollment for any scholar that would like to take. We also offer dual enrollment and early college high school credit opportunities for our scholars.

All of this hard work has paid off when it comes to looking at how we've been recognized across the state as well as the nation.

The College Board and AP Honor, we earned the recognition from the College Board and the AP Honor Roll by getting on the AP Honor Roll in the 2022-'23 school year and '23'-'24 academic year.

We were also recognized in the U.S. News & World Report as the No. 2 middle school in the great state of New Mexico, and the No. 4 high school in New Mexico, which puts us in the top 3 percent of high schools in the nation.

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to give you a sense and feel of the community at ASK.

(Video is played.)

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: So what makes ASK different?

When we look at how we treat and engage our scholars, as mentioned earlier we treat them as professionals, getting them ready for their future careers.

We have a scholar uniforms policy. We refer to students as scholars as mentioned earlier, teachers as project managers, and classrooms as learning spaces.

We operate on a four-day schedule, 154-day calendar. This schedule is significant for us because it allows for additional benefits to continually support our scholars. For example, every Friday, we are -- we offer scholar tutoring. This is an opportunity to get extra help and assistance with their project managers one-on-one.

We also offer weekly support through our fundamental connections classes and career pathways courses, as well as near-peer tutoring, scholar-to-scholar tutoring, during the week.

Our small class size, as I mentioned

As mentioned earlier, we're proud to hold the Spotlight ranking with Vistas in the most recent Vistas scoring and in all previous Vistas scorings. We've had U.S. Presidential Scholars come through the academy and graduate, and we also have a Cognia accreditation as well.

As our scholars go through their days, six through twelve, our middle schoolers have the opportunity to take both engineering and biomedical sciences. And then, as I mentioned earlier, when they become high school students, they pick a pathway.

When we look at the courses that are offered in engineering, we offer flight and space, automation and robotics, computers and technology, computer science.

We are also partnered with Project Lead The Way, PLTW, Introduction to Engineering and Design, Principles of Engineering, Scientific Technology, PLTW's Aerospace Engineering, and, finally, PLTW's Digital Electronics.

When we look at our biomedical sciences, we offer a Survey of Biomedical Sciences And Green Architecture, Medical Detectives, PLTW's Principles of Bio Med, PLTW Human Body Systems, PLTW Medical which has been absolutely dominant in competition lately. That's -- that's the victory model right there. We -- they just returned from Dallas and finished ninth out of 100 schools.

So -- and it was a high school competition. So we're -- we're really proud of this team. They are doing fantastic. And they will be very excited to share this with you, here, too.

There they are. Thank you, Ms. Vazquez. (Robotics Team presentation.)

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: And then we have one other link, where we'll be able to go live to our high school seniors to discuss allied health occupations. This is an opportunity for our high schoolers to work in fields and intern in fields of their interest in the biomedical field. This is all a part of our future planning for the scholars. Let's hope this link works a little better.

(Seniors' presentation.)

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Thank you very much. And thank you for working through the technology with us. Thank you, Ms. Nuanes.

At this time, I'm going to share the microphone with Ms. Vazquez, who can give you a more in-depth look at our project-based program as well

Intervention, and HOSA, our allied health occupations.

One of the strengths of the academy is this list of courses I've read you are our elective classes; so they're all the fun ones. And these are the electives that our scholars sign up for.

What we're asked to do now is we're going to go to our first presentation and take you live -- boy, I hope it works -- take you live to The ASK Academy, where we have three middle school scholars there, excited to share with you their experience.

No, that's okay. Share with you their experience with our middle school robotics team, one of our extracurriculars.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: We're communicating with -- we're going to let you in here.

(Technology pause in proceedings.)

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: As mentioned by Ms. Rowe from our visit and the stink bomb to this, we've been on a run here.

MS. JANISSE VAZQUEZ: To be fair, I thought I was going to be in charge of the technology. So I do apologize.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: This group of scholars is going to be from our middle school robotics team,

as our professional development and equity.

MS. JANISSE VAZQUEZ: Good morning. You probably recall a very traditional classroom setting when you went to school; right? A lot of sit-and-get. That's what we call it.

And the great thing about The ASK Academy is that we try to avoid that. That's one of the great things that makes us different. That's why project-based learning, bringing these real-world projects to life, really does help our scholars understand what skills they're going to need in the future.

We know that just learning math concepts, just learning science standards isn't what our scholars are going to need when they're hired; right? They need communication skills. They need problem-solving skills. And so we're able to create these really well-rounded scholars by the time they leave ASK.

And we know when we talk to professionals in the field, because they're often at our school viewing these amazing projects, that's one of the pieces that they find missing when they're trying to hire in present times.

And so it's really exciting. And then

think about being up and active and doing and asking questions and reflecting. That's what project-based learning is all about.

well.

Now we're going to hear from our colleague and how much she appreciates project-based learning. (Video plays.)

MS. JANISSE VAZQUEZ: Now, can you imagine that leading a group -- right? -- through project-based learning can be challenging. And that's where our professional development really meets the needs of those managers.

We really do our best to make sure that we're not bringing in new topics, the latest fads when it comes to doing professional development or training with our staff, because we know that doesn't work well.

We ask the staff, "What do you need? What is working? What is not working?" And then we address those challenges.

As Mr. Garcia mentioned, the great thing is we can do that weekly, on Fridays from 10:00 to 12:00, with our staff. And so one of the challenges in the last couple of years they've mentioned is the development of rubrics.

Rubrics are essential for scholars to

were doing a really great job.

But then comes to, you know, assessments outside of the program, and we found, sadly, that they had not learned the skills. They had not learned the concepts. And so we have now removed that program from the equation.

But then we've also had some challenges within our hiring. There's not, you know, an abundance of math managers out there. So that's been a challenge for us.

But I think this year we've built a really great team. We finally have a lot of great folks on board to help us. And we're focusing on hands-on -- right? -- more direct instruction. We're bringing PBL back into the math classroom, where we are asking scholars to show us that they understand the concepts. It's not just worksheets. It's not just a digital program.

And we've also -- this year, have contracted with a math coach specifically to work with that team so that we can work on scaffolding in math, and so to help our scholars make those gains. And we really do feel with that and some of the other changes we've made, we're going to start to see those gains again.

understand what they need to do within a project, do well. And so that's been something we focused on as

We don't do the Flavor of the Month; right? We know that that's not good. And so I think that that -- we also provide PD in a project-based way, and it's really successful.

Now, we do want to address the drop in our math proficiency. You can see the scores in front of you. And we do think it's a significant drop. And as was mentioned before, we are doing so many things to be sure to move, you know, ourselves up.

So if you recall, the year 2020 was a challenge for all schools, and we had to move digitally. And so as we're trying to teach our scholars math virtually, what we did was we adopted an online program called Alex. It had a good reputation. It's used by UNM and CNM in their introductory classes. But what we found is that we became over-reliant on a digital program.

And knowing how intelligent our scholars are, they found alternate ways to find the answers to then show in the program that they were making gains. And so they would pass their assessments; they would pass their practice. And we thought we

One other thing that we've been addressing quite a bit for the last few years is the equity for our scholars. We know that PED has brought it to our attention that some of our scholars are needing something different from us and from our managers.

And so our equity council, which is very active -- I'm happy to say that I am the lead of our equity council -- we have made a lot of changes that have already made a huge difference within our scholar population and the way that we teach.

But one of the things that PED stressed and the scholars were stressing is that sometimes our scholars are not kind to each other; okay? And so that's why we partnered with the Harvard Graduate School of Education with this program called Making Caring Common.

And so weekly, scholars are using this curriculum to not only connect with one another, but to make additional connections with their project managers.

And the great thing about the program is as they create a community within those classes, as we get to the last phase of if, then we can really start to focus on social change, which is something that we need at ASK.

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And then you can see on there a lot of the changes and things that our equity council has brought back. Our focus this year is making a better space for our indigenous populations. And that's what our advisements will be based on for this year.

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And then, of course, the Black Education Act, not only are we doing the required courses, we are going above and beyond. We've done an additional training with a professor from UNM who has come out and trained with us.

And then two of our members of our equity council have actually gone to Dr. Hollie's CLRI training provided by PED. And we hope to work with him next year to work directly with our school.

So thank you for your time. At this point, I'm going to pass it on to our CFO, Mr. Pat Kelly.

MR. PATRICK KELLY: Good morning. Just to talk a little bit about the significant changes that have gone on on the financial aspect of The ASK Academy.

I'm sitting here. The school, before me, contracted for their business management services. The COO that had been with the school from day one competition, and the national competition was in a month. So how do we change our CTE -- our State CTE budget in a short period of time to be able to adapt to what these kids are doing? So I think that's a big benefit.

You know, we've got a strategic planning initiative at our school to build sustainable infrastructure that lasts beyond the people that are in this room now.

We have a living five-year budget model that, you know, even if a teacher comes to me and says, "I'm going to apply for my level three license," I'm plugging that in to see how that affects our future, you know, how does that impact us down the road.

And then one thing which was incredibly nice is I inherited a very clean financial school. like, clean audits. The Vigil Group did a great job.

So as I came into this position, I was, like, well, how do I not screw this up; right? But also how do I take this to another level? How do I grow this position?

And one of the main things that I brought was kind of digitizing the financial office, like,

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retired in early 2023. And so the structure changed from a COO and created a new position as a CFO to where it absorbs some of the duties, the financial duties of that position. And then some of the compliance pieces filtered over to the CEO position.

Having an in-house business manager, I believe, has been a benefit to the school. We are able to have these real-time conversations of when math is needed. We're not -- there's not a delay in, "Hey, can we bring in a math coach?"

It's a real-time decision that we have in our weekly meetings.

One major change that we've done is I've -- my philosophy is to disseminate budget control to the people that are the end users of that budget. So in regards -- like Ms. Vazquez, she's in charge of the instructional materials budget. I'm not an expert on what those materials need to be, but she is. So I just make sure she purchases things in compliance with getting a P.O. and those things. But I give the power to those kind of departments.

Same thing with the CTE and the robotics teams. Like, this is a perfect example of how they did a state competition and qualified for a national you know, going away from the paper and filing and all that stuff to kind of grow it to a digitizing model.

And so one thing I've done in that is we've completely -- approvals and transactions are all digital. They're all in our financial system. It gives more transparency to our staff, to our board. It's -- it's making me replaceable, which is a good thing, I think.

But it -- it just shows, you know, that we can move things quicker. It gives more, you know, strength to the financial system and the sustainability of it.

But one thing I want to do with that is maintain the audit results and the transparency that we get from those.

And how I do that is, you know, we just continue to -- sorry -- to have the whole staff buy into this, which has been a great thing.

Can we jump to the next slide? Sorry. Yeah.

With our audits, my goal has always been to -- even though we're having clean audits, I know we're not -- every transaction is in compliance. So how are we tracking those transactions that may --

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you know, we didn't deposit within 24 hours and they just didn't get pulled in the audit and those kind of things.

So we're gathering our data and analyzing it, saying, "Is this a perfect storm of our back-up's back-up calling in sick that day?"

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"Or is it just -- is there a flaw in our policies?

So we've been able to kind of grow that way financially.

Then the last thing is just kind of our cash balance has continued to grow over the term of the charter, which is a surprising thing when I've looked at it, because I've got the impression from staff that we're spending more money than we ever have, we're meeting the needs better than we ever have. But yet we're saving money.

So as I look at that and I kind of say how are we doing that, you know, these strategic planning meetings, we're efficiently and effectively using our operational dollars. But we're also using federal dollars more effectively. We're supplementing some of those programs.

We had a backlog of federal funds because we had so much COVID money. We're able to use our addition, we have a position for a career educator.

And we have worked to formalize our policies and procedures, including the responsibilities and roles of our officers. We're really committed to being in -- to staying in our lane for our specific role of fiduciary responsibility and of recruiting and hiring and, then supervising and supporting our CEO.

But we also work at being in relationship with the school. So we've created positions and responsibilities that every director is engaged, and we are truly a working board.

We have liaison positions, so we're connected to the equity council, the foundation, to the academic work, and to our parent group.

So with that, and with our work, even on our agendas for our monthly meetings, we bring in project managers and scholars to make presentations. We rotate between middle school and high school so that we get to see what project-based learning looks like and hear from scholars and project managers themselves to keep us informed for what we do.

We're committed to transparency and clarity in all of our actions. And while there is always work to be done, we get to do a lot of

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federal funds now to grow things. It's kind of an exciting time to be here, because I feel like we're meeting the needs of our community better than we have before, but we're continuing to grow that balance, which is ultimately hoping to get us to a goal of expanding our campus, building a gymnasium, you know, a cafeteria, you know, completing the whole campus.

So it's an exciting time to be here. I am fortunate to have joined this team, and I'm excited in five years to kind of report on how we've grown, how these initiatives financially have impacted our school.

So thank you.

And I'll turn it over to Dr. Forrester for the governing council.

DR. JEANNE FORRESTER: Thank you. And just briefly, in the 15 years that the school has been in existence, the governing council has been committed to creating more sustainability and growth in the way that it operates. And I'm happy to tell you we're fully operational. All our seats are filled.

Our directors represent the two areas that our career paths are established for. And, in

celebrating.

Thank you.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Thank you, Dr. Forrester.

So as our presentation draws to a close. We have one more video to show you. And it kind of takes us back to where the academy started 15 years ago. Being an original hire of the academy as a part-time New Mexico history teacher, somehow I managed to work myself to the privilege of sitting here before you today. It all started with relationships. And I still think that is the lifeblood of our success, relationships, getting to know our staff, our colleagues, and, most

And we'll finish with Ms. Vollmar and her video.

(Video is played.)

importantly, our scholars.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Thank you for your time this morning. It was an honor and privilege to be here and to share with you all the successes of The ASK Academy, and thank you for your consideration.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Comments? How many people do we have?

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MS. MELISSA BROWN: We have ten people for public comment, three online and seven in the room.

So we will start with the people in -- online with Quincy Clark.

Please remember to spell your last name for our court reporter and try to keep your comments limited to two minutes.

FROM THE PUBLIC: Yes. My name is Quincy, last name, Clark. C-l-a-r-k. I'm in favor. I'm a parent of two students at The ASK Academy, one senior, one tenth-grader.

My -- I want to start by saying I have two different types of students. My daughter is a Scholar Government president, HOSA president, National Honor Society president at The ASK Academy. She's also a 4.2 grade point average, currently as of today.

The other side of that, I have a student that is dual-sensory. He's hearing-impaired and visually-impaired. He also has a 4.0 grade point average as of today.

I have -- I have my daughter. She -- she pushes to strive and pushes herself. My son, on the other hand, he needs pushing. He needs some motivation. And he's gotten it at The ASK Academy.

forgot to ask -- oops. I didn't mean to promote you to the panel. Sorry. I forgot to ask, if you all online could turn on your cameras, that would be lovely to be able to see.

Next we have Kristina Calder.

FROM THE PUBLIC: Hello. My name is Kristina Calder. My son is a scholar at The ASK Academy. This is his third year. My back history with him is prior, we were home learning, homeschooling, and so I was very hesitant to put him into a more public schooling. However, he was very wanting, adamant on wanting to do that.

So we chose The ASK Academy. And I have been completely happy. And he is just going to town, thriving. He very much has become confident in himself.

The project managers, I believe, have allowed him to change, adjust, add. He loves to add to projects. And they have allowed him to do that. They've listened to his comments and his suggestions, and they take those very much to heart. So he feels confident in his knowledge and confident in himself to speak up.

On the other side, I am a very active member of the parent support committee, and I

The ASK Academy has worked hard to adjust to his disabilities. Like I said, he's dual -- dual; blind and legally deaf. And they made accommodations. And I don't believe my son would be where he's at today if it wasn't for the school and the leadership roles that they have with the class managers and the students that he's around. They motivate him quite well.

My daughter and my son have both been at the middle school, and from sixth grade currently through high school. My daughter will graduate this year. She's already bugging me for financing for college. She's getting ready all the paperwork, and she hasn't even graduated yet.

I'm so excited for her. And I'm hoping in the next two years, my son will be in the same position.

Like I said, I've got to push him. My daughter eats it up every day. And it makes me proud that the school has pushed my kids and helped my kids.

And that's the comments I have for today for The ASK Academy. They wouldn't be where they're at without them. Thank you.

MS. MELISSA BROWN: Thank you so much. I

appreciate the school. We have access to the administration. If we have comments or concerns or ideas, they're very open to listening to us, working with us.

100 percent, the school is open to parents to come and visualize what's happening in the classrooms. We're very active. So I'm definitely in favor of the renewal. And I appreciate The ASK, not only for my son, but for myself as well.

Thank you.

MS. MELISSA BROWN: Thank you very much. Next we have Heidi Laughlin.

FROM THE PUBLIC: Good morning. My name is Heidi Laughlin. Last name is L-a-u-g-h-l-i-n.

I am the proud parent of two ASK Academy scholars currently in the seventh and eighth grade. Both of my girls have attended ASK for their entire middle school journey, and at least one of them, if not both, plans to stay at ASK for high school.

I'm here today to express my full support for The ASK Academy charter renewal. The ASK Academy's project-based learning approach has not only helped my children grow academically, but also encouraged critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

For example, in their Medical Detectives course, my daughter has explored illnesses, diseases, recovery plans, and cures by transforming their classroom into a lifelike clinic, where parents acted as patients while the scholars listened to their symptoms and diagnosed them.

In New Mexico History, scholars brought New Mexico's history and culture to life by creating a living map of the Land of Enchantment. The scholars researched and built 91 landmarks that everyone could experience by taking a walking tour of the state.

In Green Architecture, my learners -- my daughters investigated and outlined a building plan to build an earth ship using renewable resources to design an eco-friendly and sustainable home, learning about energy conservation and reducing their environmental footprint.

In algebra, my daughter led a team to design a more accessible entryway for one of the buildings. This project integrated math, scaling, and lessons on the Americans with Disability Act.

In addition to these academic projects, my children also participate in The ASK Academy Creative Writing Club, the Junior National Honor they're also easy to access as well.

One of the professors recently reached out to me about something regarding one of my scholars and took the time to walk me through, "Hey, Ms. Bango, this is how you get into the Google Classroom. This is how you do this," step by step. And he gave me some very personalized feedback for my scholar, which was huge -- honestly, was a huge insight for me, and I really appreciated that.

One of the other things that, as a parent support committee member, is that we can appreciate how the actual academic team and the leadership team is also very accessible to any feedback we have. They are willing to hear us out. They're great about communication.

So, overall, I think it's just -- like, again, hearing the relationships of the school are really something to take on, because relationships is something that, as professionals, we all know are really important to build.

Thank you.

MS. MELISSA BROWN: Next is one of your children, I presume. Logan Bango.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello, everybody. Can you hear me fine?

Society. And they've attended school dances, movie nights, the annual Fall Festival. These activities demonstrate how this charter creates unique opportunities beyond the classroom, encouraging personal growth and development for every student.

The positive impact of The ASK Academy stretches beyond individual students. It benefits families in the wider community. I strongly urge you to approve the renewal of this exceptional school's charter so that even more students can experience the same transformative education my children have.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
MS. MELISSA BROWN: Thank you, Heidi.
Next, we have, in the room, Giselle Bango.
If you'll come up here, please.

FROM THE FLOOR: That's a tough person to follow. Geez. Okay.

So my name is Giselle Bango. My last name is B-a-n-g-o. I am here as a parent of two scholars and also as one of the PSC members. And part of what I love about ASK is the relationships. I think you're going to hear that as a theme over and over.

The staff is very accessible. Whenever anything comes up, they'll reach out to you. And

My name is Logan Bango, B-a-n-g-o.

And I like The ASK Academy, because as someone with ADHD, the teachers will help make sure that I do my stuff. And I have a very bad habit of procrastinating, so they make sure I get stuff done, and they'll push me, like Mr. Clark had said.

I have a lot of like -- I have a lot, I guess, of not wanting to do stuff. So they want to make sure I do it and will actually -- force me to help me study and make sure I do my work.

I feel that they actually care about us compared to other schools, where it feels like all the teachers are just robots. These people will actually talk to us, provide supports. And they'll actually come up to us and see what we need help with.

For example I had an essay. And my teacher helped me do it last week during Friday support, and he gave me some revision advice for it. It just feels like they actually care about us and don't just shrug it off like we're just some other students they've been teaching for years. They actually will talk to us and what we need help with and will actually listen to us compared to other teachers.

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That's what I had to say. Thank you, guys.

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halls.

SECRETARY BECK: He's not alone in procrastination.

MS. MELISSA BROWN: Chase Bango.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Chase Bango. B-a-n-g-o. What I really like about The ASK Academy is the community that has been built. I know most of the eighth-graders and some of the seventh-graders, even though I don't go to -- I don't have any classes with the seventh-graders. And there are a lot of eighth-graders I don't have classes with. So I'm friends with most of them -well, "friends" is -- I know a lot of them, like,

So I can just talk to anyone, basically. And that's, like, for a lot of people. There's only -- I don't -- only a few people I can't name if I see them. But it's, like, I really like the size of the school, because it makes it so that you don't feel crowded when walking through the

And I also really like how the teachers encourage this community, because they have us -they usually let us have, like, free seating or seat

S-k-i-l-l-m-a-n. I'm here in strong support of ASK Academy. I have two stepchildren who are scholars there.

I think the most striking thing is when you step on The ASK Academy campus, it's the culture. And you can see it in the way the students interact with one another. You can see it in the way the teachers and administrators interact with one another, as well as the students.

And how does this impact the kids? Well, these two scholars that I support, they have different kinds of struggles. As Signe just told you, she has dyslexia. And Theis is very gifted but has attention struggles.

And both of them struggled very mightily at previous schools and are really thriving at ASK. And I attribute a lot of that to the culture, because the culture empowers the teachers to make the minor adjustments, as well as the significant adjustments, by being able to communicate with one another and communicate with the administration.

The second point I'd like to make is that I've been working at a small biotech that we've been growing for the last 24 years in -- here in Santa Fe, and hiring people with just these kinds of

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by our friends for the assigned seating. And this,

like, encourages the community to be built with our friends and other people that we don't know,

because, well, we have to talk to them because we're usually doing projects, because it's a project-based

learning school. So that's why I really like The

ASK Academy.

That's all I have to say. Thank you. MS. MELISSA BROWN: Okay. Taking a stab

here. But the consensus is Siné [ph] Madison? Okay. Sorry. Got it wrong.

FROM THE FLOOR: My name is Signe Madsen, M-a-d-s-e-n.

I'm in seventh grade, and I really like the school because all the project managers are really nice and they let me turn in late.

And they help me with my dyslexia, because they know what I need for dyslexia, and they let me use the tools that I need. But in other schools, they just put me in a SAT learning program, which didn't help me at all.

MS. MELISSA BROWN: Thank you very much.

23 Jeff Skillman.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning,

25 Commissioners. My name is Jeff Skillman, backgrounds, working at the interface of biomedical and engineering.

And the more we can educate people in these kinds of skills in New Mexico, the better off we are, both as an economy and as a culture. Thank you.

MS. MELISSA BROWN: Thank you very much. Robin Almanzar. Don't know how to put the accents on your last name.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning, Commissioners. My name is Robin Almanzar. A-l-m-a-n-z-a-r. I have a proud scholar of The ASK Academy. She was one of the first ones when they started -- they opened up their sixth grade. She comes from a Catholic school. So I wanted to continue her education. That was very important to

So I did some research and told my daughter about this school. And she also researched it with me. And I actually took her out of the sixth grade from St. Thomas, and she went to the ASK Academy.

And we are very proud of the education and so excited that she has learned so much, because. like I said, that was one of the main reasons. A

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lot of times when you come from a private school, we feel like you have to pay for that education. So we were so excited to find a charter school that gave that education without us having to pay that high price.

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It's close to us. It's convenient. And my daughter has excelled tremendously. She is an A-plus student. She's on the honor roll also. She is in the TSA. She -- one of the things I really love is that when she comes home, she shares that she is so comfortable with the project managers.

She can talk to them on any level if anything comes up, and they will find answers for her. When there are programs that come out, like there was a program about the Treasury Department, and they could -- they want them to apply for stuff. They help them. It was, like, an internship. And it was for all the schools in Sandoval County, for seniors and juniors.

My daughter was encouraged by the principal to apply. She wrote a phenomenal essay, and she got picked. She is learning so much, even just from that program.

And they have only picked one senior and one junior from all those schools. So I feel like

The courses are engaging and require critical thinking. The project managers are highly capable and caring. The small class size allows for more personalized education and communication. And the style of learning is active and engaging.

Last year, as a high school freshman, Cameron wanted to attend our local district high school, Sue Cleveland. Although he had more elective and extracurricular options, I watched as he lost interest in school and struggled to maintain grades, even though the work was not difficult for him.

At the first week back at ASK, Cameron came hope excited about the discussions he was having at school. The ASK Academy is a place where Cameron and other bright students can be themselves. It is a place where it's cool to be smart. And it is cool to be smart.

But that's the culture.

Cameron also enjoys sports such as tennis and basketball and excels as a violinist.

ASK is interested in each scholar as a person, as you've heard other people talk about, and they've been helpful and accommodating in his efforts in these other activities.

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they have really helped her and given her a pathway. And I am totally in favor of the school. She would not be where she is today if we didn't continue that education. And they are helping her get that.

Thank you.

MS. MELISSA BROWN: Thank you very much. Finally, we have Tamara Jones.

FROM THE FLOOR: It's Tamara Jones.

I think you're kind of getting a picture, so this may be redundant. Oh. J-o-n-e-s. Tamara Jones.

So you may have heard this. You're getting a picture overall. But if you don't mind, I'll read the thoughts I had written down.

So I'm here today. Mr. Garcia had invited me to share our experience at The ASK Academy. I'm the mother of a tenth-grade scholar. And we live in Rio Rancho.

Cameron, my son, is 15 years old and has chosen engineering as his career pathway. He is particularly interested in aerospace engineering.

Cameron has had a gifted IEP since elementary school and has required extra supports and enrichment to meet his educational needs. We

feel very fortunate to have found The ASK Academy.

Lastly, I just want to emphasize that one size does not fit all. Young people's backgrounds, minds, and personalities are diverse. Our experience at public high school was not one that we would have continued.

I'm grateful for The ASK Academy. When students are supported with diverse educational opportunities, it allows them to develop into the best version of themselves, both now and in the future.

I'm happy to speak with you here today, albeit briefly, in support of my son's exceptional school. Thank you for your time.

MS. MELISSA BROWN: That concludes Public Comment.

SECRETARY BECK: Great presentation. Great thoughts. I just got to put it on the record that Mr. Kelly was my assistant coach 20 years ago this year when we won our first state championship. And he also played basketball for UNM, by the way. Just FYI.

Great stuff. Really super stuff.

I -- I kind of think of Commissioner Burt and Commissioner Carrillo in terms of the expedited renewal. I certainly hear Commissioner Burt. This

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is -- it's great. And it helps us all. But I also hear Mr. Carrillo where we love having you guys come up and tell us your stories.

I'm torn. I'm the diplomat. I'm torn on that.

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I've referred to Mr. Skillman and Ms. Jones about it's highly evident that you have a great culture going on there, the first school I've heard of that doesn't say "teachers" and "students." And nobody even slips on that, you know. It is scholars and project managers. That's wonderful. I love that.

The other thing I like is that you are head-on addressing your math issues. You know, there are schools that have problems but don't have a solid plan to be able to attack those problems. You obviously recognized where your weakness occurred, and you are doing the right thing by attacking that head-on. So I think that's wonderful.

The other little piece that I think is great, too, is you said in your professional development, you work really hard on rubrics.

fake -- honestly, in my mind, I'm thinking "I'm

You know, I was a teacher for 13 years at Sandia High School, AP U.S. Government and Politics and engineering, stuff like that. Do you track your students in any way after they graduate to see their outcomes after high school?

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: We are in the process of developing, through an alumni association, a more consistent method for tracking. It is something that we definitely need to do more of to get a better understanding of exactly what fields they're going into.

SECRETARY BECK: I'd be curious about that. Because it seems like you got a real successful track, and I'd be interested to see how many docs you have and how many engineers and things like that. That would be pretty interesting to hear.

I'm glad you're an ex-history teacher. My question is what do you do for civics? How do you teach civics amongst all these other STEM classes?

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: We obviously meet the New Mexico State standards by teaching New Mexico History, U.S. History, and then Government and Econ. We offer the AP electives.

whole -- you know, when I was going to school you

One of the things we do at the academy is

sat in a row, and, in social studies, you took a lot

of notes, and then you'd take that test like every

Is it as engaging as dissecting an

project managers through our professional

alligator or building a robot? It depends. It can

I think with the support that we offer our

development weekly we really see creative ways to

deliver historical content in a hands-on approach

But thanks to the project-based learning approach, especially when I was teaching, I remember, as Ms. Vazquez had discussed, that

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and all that. And for the 13 years, I never really figured out how to do a good rubric, you know? I'd

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four weeks. we try to make history come alive and give our scholars a hands-on approach to using the standards

and the curriculum in their classrooms.

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for our scholars; so...

be. I think it can be.

SECRETARY BECK: Okay. So just want to make sure that's covered for sure. Here are two other questions I have.

I noticed on the Vista report that your college and career was at 36.2 percent, where the State average is a 53.6. Do you have an explanation for that or what's going on with that?

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: I do, Commissioner. The data is incorrect. And there's a note -- and

faking this, I'm really faking this." And I would love to have had professional development on a good-quality rubric and how you do it.

So I know that helps your scholars. I know that helps your project managers, you know. So that's great.

A few little questions here.

No. 1: What's your -- if it's a four-day schedule, what's your start time and end time? I'm just curious.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: First period begins at 8:00 and dismissal is at 4:00 p.m. It's an eight-hour day, four days a week.

SECRETARY BECK: Does that impact athletics, by any chance?

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Excuse me. Athletics in their home district.

SECRETARY BECK: Yeah. In Rio Rancho, Cleveland, yeah. Okay. I was curious on that.

Real quick, do you ever track your scholars after they -- it sounds like we've got a lot of potential doctors in med school and pre-med

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I'm not -- yeah. Please don't misunderstand. I'm not suggesting your data is incorrect. I'm suggesting that the information that's being cited, that data is incorrect. And there's a note on that on the site.

Ms. Vazquez has put in a lot of effort in very friendly discussions about understanding how the data worked out that way. And I've had those discussions as well. The data is not correct.

SECRETARY BECK: Okay. Based on everything I've heard for the last 45 minutes or hour, I would think that that's probably not correct.

On the equity issue, you know, you talk about a little bit of -- I think you were referring to a bullying kind of issue or a -- issue amongst students. I would think that this is a highly competitive program, and so that would be naturally, you know, a situation where you might run into that. I appreciate you hitting that head-on.

The one that I'm curious about is the indigenous efforts you're going to make. I'm looking at the demographics here. And you are 3 percent Native American. And you do have a lot of Native American communities around you, needless --

that were going to recommend to the CEO. But the first one is is to have a stipend position within the school who will be making those connections with those liaisons to provide more of the education, because I think that's limiting.

We did bring up transportation. But again, we had (audio distortion) say to us, "We have the funding. We can make that happen."

So that might be a constraint for other scholars, but not so much the indigenous population around us.

SECRETARY BECK: Yes. Because I think that's a pretty important effort to put forth with that. And, you know, we sometimes talk up here about what we call a chilling effect. And, you know, that can be an impediment to, you know, some of the people that would want to come on board to where you are.

Because I understand you're six through twelve, so you get a lot of students probably in sixth grade that need some remedial work in order to be able to be successful there.

So -- but I think that's a -- I think that's a worthy endeavor, because you have a lot of opportunity with those indigenous populations to

you know, Zia and Santa Ana, Sandia, you know, a lot of -- do you have transportation?

Is there any transportation mode there? MR. EDWARD GARCIA: No, we don't, Commissioner.

SECRETARY BECK: Are you thinking about doing that? Or is that in anybody's plans, by any chance, to be able to connect with those -- the pueblos or anything?

MS. JANISSE VAZQUEZ: So I'm glad you brought that up. That was other main conversation in our equity council meeting earlier this week.

And they actually have funding to provide transportation to the academy. What -- some of the liaisons are telling us -- because we're trying to recruit from the pueblos -- they -- I don't want to say discourage. But right now their main concern is our passing rate for courses is 70 percent and above. And our message is that's right, and they can certainly meet those standards like any other scholar.

So it's more about understanding what we have to provide to lift them so that they can be successful within our school.

And so the advisement -- and we had five

really thrive in what you're doing.

Okay. Well, it's wonderful. It's great. Great to see Pat again, for sure. I fully intend to come visit there sometime. I'd like to do that. And I thank you guys for coming up.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Thank you, Commissioner.

THE CHAIR: So thank you. I mean, this is absolutely a school that anyone certainly can support. And I really appreciate the level of support and thought that went into your COVID years, because we have so many schools -- across the nation, because of COVID, we couldn't test. We don't know what they did.

I went to the NACSA conference in '23, and there was a school district that was there that did a presentation and said, "Our kids did better during that time, because these are the supports, and this is what we did. And, yes, it was tough to do testing, but we figured it out, and we were -- maybe it wasn't as accurate as you may want it, but we were -- you know, we were getting scores, and we could build supports."

And you persevered through that better than certainly most. And I really do appreciate

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How long -- what's your -- how long are your class periods during the day?

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Sixty-eight minutes.

THE CHAIR: Okay. I did project-based learning. So -- and I know how hard this is. I know how hard this is to do it with fidelity and how hard it is to do it right. And I was fortunate -- I was doing it within a big school that wasn't PBL. So it was so much challenging -- and history teacher.

So, you know, and did a lot of co-teaching with an English teacher. But we did it -- we had 90-minute classes. So that -- you know, it help --I did it in the 60. When we did it to the 90, it was like I was in heaven, because you could do so much.

So I appreciate. And I know when you do it and you do it well, you get the results that you get, because the student engagement is just so much higher.

And the sense of community that you've built in the school is just incredible. And it's one -- you're one of those schools that you say, "I want everyone to be able to -- this is what school

should feel like for all kids," you know. And it

shouldn't just be these very fortunate that get to

there's not transportation -- and I know you touched on that with the indigenous communities. But with the entire community as a whole, it's a barrier to many families when -- and I -- so what do you do about breakfast?

So breakfast is -- because I thought it was a State mandate that you had to do free breakfast.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: No. No. If you have --

THE CHAIR: Isn't that -- am I wrong? DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: Chair Gipson, the mandate is if you serve lunch, you also have to serve breakfast.

THE CHAIR: Thanks. Okay. So to me, that's -- the ability to be able to offer this programming to -- because I -- kind of hit on it in a way, that I fully support the -- the concept that you have to pass by 70. And I understand you've got the supports to help the students.

But the messaging maybe isn't getting out to the community for those supports, as you mentioned, so that there's folks out there that are saying, "My kid can't go there," you know.

And they -- "My kid can't go there because

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1 the -- you know, the lunch opportunities aren't

2 there," because they need the availability of the

free lunch program.

go to this school that get this experience. Not that in many -- I mean, we're very fortunate because the overwhelming majority of our schools, that's what the families are coming and

saying in public comment. "We've built a community. They care about our students. They know who our children are, not just within the framework of that class time period.

And it is this incredibly strong community." And Commissioner Beck asked about the transportation. And I saw that you didn't do transportation. And you don't do food?

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: That's correct. We don't have -- we don't have a cafeteria, necessarily, to offer food services. So what we do have is a food truck on campus Monday through Wednesday. And then our parent support committee offers Dion's pizza on Thursdays.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Because when I look at -- when I look at your demographics, you fall substantially short with economically disadvantaged and your students with disabilities. And I'm just wondering if the fact that there's not food and

And, therefore, also, the breakfast, because we know that kids learn when they're not hungry. And that's certainly a common unfortunate problem in New Mexico.

So that's my only somewhat concern with this, you know, that there's not that -- I wish more kids would see this school as that opportunity to be able to go there, to be able to, you know, engage in this incredibly successful program, which I guess leads to the question, too, what are you looking at in terms of the next five years in terms of expansion?

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Expansion around the food program? Or --

THE CHAIR: No, your student population, your building, so that maybe that would also help with you being able to provide food services better.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Okay. So when we look at our expansion options, we are currently in the process of adding another building to our property, which would include a cafeteria and a gymnasium. We're currently looking at cost and design to

production@litsupport.com

possibly have something like a warming kitchen there, which may give us some more flexibility to participate in different lunch programs.

When it comes to our enrollment number, we're going to stay right around this 550 to 600 number.

But I do see your point, Madam Chair, about, well, with these lunch options, it may change the dynamics of that lottery process for students who may say, "Oh, well, there is a free lunch and breakfast or a transportation option going forward."

So over the next five years, that's the path we would like to get on with the additional facilities all on the same property, which will given us some more flexibility.

THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. Yeah. Did you want to go? Okay. Alan wants to go also. I didn't know if your hand was up or not.

So Commissioner Burt and then Commissioner Brauer and then Commissioner Carrillo.

COMMISSIONER BURT: Hey. Good morning, Dr. Garcia and ASK Academy team. It's good to see you all.

I mean, yeah, this -- it's -- this is -- once again, I appreciate schools like this, because

see internally with project-based learning and the outcomes that you're seeing on those rubrics that are developed internally? And is that -- like, do you see -- if it gets -- you know, trends across that, does that equal trends across your assessment results?

Or can you talk about any correlation between how the project-based learning -- and does it correlate to those outcomes you're seeing on the State assessment?

MS. JANISSE VAZQUEZ: Certainly. Great question. So I think often when we think of project-based learning, we forget that there is a standard that has to align with each project. Sometimes in a more traditional school, which I worked at for many years, some of these projects are the fun projects that teachers are interested in and don't necessarily equate to, "Hey, I learned this content as required by the State."

And so here, when we are creating these projects, the first thing we're looking at is those standards. What content will these scholars gain? But, then, again, along with that content, what other skills? And the great thing about project-based learning -- right? -- as was stated is

it makes the job as an authorizer really easy to be able to continue supporting a renewal, no

able to continue supporting a renewal, no conditions. So it is just going to be questions that I have.

And I do appreciate -- Dr. Garcia walked me around the school. I got to see some of the kids, the classrooms, the robotics -- some of the cool equipment they have in their school. I mean, it is incredible and a great benefit to my district and to the community around here.

Okay. So one of the things I want to -this is actually, like, a really positive thing -is oftentimes I'll hear people -- or schools who
really have that focus on project-based learning,
they -- oftentimes I'll hear them struggle with
accountability because I -- they -- they -- I just
hear that, you know, it just doesn't quite translate
to standardized assessments, and, you know, it's
hard to capture the learning in project-based
learning, and it doesn't really translate to, you
know, outcomes on the State assessment or things
like that, which, obviously, is not the case for
your school at all.

Can you talk a little bit about how you see -- or is there any correlation between what you

that you can work with so many different contents to bring it to life.

So, regardless, if you're doing PBL in a science course or in a math course, you are going to bring in communication. You're going to bring in reading and writing, and so many other skills that they will then showcase on those assessments. So there is a 100 percent correlation between PBL and our scores.

COMMISSIONER BURT: Okay. I appreciate that, because I do think -- would like to explain, "Yeah, focus on the standards, teach the standards, teach them however you want."

Honestly, that's how I do the autonomy of charter schools. Teach the standards however you want to do it, and then it should just show up -- you shouldn't have to stress about the test. Those outcomes just naturally show up when they get assessed generally.

So I appreciate that. And I look forward to being able to use you as an example of heavy project-based learning. That's the primary method of instruction, so much so that their teachers are called project managers; right? Like, just to reinforce, which also, as a former English teacher,

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you know, language is so important.

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And so it does set an attitude and tone around the relationship of, you know, teachers and students being project managers and scholars. Just the -- the language alone really is indicative of the demeanor of the school and the students. And it makes sense, and I appreciate it.

Okay. So my only -- the one thing that I saw in your data -- I mean, it's not concern, because it's high. But it's the one space where the district is outperforming ASK Academy. And that's in your graduation rates.

So can you talk a little bit about -which, once again, you're not super low by any means. But, also, I mean, 2022 is 79 percent, which is barely above the State average and significantly lower than Rio Rancho schools, which I won't -- can you talk a little bit about -- and then I did see your five-year graduation rate go up pretty well.

So I don't know if it's just the higher expectations and the passing classes? Or maybe I shouldn't give pretend reasons and let you tell me about your graduation rates.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Sure. So there are a couple of different reasons. I think one of the

scholars as well in a positive way.

Also, I would just want to, for the record, make clear. I do not have a doctorate in education. I do have a master's degree in educational leadership that I am proud of. And I will consider a doctorate down the road. But I do not have one yet.

COMMISSIONER BURT: I'm putting it into the universe then. Okay.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Create the positive energy.

COMMISSIONER BURT: So that's what I -- I do think a lot of times context does help with numbers, and especially because it -- like, to me, generally, a school like yours, I would expect all of your seniors to be graduat- -- like, I don't see kids dropping out of this school generally.

So -- and I know the shared accountability is what your model of graduation rates is, what you're kind of alluding to. So if a student is in your school senior year, how many of those kids are you generally graduating?

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Oh. When they start --

COMMISSIONER BURT: Yeah. Or if they

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things, when you take a look at the academy, as Madam Chair mentioned, our pass rate of 70 percent impacts sometimes students' plans after their sophomore year as to what may be next.

When we look at supporting our scholars, that support starts in the sixth grade on up. But there comes a point where, when you look at those electives, as I mentioned earlier in the presentation, sometimes there's a realization that, if biology wasn't for me, I don't see how Medical Detectives works next; like, that's just those conversations that are being had.

I also think when you look at our graduation rate, it's not always impacted by something negative. Sometimes there are scholars that are excelling in athletics that do decide that they need to go to a Cleveland or a Rio Rancho to be in their district for their zero-hour sports and those different things as they become juniors and seniors in later years.

That is why we do see that increase in the fifth year, and there is a little bit of a difference.

So it's a mixed bag. It's not always something negative. It's sometimes what's best for continue all the way through, they're there senior year, what does that graduation rate look like of students who kind of stay at ASK and don't leave? Do you know?

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Yeah, sure. With our senior class, there may be a small number that may not and may be pushed to the fifth-year plan. What we're talking about are seniors that started on August 1st.

Let's say there's 55. We will get 50 to 51 across the stage for that year, and then two or three maybe on the fifth-year plan or an Edgenuity course over the summer, where we'll do a graduation ceremony for them in August or something like that.

COMMISSIONER BURT: Yeah. Okay. That makes sense. Yeah, that was it. I mean, once again, I'm just -- this is a school I'm incredibly proud of. Ditto everything that Chair Gipson said about the -- you know, the perception of families feeling like they have that opportunity to be at the school, that it's not so elite for them to be able to attend as well.

Because I know those kids that are furthest from opportunity could benefit maybe the most from a school like yours that really actualizes

their dreams and turns it into reality. And so just making sure every family in the area really feels like they have a space as long as their number gets drawn in the lottery; right?

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So not wanting to preclude anyone from wanting to even apply to your lottery because they feel like they can't fit in this some way or another.

So I'm glad the equity council is looking at that, considering that, and providing recommendations, really, through that lens, which is the point of them. And I know the administration and the governing board are very receptive to recommendations and grateful for that as well.

So congratulations on another great five years. To have that clean slate this last -- you know, this last school year, you know, just complete greens, makes -- once again, thank you for making the job so easy on this side to be able to confidently support you into the future.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Thank you. THE CHAIR: Thanks. Commissioner Brauer. COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Thank you, ASK team.

24 I'm in between microphones. I'm not sure which one 25 I should use, kind of like how you all feel.

with disabilities as part of your school as is seen in Rio Rancho Public Schools.

I think that's a fair goal to make that happen. And the moral imperative that I feel is that when I look at your most recent data with economically disadvantaged students especially, you're tracking above the State and above Rio Rancho in almost all three of the areas. I think one, you're above in math for economically disadvantaged, but slightly below Rio Rancho. So above the State, slightly below. But you're above the State and Rio Rancho proficiency scores in economically disadvantaged students.

With Native American students, the only one that's not masked, you're above State averages for that as well.

So there is a moral obligation there. I think that I would -- and it's awesome for you all to do true tribal consultation and go beyond what's asked or -- there's very little that's being asked for schools to reach out to tribal leaders and do consultation.

And so true partnership and true co-creation I think is what really is the -- the request and the spirit behind consultation. So I'm

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Thanks so much for the work you all do. So this is the first time in my -- in my work that I actually work with a person that works at my farm that all three of his children go to your school. And so I have had a chance to work with him and hear about why he chose ASK. He speaks very highly of the impact that you all as leaders have on the welcoming his -- his -- his kiddos into your school. And just the overall communication and the focus in on the academics is something that really drives him and his wife to have his children go to your school.

And this is a person who I entrust a lot with -- you know, because he's doing the work I normally do right now so I can be up here with ya'll. So that means a lot to me.

I think your school -- and as Commissioner Burt cut to the chase, five years, I wish we could do an extended time with you all, but also an opportunity to think about, like, what's next. So I have a couple of questions. I won't beat around the bush. I'll echo the Chair and Commissioner Burt. I think there is a moral obligation for y'all to think about how do you increase -- at least get to the level of percentage of students of economically disadvantaged, Native American students, students

really -- thank you very much for taking that on.

So one question I have -- well -- and the other thing I just want to say, I think it's awesome that 70 percent is the passing. Because, you know, that's -- that's what -- I -- you know, when we set an expectation like that, you reach that expectation.

So my first question is how many students do you feel don't reach that expectation and then kind of move on, versus -- it seems like almost everyone kind of meets that. I'm assuming there's not very many students who choose not to come back to you during their time because they're, like, failing out, or it's not the right fit.

So I wanted to just -- you mentioned a little bit earlier, Mr. Garc- -- or Dr. Garcia --

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: No, no, no.

COMMISSIONER BRAUER: -- some of the students choose, in tenth grade, to go to another school. But I'm assuming, just given what your enrollment is, it doesn't seem like -- that's not the norm. I wanted to hear a little bit more about -- is that an issue that students aren't meeting the bar? Or given all the resources that you're providing to them, you meet them where they

have are, and they excel?

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Sure. So our intention is always to meet all of our scholars where they are and to help them excel.

Now, there are situations where, like I mentioned, sometimes there is a situation where the scholar really is struggling with the content. Because of the way the electives are set up, it is heavy in STEM.

There are a few history teachers here. When I was a history teacher -- I was a history major in college, I have my bachelor's degree in history -- STEM was not my forte. It -- it was not.

So as you go through the process, and you see all of the work that a scholar may be putting in and finding success, they may say, you know, I'm really looking more for, like, the criminal justice classes or a social issues class, and that may be one reason why they decide to transfer.

There are other scenarios where the scholars may participate in band and orchestra. We heard from a parent earlier today where their scholar plays an instrument.

As you get into the upper grade levels in the district, there is more asked of you to where help them find the success that they want for whatever their future might be.

And then there are some of them that want to be the best history teacher in the world, and it's really hard to get them into flight and engineering.

COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Thank you for that. Thank for you that description.

The other question I had -- I love the work-based learning, or the internships that you have, the different models.

I was just curious. Why not Intel and why not Sandia?

I was just curious -- not to give you more work. But I didn't see them -- when I looked at your slide and your information -- actually, before I asked this question I did a Control-Find.

Am I missing this? Because it seems those two would be ones I would expect, because I know both of them have good programming with schools. So I just wanted to hear --

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: That's a problem in our engineering pathway. We're still working on that. When we're looking at the labs and Intel, the security problems to grant the shadowing is really

band practice happens during the school day now, and marching band has trips, and athletics has zero-hour practice, to where they look at it and they say, "Well, I'm doing all right here at ASK. But scholarship does pay college tuition, too, and there's an opportunity for me to do that somewhere else."

There are a handful of scholars where it may be difficult. The amount of extra help we're giving, the tutoring, the peer-to-peer tutoring, the one-on-one, where it's not the right fit, because mathematically, 70 is the pass score for credit. And the district, it's 60.

If you've been working really hard and you've got 64s and 67s, numerically, and you start to do the math towards graduation, it's, like, you know what? You can graduate on time.

So those are some of the challenges we face.

But I don't -- I shouldn't use the term "challenges." I think those are some of the realities that we deal with. And we do our best to meet each of those students where they are, whether it's to meet their needs and desires for the extracurricular or support them in the content to

difficult to get through security clearances to do that.

When we look at the bio-med shadowing, the scholars have an opportunity to see bio-med from top to bottom. It's not always about patient confidentiality, but it's about how are they structuring hospitals, layouts, operations of a hospital, procedures, radiology? We've been working into this concept of getting into the labs, whether it's through Sandia and through Intel and working with the Intel Corporation, which is right down the street from us.

It's been an uphill battle. But there's been a lot of effort in support with our governing council members and connections in some engineering firms. We are trying to expand that more on the engineering side as well; so...

 $\label{lem:commissioner} COMMISSIONER\ BRAUER:\ Okay.\ Thank\ you.$ Awe some. That's my only other question.

I wanted to say -- your scholars just left, and I should have started with this, to thank them for their courage and their smarts to come up and speak with us today. So, please -- I know that's on the record. But please share that from the Commission, that we really appreciate it.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Thank you.
COMMISSIONER BRAUER: We're used to having a full room this week of students, but they did their fair share. So thank you.

SECRETARY BECK: I want to say real quick, Pat, if you're having challenges with getting into Intel, my son-in-law is pretty high up there at Intel. He might be able to help this out a little bit. Contact me if you need to.

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Carrillo.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Thank you. Thank you very much for coming up. One of the families that left, I made a point to thank them, the Madsen family. Just -- it means so much to us when kids come, and parents, and talk to us. Big deal.

The -- so -- and when Ms. Burt was asking about the grad rate and everything else, I said, "Sure, it's higher in these districts." You can graduate with a D, you know. You can walk.

I mean, I know schools and districts that, to get kids across the stage during COVID, they basically just took F kids, had them take some Edgenuity to get a D so they could walk.

I mean, that's deplorable that we allowed that to happen. And I know factually that that

really upsetting everybody, because teachers are now having to learn a whole new thing, and parents are angry because the way something is done, they can't help their kid. Not that they could at your school, anyway, because it's so -- I couldn't.

But it's -- so thank you. Because it's the continuity. And it sounds like -- let's see. I know I wrote down your name, Dr. Forrester. It sounds like you have a good deal of continuity on your board. Is that -- okay.

Just -- you're never on our agenda. So anytime that's -- that's good, you know. So if we only get to see you once every five years, that's fantastic. And we'll see you at conferences. So I'm always happy to hear that.

So the lunch -- well, I'm -- I'm on your website right now. And there is the page that is the ASK STEM -- I'm laughing because you and Ohio State. "The ASK Academy" because Ohio State trademarked the "The" at Ohio State. "The ASK Academy."

So I'm on your website. And the page that, "Is the ASK STEM program right for your child?"

We've had some schools, one in

happened and schools that it happened at.

So I love that it's a C.

When I was on -- before I did this this last four years -- and Lord have mercy, I have four more -- I was on the school board for Santa Fe public schools. And I floated the idea for a while of eliminating D's in the district. Because that's been done in different places in the country. Just raise the damn bar.

People go -- they'll get better. They'll do what's expected of them. It didn't go over very well. Hence -- needless to say.

So, Ms. Vazquez, you -- I -- I am glad that, straightaway, you said, "No Flavor of the Month."

I mean, I see that as being a huge problem in public ed in general is that some new curriculum comes along. We're doing -- I remember it was Treasures. When my son was in the fifth grade -- no -- when I started to get involved on the board, I guess he was even younger. But there's the Treasures program in schools.

Everybody hated it. But it's, like, it came along, and just as quickly as it came along, people really hated it, and then it left. So you're

particular -- I don't mind naming them -- the AIMS school -- where the lottery process is such that it really does dissuade a family from getting -- you know, applying to the school.

And the term that was used, the chilling effect. And that's a term that's used within civil rights; right?

And I'd just ask you to be -- there's nothing in here that -- you know -- and they're leaving the State, by the way. They're going to Albuquerque to get recertified.

But be cognizant of that, because, especially in the lottery process, you know, a parent might read this and think, "Oh, I don't know if my child is up for this," even though their child, in another type of district school, might be gifted and doing really well, I would just want somebody not to go through the lottery because of anything that may be on your website.

And you'll just make that judgment. Could this be kind of dissuading somebody from -- just taking the step to see if this could be right. Because it's amazing sometimes what happens with a kid when they're a scholar, when they're treated a certain way and given a certain opportunity. And

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1 they -- they flourish, like, become who they are. 2 So I just ask you to be conscious of that. 3 What are you planning to do on a lunch 4 program? 5 Ms. Russell, don't you have -- isn't this, 6 like, next year, not this fall, but maybe where 7

you've got to have -- oh, that's -- oh, my gosh. That's in a month.

(Off-mic discussion.)

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SECRETARY BECK: So for the following year, that's mandated, isn't that, for all schools?

DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: Yes, Commissioner Carrillo.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: So do you have a plan for that yet?

> MR. EDWARD GARCIA: It's a mandate? No, it's not a mandate.

DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: Okay. Chair Gipson, Commissioner Carrillo, if -- Ms. Rowe, do you have more?

MS. CHERYL ROWE: I don't have it in front of me. Sorry. But there's a little bit of a -there's a little bit of confusion around it.

Because if you've already got a federal school lunch program, then you're required. But if the house, they can pick up this person on the way -- we're making transportation an issue in this next legislature, this body is, as well as many New Mexico school boards.

So if that's something that interests you, it would be great to come to a hearing or two and come to the Legislature and say, you know, "Every kid -- it's an equity issue. Every kid should be able to get to school."

Parents have kids all over the valley; right? It becomes challenging. So maybe take a look at that. I was really happy that you said kids in band and music at your school. I was going ask about.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: We don't offer a music program. We offer art in the eighth grade, as well as in the high school this year, we offered art as an elective. When students want to participate in band or orchestra, they do that in their home district.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Excellent. So in the -- refer to my notes for public comment right

There was definitely a theme around scholars feeling very supported by their project

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you don't, then you're not. Anyway, it's not clear, to me at this point, in the way it's written.

DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: I don't believe it's -- and I think this is something that -- I don't know how recently the PEC's food service subcommittee has met. But I think CSD needs to do our research next week, and that subcommittee should probably meet fairly soon.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Okay.

DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: We can clarify -we can try to clarify it by the end of this hearing, if you'd like.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: I would like that.

DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: Thank you.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: I would suggest for you, then, to just stay on top of whatever the State's going to mandate or not.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: We track it. Yes, we'll be on top.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: There's no question that for some families, the lunch and transpo issue is a hardship. On the transportation side, if that's something you want to have, like, a hub system or whatever, or partner with Rio Rancho Schools, I mean, where if they're driving right by

managers. And that's just very impressive, because, all too often -- I don't know -- you get people that have been in the profession for so long, they're just -- they're numb to what other people may need.

So just to hear that as being really consistent in -- in public comment, people feeling supported. And then parents also feeling very supported in your program. So I made a special note on that as well.

And Pat -- Pat; right? Mr. Kelly? Just, I'm impressed by what you've said relative to -because there were those financial things way back. But just that because you're on campus now and you're there, I wrote down "pivot quickly." The idea if something comes up, boom, you can adjust it, pivot quickly.

You can do that with math. Even when your math scores went down, they were still above everybody else. It's impressive that you said, "It's just not good enough for us. We know we have to do something different."

Have you -- I'm curious about this. You know our program, the \$10,000 special project program that we have? Have you applied for that? \$10,000 bucks of free money, and it's your money.

This is coming from our 2 percent for us to give back.

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I know the Chair is going to resend out an e-mail. There are so many e-mails from us and the PED, it's like ay-yi-yi. This was sent out in October.

If there was an area where you want to take this money for extra support that relates to your performance framework, it's money on the table. Just needs you to grab it.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Okay. VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Okay? And, yes, Dr. Russell.

DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: Chair Gipson and Commissioner Carrillo, the -- the newly revised New Mexico Administrative Code refers only to schools that operate the Healthy Universal School Meals program. It doesn't mandate schools that do not currently operate it to implement it by 2025.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Huh. I mean, I would say there's -- I mean, we are on top of things on this body. And I -- I don't think that's our impression.

I mean, I just -- you're either going to feed kids in the state or not. That's a whole other

support them.

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I can tell you with my children, I had kids that gravitated toward a challenge and others that avoided it like the plague. And they felt like if they -- that 70 percent, that would have been enough to, just, "Never mind, I don't even want to try that."

And they didn't -- I know that they could have really benefited from somebody that challenged them and made them -- gave them not only the challenge, but the support to make that challenge work.

And I think there's a lot of kids in mid school that if they experienced your school, they would recognize that they have that ability and that they would be willing to -- they'd start achieving toward that goal when they see that they're -- they can do it.

I think there's so many kids anymore that haven't -- they have just been beat down enough to where they don't think they can do it, and that 70 percent would scare them to death.

So I think your challenge, I can imagine, as parents, we all really want our kids to go to schools like yours. But our kids are highly

issue I won't get into. I won't get into it with you, my disappointment on things on that level.

Very impressed with your school and all of you, and thank you so much for coming up here. I mean, I'm obviously supporting a -- a five-year with no conditions.

MR. EDWARD GARCIA: Thank you. THE CHAIR: Commissioner Burt. Oh, I'm sorry. Commissioner Stewart -- "Commissioner Stewart" -- Commissioner Ingham. So Commissioner Ingham.

COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Well, hi. And I am very -- I normally am there all the time. I'm really sorry that I can't attend in person. It doesn't suit me.

I want to congratulate you guys. I know you -- your school, it seems to me, has -- you recognize where you're going and that you're -- you have picked out some specific pathways that are wonderful.

And I am going to say that not every kid is going to pick that pathway. And so I don't think you need to be ashamed that somebody doesn't pick that. I think that it would be hugely advantageous for -- for kids to get the understanding that you do

resistant when it comes down to that effort that they're going to have to put in.

So I think your challenge is, probably, when you got some potential applicants, or where you're talking to parents and stuff about -- to engage with some of those kids before their -- you know, when they're in mid school, to -- to somehow get them to understand that it is possible for them to achieve in a highly -- a real -- lost the word -- a rigorous environment, I think that there's so many kids that just don't think they can survive in that.

And it's the kids, not the parents. The parents want that to happen. But the kids are, like, "Nah, not on your life."

We give our kids a lot of autonomy anymore. We -- in the old days, you know, "Do what I say," you know. It doesn't work that well so much anymore. Believe me. I can attest to that.

But I think you guys have a challenge in relating to the -- to the kids that it is -- this is something that can be fun and really enjoyable. And being challenged is not a bad thing. It's a wonderful thing.

So I really appreciate how the kids talked about your -- no matter what their challenges were,

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you guys related to them. And my daughter, who is a teacher, told me that -- gave me that understanding, that when she has a class and it gets too big, she can't give that individual time to 28, 29 kids. She can -- she can function very well to a certain extent. But if you overwhelm them with too many students, they can't have that individual relationship with each kid.

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So I applaud what you're doing, and I thank you. I am super impressed. And, like I said, if -- I would have been pushing my kids to go to your school if I could have ever -- but thank you for everything you're doing. And this is really a thrill to be able to renew your charter for another five years.

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Burt.

COMMISSIONER BURT: Thanks. I'm going to go ahead and make a motion. I move that the Public Education Commission approve the renewal application for The ASK Academy for a five-year term without conditions.

THE CHAIR: Second.

There's a motion by Commissioner Burt and a second by Commissioner. Roll, please.

SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Brauer.

the audience that came. We appreciate your time and effort. Looking forward to what you all have to

So what we will do is the Charter School Division will -- is that going to be you, Lucy? -will give their report and their recommendation. And if there is any entity that's here that wants to offer tribal input, there's time allotted in the agenda, always, for that, just in case. And then the school will have their opportunity to present whatever you want to. And then we'll go to public comment. And then it'll be our questions. Okay?

So, Lucy, whatever you're ready. MS. LUCY VALENZUELA: Okay. Thank you.

15 Good morning, Chair Gipson and 16 Commissioners. As you know, my name is Lucy 17 Valenzuela, Authorizing Practices Administrator for 18 the Charter Schools Division.

I am here to provide the CSD/PED evaluation for Sandoval Academy of Bilingual Education.

SABE opened its doors in 2013 with the Public Education Commission as its authorizer. This is their second renewal with the PEC.

The mission of SABE is to enable students

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COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Yes. SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Manis.

COMMISSIONER MANIS: Yes.

SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Burt.

COMMISSIONER BURT: Yes.

SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner

Clahchischilliage.

(No response.)

SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Ingham.

COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Absolutely.

SECRETARY BECK: Vice Chair Carrillo.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Yes.

SECRETARY BECK: Chair Gipson.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

SECRETARY BECK: Secretary Beck. Yes.

There are seven votes for, zero votes against. The

motion passes. Congratulations.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.

We'll pause till 11:00.

(Recess taken, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.)

THE CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. And we are back for our second renewal hearing of the

day. And this is Sandoval Academy of Bilingual

24 Education.

So good morning. Thanks everyone here in

to maintain their native language, reconnect with their heritage language, or discover a new, enriching language.

Students attain Spanish and English fluency and literacy through two-way immersion, which will expand their world view and education and career opportunities.

Ms. Jackie Rodriguez is the school's executive director, and Ms. Felicitas Reyes is the school's principal. Both leaders have over 20 years of education experience combined and are strong and proud advocates of bilingual education.

The CSD visited the school on Tuesday. October 8th, 2024. The renewal visit team consisted of myself as team lead, Ted Farnath and Kelli Renken.

The Charter Schools Division recommends that Sandoval Academy of Bilingual Education be renewed for a term of five years without conditions.

The recommendation is based on the record of the school's performance over the course of the contract term, the renewal application, which highlights adult actions and programs in the service of student progress, and verification of those programs and adult actions during our renewal visit

and annual visits.

SABE has been designated as a Traditional school for the last two years through NM Vistas.

Additionally, the PED has published the Spring 2024 assessment results. The school's Vista designation is Traditional, with a score of 56.4.

The school's proficiencies are 46 percent, ELA; 37 percent, science; and 20 percent in math.

This indicates that the school saw some gains in ELA and math, but they did see a small decrease in science. Their ELA and math proficiencies for English Learners exceeded both the district and the State.

As a reminder, according to the PED NM Vistas web page, point totals from school year '22-'23 and school year '23-'24 cannot be compared due to changes in business rules.

The school's growth and performance suggests that the school is making gains from year to year.

For their finance and their organizational ratings, throughout its contract SABE had four repeat findings of Working To Meet or Does Not Meet ratings. One involved Indicator 2.c., responses to audit findings, where the school had a repeat

In conclusion, leadership and teachers at SABE are committed to making SABE a true bilingual focused school in the Rio Rancho community. Many students commute to the school because of the robust bilingual program they offer.

Students are extremely satisfied and happy at SABE. During the student focus group, one student mentioned that they enjoyed attending SABE because it gives them the opportunity to learn Spanish and not become a "Yo no sabo" kid, which is referring to an "I don't know" kid, which means many of their peers or others are not fluent in Spanish.

Families are also very happy with the educational experience that their students are receiving. Many families that are at SABE have known Ms. Rodriguez from her time at a local Albuquerque charter school. So they know her commitment to bilingual education.

Many adult actions have taken place to increase proficiencies, correct audit findings, and all other findings that the CSD has rated as Working To Meet or Does Not Meet throughout the performance framework.

It is for these reasons that the CSD recommends the school be renewed for a five-year

finding in 2021 plus a new finding.

However, they took immediate actions and were rated Meets Standard in the last two years.

For Indicator 3.c., reporting requirements, the executive director developed a successful tracking system earning a Meets Standard rating in '23-'24.

For Indicator 4.b., attendance and retention, they received a Working To Meet rating in '21-'22 and '22-'23 school years (audio distortion) State attendance rate by less than 5 percent.

Efforts like home visits, incentives, and parent meetings have been implemented to improve attendance.

Part B ratings. The school's ratings for Part B are as follows:

They met the standards for mission-specific goals, education program, equity and identity, and other performance indicators.

They were rated Demonstrates Substantial Progress under student outcomes, financial compliance, and governance responsibilities.

The school has also submitted requests for an enrollment cap increase and school relocation that will be implemented in the next contract term. contract term without conditions.

MS. MELISSA BROWN: If anyone is here to speak on behalf of a tribal entity, please raise your hand.

All of our official tribal entities seem to be in the room and in the kindergarten. We don't have any.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Whenever you're ready.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: Good morning. Good morning, Chair Gipson, Commissioners, and our Charter School Division team. I am Jackie Rodriguez, the head of school. Last name, R-o-d-r-i-g-u-e-z. Ms. Reyes, I'll let her introduce herself.

MS. FELICITAS REYES: Buenos días. My name is Felicitas Reyes. Last name is R-e-y-e-s. I am the principal and the special services director at SABE.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: And I wanted to just add, between Mrs. Reyes and myself, we have 62 years of education combined.

I wish it was just 20, because that means I'd be really young still.

Some members we have as part of our school

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team with us is Ms. Becky Torres, our governing board chair.

We have Ms. Ashley Wolfel and Mr. Mike Vigil, our business management representatives. And we also have Sue Fox, our legal representative, and many students and parents and community that are here to speak during public comment.

So I was fortunate to join Sandoval Academy in 2017, which was the third year of its charter.

I'm a big, passionate -- my passion lies with bilingual and multicultural education. Growing up as a child in Northern New Mexico who was not offered the opportunity to learn Spanish, I fit our mission. And I know Lucy already read our mission. But I'm a heritage learner. I'm a student who was not offered an opportunity to learn both her languages in a bilingual state. And my passion grew which I chose to become an educator in New Mexico.

I have worked in the state for 27 years -- or 28? -- 27 years. And SABE is my -- my new home, which I take a lot of pride in, and a lot of time and effort is put into this school.

The story starts with SABE being -- and I think it's important to state that because our video

If you look at our traditional districts around us, we have a higher percentage of students at risk that we serve within our school system. And with that does come the challenges, but also the successes in serving students, especially our English Language Learners that are bilingual and emergent -- or simultaneous bilinguals that are learning both English and Spanish from home. And they have come into our school, and it's a natural flow for them to continue learning in two languages.

We proudly serve families from Rio Rancho, Bernalillo, Algodones, Albuquerque, Jemez Pueblo, Placitas, and Santa Ana Pueblo. We continue to try to expand our reach to other smaller communities around us, and we are constantly in the recruitment mode, where we are trying to fill our seats and continue to see that enrollment grow for us.

Great staff makeup as well. We have -during our term, we've had teachers from Mexico,
Peru, Honduras, Ecuador, Chile, Spain, and, of
course, the U.S. We find that a huge success for
our students to be learning from native speakers of
the Spanish language. But it also builds the family
that we have at SABE.

And that's one of the biggest highlights

will reintroduce our founders. It was a brother/sister team that lived in the city of Rio Rancho that wanted the opportunity of bilingualism in their school and their city.

Mr. Brennan Divett is still on the board. He's our governing board vice chair. He's a bilingual educator and the parent of two young ladies.

Ms. Gonzales is a bilingual educator and parent. And I actually worked with her son in a dual-language program that I started with a traditional district that since no longer has that program. But you'll see in their messaging there that everyone deserves a bilingual education, regardless of what language they speak. In New Mexico, it's important to maintain the language because the minority language is always in danger of being lost. And when you lose the language, you lose the culture as well.

Speaking to our scholar demographics, SABE, we have a very diverse group of students and staff. If you notice, that quick graphic just kind of points out that we have over 84 percent Hispanic students, 23 percent English Language Learners, and over 42 percent of economically disadvantaged.

of SABE is we are a family, and we have conversations of the differences in Spanish from everybody's different region, even from Northern New Mexico. Because if you know Northern New Mexico, you know our Spanish is -- it has its uniqueness.

Twelve of our sixteen classroom support teachers, so over 75 percent of our staff, hold their TESOL, their Teachers of English or Other Languages, or bilingual endorsements. We continue to encourage our bilingual teachers and our teachers new to us to take part. And we use title funds to support the teachers that would like to get their TESOL endorsement specifically.

Student outcomes. Lucy did speak about some of our gains. And I'll kind of hit some of those things as well.

We're continuing to develop bilingual and biliterate kids. So everything we do in our day to day is teach in English and Spanish. The way our day is broken down is students receive English language arts with science and social studies within that, and math in English.

Our Spanish is Spanish language arts with science and social studies, the content taught

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We use something called Guided Language Acquisition Design, which is units that are built around science and social studies that build language skills, or ways students can learn the second language to cover all the content.

She spoke a lot to this, so I don't want to repeat everything. But we have exceeded the standards in our mission-specific goal every year. We created -- I think Chair Gipson was on that team five years ago when we renewed. We actually have a teacher and staff developed biliteracy trajectory tool that uses research from WIDA and the Center For Applied Linguistics and Dual Education of New Mexico that actually helps guide our -- our measurement of how students are learning both English and Spanish.

We use that trajectory tool at the beginning of the year, middle of the year and end of the year to gauge that every child is growing in both languages. So it's not strictly proficiency, reading proficiency, math proficiency; it's also language proficiency that we focus our work on.

Again, we are designated Traditional in New Mexico Vistas for the last three years. We were identified as a school -- and I lost it right there

with disabilities, we are exceeding, if not both districts, at least one of the districts, and either meeting or exceeding the State expecta- -- or the State levels.

This is English Language Arts. And the arrow is just pointing out that growth over the years. You do see that increase every year. That's 20- -- can't see the years -- '21 -- '22 and '23 -or '23-'24.

MS. FELICITAS REYES: The first one is '21-'22, '22-'23.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: So '21-'22, and then '23. That's last year's included in there. We do see growth. Across those bar graphs are the subgroups of growth.

This is the State assessments in English Language Arts compared to our local districts. So you'll see that teal band in the first graph. It does show our Hispanic growth.

The next arrow shows our students with disabilities and English Language Learners and our economically disadvantaged.

I also want to remind the Commissioners that we're teaching in two languages. So not only are our kids taking these tests in English, they are

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in the -- I'll get to it.

Annual growth in both ELA and math, we know it's not enough. But we continue our efforts in supporting our staff to support our students to continue to see those rates go up, of proficiency, but, most importantly, also look at growth over

We know science is definitely an area of focus for us, because we see that a lot of -- it seems as if the attention has been put on math and reading. We will be implementing assessment -- a progress monitoring assessment with NWEA to include science next year so we can start gauging and using that data during our Professional Learning Community meetings, when our teachers are collaborating and talking about test scores and student data, to make sure we're considering that as well.

We surpassed the State and local districts -- when I say "local districts," we look at Rio Rancho Public Schools and Bernalillo Public Schools, because our demographics are very different from both, but that gives us a good gauge.

But as far as our English Language Learners, our economically disadvantaged, our Hispanic cases, and, in some cases, our students learning in Spanish, and they are making these gains and showing these results.

Here's our math. A couple of things to point out: our students with disabilities, our English Language Learners, and our economically disadvantaged.

And then for '23-'24, you see the same. Our Hispanic students are -- students with disabilities and our English Language Learners.

In science, of course, we want to present it and not just hide it. But we do have some work to do. But, again, our hope and focus is to really use some data to guide our development of our units and specifically hit our science and social studies content areas so that we can make sure that we're addressing that concern in those tests.

I also want to remind the Commissioners we're a very small school. So for our fifth- and eighth-graders, last year that would have been about 45 students that took that test. So that's -- those scores are hard to kind of swallow because it takes a couple of kids that may not do well in the test, and it really affects our scores.

MS. FELICITAS REYES: So the three goals of our dual language program:

We emphasize the importance of bilingualism and the developing of high levels of proficiency in both languages. Also developing biliteracy, expecting -- having the expectation and high academic achievement in both languages.

And we do have students that are at or above grade level in their achievement in both languages.

One of the biggest things is also the multicultural competence, where children are learning or demonstrating a positive attitude and behavior towards different cultures. Because we all come from different parts of Latin America and our backgrounds. So we all have different traditions and customs, and then also here living in the U.S. So we really push that with the students.

And the next one is really emphasizing the importance and the research in dual language programs. Part of our Professional Learning Communities is also maintaining the -- and -- the teachers informed of best practices in the development of the two languages.

Also, the research in dual language programs, we do make sure that our teachers are professionally trained in this area. And also

our facility is not in the best of locations. It's not horrible, but it's not great. It is in a commercial area, where we do share a building with U.S. Cotton, a movie production company, and another nonprofit in the building.

We house 25,000 square feet, where we have very little room to grow.

Our new building is closer to 30,000 square feet with room to expand. It's on our own parcel of acreage, and it's right across from the police office, and it's also next to a park and some other opportunities for partnerships with the local gym and some other things that we have in mind.

You all are very aware of the challenges of facilities. It's even more challenging, and it's one of our largest challenges at SABE. We do not get -- receive House Bill 33 funding because the city is at bond capacity. So we just get SB 19.

So we've had to plan. And we were fortunate to find an investor that we're able to move forward with a lease purchase agreement for our next term.

We also hope to expand our program through -- we're going to apply for the grant for

knowing of the best -- best practices and working with the students to have stronger academic outcomes for the students.

And some of this information was already mentioned. As far as our finance and governance of the school, we have had zero findings in the last audit that our school went through. We had minor findings previously, but those were addressed immediately.

And then also consistent membership in our governing board. And these are parents, retired educators, and one of them is the founder of the school.

And also we just received the Public Charter Schools New Mexico's Excellence Award for our governance, for our governing board.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: So one point. This has been a huge move for me. That's kind of pun intended.

So we have presented the amendments -- or for consideration for our next charter is we have moved into a lease-purchase agreement to move to a new facility.

This is huge for us, because the current building is under a traditional lease, and we are --

the pre-kindergarten option. And this building is just more conducive to learning. It's built out specifically as a school, a total remodel on the inside, an increase of about six classrooms.

It has a small multipurpose room, so it's still lacking in some of the resources that we absolutely need. And we hope our legislators continue to support us, as they have in the last two or three legislative sessions.

The other thing, that it will allow us to have a playground. You can ask every kiddo behind me and everybody would say yes, they would love a playground.

Right now that's in the works, and we do have some set-aside funds for that. But at our current facility, it was -- it was -- when I came in, Chair Gipson, you might remember, we were not in great financial standing. We have since turned that around. We have built up our school population.

When I came in in 2017, we had 85 kids, 82 kids. We're at 222.

We are losing opportunities to have more kids, because we don't have a playground, because we don't have our own building.

We are fortunate -- I was smart enough to

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add in our ARP application, during that CARES money, to add transportation. So we do have our own bus. We contract with Herrera Bus, and we actually got a new bus last spring.

We also have food -- a food program. We were recognized as a Community Eligibility Provisional school last year, so we provide free breakfast, lunch, and snack for all our students.

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Continued that partnership, and we were very fortunate to develop that partnership with Bernalillo Public Schools. So they provide us our lunch service.

But we are very excited for the move, hope that we can wrap that into our new contract, our new charter, and include that increase in cap. So we are currently at a 280 cap and, we know we can serve more students from our community and the surrounding communities.

We're hoping to -- and the reason to do that is, one, serve more students from our community; two, it would allow us to have two classrooms per grade level, K-8, and allow us to fill that space; and continue to grow and continue to have funding so that we can expand our facilities, expand our offerings and have -- provide

We have intervention support in the student's dominant home language. So if we have students that are native Spanish speakers and are are in need of intervention, we are able to provide that for them.

We also have a social-emotional curriculum that the teachers have access to to best support our students.

We provide before- and after-school programs with extracurricular options.

We have a PTA, a parent-teacher association, and also a student leadership program, which we call our "Student Ambassadors," which some of them are here this morning. And we also have parent councils that incorporate our equity council and other parent committees.

We also have been able to have a parent liaison that helps us with providing families with community resources, if needed.

Some of our other highlights is that we also have an on-site counseling option. This is an outside community agency that uses some of our space to help support some of our students' emotional needs.

We also have our family engagements night.

This is "SOMOS SABE." It's a once-a-month evening

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more to our students as far as interventions and other things that we continue to see as successful in building up our school.

At SABE, we truly are a family. Our kids are dropped off, and we open the doors for them -well, actually Ms. Wilder and Ms. Farrell do. They're our morning teachers. We go and help. And the kids are loaded into cars at the end of the day if they're not going in the bus.

We strongly believe it truly takes a village, and we're part of that village. We know our kids by name. We know our parents by cars if we don't know their names.

But we absolutely -- having a small school community has been wonderful for the efforts that we make and the things that we do.

MS. FELICITAS REYES: Some of the other highlights. We are a full inclusion school. And, again, making sure that we serve our -- our students with special needs. So we are a full inclusion school.

Like Ms. Rodriguez mentioned, we do have a lunch program and a breakfast program in partnership with Bernalillo Public Schools.

We are -- we do provide transportation.

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event that we hold for parents. And the teachers

have different activities that the parents visit different classrooms. And each month has a different theme that is addressed.

We've also participated as a site for La Cosecha, for the national dual language conference. This is our second year that we've hosted a school visit.

We are a Professional Learning Community, so we meet regularly with the teachers to discuss student data.

One of our pride and joys is we won first place in the Film Prize Junior out of 180-some schools. And it was the first time we participated. So that was very exciting when we got the news about that.

Also National Schools Week's Choice (verbatim), we're a participant in that event. We had two Ben Ray Lujan fellows, and one of them is teaching kindergarten at our school this year.

We also have Wild Friends. Our student ambassadors are partnered with Wild Friends of New Mexico. And this is the second year that we participate with them.

Also we have a partnership with the Isotopes, Watermelon Ranch, and also our -- one of our community jujitsu resources. They come to the school, and the students are able to participate in jujitsu as well.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: Can you play the video?

(Video played.)

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MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: That is our presentation, and move to public comment.

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Okay. For public comment, we do have 23 in the room. If you did not sign up, please let us know.

Kids, please speak in a loud voice. You're speaking in a large room, about this far from the microphone.

The first person for public comment is Michael Rodriguez. And, officially, there's a two-minute limit.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning. My name is Michael Rodriguez, R-o-d-r-i-g-u-e-z. I'm executive director for Dual Language Education of New Mexico. We're a local nonprofit that's been around for

24 23 years. And we specialize in providing support to 25

SEAs, LEAs, and schools around the country in

1 their renewal for those reasons. And, long term, 2 dual language education is a long-term investment. When I say "investment," it's an investment both in

3 4 programs like SABE, the students, and the future of 5 our state.

6 Thank you.

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7 MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. Next I have 8 Michelle Owusu Nkwantabisah.

9 FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is -- how 10 I spell my last name is O-w-u-s-u 11

N-k-w-a-n-t-a-b-i-s-a-h.

Why I like my school is because they have SOMOS SABE nights, and they teach me more English and Spanish.

15 I also like it because I have lots and 16 lots of friends. Teachers help me a lot.

17 During math, Ms. Crain helps me. During 18 PE, Ms. Wilder teaches me how to get stronger. 19 Ms. Farrell helps me with the ukulele.

20 When someone says stop and they don't 21 stop, I tell the teacher, and they will get in 22

trouble. For example, they'll take recess. We do (incomprehensible) dance, and that is why I like my school.

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. Next I have

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support of dual language and multilingual learner programming.

We also host the national La Cosecha dual language conference. We had it three weeks ago here in Santa Fe with over 3,000 educators, pre-K to 20, from around the country.

With over four years -- 40 years of dual language research, we know PED knows that there are no better programs than dual language when it comes to students being able to access their second language, whether it be English or Spanish, as well as retain their home language, culture, and identity.

So with that, the three goals that Mrs. Reves referenced, bilingualism, biliteracy, high academic achievement in two languages, and social competence are critical for students, not to mention the many benefits of -- cognitive, you know, being able to negotiate meanings and all the different things students gain from it as well.

We've been involved with SABE for a number of years, and they have been providing -- we've been providing professional development to them in this area.

So we definitely stand in strong favor of

1 Tanya Anderson.

> FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Tanya Anderson. A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n.

One of the reasons why I like the school is the ability to tailor curriculum to specific student needs. The parent involvement and participation, for example. I'm a parent. I'm a substitute teacher. And I'm the PTA president at SABE. And I like the focus the school has on language immersion. Thank you.

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. We also have a standing -- stand-up microphone for adults if you'd prefer. Sorry.

Next we have Ibrahim Morales.

FROM THE FLOOR: Ibrahim Morales. M-o-r-a-l-e-s. I will be talking about why I love -- why I love SABE. I love SABE because I can come to school every day feeling safe, knowing I have good teachers and good friends. (Spanish spoken.)

MS. MARTICA DAVIS: Thank you. Next we have Ilvs Morales.

23 FROM THE FLOOR: Buenos días. My name is 24 Ilys Morales. Would you like me to say how to spell 25 my last name? M--- M-o-r-a-l-e-s. And I will be

production@litsupport.com

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1 talking about why I love my school. 2. The teachers are nice, and I have -- and I 3 have good friends. I also learn a lot of Spanish. 4 We also have family nights. I like family nights. 5 They have games to play and parents meet the 6 teachers. 7 And also, when it's October, we get to do 8 trick-or-treat. 9 MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. Next we 10 have -- I'm sorry if I mispronounce -- is it Gerardo 11 Gonzales? 12

FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning, Commissioners. My name is Gerardo Gonzales. G-o-n-z-a-l-e-s.

My favorite thing about SABE is the food, the teachers, and my school, because it's very fun and it's (incomprehensible).

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

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MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Next I have Dylan Gonzales.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning, Commissioners. (Spanish spoken.) G-o-n-z-a-l-e-s. My school is really fun. And my favorite thing about SABE is that I'm not alone. I have brothers

with me. And we have recess. And I also like my

1 one of them with special needs. And one of them is 2. in a regular class setting. I love SABE just

3 because it has -- provides a lot of support for my 4 special needs students. And not only is it

5 welcoming, but they also understand and take the 6 time to listen to you in anything that you might

7 want to contribute.

So given the opportunity to have a bilingual setting for my kids is definitely important as I do have an awkward [ph] child, and he does -- he used to be in a bilingual setting. Moving him to a non-bilingual setting, he has lots of Spanish. So giving them that opportunity for all of our students is amazing. Thank you.

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Next we have Isaiah Serratos.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Isaiah Serratos. How you spell Serratos is S-e-r-r-a-t-o-s. I like SABE 'cause I have recess, and I have good teachers, and I have a safe school.

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. Next we have Sandra Easton.

FROM THE FLOOR: Great. To begin, I could keep you here all day. I have an adopted son. His name is Talin. And when he reached SABE, he had

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teacher from English and Spanish.

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. Next I have Laila Martinez.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning, Commissioners. Laila Martinez. M-a-r-t-i-n-e-z.

I've been a student at SABE for six years, and I have two siblings with me. (Spanish spoken.)

SABE has helped me speak, write, and read my English and Spanish more fluently. (Spanish spoken.)

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. Next I have -- last name, Serratos. So I'm not sure about the first name. Is it Jessica or -- if you could let us know.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Josiah Serratos. How to spell Serratos is S-e-r-r-a-t-o-s. I like about my school is that I have safe teachers, and I know my school is safe. And I have lots of friends. And they have good lunch. And I am in fourth grade. Thank you.

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you.

Next we have Kitty Sandoval.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Kitty Sandoval. You spell Sandoval S-a-n-d-o-v-a-l.

I am a parent of two students for SABE,

severe ADH (verbatim) and was throwing books at his old school and giving the teachers a hard time. And I had to pull out what little hair I have left.

So, eventually, they told me to go to SABE. And from day one, I never heard anything. Two weeks later -- one week later, I

called Ms. Reyes. I said, "Is he alive? Or has he damaged the classroom?"

And they said no.

And from that day on, my son has flourished.

I can't even begin to tell you. He graduated IEP. And the other day I went to his classroom. And he read a whole long paragraph in Spanish.

And I looked. And I said, "Is this my son?" And it is.

And I am so thankful to these teachers. The one he has now is Ms. Cruz. She's just absolutely a wonderful teacher.

And then I've -- Ms. Rodriguez and Ms. Reyes have been so fabulous with him. He's not the same boy. He's growing up. And the one thing -- I come from the old school

where you say "thank you" and "please." And he

didn't even have to learn that from me. He got it from the teachers.

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And they are wonderful. I feel so safe with him there. So -- and when eighth grade comes, I wish they had twelfth grade. But we'll see what happens in the future. Thank you very much for listening to me.

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. Next we have Rain [ph] Sarracino.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Rain Sarracino. S-a-r-r-a-c-i-n-o.

Some of the things that I like to do are Film Prize Junior. I like doing arts and crafts and stuff. And writing stories are one of my things that I like to do. So I love to cooperate with my friends and, you know, share stories.

Last year we did a documentary about New Mexico and what culture meant to New Mexico residents.

This school lets me explore my creativity and curiosity for music. The teachers are always open for suggestions. And they encourage the creativity a lot of the kids have. The teacher -- the teachers genuinely care about us. And if you ever have a hard time, they are open to talking.

with just everything at school.

One of the things that I'm a part of is Ambassadors. I have been an Ambassador for my whole middle school; so sixth, seventh, and eighth. I've been there since fourth, so five years.

And Ambassadors has been a fun experience as well, because I get to do not just learning, but extra activities that support my school.

I get to learn Spanish and I get to do projects that my school makes possible. And they're not just about learning and supporting the school, but they're also fun activities to hang out with my friends. And I enjoy it a lot. Thank you.

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Next I have Franco Owusa Nkwantabisah.

16 FROM THE FLOOR: (Spanish spoken.)
17 O-w-u-s-u N-k-w-a-n-t-a-b-i-s-a-h.

(Spanish spoken.)

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you.

Next we have Sarah Farrell.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Sarah

Farrell. F-a-r-r-e-l-l. I'm the music teacher at

SABE. This is my fourth year and my twentieth year

of teaching.I have

I have been fortunate that all but two of

This is a place I feel safe talking and communicating. Everyone here is very sweet and -- yeah.

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. Next we have Javier Garcia.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Javier Garcia. How you spell my last name is G-a-r-c-i-a. And I -- I love SABE because you can make a lot of friends, and you can read. And also you can learn about bugs.

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Next we have Anai [ph] Garcia.

FROM THE FLOOR: (Spanish spoken.) Garcia. G-a-r-c-i-a. (Spanish spoken.)

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. Next we have Novea [ph] Sarracino.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Novea Sarracino. S-a-r-r-a-c-i-n-o. I love my school because it's -- it's just been a really nice experience. I've created relationships with the people who work there, like my teachers. I get to talk to them.

It's great. I love it. They understand me, and it's something that I enjoy. I enjoy talking to them. I enjoy learning from them, along my years have been in bilingual education. And I really enjoy SABE, because it gives us the

opportunity to ensure that our students -- some of the times when kids go to school, they learn that

they should stop speaking their native language. In

our school, not only do they get to keep speaking t, but we encourage it and make sure that everybody

8 knows both languages and knows that all languages 9 and all cultures are vitally important. Thank you.

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. Next we have Salome Anderson.

FROM THE FLOOR: (Spanish spoken.) And how you spell my last name is A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n. And what I like about SABE is (Spanish spoken) and how the school teaches me Spanish. And that's all.

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. Next, Daisy Romero.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Daisy Romero. And I'm going to talk about the bilingualism at SABE.

I have been at SABE for about eight years.

Our classes are in Spanish and English. The reason
I like it is because when I speak the Spanish at
SABE, it helps me connect to my family, 'cause I
had, like, half of them are in Spanish; so it helps

me connect with them. And it's also beneficial for my academic career and, like, the future, 'cause bilingualism helps a little more pay.

I'm sorry. My last name is Romero.

5 R-o-m-e-r-o.

(Spanish spoken.)

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. Next we have Talin Easton.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Talin Easton. E-a-s-t-o-n. I am eleven years old and have been in SABE since first grade.

SABE also has improved my social skills to make more friends. And one reason why I like SABE very much is because the teachers are kind, considerate, and helpful.

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. Next we have Jasmine Garcia.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Jasmine Garcia. G-a-r-c-i-a. And what I like about SABE is that it's a very welcoming place. It helps you feel like you're part of the family. It has taught me how to keep my language, which is Spanish and it has helped me not forget my language. (Spanish spoken.)

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. Last, but

others, it's about finding the care and attention their child didn't receive at a traditional school.

It's amazing to hear each family's story and see how the school has impacted every student, family, teacher, and staff member who walks through its doors.

SABE is about creating a true sense of belonging. It is a place where students become compassionate, curious, and culturally aware individuals.

Over the past ten years, SABE has stayed true to its mission of bilingual education. What has grown from that is a passionate community that stands behind the mission and implements it every day.

SABE continues to provide a home for bilingual individuals, English learners and Spanish learners alike, proving that everyone has a place there.

I'm proud to be part of a school that celebrates every child, every family, and every culture. SABE is a family, and it's a vital part of our community.

MS. NICOLA DAVIS: Thank you. And one more.

not least on our list is Christie Herrera.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Christie Herrera. It's H-e-r-r-e-r-a. I've been part of the SABE familia for seven years now. SABE has been more than a school for my son and myself. It's been a home.

As the son of an immigrant father and a New Mexican mother, Ben found a place where he could embrace and take pride in his full identity. At SABE, he didn't feel self-conscious about being different as he might have at a traditional school. Instead, he developed a sense of pride in his ability to speak two languages.

At SABE, my son has incredible bilingual role models from diverse backgrounds who reflect his own experiences and remind him every day that his upbringing isn't something to hide; it's something to stand up and be proud of.

He found a place where he could thrive and a community that welcomed and supported us every step of the way.

What makes SABE so special is that it means something different to every family.

For some, it's about preserving a language and strengthening connections with family. For

FROM THE FLOOR: Buenos días. My name is Ysa [ph] Morales. (Spanish spoken.)

MS. MARTICA DAVIS: Today, I'm also grateful for my bilingual education. That concludes public speaking. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: I just want to say thank you. (Off-mic.)

Commissioner Beck.

SECRETARY BECK: Yeah. What a beautiful last half hour -- I mean hour. Sorry. You guys are good, too. But the last half hour especially has been pretty amazing.

You know, I grew up in Cleveland, Ohio. And I took French as a foreign language; right? And how many times do I wish I would have taken Spanish. You know, I feel humbled and inadequate compared to your students who are -- do a remarkable job.

And it's just so much fun to see all the very different kinds of charter schools we have and how hard they work and how meaningful their work is.

It's really -- it reminds me why I did this in the first place, for sure.

Beautiful. Great stuff.

I love your mission goal. I think that's great. I love that not only is it directed toward

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what your school means, but also it's quantifiable.

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So many -- one of the things that I have a hard time with in many mission goals is they tend to be nebulous, or they -- you know, they're qualitative or, you know, feel good or something like that. This really is something that you can sink your teeth into and know the status of how well you're doing.

So I really appreciate the thought that went behind, five years ago, I guess, with Chair Gipson, the -- the mission goal you did. It's wonderful.

I've got a few questions. Obviously, you're somewhat challenged on the math side. And you mentioned in your -- your presentation that you do math on the English side but not on the Spanish side. Is there a reason why you wouldn't incorporate math on the Spanish side?

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: It's based on our population. A majority of our students are English-dominant. So when we -- actually, when I first came in during our first term, we were a different model, immersion model. We were a 90/10 model. We opted to go to a 50/50 immersion model for two reasons -- three reasons. One was lack of

they're coming in, they're able to have that bridging support.

SECRETARY BECK: Well, you just brought up my second question, which is how is your PLC or your professional development or your collaboration structured? How does that work, real quick?

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: Prior to the change in hours, it was every Friday. So we had early release on Fridays prior to last year. And we still do, but it's changed some. So we had two hours every Friday that we had our PLC time. Our "team time" is what we call it, because together, everybody achieves more.

But we had that time scheduled for PLC time, PLC time, which was looking at data, really building that framework. It takes time to build that framework and really get the buy-in from teachers.

When we had to extend our days due to the new regulation, we had to cut that -- into that time. So the way we structure it now is two Fridays out of every month, our teachers stay till 4:30 and leave at 2:30 their other days. So we have a two-hour chunk.

SECRETARY BECK: Do you do it by grade

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staffing. Second was I was a teacher and coordinator within the district, the traditional district, where we started the dual language program. And the desire was to have a 50/50 model rather than 90/10.

And when we recognized the number of students that were English-dominant, we saw the advantage of teaching math in English.

However, that is some of the work that we hope to do when we have the funds to be able to do some trans-languaging and some bridging support with our teachers in how we're supporting our Spanish speakers with their math skills, because that is a definite opportunity that we are missing out on.

But, like I said, some of our challenges is fiscally is having enough money to do all that we know we need to do.

We do have -- we do have our Professional Learning Community time where we have our teachers do some collaboration. Our hope is to continue to build that up so that we can have those conversations of what's working for you, what do students need, especially when we're looking at the bridging of the two languages in all content areas so that students, regardless of what language

level? Is that how you're structured with that?

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: We did. In years past, we did a K-1-2 team --

MS. FELICITAS REYES: Originally, it was, like, kindergarten, like, by grade levels.

But then we found that because we have such a small staff, it's K -- K-1 and then 2-3. And then because we have single teachers, like, teaching both English and Spanish in a grade, so it's fourth through eighth grade.

But now it's K-2, 3-5, and then middle school. So we've -- we look at what the needs of our staff and the kids are. And that way, they can collaborate a little bit more.

So we have changed it depending on what the needs of the school are.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: And that has been a huge challenge, because we've essentially taken away time to those efforts and trying to still maintain with the traditional district and times and salaries, all of that kind of shifts us to be creative.

But we do dedicate that time, two Fridays a month, while the other two Fridays are an exchange for time.

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Additionally, teachers have common planning time with their grade-level team. So they'll have music and PE. So during that time, they have the opportunity to do planning. It's not really scripted by administration; it's kind of left to them. But definitely building -- and every year is different, because you get a new teacher or extra support staff or extra staff that we need to build them up back to that.

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But PLC is one of our -- one of our efforts to address the lack of funding or lack of time for the amount of professional development that we know we all need; us, as administrators, as well. So we use the strength in our team, the experience of our team, the strategies of the team, and really looking at assessment and building it from there.

SECRETARY BECK: Yeah. I was a teacher for 13 years at Sandia High School. There's a huge difference between quantity of time and quality of time. I'm not so concerned about quantity of time. I'm more concerned about quality of time. It seems like you've got that.

On the Vista reports, in the Early Literacy Assessments results, the State average for K through 2, Early Literacy was 34.6 percent

question on -- you talked that you interact a lot with the pueblos, the Santa Ana and all that. But yet in your enrollment by subgroup, you have a very, very small subgroup of Native American Indigenous.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: We've had a number of families that come to us. And we -- I remember our first years, we had a student from Santa Ana was a student who had an IEP as well. And I think it's the sense of family that we truly know our families and they are open about their circumstances or situations.

In that case, very supportive with the educational team from the pueblo, support of the governor's office and the parents and the special -the social workers that were supportive of that student's IEP.

But we have also some students from Jemez Pueblo, and it's by choice that they come to our school.

We do have a number of Hawaiian students. And there's a family from -- a Navajo family who's been part of our SOMOS SABE nights, and who actually, in the kindergarten program last year, was part of the SOMOS SABE, the parent night, and read a book in Diné and spoke about their traditions.

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proficient, and you guys were 5.5 percent proficient. Do you have any idea why you --MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: Is that this year's?

SECRETARY BECK: That was this year's. Do you have any idea why that was so challenging?

Vistas, we take with a grain of salt. We've seen some weird numbers come out of Vistas. But I was wondering if you had any thoughts on that or --

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: The only thing we can --

SECRETARY BECK: I'll check and make sure that's correct.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: I don't have it in front of me. My apologies.

SECRETARY BECK: Let me see. Toggle table. Wait a minute. No. Hold on. Wrong school. You guys did great.

MS. FELICITAS REYES: Yeah. We --SECRETARY BECK: You guys did great. 17.5 percent, New Mexico; 27.7, Sandoval Bilingual. I applaud you. I don't applaud myself, but I applaud you.

And last quick -- well, one other quick

That just kind of goes to who we are as a culture of a school is that parents -- and they hear about us. You know, we constantly hear from families that come to us, both students that have IEPs, because we have a very high success rate for our students in the inclusion model, and students from other communities that come knowing that the education is supportive and supportive of their culture.

SECRETARY BECK: It says here in the Part A renewal that 1 percent of your population is Native American.

MS. FELICITAS REYES: Prior to COVID, it was a little bit higher. But because of COVID, that's when we started seeing the decrease. And some of the families actually came back after COVID.

> SECRETARY BECK: Last quick question. What's Wild Friends?

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: It's -- the girls can probably speak to it better than I can. It's part of our Student Ambassador group. They advocate for some wildlife preservation.

SECRETARY BECK: Wildlife preservation? Okay.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: So through our --

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through our Student Ambassador group, that's one of the activities they take part in. We actually had two students through our Ambassadors program with Wild Friends advocated for the program in the Legislature last year.

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SECRETARY BECK: I had a completely different visual of what I thought Wild Friends was. I appreciate you letting me know that. Wonderful stuff. Wonderful.

And, kids, thank you so much. Gracias. That's -- gracias. It was beautiful. So thank you. THE CHAIR: Commissioner Carrillo.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Thank you as well. So I -- you know, I mean, I took -- what -- a few years of Spanish in high school and two years in college. And I didn't use it very much. And I remember one summer going to Peru, and I tried my best, and he said that, "It's pathetic."

I said, "At least I'm trying."

Muchas gracias. (Spanish spoken.) Was that okay? All right.

So, anyway, clearly, you serve a nice lunch. So what do you do? I mean, singling out lunch as a favorite, what do you do that's different and wonderful?

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: That's wonderful to hear, that partnership. Is that how you handle transportation is a partnership with the district?

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: No. We partner with Herrera Bus. We contract directly with Herrera

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: All-righty. Have you applied for our special project grant yet?

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: (Indicates.)

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Excellent. You'd be surprised how many schools, when they saw an e-mail from the PEC, didn't answer it. Now they're, like -- I'm so glad that you are taking advantage of that.

Very happy to hear about full inclusion as your methodology, and on-site counseling, that you have that in the budget, and that's very -- a priority for you.

The -- can you -- and, actually, maybe she would like to -- is it Isabel Sarracino? Did I get the first name right? -- is it Ycel [ph] -- on the Ambassador side, to tell us a little bit more about what the program -- the Ambassador program is --

FROM THE FLOOR: So from the things that I've done as an Ambassador for the three years that

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MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: Commissioner Carrillo and Chair, we are fortunate. First year, I went in and made a connection with the director of nutrition at Bernalillo Public Schools. We contract with them. We have since then. They are a huge supporter of the school as far as nutrition.

We've had a continuing partnership since I came in in 2017. We kicked off with the Thanksgiving meal in November. It's been great ever since.

We're one of their Seamless Summer Option sites during the summer. They provide meals to our students during the holidays as one of their site

And I would just go off to that -- they're not here and listening -- but they are a true model of scratch kitchen, fresh-made foods. And the kids know it. Their favorites are the -- well, my favorites, too. Frito pie day and any day that they have the fresh bread.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: My gosh, it sounds great.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: Their menu is built around the community as well. Their menu was developed around the community as well.

I've been in the middle school, it's a lot. And it's really fun.

We've done some fundraisers; right? Some fundraisers include food for holidays, along with just giving out candy for Valentine's Day. Instead of calling it Valentine's Day, we say "Friends Month." It's really fun.

You get to go to places which -- like, the La Cosecha. You got to represent your school. You also got to learn by going to a few classes that I, in my opinion, found very fun.

So as an Ambassador, I enjoy it, because I can, one, support my school; two, just have fun with my friends; three, make connections with the principal, because she's a big part of it, as well along with my teachers, who also help with it.

And with Wild Friends, it's another thing you get to go to places like this, even the Roundhouse, and you get to talk to legislators. And it's just so fun, because some people would be, like, they're so -- it would be so scary talking to them. And then you talk to them, and they're so sweet. They're just normal people. Like, you just realize that. And I enjoy it a lot.

Getting to go around my school and have

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kids see me, and they're, "Oh, my gosh, I want to do that. That sounds so cool."

Or, "I want to support my school. I want to talk about my school," all this and that, you know. And I enjoy it a lot.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Thank you very much. I imagine you represent your school very well when you're across the street. Certainly here. We're not a scary bunch. I don't think we're a scary bunch anyway. Yeah.

And, you know, I don't have a lot of questions about what you do. I'm very -- you know, it's funny -- not kind of "funny" laughing, but sometimes I'm skeptical, especially more at the high school level in districts, of different bilingual programs and bilingual seal. And it's something that's prestigious to have, but then with all these questions, are they getting -- this is at the high school level.

Are there -- is there fidelity to the program and to the language, and are they really getting what they need in terms of the academic instruction? But what I'm hearing here is, because it's starting at K -- at the early levels, and I'm so just happy that all of you kids came to see us,

their own assessment scores and such. But they also present in both English and Spanish to their parents and show what they're learning.

Instead of the teachers talking about what the kids are learning, the kids actually get to show their parents, "For the past two years, we've been doing this." And they do it in both languages when they meet with their parents to present their data.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: That's fantastic, just -- in terms of building their self-confidence and self-esteem. And that's huge, because you take that -- you know, after eighth grade, and when you've developed those skills of speaking publicly to a group, looking people in the eye when you shake their hand, things like that, it goes -- those soft skills, we call them, sometimes go a very long way.

So thank you for doing that as well. I don't really have any questions about your finances or anything else. I'm just -- I see just a sea of green in all the different categories, which we love.

You're never on our agenda, so that's always a good sign.

So thank you for all you do.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

that you're kind of laying the groundwork in a much more foundational way, so that there's the dual language success, and tri-language success, because there could be the native language, but also Spanish and English. So kudos.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: Commissioner Carrillo, if I can add, we in the process of developing a committee for the biliteracy seal for our eighth-grade students and possibly for our fifth-grade students. Same -- two reasons is one, to have our students be able to celebrate their bilingualism, but definitely aligned to what you're saying that they are truly bilingual and biliterate.

Ms. Easton did speak to I wish we could do K-12. That would be an ideal situation. But we feel it's important to recognize the efforts of even our kinder through the fifth grade, or our kinder through eighth grade of our students who are truly bilingual and can take that to the high school level as well.

MS. FELICITAS REYES: If I may add something. One of the things we forgot to mention is we do student-led conferences from kinder through eighth grade. And so they're basically data presentations. So the kids are very familiar with

THE CHAIR: I -- you know, I'll just echo. Thank you once again. I, too, four years of high school Spanish and three years of college. Didn't -- and taught in a school that had -- I was able to practice it a little bit in the school that I taught in.

I went to a governance council meeting not that long ago. And most -- the majority of the families were Spanish-speaking. And the one clear message I got out of that was they hated the lunch. I mean, by and large, every one of them thought it was -- I didn't need to know. They hated that lunch. And it was provided by the local school district.

So, you know, great that the school district is, I think, being a little more thoughtful and preparing what students are familiar with, and comfortable with and recognizing and helping to celebrate their cultures. I don't think ours is as well. Thank you for that.

I just wanted to talk a little bit more about the build. It's really not a build, but the move.

So, like, five years from now, where do you -- what do you see that looking like?

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: I already have a phase two in mind, building out for middle school program and multipurpose room to serve as a PE room, stage area, gym area.

But, ultimately, the amount of space that we have currently will allow a kinder-through-eighth-grade program; tight, but we will need to expand to fully house that request of 380 students -- or is it 360?

But we -- a playground. Again, we're in a great location. It's really close to law enforcement, so we have some advantages of being there. It's more central Rio Rancho.

We will continue to advocate and get the word out there for some of the residents of Albuquerque, some areas we haven't tapped into to increase our enrollment.

But probably a phase two, and I think that would serve a great size school. Those are the only two things we're lacking is more classrooms and a great multi-purpose room.

THE CHAIR: So is there any thought about pre-K?

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: Yes. Absolutely. The classrooms are already built out for two pre-K

to come up? I'm curious as to what that program is.

And I know I'm totally calling you out.
 You weren't ready for this. And I'm very grateful
 that you're coming up.

FROM THE FLOOR: Well, Film Prize -- they have different categories of what films you can make, which gives the students a lot of, like, different things to make films about and expand their creativity towards things.

Like I said, last year, we did a documentary. This year, we wanted to do animation, because a lot of the students love drawing. And, like, my sister, she loves drawing. She draws all the time. She's been drawing since she was little.

Some of the other schools also do acting, and they just create their own stories and share stories.

There's comedy ones, thriller ones, documentaries, a whole bunch load of things.

And I saw a couple of them, and they are really nice.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: So this is something that all the different schools, if they have students that want to participate, can participate in this.

classrooms, and we are applying for the grant once that becomes available. We considered even starting it early because the building will actually be available in February. But because the grant -- the way the grant runs, we'll have to wait till the pre-K grant.

THE CHAIR: Yeah. Yeah. And you have to have time, I guess, for the build-up of the playground.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: Yeah.

THE CHAIR: I know there are separate -- allotted separate playground requirements with the real tiny tykes.

So thanks for that. And when you say "building out," does that mean physically having to add on to that?

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: Yes. Additional structure. Correct.

THE CHAIR: Thanks. That's all I have.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: I have a question.

THE CHAIR: Sure.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: And it's great to be able to hear from the students. So, Ms. Sarracino, you mentioned Film Prize. And would -- do you want

FROM THE FLOOR: Yeah. There's -- I think there's a high school. And then there's middle school, dual credit class.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Is why this is called Film Prize Junior; is that --

FROM THE FLOOR: Yeah.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: That's really cool. I didn't know this went on in schools. I'm certainly happy you're in that program and doing well in it. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Brauer.
COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Thank you,
Madam Chair. Thank you, team. Thank you, Ms. Reyes
and Ms. Rodriguez.

I -- the Commission has already shared a lot of the good graces, and I didn't want to take up our time before lunch, especially for the kiddos, since they need to get back, hopefully, and have some of that beautiful lunch. Probably not today, but -- you know.

I -- I just want -- I just want to just share that we have so many charter schools start from a place of deep personal connection to a problem in our education system. And we talk about a lot of our other schools when we see this.

And the uniqueness of your school does that, does that same exact thing. And because sometimes we are a very large, majority-Hispanic potentially, quote-unquote, Spanish-speaking community, I think it kind of goes unaddressed, and heritage becomes the norm for many of our students who have that specific background.

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And so I think that what you all do, sometimes it could potentially go under the radar in terms of the uniqueness and the importance.

And then when we see these young children and our young -- our future leaders that come up and speak with such clarity and confidence and courage, it's just a -- it's a beautiful thing to see that.

And we need more of these opportunities.

And so thank you so much for all that you do. It's really awesome to see, not that the red-yellow-green thing matters everything to us. But it's great to see not just everything is in green, but the story of having a couple of different colors at the beginning of this cycle through now, there's a -- there's a clear growth that's happened, as well as within your -- your proficiency scores.

And to think about how beautiful it is to think about our young people. And, again, I'm

But there is an opportunity -- just, like,
you know, sometimes students opt -- you know, you
can even start taking, like, Algebra 1 now in
seventh grade, probably -- right? -- and you can
fulfill a lot of your requirements. What would it
mean, like -- maybe it's a possibility already. I
don't know.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: It is.

COMMISSIONER BRAUER: That would be so awesome to have our young students be bilingual-sealed, if that's the noun that we use, and frequent.

MS. JACKIE RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Commissioner. And to add, there is that option. So we are pursuing that. Additionally, there is another charter school -- but I don't think they're State-authorized -- that, actually, they do AP classes for eighth-graders, so that they have a Spanish credit or even more that they go into high school with.

So I pick that directors's brain all the time. And we're friends and colleagues. So we absolutely talk about our schools and the comparisons and differences and challenges and all of it. So, absolutely.

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mono-lingual, even though I'm -- like many of the other Commissioners, my undergrad actually got placed on the Spanish-speaking floor. I don't know why this Appalachian kid was in with a bunch of kids from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. But that's where they put me when I transferred in. I learned a lot of Spanish almost through an immersion experience; right?

And I just think about how beautiful it is to see our young people, not just speaking, but reading off of their papers. I think that's just, like, a beautiful thing. And thinking about how they're reading and speaking and writing in both languages is such a great -- such a great thing.

So I wanted to make sure it didn't go unannounced, because it is -- in the state we live in, it almost seems like a given. And we know it's not. We know it's not, no matter what the efforts are happening to do so.

The one thing I just think about -- and this is probably -- I always think about this when I see you come up. I wonder how we can get some type of bilingual seal for, like, elementary school as well, and middle school, and not just for the high school level.

COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Awesome. That sounds like that's your goal for contract

negotiations for 2000-and -- not really. I'm just
 kidding. Thank you for that. That's really

awesome.

THE CHAIR: So I move that the Public Education Commission approve the renewal application for the Sandoval Academy of Bilingual Education for a five-year term without conditions.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Second.

THE CHAIR: There's a motion by

Commissioner Gipson and a second by Commissioner Carrillo.

SECRETARY BECK: Chair Gipson.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

16 SECRETARY BECK: Vice Chair Carrillo.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Yes.

18 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Ingham.

COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Yes.

20 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner

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COMMISSIONER CLAHCHISCHILLIAGE: Yes.

SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Burt.

24 (No response.)

SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Manis.

40 (Pages 154 to 157) 154 1 1 COMMISSIONER MANIS: Yes. students as citizen scholars with a dual language 2 2 environment through a rigorous learning curriculum SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Brauer. which will prepare students for post-secondary 3 COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Yes. 3 4 4 SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Taylor. success. 5 5 The head administrator, Daniel Peña, has (No response.) 6 6 SECRETARY BECK: Yeah. She already been at the school for many years as its leader. 7 7 said -- okay. We have one, two, three, four, five, The renewal visit took place on 8 six, seven votes for, and no votes against. The 8 October 23rd, with Cheryl Rowe as lead, Lucy 9 9 Valenzuela, and Kristen LaVolpa. I was not on the motion passes. Congratulations. Thank you, 10 10 renewal visit team, but I visited the school for everybody who came. 11 THE CHAIR: We will pause till 2:00. 11 their annual visit this past spring. 12 12 (Luncheon recess taken, 12:30 p.m. The Charter Schools Division recommends 13 13 to 2:00 p.m.) that Tierra Encantada Charter School be renewed for 14 14 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you very much for a term of five years with the following conditions: 15 your patience. We are here for our third hearing --15 First, that the school's Record of 16 16 third hearing of the day. And this is Tierra Performance demonstrates improved academic growth, 17 17 Encantada Charter School. beginning with specific -- a specific immediate 18 So our agenda goes Charter School Division 18 action to offer students two semesters of ELA and 19 19 will do their presentation and recommendation. If math each year. 20 20 there's any entity that's here, by chance, for a And, second, that the school identifies a 21 tribal consultation, there's time on the agenda for 21 robust strategic educational plan to improve student 22 22 outcomes with appropriate staff professional 23 23 You'll have your opportunity to present development related to content instruction, 24 24 including plans to strengthen the bilingual program. your information. 25 We'll do public comment after that. 25 The recommendation is based on the record 155 157 1 And then questions from us. 1 of the school's performance over the course of the 2 2 So -- and just a reminder, when you first contract term, the renewal application, which 3 speak, if you state your name -- and for everyone in 3 highlights adult actions and programs in the service 4 the audience, if you're doing public comment --4 of student progress, and verification of those 5 5 because we have a court reporter doing -programs and adult actions during the CSD renewal 6 transcribing for us, and she's virtual. 6 site visit and annual visits. 7 7 If you state your name, spell your last The school's ratings on Part B of the 8 8 name, and for you folks, the role that you have in renewal application are as follows: 9 the -- in the school, and then we'll be good. So 9 The school rated Demonstrates Substantial 10 10 thank you. Progress in financial compliance, in governance, in 11 11 equity and identity, and on other performance And welcome once again. I don't know 12 framework indicators. 12 who's doing it. 13 13 DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: I am, Chair Gipson. The school rated Failing to Demonstrate 14 14 Progress in three areas: Student outcomes, Good afternoon, Chair Gipson and 15 15 mission-specific goals, and educational program. Commissioners. I'm Brigette Russell, Deputy 16 I'll address those three first, and then come back 16 Director in the Charter Schools Division, here to 17 17 to the areas where they demonstrated progress. provide the PED evaluation for Tierra Encantada

Santa Fe Public Schools as their authorizer. The school remained with Santa Fe until renewing with the PEC in 2015.

This is their second renewal application

Tierra Encantada opened in 2006 with

This is their second renewal application with the Commission.

The mission of the school is to empower

designated Traditional on Vistas for the past three years. But CSD does have concerns about the school's academic outcomes.

For '22 -- for '23-'24, proficiency
percentages were 29 percent in reading 5 percent is

For '22 -- for '23-'24, proficiency percentages were 29 percent in reading, 5 percent in math, and 30 percent in science, all below district and state averages, which are themselves low.

In terms of academics, the school has been

Charter School.

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The math proficiency rate is particularly concerning.

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A bright spot in this school's academic outcomes is proficiencies for students with disabilities: 33 percent in reading and 44 percent in science. Both of these are more than double the district and the state rates.

Math proficiency for students with disabilities is masked, but is less than or equal to 20 percent.

CSD learned during the renewal visits this fall and the annual visit last spring that the school only offers math and language arts for one semester instead of the whole school year. And CSD believes this likely contributes to the low proficiencies.

The school has had challenges meeting their mission-specific goals over the charter term, meeting the target less than half of the time.

The dual credit goal was a challenge because students were not ready for college-level classes. The school is now collaborating with Santa Fe Community College, its dual credit partner, to offer intervention to support students with their college classes.

So in terms of their educational program, they are fully implementing with fidelity one element. And the other two are -- are incomplete in their implementation resulting in the rating.

The four areas where the school Demonstrated Substantial Progress: First, financial compliance. They have a very strong financial compliance record, a clean record for most of the charter term, with the exception of one Working to Meet rating the first year and one Does Not Meet indicator rating last year.

They have clear systematic processes, and CSD has no concerns in this area. On the contrary, I was very impressed by the school's financial management. We couldn't rate them Meets because of the way the rubric is, but their finances are very strong.

In terms of governance, they are also very close to Meets with only one Working to Meet rating in '22-'23 when board members did not complete all training hours.

They have corrected this by arranging to have required on-site training and have met all requirements since then.

Equity and identity, they have created a

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1 model program to address equity and identity issues 2 called "The Empathy Project." This school-wide

> project faces equity and identity issues head on and ensures that students feel seen, respected,

supported, and included.

They would be Meets in this area, except that they are working toward creating an equity council that meets all PED definitions and requirements.

For other performance framework indicators, the school has adequately addressed any ratings of Does Not Meet or repeated Working to Meet and explained the actions being taken to remedy any issues.

All the licensure issues have been resolved.

They are working with Language and Culture to resolve concerns from a technical assistance and monitoring letter, and have hired a student success coordinator who actively monitors attendance and works to ensure that students remain engaged and regularly attend school.

Thank you.

MS. MELISSA BROWN: Do we have anybody on our virtual audience or in the actual audience that

The Spanish language proficiency mission goal was met only once. But a growing number of students are earning the bilingual seal every year.

The three main components of Tierra Encantada's educational program are dual language immersion, project-based learning, and college and career pathways.

The strongest of these is college and career pathways through the dual credit program. The school has collaborated with Santa Fe Community College to expand their offerings in this area.

Dual language, which requires students receive half of their instruction in Spanish, has been a challenge to implement due to difficulty retaining bilingual teachers.

The PED language and culture division believes that the school's program more closely fits a Spanish Heritage model, and has suggested that the school may wish to switch to that for their next charter term if dual language can't be implemented with fidelity.

A return to true project-based learning has been slow since the post-pandemic return to in-person instruction. But cross-curricular projects are being incorporated into the curriculum.

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is here to represent a tribal entity?

(No response.)

MS. MELISSA BROWN: We do not.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Last school, we had little tykes up, and

we had a whole row raise their hand. It's, like,

"No, not yet."

So welcome once again. And you have to

So welcome once again. And you have to press hard the first time. It should go -- there you go. And you don't have to keep your finger on it

Welcome once again. Introduce yourselves and anyone else that's going to speak, and you can start when you're ready.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: You guys are ready now? Thank you very much. First of all, I want to thank everybody for having us here. It's great to be here. Yesterday and today, I had a conversation with people. It's exactly five years to the day that we were sitting here. It was Wednesday, December 11th, 2019.

We took it as a sign. We thank everybody for being here.

I also want to thank the Charter School Division. Cheryl Rowe has been very, very helpful passage. And we're hoping that, you know, we -- I know I've got some students here. I hope we score well on our passage and that they give us a good mark at the end of our passage.

So welcome again, Tierra Encantada Charter School. This is our passage.

So if we can go on to the next slide.

8 A little bit about us.

Next slide. And -- I'm sorry -- next slide.

So we've already heard about the mission. So our students prepare for college and careers. We give them the -- the opportunities to earn up to twelve college credit hours, a degree, or a certificate before graduating high school.

Next slide.

So I'm going to talk a little bit about our mission-specific goals.

Next.

So our mission-specific goals is that 70 percent of our students enrolled on the 40th and 120th day will earn college credit. That is, in the ninth grade, students will take one introductory college class, and in grades 10 and 11, a minimum of two classes, and in grade 12, they take a minimum of

three college classes.

with us in providing technical assistance and guidance throughout the last few years with us. And she's always a phone call away and an e-mail away. I want to thank you for always being there and guiding us and helping us out.

We can start our -- oh, I'm so sorry. My name is Daniel Peña, I am the school director for Tierra Encantada Charter School. Oh. P-e-n-a. Thank you.

So we're going to start our presentation. I want to explain a little something first, is that our -- Tierra Encantada follows what's called a "passages" model. And at the end of the year, seniors have to present a passage to the community of teachers or representatives; a panel, if you will.

So the passage presentations are benchmark presentations at the end of pivotal transitional years, like the twelfth grade. During the passage presentations, students use their portfolios as evidence to demonstrate their readiness to move on to the next level of education.

So what we're doing here today is we're trying to put our -- you know, do what we have asked our students to do. So we have prepared our own

A recent analysis of student outcomes revealed a passing rate of over 73 percent. This strong performance has attributed to our school's structured approach, which includes integrated academic support built into our master schedule,

which I'll talk about in a little bit.

Next slide, please.

In our passages, we always talk about the challenges we've had and that we've faced over the years as we grow within Tierra Encantada Charter School.

These are some of the challenges we've faced over the years.

Colleges have indicated that there's a lack of soft skills, which are crucial for success in both academic and professional settings.

We saw more need to -- more support for our students that need it. So students required ongoing support throughout the day to help them navigate their coursework and responsibilities effectively.

We also found the need for continuous monitoring of students' progress to assure they're maintaining success and addressing any challenges

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they may encounter.

Next slide, please.

Some of our successes.

As mentioned earlier, we have developed direct partners with colleges. We establish direct collaborations with colleges to facilitate smoother transitions for students in higher education, ensuring that they receive resources and guidance.

Colleges now come to Tierra Encantada, set up shop, and work with students and provide support and technical assistance.

We developed a college and career pathways manual. So our students are now following career pathways. When we first started with the dual credit program, we were trying to help students figure out which path to go on. And we realized, wait a minute. They can't do this because they need something -- they need a college catalog in order for them to follow.

So they are now following college and career pathways. And we worked with the community college, our direct partner, in developing that college and career pathway guide for our students.

We also saw a need for designated dual credit hours within our schedule. And within that

haven't met our mark with our mission-specific goals. But with all the courses that our students are taking, whether due to scheduling conflicts or the workload, that they couldn't meet the criteria for our mission-specific goal, so within all the courses that they're taking, we do have a 79 percent pass rate with all college courses that the students are taking, nine through the twelve.

And what you're seeing on the screen -I'm sorry. What you saw on the screen was a copy of
our dual credit pathway catalog that our students
use when they're signing up for -- for courses. And
on the right side is just a sample of some of the
pathways that our students can choose from.

And that's a table of contents that we wanted you to see.

Next slide, please.

One more time.

So our second mission-specific goal was under dual language. So we stated that 50 percent of our students in grade 8 will increase one level on the State assessment for Spanish language proficiency.

Although we have not met this goal every year, the progress made in meeting it during the

schedule, students now have a period called "dual credit," where the students go and receive support and guidance with a designated staff member in that period.

So they're not taking the courses outside of the day or when they can. We now have designated periods within the day that we -- we've blocked off for them to sign up for -- well, in the master schedule, they have a dual credit hour where they go and receive continued guidance.

We've also moved dual credit to -- to our crews for further monitoring. A crew class is a class of students who are assigned to in the seventh grade. They stay with that teacher until they graduate. In other words, that teacher becomes their in-school parent, their person they can go to. And one of those areas we've done is we've moved dual credit monitoring into crew classes for additional support in dual credit.

TECS students have demonstrated a 73 percent pass rate from 2020 to 2024. But from '21 to '23, it was a 76 percent pass rate and a passing average grade of 79 percent.

This includes all courses taken.

I know we've talked a little bit about we

most recent academic year reflects the ongoing efforts to enhance student outcomes in areas identified as priority to the school. We are making some improvements in that area.

Next slide, please.

One more time.

So here were some of the challenges that we faced with our second mission-specific goal.

That first bullet point, where it says "Testing Limitations," what we're trying to say here is that the students' data we reported was limited to only eighth grade. TECS did have other grade levels that showed improvement and ending the year with 98 percent participation rate, further demonstrating proficiency in all grade levels.

We had -- some of the challenges we had were students transferring from other schools. And some of that posed challenges, as often they were varied in their Spanish language proficiency, maybe coming from different bilingual programs or dual language programs.

As mentioned earlier, we've had a challenge with staffing, either in core content or Spanish language arts. So every year, we've had some change in those areas as far as staffing,

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creating inconsistency and instructional approaches, curriculum continuity, and relationship building with students.

And then, finally, our -- we had limited dual language environment. Staffing shortages reduced the number of hours that we could provide in a dual language setting, limited immersive Spanish instruction, and necessitating a shift to a different model rather than full immersion approach.

But we still maintain a strand of dual -- of dual language within our bilingual program.

And our successes.

So in -- Tierra Encantada has received two awards from the Bilingual Multicultural Program. It's a bilingual multicultural education recognition award for excellence, in '22-'23 and in '23-'24 school years, showing our efforts and commitment to bilingual education.

We've also had a steady increase of State bilingual participation. In bilingual seal participation, a growing number of students pursued and received the bilingual seal, reflecting consistent success in promoting bilingualism and biliteracy among students.

So in 2020 and '21, 59 percent of our

participate in community service projects conducted in Spanish throughout the community, or within the school, whether it's tutoring or going out to the community.

They are actively involved in the Model UN in English, and they are actively involved in Model UN in Spanish. They present at the La Cosecha conference. And they have to present their end-of-the-year passage in Spanish, which requires a high level of linguistic competency.

We feel this is in alignment with our mission goals. The success of the bilingual program aligns closely with our mission of bilingualism and biliteracy.

Students achieve progress on the State assessment and develop long-term Spanish proficiency. By fostering high standards and encouraging student participation in the bilingual seal program, we have established a track record of success in meeting or exceeding our mission-specific goals for Spanish language proficiency, we feel.

One of the components of a passage is we have to talk about what action are we going to be taking. Once it was determined that we had some concerns about the bilingual program for

graduating twelfth-graders received the bilingual seal.

In 2022, 70 percent of our students graduating received the bilingual seal.

In 2023, 75 percent of our students received the bilingual seal.

And in 2024, 74 percent of our students received the bilingual seal.

Next slide, please. Thank you.

I want to talk a little bit about the bilingual seal program. So students -- and what it takes to even earn the State bilingual seal at Tierra Encantada.

Students who -- and we have a couple of students here in our bilingual seal program. Students who successfully earn the State bilingual seal, they have to demonstrate proficiency in multiple areas.

They have to pass the CLEP test in Spanish. We know they are able to pass the Avant and be eligible for the bilingual seal. But we have been working with the college to have them take the CLEP test in Spanish, and they have to pass that.

They have to attend regular bilingual seal classes within the school. And they have to

Tierra Encantada, we began working closely with the Language and Cultural Division. We've been receiving technical assistance from them and providing and maximizing dual language support within our limited resources that we have as far as staffing.

We also, within our -- within our school, we developed our own Corrective Action Plan. We develop and implement a Corrective Action Plan to address compliance issues and improve the effectiveness of our bilingual program and its focus on increasing and aligning with bilingual education standards, enhancing teacher training, and addressing gaps in program delivery.

For reading, we've had some improvement in reading, and this improvement highlights the school's commitment to literacy, our focused -- I'm sorry -- I'm a little bit nervous.

This improvement highlights the school's commitment to literacy and our focused intervention periods to support students -- to support students. The integration of structured literacy programs, interventions have played a role in achieving these gains.

So our challenges that we faced and that

we learned from in reading is the development of an ELA curriculum. We needed to identify a comprehensive program.

We had ELA staff turnovers. Turnover among ELA teachers disrupted continuity in instruction.

And as mentioned earlier, we -- we use a block -- a block schedule modeled on college-based -- on a college-based system. It presented a challenge for students who were in classes for longer periods of time and maybe had problems retaining or engaging in ELA instruction.

Varied reading proficiency levels, of course, addressing a wide range of reading proficiency levels within the same classrooms required differentiated instruction and additional resources, placing a strain on instructional planning and delivery.

Despite these challenges, Tierra Encantada demonstrated its commitment to literacy by receiving a 10 percent increase in reading proficiency through targeted interventions and structured support.

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What were some of our successes in the area of reading?

10 percent increase in reading proficiency, underscoring Tierra Encantada's commitment to fostering a strong foundation in literacy and its students.

So our next step is what are our actions, what are we going to be doing?

Well, we're going to be looking at transitioning into a traditional schedule, move from a block schedule to a traditional schedule to improve more consistent and frequent exposure to ELA instruction, fostering better retention and skill development.

We're going to maintain our ELA staffing.
We're prioritizing and retaining current ELA staff
to ensure instructional continuity and to build on
the progress already made in reading proficiency,
more focus on data-driven instruction, and enhanced
structured professional development of Professional
Learning Communities. Use PLCs carry -- we're going
to use PLCs to facilitate discussions on student
performance, share best practices, and address
challenges for addressing literacy challenges across
grade levels.

Next slide, please.So in math, there's been a steady

Well, we adopted a comprehensive ELA curriculum, CommonLit, with -- which included professional development and included the addition of common and formative assessments within that program.

We improved staff retention in ELA, and we introduced weekly structured Professional Learning Communities, established meetings that focused on analyzing student performance data, identifying trends and planning targeted interventions to support literacy improvement. And there's more focus on data-driven instruction within those PLCs.

There's some cross-content collaboration and planning. So we've also seen that happening. And we've also seen adherence to what we call the "text curriculum framework," which we developed a few years ago. So our ELA teachers follow the curriculum framework to ensure consistency, alignment, and structured approach to literacy instruction.

And as mentioned earlier, we did outperform the State of New Mexico in some areas. In special ed, we outperformed the State in our recent Vistas data that was released about a month ago. These successes collectively contributed to a growth -- this steady growth that we've had has been a testament of our emphasis on strengthening the math instruction, adopting evidence-based practices, and providing additional academic support to students through our intervention period and personalized learning strategies.

So some of the challenges that we face and we learned throughout the years is one of the challenges is math department turnover.

Frequent turnover among math teachers disrupted our instructional consistency. Again, block scheduling model. The college-based block schedule presented challenges for math instruction, as longer periods were not always effective for subjects requiring consistent practice and skill reinforcement.

We had some limited professional development opportunities. Professional development specific to math instruction was limited, reducing opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills. And then we had an inconsistent comprehensive curriculum across the department as well.

Next slide.

One more time.

What were some of our successes in math?

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We introduced the introduction of the Alex math program, an adaptive online learning platform that personalizes instruction based on each student's unique learning needs.

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Alex offers targeted practice, identifies knowledge gaps, and adjusts to curriculum as students progress, promoting deeper understanding and mastery of math concepts.

Teachers are attending more professional development in the area of math, focused on evidence-based instructional practices and strategies.

We have enhanced our academic support and intervention periods. We strengthened the use of the intervention periods to provide targeted support for students who need additional assistance.

And, again, compared to New Mexico in the area of special education, we were higher. We scored higher. We had 20 percent proficiency versus the 7.5 percent overall proficiency for New Mexico.

The success highlights TECS's dedicated approach, contributing to the steady 5 percent increase in student performance.

In our actions, this is what we're going to be doing. So we're going to be transitioning to need to foster understanding and positive communication within the school and beyond.

The goal of The Empathy Project is to educate others with a profound impact that words and actions have on individuals and the larger community.

The project seeks to promote empathy as a core value by engaging the TECS community in discussions, activities, and initiatives that emphasize the importance of kind and considerate communication by encouraging members to be more mindful of their words and how they affect others. The Empathy Project aims to reduce conflict and build a more supportive and inclusive environment at TECS and throughout the wider community.

If you can go one more. There we go.

So The Empathy Project at Tierra Encantada Charter School has been an integral part of the school's academic and social learning framework, permeating various classes and gradually being introduced into the curriculum.

This approach helps ensure that the values of empathy, cultural awareness, and respectful communication are not just stand-alone initiatives, but essential components of the TECS educational

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a traditional yearlong schedule. We're making a decision to move away from the college-based block schedule to a traditional yearlong schedule, providing more consistency and sustained math instruction.

We're going to be working at adopting a comprehensive math curriculum, begin the adoption of and integration of more comprehensive curriculum across math departments -- the math department -- to create a cohesive, structured approach.

I also want to add that, as a staff, we recognize that we all are ELA and math teachers, and, thus, are working on our PLCs to support both math and reading strategies across all content areas with the guidance of both ELA and math departments.

Our Empathy Project.

It's a school-wide project. It's a project-based element. It's something that we're very, very proud of.

The Empathy Project at Tierra Encantada Charter School was initiated as a response to a troubling rise in violent and harmful events involving community members.

The project was created by a collaborative group of teachers and students who recognized the experience.

Here's how the project has been woven throughout TECS: Through classroom activities, literature across all contents, into our curriculum framework.

We also provide professional development. Before teachers go in and work with students, we have meetings with our teachers to prepare them for that, cross-content collaboration, and project-based learning.

It's also -- we also consider empathy as a cultural pillar at TECS. The empathy isn't confined to individual classrooms. It is supported school-wide through events, workshops, and special days dedicated to empathy-building activities. This helps solidify a school culture where empathy is a shared value.

We also see student leadership coming out from The Empathy Project. Students are encouraged to take leading roles in promoting empathy throughout the school, such as organizing events, leading discussions, and helping with empathy-focused projects.

Through these efforts, The Empathy Project has become a fundamental part of TECS' educational

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approach, contributing to a learning environment where students are not only academically equipped, but also emotionally intelligent and socially aware.

Successes.

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Some of the successes we've seen as successful components of The Empathy Project.

We hit the area of protection of student rights. The Empathy Project has strengthened TECS' commitment to creating an inclusive school environment where every student feels seen, respected, and supported.

Activity within the project -- activities within the project have helped reduce incidents of bullying and promote mutual respect among students.

We've seen a decrease in student referrals for discipline.

The project celebrates diversity, fostering a school culture where students from all backgrounds are valued. And, again, as mentioned earlier, we've met several areas -- through The Empathy Project, as you can see there, we've met several areas of compliance for the State of New Mexico.

Next slide, please.

So key activities of The Empathy Project.

with other charter schools.

There was entertainment and interactive booths.

The Empathy Take-A-Stand Rally was a powerful event that reinforced the school's mission to create an environment where empathy, respect, and cultural awareness are central to education. By bringing together students and educators and community members, we fostered a shared commitment to building more -- building a more compassionate and socially aware society.

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And the final component to any passage is an art piece. And all students have to develop an art piece.

So we -- if you could pause just for a second? I want to introduce this art piece. This art piece was made by a former student of ours named Fin. She graduated -- she graduated a little bit early.

She was very tied to The Empathy Project and was one of the student leaders for The Empathy Project and has made it a goal to document The Empathy Project and is creating a documentary.

I reached out to Fin and asked Fin if I

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could use some of the footage.

Right now the program is about 20 minutes long. You're going to see about four minutes of that. So we were able to whittle it down. You're going to see last year's yearlong project of The Empathy Project, under the title, "The History of Hate."

This year's project is -- we're running History of Hate now with our middle school, and our high school is now using, under the unit of "Empowering Women." So if you could play the video now. Thank you.

(Video plays.)

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: And with that, that is our passage. We want to thank you for being present at our passage. Students, I hope we did okay.

MS. MELISSA BROWN: So if I could just share with the Commissioners. I'm trying to get --Commissioner Ingham is here. He's just not on the panel. I'm working on that. We do have one speaker, public speaker, online and two in the room.

So right now, what Commissioner Manis and Commissioner Ingham have is the ability to talk, but we can't see them on screen.

All right. So the first -- first person

I won't read through all these. But The Empathy Project at TECS has significantly contributed to a school environment where students' rights are protected through inclusivity, respect, and cultural validation. This initiative aligns with various educational mandates and reinforces our dedication to supporting the identities and well-being of all

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students.

So what action have we taken with The **Empathy Project?**

Well, The Empathy Project launched, last year, our inaugural Empathy Take-A-Stand Rally, part of the Tierra Encantada Charter School social-emotional learning initiative.

It took place on April 5th of 2024, bringing together students from TECS, other charter schools, and various community organizations to champion the importance of empathy and emotional awareness in education.

This event aimed to inspire students, educators, and community members to foster empathy, build stronger connections, and promote social responsibility. The rally featured public speakers, community programs and organizations, collaboration

is Esmeralda Sanchez. You can unmute yourself and please spell your last name and try to keep your comments to about two minutes.

FROM THE PUBLIC: (Spanish spoken.)
THE CHAIR: There's no translation for the transcript.

MS. LUCY VALENZUELA: Brigette, am I allowed to translate? Or should we have somebody from the school do it?

DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: If Commissioner Gipson agrees, you can translate.

Thank you, Lucy.

You're welcome.

MS. LUCY VALENZUELA: (For Ms. Esmeralda Sanchez)

Okay. If I would have known, I would have had her stop. But I'll try my best to summarize what she said.

She just said she's very thankful and grateful to Tierra Encantada, as well as to Ms. -- oh, I can't -- Angela for the support that she provides her students, and, overall, the overall support that the school provides, not just to the parents, even if they're not English speaking, but as well to the students, and that they're always there and willing to help the students.

Tierra Encantada. We liked the fact that Mr. Peña was the head of school.

We also loved the curriculum of the school and the dual credit program for our son. Also, we appreciated the smaller class sizes and smaller school setting. We were fortunate enough to get into the school.

It has been the best decision we have ever made. My son is excelling in school, not just with his grades, but him growing up to be a great individual. There's no bullying, no social cliques, and no disrespect of one another. Tierra Encantada has taught him he can do anything he puts his mind to. He is now taking college courses as a 15-year-old and on his way to becoming an engineer, which has been his childhood dream.

All of his teachers and his school counselors helped guide him towards his dream.

One thing that all of you may not know about Tierra Encantada is the compassion that the staff has towards each student at their school. It is a lower-income school where many of the students work to help supplement their family incomes.

The school does everything to work with the students to assure they can succeed in school

MS. MELISSA BROWN: So now in the room, and you'll come up to the microphone here, we have Edith Martinez.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good afternoon. My name is Edith Martinez. I am a parent of a tenth-grader at Tierra Encantada Charter School.

My son, Eric Holmes, has been attending the school since he was in the seventh grade. My older three girls graduated from the public schools and completed their higher education. My husband and I were both coaches in the school system, and I also ran the largest youth and after-school program in the city.

I was able to talk to the youth about their experiences in the public schools, specifically in the middle and high school. Many students were having trouble with larger schools and the larger class sizes. They felt they were not getting the attention they needed or deserved.

My husband and I had to decide where we wanted to send our son to middle school. We were not comfortable sending him to a public school, so we started looking at charter schools.

After much research, we decided on

and take care of their family responsibilities.

They take the time to work with the students one on one if they need extra support in their schoolwork.

It is truly a family.

Every teacher knows every student by name and circumstance, no students are left behind.

Tierra Encantada has a great parents-school communication system. We are updated by texts, e-mails, and phone calls. I did not receive this type of constant communication from the public schools.

I have gotten to know a lot of the parents over my career. Parents ask me where to send their children for middle school. They are afraid of what's going on with the public schools and in our world and want their children to be safe. I encourage them to look and consider Tierra Encantada.

I love dropping off my son each day, knowing he's going to be respected by all, and to continue to have the ability to get the education he deserves. We are truly blessed to have such a great charter school option for students in Santa Fe.

I'm not discounting the public school system, as my older children, my husband and I, we

all attended the public schools. I just know our charter school is a way for our youth to feel that they are truly a part of our living community, and they can pursue whatever dreams they have.

Please help keep the educational jewel in Santa Fe, a special school that is inclusive for all students and gives them a place to be their true selves.

Thank you.

MS. MELISSA BROWN: Thank you. Our next speaker is -- excuse me -- Kimberly -- and I'm not sure how to pronounce your last name, so I'm not going to try.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good afternoon. My name is Kimberly Niceley. N-i-c-e-l-e-y. We received a letter from a parent who couldn't be here today, so I'm speaking on behalf of Christina Sandoval.

"Tierra Encantada Charter School is truly a gem in the realm of education. As a family of two sparkling stars currently shining in the school and a plan to add a third, we've witnessed firsthand the enchanting impact of their educational approach.

"Our history with Tierra Encantada is deep-rooted, as several family members have walked the halls and proudly graduated with dreams in their and resources, we are confident that our children's dreams are as limitless as the skies. We couldn't wish for a more supportive and innovative school community to guide our aspiring scholars.

"The school's robust (incomprehensible) policy and proactive preventative programs create an atmosphere where our children feel both safe and supported, nurturing their minds in an environment built on respect and kindness. With their dual language option, not only are we raising bilingual learners, we are also giving our kids the gift of cultural connection and global understanding.

"Every day spent at Tierra Encantada is a step towards become compassionate, informed citizens of the world, pouring inspiration into their educational adventure.

"Tierra Encantada isn't just a school; it's a place where dreams are cultivated and futures are brightened. We couldn't be happier or more grateful for the gift of this learning community. Thank you for your time. Christina Sandoval.

MS. MELISSA BROWN: That concludes public comment.

THE CHAIR: Welcome once again. Thank you for all the time and effort that you put into the

pockets.

"Our eldest has a gifted IEP in place, thriving under the guidance of remarkable educators who tirelessly navigate uncharted waters with us, dedicated to crafting a personalized academic adventure tailored to his growing mind.

"The teachers here are more than just instructors. They are mentors, always at the ready, like wizards always conjuring solutions to ensure our children soar to new heights.

"Navigating our eldest child's gifted IEP journey could have been daunting. But Tierra Encantada stepped up like a true partner in education. Their commitment to amplifying his potential through advanced classes show they prioritize the individual strengths and needs of each student.

"Each step of the way, the dedicated staff has collaborated with us, paving pathways for our child's success that go beyond the ordinary.

"Tierra Encantada's dual credit program feels like access to treasure maps leading to knowledge from both the high school experience and the collegiate oceans beyond.

"Thanks to the school's blend of support

application. We really do appreciate it. And all the folks that spoke, we appreciate your time and efforts.

I need a little bit of a clarification. I heard you say that the school was fulfilling one of its -- one of the three ed programs. Which one are they doing? One, two, or three?

DR. BRIGETTE RUSSELL: They are completely and fully implementing one of the three components of their ed program: The career pathways, dual credit. They are partially implementing the other two components.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Okay. So it's No. -- it's the third -- I'm looking at their contract. So it's the third one. Okay. Thanks.

So I'm a little challenged here, only because I appreciate the creation of an environment that is safe and secure and is respectful for staff and students and everyone. There is -- there's no amount of value that you can really put on that. That is absolutely important.

And there's no doubt that you're serving those families, and families are comfortable, and they are comfortable in knowing that their students there are safe and secure.

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But when you mentioned that we were -it's almost five years to the date that we were here, I'm also looking at the data from five years ago. And we're just about exactly at the same place. And that's what challenges me at this point in time, that there hasn't been a really -- a significant growth. And, in some cases, I think there's been a little bit of backtracking.

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districts.

Because I am concerned that a school that has a mission for dual language and the dual language isn't being accomplished, because that's -you know, that's -- that is your mission. So -- and I -- I understand staffing issues. And I -- your staff retention isn't great. So can you talk to me a little bit about what's happening in regards to staff retention?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: As in how are we hoping to retain staff?

THE CHAIR: Right. So what's the challenges in trying to retain staff? That's -- you know --

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Well, one of the things we've done to retain them is that we've increased our -- we've increased our stipends for staff to come -- our bilingual stipends. Because we weren't

competitive with the surrounding schools and

Spanish Language Arts and two courses.

What's happening right now is because we don't have a fully staffed Spanish Language Arts, we can't count those students -- we're missing, like, two sections of a group of kids that would be receiving the Spanish Language Arts and -- from two other teachers. So we're limited to one section right now.

THE CHAIR: Okay. And can you -- because you mentioned you're moving to a yearlong versus the block schedule. So I guess I saw block scheduling. I don't understand. What do you mean a yearlong versus block scheduling?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: So we teach in a -- our block schedule is like a college schedule. Students -- let's take English Language Arts. They take English Language Arts semester one. Semester two, they may take math. Spanish Language Arts is taken all year. But -- so they would take English in the fall and not take it in the spring.

THE CHAIR: So you're -- you're going to go to a more traditional, like, 40-minute class all yearlong.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Yes, ma'am. We're looking at that model right now.

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THE CHAIR: You're not sure if you're

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And so a lot of times if they came here and they wanted to move to another school, the pay was the same. So what we did, we've increased those stipends, which has helped us retain staff as well.

So that was an area that we saw we probably needed to look at our finances and see if that's something that we could do to help recruit and retain. And it has been working, because, as I said, we are starting to get staff in and start to main- -- I don't think I said that, but we are starting to maintain them.

We are now staffed across our content areas. As far as our bilingual teachers, we are still struggling to get Spanish Language Arts teachers in. But as far as our content, we are fully staffed now.

THE CHAIR: So what does your dual language model look like now?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Right now, they take Spanish Language Arts, okay? And then they would need to take two -- two classes to complete the three hours. They need to take either science or math or social studies and science. It has to be

going? MR. DANIEL PEÑA: No. Yes, we are. We're looking at what that model is going to look like. What I do want to emphasize is in our -- if a student takes English Language Arts in the fall, in the spring, we have our intervention periods, and we try to place them in intervention periods that would address English and reading skills.

believe Ms. -- is that okay with Ms. Esquibel-Martinez, our principal, would like to say something as well.

You wanted to say something? And I

MS. ANGELA ESQUIBEL-MARTINEZ: My name is Angela Esquibel-Martinez. Last name is E-s-q-u-i-b-e-l hyphen M-a-r-t-i-n-e-z.

Madam Chair, Commissioners, Public Education Department members, audience, I'd like to go back to the question regarding retention of our bilingual staff.

One of our unique challenges in attracting and retaining bilingual staff is the credentialing requirements. We call them "golden unicorns," our staff, the Spanish Language Arts teachers. They're not just teachers of a foreign language. That poses

a challenge, in that they have to have bilingual certification on also modern classical languages. We have attracted in our past the finest from other countries; from Argentina, from Spain, from Mexico. At one point, we had several Latin American countries represented in our school by our teaching staff.

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The turnover in our bilingual department from our Spanish Language Arts teachers has resulted not by our own lack of incentivizing or lofty salary packages, but because families will often stay for a couple of years, their visas expire, they move back to their -- for example, we lost a teacher back to Argentina. We lost a teacher back to Spain. It's not for lack of trying to retain.

I feel like when we did have a strong, like, three-member Spanish Language Arts team was when we saw the most benefit to our dual language program. We've had a hard time for the last three to four years keeping a team of four. We're down to a one-person team.

We've done our best to hold that together by mitigating, by coming up with technological curriculums to continue to reinforce Spanish language instruction. that person that's holding our Spanish Language Arts department together.

We -- in addition to attracting highly qualified Spanish Language Arts teachers, we also need to incentivize and find teachers who are highly qualified in science who are also bilingual; highly qualified in math who are also bilingual; highly qualified in social studies. That has been an absolute challenge.

It is hard to find teachers in Spanish or math as it is; although easier in humanities and social studies. But to find them with a bilingual credential is often a challenge.

Thank you for the time explaining.

THE CHAIR: Thanks. So if I go back a little bit to what I said before with your -- the data in terms of your -- well, I don't see anything really significant in your application that really speaks to -- you spoke to proficiency. But you don't really speak to growth.

So, you know, if I look at the data from five years ago and today, it's pretty flat in terms of -- there hasn't been a whole lot of movement.

But can you talk to me a little bit about -- 'cause I see all the NM-MSSA scores and so

You can imagine without highly qualified, trained personnel to do so, we're not, again, enforcing the teaching of a language. We need to be teaching Spanish Language Arts. That's been a

Another challenge for us has been often when we do find teachers interested in our school, they're incentivized by our calendar, by our salary package, by our mission, in that we're dual language -- that we have a dual language mission.

unique challenge for us.

One of the hindrances is often having visa sponsorship, which is a unique challenge for us being a very small charter.

We have reached out to agencies at the PED for support to no avail. And we've communicated that to the multicultural division, department.

So, again, no excuses. This is hard to retain bilingual staff with that type of credentialing and retain them when, through no fault of their own, they tend to be here for short periods of time.

Kudos to those who have stayed with us who have chosen to make New Mexico home and not go to -for example, our one teacher that has hung on for six years is from Argentina and has chosen to be

on

Are you doing -- and I apologize if it's in there, if you mentioned it, and I'm missing it now. Do you do NWEA or anything like that?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: We do. We do NWEA.

THE CHAIR: Because I don't see anything in here in terms of scores. So, you know, I think we all recognize the proficiency levels across the board in -- in New Mexico; although -- but I don't see -- you know, I don't see any information in regards to student growth data.

So if you do do it, obviously, I can't see it now.

But can you talk to me about how you're using that data to try to -- to drive your instruction?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Yes. We -- so we do -- we do administer NWEA, Madam Chair. And we do use the data.

Our teachers take that data into their learning communities, and they look at how are we going to address this, what are we going to do. And we just started doing Professional Learning Communities over the last couple of years, where they're actually drilling down on that. Not that

2.

they haven't been, and I apologize for saying it that way.

2.

We started doing Professional Learning Communities within all the departments. Their job is to look at the data and start figuring out how are we going to address these issues.

And so it helps us with the intervention periods. We have an intervention, in other words, within our master schedule. It helps us decide how many math intervention periods are we going to have, how many reading math intervention periods are we going to have, what are they going to look like.

It also helps us across the board. as I mentioned earlier, our teachers are looking at that data now. How can we address reading and math within our other content areas? How can we provide support in that area?

So all of our teachers are using that data to drive instruction. All of our teachers are using it to identify areas where there is some lacking. And we put that within our intervention periods and within other content areas.

THE CHAIR: So without putting you on the spot, can you -- can you, at this point in time, talk to me a little bit about how students are doing

recently taken college courses, it is not going down.

But when you address the soft skills issues as early as seventh and eighth grade, become organized, become better communicators, understand how to read a syllabi, for example, when we take care of the soft skills need and you look over a period of time, we're confident that they've gained the skills by eleventh and twelfth grade, even by ninth grade, enough to pass high-level college courses such as calculus, such as trigonometry.

We've got several kids who have earned certificates. And it begs, like, where is that anomaly, that little gap where there's a moment of time where they look like they're not doing well, but, yet, they demonstrate competency in college courses that are demanding, rigorous.

And they don't take what people would call, like, the lowest level of courses. Some kids choose to forgo their English Language Arts classes, for example, and take Composition 1 and 2 in high school, which suggests that they've gained the skills in seventh, eighth, and ninth grade in order to take Composition 1 and 2 with success and with a high pass rate.

in terms of reaching their targets towards proficiency on the NW- -- I don't know if you -- you may not be prepared to do that. I don't want to put you on the spot. But if you can, that would be helpful.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Yeah. I don't -- I was looking through my folder, and I didn't bring that piece of data with me, and I apologize for that, being able to tell you. But, yeah, I don't have it with me.

Yeah, go ahead.

MS. ANGELA ESQUIBEL-MARTINEZ: Madam Chair, thank you for the question.

You know, we struggled with this particular concept, and you'll recognize this. When you see that -- okay. So we -- so the high stakes tests occur at eighth and eleventh grade. So we have these moments of time where we're measuring proficiency.

What we're seeing is, yes, we're making gains in growth over the time. And the greatest measure and identifier of that is how well students are faring in college classes. It's begged the question is the rigor and demand in college going down? And we're sure it's not; those of us who have

When we hear 73 or 79 percent, it depends on what span of time we're looking at: 2020 to 2024, 2021 to 20- -- the idea is over this period of time when kids have increased their capacity to take courses from ninth grade to twelfth grade, and then you multiply that over time, when you've taken more than 700 college courses collectively, and you get a 79 or 73 percent pass rate, not just participation rate, it begs the question why are those moments in time being the only matrices for success?

And we're confident in that our kids are making the gains, because we see it in their college-level performance.

We also see it in the number -- in our dual language program. Overall, we see it in the number of kids who have exponentially obtained bilingual seal, which is very demanding. You have to demonstrate competency in English Language Arts, in Spanish Language Arts, and all academic proficiency in other content areas in order to demonstrate that you are a student who has earned the bilingual seal upon graduation.

So we're confident -- we've learned this about ourselves. The longer a student stays with us, the better their proficiency rate. It's those

moments in time -- and we've got to really drill down and look at -- like, what is it that we need to present?

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Like, at what moment in time -- for example, we've discovered that only measuring our Spanish language success rate at 50 at eighth grade isn't serving us well as a mission-specific goal. We need to be looking at a longer period and maybe reconsider what that mission-specific goal is.

THE CHAIR: I appreciate that. And I appreciate your focus on, you know, looking and saying our kids were successful in these college classes. But if I'm that English Language Arts teacher, or I'm that math teacher, for my instruction, the short-cycle assessments, that's what I'm going to be using to help drive -- not waiting till -- if I'm the seventh-grade teacher, I'm not waiting for those kiddos to be in eighth grade to see whether I was successful.

I want to be looking at my short cycles now to see how am I going to -- what am I going to do to change so that they've grown to the MOY and then what happens at the EOY. Because once they leave, I can't help them.

So that's what -- that's what I was asking

create a curriculum framework around project-based learning. We had to train everybody on that.

We wanted to start over. We wanted to say to everybody, "This is what we're going to be doing," because we used to follow a certain model. So we decided we needed to all be on the same page, because everybody came with different ideas in how they viewed project-based learning.

Over the years, we've been working with staff and teachers to develop project-based learning. And so now that we've unpacked standards together, we've looked at standards together, we have tied those standards to projects, we're now starting to branch out.

We may not be seeing it all. What you saw on the screen was a school-wide, project-based learning that involved a bunch of classes.

But I guess your question is are we doing project-based learning.

THE CHAIR: In the individual classrooms.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: And we are.

22 THE CHAIR: So what does that look like?
23 MS. ANGELA ESOUIBEL-MARTINEZ: Madam

Chair, Commissioners, PED members, so one of the things we had to identify is what's the difference

in terms of do you do the short cycles, and what are -- how are those short cycles being used to help to drive. Because I know one of the challenges in high school is for the State -- the only thing they're doing is the SATs. And it's not a growth model. So that doesn't help instruction in a school setting in any shape, form, or manner.

So that schools have -- you know, your hope is that schools are creating those strategies so that they -- that they're helping to drive instruction sophomore year, senior year, even through the junior year, through those short cycles.

So that was my curiosity was what are you doing in terms of helping to drive instruction on a day-to-day basis for -- because I don't see any data for growth that's here. So I guess we'll have to move on from there.

So you're apparently not fulfilling, with fidelity, your project-based learning that's in the programming. So what does your project-based learning look like right now?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: So as we -- as was mentioned earlier, project-based learning kind of came to a pause and a halt within the pandemic. And when we came back, we made a concerted effort to

between a task, an activity, and an actual project. So with the training that the staff has had in the last two years, they sorted out the difference.

You've got to come up with an essential question. You have to determine that there's a problem that needs to be solved. You need to do the elements of research. You need to learn the processes of a study and determining -- do a needs assessment, for example.

So using the following project model, we're -- we've asked that teachers first gain that basic understanding of, like, what's the measurable goal, and what does the project aim to serve? What are you trying to accomplish?

Then they move into what's the scope of the project. They're gaining this understanding. We have had challenges sorting out is this an activity, something nice to do, or do we plan this all the way out from the beginning steps to demonstrating that you are able to analyze something, solve a problem, you've acquired critical thinking skills.

So things such as describing the research phase, what methodology has been applied. I have at least twelve examples of projects that have been

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done in the last year, which teachers described exactly what those steps were. We have them submit what their project looks like, all the way down to the culminating activity, or describing the feedback and revision process.

We understood that we collectively didn't understand projects. What does it look like? How do you demonstrate the work along the way? Do you use documentation panels to show where you are from beginning to end?

We have also established partnerships. For example, right now, we're working towards a drone project, and it's a collaboration with the New Mexico -- Northern Community College and Los Alamos chapter. We're using a particular model of -- 3-D models. And students are using drones to capture aerial imagery of buildings and landscapes.

That's a project that's been established with a partnership like Los Alamos and Northern New Mexico. So that's an evolution of a project that's much more project than it is activity.

So, like, anywhere where people are at different stages of learning, we realize that, yes, some are new. If you're a Level 1 or 2 teacher, you might be new to the concept of projects. If you

2 MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Uh-huh.

THE CHAIR: I guess my challenge is you put this in. There's only three pieces -- three components to your ed program from the last contract. So the fact that it wasn't -- you weren't -- apparently, you weren't sure what project-based learning was at that moment in time, but yet you've said, "This is what we are."

And you committed to this as a -- as a core component of your ed programming. And now we're still kind of in the learning phases. That challenges me that this is what you were -- you know, you -- I have difficulties with the fact that this state is part of -- you didn't -- so was there any discussion ever that you would change your contract, and this wouldn't be a core component?

Or that you just understood that you weren't abiding by a core component of your contract?

You know, that's where I'm -- that's where the tension is at this point in time. This is what you came to -- we didn't say, "You're going to be a project-based school."

You said, "This is what we are. And this

yes.

come from another school and never done projects, we realize we have to leverage the understanding first on projects.

So our intent has been that we don't let projects go by the wayside, but we realized that we had to really unravel and sort out the misunderstandings of what a project is, and then those who really understand the concept would run with it, and we've monitored that along the way.

But we have addressed it through training, through redefining what a project would look like, versus a task or an activity, and then just setting expectations around what projects look like.

We also have one model right now. It's a garden project that is a collaboration of social studies and science. It's not just gardening; it's understanding cultivating. It's understanding history, digging down into elements of soil and elements of how a particular crop sustains a community.

So it's getting better. It's definitely an area in need of improvement.

THE CHAIR: So are your projects tied to content standards?

MS. ANGELA ESQUIBEL-MARTINEZ: Absolutely,

is what CSD is going to see when they come into the school."

So that have there been discussions with -- and I don't know if there's anyone from your governance council here.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Uh-huh.

THE CHAIR: Has there been discussions with the governance council that we're not doing this? We're not following what we said in the contract?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Yeah. We've discussed, you know, what Charter School Division has come forth and said that what they've seen as far as project-based learning.

You know, I had mentioned that during the pandemic, we had to put a pause. Before -- I'm trying not to sound like we're making an excuse here.

We were a different staff here. We had a whole new staff that came out after the pandemic, and we made an effort to make some changes in that way. And so we had to retrain. We had to work with everybody. And we had to -- like Angela was saying, we had to decide. We had to learn what's a task and what's a project.

We were a different staff here. We had a

production@litsupport.com

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And we had to -- I guess, for the lack of a better word, we had to start over and start looking at what are projects and what do they look like, and what do they look like in a bilingual setting, and what do they look like across the school?

THE CHAIR: I hear that. What -- if I was going to put this in my contract as a core component of my contract, I would have had that discussion five years ago --

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Uh-huh.

THE CHAIR: -- instead of saying no -- now you're saying five years in -- now we're at the end of this contract, and now you're saying we're having these discussions about what a project looks like, when you came to us and said, "We are a project-based learning school."

So that's where I have that challenge, that it was you saying, "This is what we do," not, "This is what we..." -- because if you had said, "We'd like to move to this," it wouldn't have been -- my recommendation would have been, "Well, don't make it a core component of your contract because you're not there yet."

And there's -- everything that you do in

sitting here now, and five years into this, you haven't held to fidelity to the contract on this component piece.

So -- and thank you for the time. I really do. So I'm kind of done for now.

Commissioner Beck.

SECRETARY BECK: Hi. I really appreciate all the work you're putting in. There were a few things that I thought were really strong. I love your idea of the acknowledgment of the importance of soft skills.

I had a -- I was in the textile business, had my own business for 25 years, my wife and I. And we interviewed multiple, multiple people.

And I -- I'll be honest with you. There's a bias towards soft skill management. That's an important piece. Because if I'm hiring a salesperson, I want to make sure that they present themselves correctly. So I think that's -- that's really important.

I have a few questions.

One, I don't -- I don't -- I was a teacher for the last 13 years of my career. From starting at the age of 52 until three years ago, I was a teacher at Sandia High School. I thought -- don't

your school doesn't have to be outlined as a key

But the educational program is -- when the charter school comes in, this is what you're going to see. This is what we're going to be rated on.

element of your program.

And, aspirationally, if you want to say, "Hey, this is something we think could work for our school, and we're going to do professional development, and we're going to try to do that," great, you know. We support innovation.

But when you come to us and say, "This is absolutely what we are..." -- and I'm also going to say -- 'cause I hear Commissioner Carrillo say it all the time. I don't want to hear COVID as an excuse.

But I've seen, over these now past several years, so many schools that did incredible project-based on Zoom.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Uh-huh.

THE CHAIR: That it was hard. It was. But they -- because they were committed to it, and their kids thrived through it.

So that -- but I think if you had known more what a project was, you would have been more able to do that. But that's where, you know, I'm

English and math have to be a full year? How can it be --

THE CHAIR: They're on block scheduling. SECRETARY BECK: We did block scheduling. Okay. I get it. It's the amount of hours necessary to accomplish that.

That concerns me, because one of the things we always dealt with -- and I was -- the chair of the -- whatever it was -- the curriculum committee, whatever it was. It's so long ago, I don't remember. And I was department chair for eight years.

And we always had problems with students coming back in September and losing a tremendous amount of skill sets that they had over the summer, you know. So I couldn't even imagine what it would be like, you know, if you have English or math from August to December, and then you don't pick it back up until the next August. I would find that problematic.

Is that going to be fixed in this new system, new program that you're going to be doing?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Yes, sir. We're going to be changing our schedule to a traditional schedule.

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SECRETARY BECK: Okay. Okay. Good. Do you do any of kind of summer catch-up? Any type

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: We do provide -- you know, with -- if the funding is available, we do provide credit recovery programs.

SECRETARY BECK: Okay. So they have the opportunity to be able to do that through the summer.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: That is correct.

SECRETARY BECK: Besides -- I'm very unfamiliar with this, so you can help me with it. Besides Santa Fe Community College, do you interact with any other colleges when you're doing these dual credit?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Yes, sir. Over the course of this contract, we worked with Northern New Mexico College. We worked with IAIA. Those three colleges specifically, we worked with.

SECRETARY BECK: All right. I'm going to get to the final thing here in just a second.

But I looked at your financials, because that's my background. And from fiscal year 20--and I understand you do some higher-incentive salaries. I get that. I get that. But I doubt if

How many times a week? How is it structured? Is it structured vertically? Horizontally? That kind of -- are they PLCs? Do you analyze student work and -- what does that look like?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: PLCs meet weekly, every week. It's by department. So English Language Arts meets together. Spanish Language Arts. They all meet together weekly for an hour.

Professional development days, we have one per month. And it's -- you know, honestly, sometimes it's based on need. There's some compliance things we have to do sometimes that take up most of our PD days.

We've brought -- we work real closely with an organization called Kite & Associates. They've done a lot of work with us as far as unpacking standards, identifying standards, our standards as well, because we are a block schedule.

Yeah. I mean, those Fridays that we have, we do a lot of that staff-wide type of training.

SECRETARY BECK: Yeah. I had it at Sandia. And I always had a problem with it, because it was, like, quantity of professional development versus quality of professional development. And,

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it's this big.

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From fiscal year 2022 to fiscal year 2023, your total expenses went from \$2.8 million to \$3.5 million, a \$700,000 increase. But in direct instruction, you went from \$1.4 million to \$1.9 million, half a million dollars in direct instruction. Did you add new teachers? New staff? New EAs?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Yeah. We brought in -what year was that again?

SECRETARY BECK: Fiscal year 2022 to 2023.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: We made the decision to bring Mr. -- using our cash balance, we brought in a dean of students temporarily. And we brought in -it was an SLA teacher, I believe, if I remember correctly.

SECRETARY BECK: Yeah. Because it reduced your cash on hand by \$330,000.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Uh-huh.

SECRETARY BECK: Putting back on my teacher hat here, with the challenges you have specifically in math, but also, very honestly, in ELA and science, what -- what type of professional development do you have for your staff? How does

that look? What does that look like?

you know, we had all the, you know, outside speakers come in and do that, and everybody would fall asleep because it was after school, and us old guys would be going like that. (Indicates.)

I think you want to look at the -- you might want to relook a little bit at how you can dig professional development into your educational programs and do that.

Do you have a specific written strategic plan on how to improve your math or how to improve your ELAs, like, specifically, step by step? Is that -- is that in the works? Is that done? How is that -- what's that look like?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: I would consider that in the works. Because we've started our PLC work, and we've started, just recently, looking at, within our PLCs, working vertically also. So it's in the works.

SECRETARY BECK: You're going to do it vertically as well as as horizontally.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Uh-huh.

SECRETARY BECK: Yeah. I think that's a critical piece that needs to be worked on for sure. So -- okay. One last question based on my history

as a teacher.

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1	Do you have a cell phone policy?	1	said you were not completing the material parts of
2	MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Yes, we do.	2	your contract; correct?
3	SECRETARY BECK: And what would that look	3	MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Correct.
4	like?	4	COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Okay. It looks like
5	MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Students have to put	5	there was a little bit of last year there was a
6	their phones away from a classroom. We have a I	6	little bit of Working to Meet on that part of the
7	guess, a bin that they have to put them in. And we	7	performance framework, because the Language and
8	don't have a problem with cell phones used in the	8	Culture Division came in, and they were, like,
9	school that way. I mean, do we have the occasional	9	"You're more of a heritage language."
10	student who kind of keeps it? Obviously. But it is	10	And then, now, we're here hearing a
11	not an issue as far as use teachers actually will	11	different story.
12	stand at the doorway with their baskets, and the	12	So it's not a good story right now for the
13	kids put them in as they walk into class.	13	present. But I would offer that it's not
14	SECRETARY BECK: Good. I'm all for that.	14	necessarily for the last five years, since we've
15	All right. That's all I have. Thank you.	15	seen you last up here, that it's that it hasn't
16	THE CHAIR: Commissioner Brauer.	16	been that case.
17	COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Thank you, Chair.	17	MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Thank you. Correct.
18	Thank you, Mr. Peña and team. It's good to have you	18	COMMISSIONER BRAUER: And I would love to
19	here.	19	hear you respond on that. And I don't know if Chair
20	I just appreciate all the work that you	20	heard this. But like, that's my interpretation of
21	all do for our students and our families. I	21	what's going on.
22	Chair Gipson, you took what I was going to say.	22	Is that fair is that a fair
23	Like, I felt like I was stage left here	23	representation of, like, this you have been
24	the last time that you all were up here in 2019.	24	fulfilling the requirements of your contract with
25	And I did peruse the overall student academic	25	regard to the material parts of your education plan
	1		regard to the material parts of your education plan
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1		1	
1 2	results. And they're very, very similar to what	1 2	until recently?
2	results. And they're very, very similar to what they were then.	2	until recently? MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Yes, sir.
2 3	results. And they're very, very similar to what they were then. I do have a little bit of trepidation. I	2 3	until recently? MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Yes, sir. COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Okay. So I do think
2 3 4	results. And they're very, very similar to what they were then. I do have a little bit of trepidation. I won't re I won't badger the witness on on	2 3 4	until recently? MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Yes, sir. COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Okay. So I do think there's an opportunity I'm not sure anybody is
2 3 4 5	results. And they're very, very similar to what they were then. I do have a little bit of trepidation. I won't re I won't badger the witness on on what Chair Gipson has already mentioned.	2 3 4 5	until recently? MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Yes, sir. COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Okay. So I do think there's an opportunity I'm not sure anybody is listening to me anymore.
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And I know that's not representative of the brilliance of your students. I know it can't be completely representative of the teaching of your students. But I've got to understand, like, what the plan is.

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When I look at that, there's only one way, and it's up. And those numbers are very similar to what they were from 2015 to present, not that much different in math.

I'm not trying to bring up older contracts in here. But it's hard to, like, not to see that part of the story. And that's heartbreaking.

So I just kind of want to know, like, what's the -- you know, as we move to renew you all, what's going to be different? What's going to be different five years from now? Are we going to see something dramatically different?

We're going to see -- and I also want to say two things can be said at the same time.

So 5 percent and the K-12 proficiency scores is not good. It's heartbreaking. I can also say I'm really glad your students are taking dual credit courses, and they're getting college credit while they're with you. I think that's great. I think that's really good.

and not take it again till August of the next year.

We're going to be -- I can sit here and tell you we're going to see this. But that is our plan is that we're going to start moving toward a more -- we're going to be moving toward a traditional schedule. We're going to be researching more curriculum, research-based curriculum that we can implement within a full-year schedule instead of a block schedule.

COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Got it. In terms of the way that you shared and characterized the hardship of finding -- you didn't call them the unicorns, the teachers. The golden unicorns? I wonder -- I don't think that -- I don't think that situation is going to be any easier in the years to come, to be quite frank.

And so I wonder, what's Plan B?

And then I also wonder, you're not the only dual language school. And so I'm wondering what have you learned from other schools that are in -- have to be in a similar situation and draw from a similar pool of candidates? I'm wondering, like, creative approaches that you're thinking about to ensure that you have the staff that you are required to have to be a dual credit school.

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But it doesn't change the fact that 5 percent is awful, and it's not truly showing the brilliance of your students. What's the plan to really increase that, you know? And, you know, reading scores can absolutely go further than where you are. Science can go further than where you are. I'm just curious about what you all are thinking about.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Are you asking me to answer that? Or is it something to think about for the next five years?

COMMISSIONER BRAUER: I'm asking you to think about that. I know that you've -- unless you haven't been aware, Mr. Peña, you're thinking about this all the time. I just think that, for me, if I'm going to renew -- renew you all, I just want to -- I want to be convinced a little bit about what's going to be different in proficiency scores as your students leave you and go on to college, that they're going to be ready for college math, especially. If we can highlight, I like that part.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Correct. Again, like I said earlier, our plan is to move to -- out of the block schedule, because we know that that's an issue you had mentioned earlier, if they take it in August

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Dual language school? COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Dual language school. Sorry.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Yeah. Angela -- I'm sorry. I didn't mean to say "yeah."

Commissioner, we are working toward working with the Language and Cultural Division, working with them, saying, "With the resources that we currently have, what is that going to look like? Do we need to step out of a dual language program? Or can we have components of a dual language program within the Heritage Model?"

We're having those conversations with them now, because you're right. Are we going to be -- I can't tell you that I'm going to walk out here today and say, "I will find those teachers," because we don't know.

But given what I have right now, I'm working with the Language and Culture Division and saying -- and we've had great work sessions with them -- "What can our program look like, given the resources we have? And can we continue to provide..." -- I mean, we do have a very strong, within our model right now, dual language strand of kids coming -- working through our system, about 25

of them, 25 kids within the dual language model right now.

We're reaching out to them and saying, "This is what we have."

We know we have to pick one or the other. But how can we continue to support students who are going to come out dual-language proficient and continue to provide that service that we heard parents say about the program that we have?

How do we continue to do that with the resources that we do have?

Now if it's impossible, it's impossible. But right now, we're working with them and saying, "Okay, what's this going to look like? What can we do with these resources?"

And so that's where we're at right now, working with the Language and Cultural Division.

COMMISSIONER BRAUER: I also think that it's -- Commissioners, I do think that it's a great -- do you remember the numbers again around the number of students who were getting the bilingual seal? But I think that's -- I think that's fabulous. Like, 75, I think -- 74 or 75 for the last couple of years.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: 75 percent.

This is not a get-you thing. This is, like -- I'm also interested in, like, how.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: As you had mentioned earlier, it's just been the last year or so that we've had these challenges within our program, because in order to get the bilingual seal, as you know, they have to have X number of hours in Spanish language arts, X number of instructional hours in core content.

We had that. We had that. So we were able to keep running these -- our kids through those programs. Even within our limited program, we were able to keep a cohort going through so they could continue getting the -- and working towards that bilingual seal.

So it's been a lot of work. Ms. Angela will sit there and work on the master schedule and trying to figure out how do we get this and how do we get this, and, at the same time, how are we getting that strand of bilingual seal students through so they can continue earning and receiving those number of hours that we need.

I hope that answers your question. But that's kind of how we have been -- just, like you had mentioned, it's just been within the last year

COMMISSIONER BRAUER: I think that is, like, amazing. That's almost -- I don't know -- I taught first grade, so I'm far away from where you all are. And I just think about how are your students coming in with, like, a really secure Spanish language, as they see you. If you don't have a strong dual language program, the support, you know, of that, I'm just, like -- I'm in awe that students are getting prepared for that.

And maybe those two things are not connected. Maybe you could help shed light on that. But I'm just thinking if they're not getting the Spanish Language Arts core in there, how in the world are they becoming -- like, 75 percent of them are becoming the bilingual seal? Because I know that is, like, really difficult.

I think if the school districts had that number, we would be in such a different spot, you know, especially the larger school districts having 75 percent of their students graduating with a bilingual seal. So I just -- how can those two things be true, you know?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: If I may, Commissioner Brauer?

COMMISSIONER BRAUER: I want to make sure.

or two, we've had these challenges within the dual language program.

COMMISSIONER BRAUER: There is, like, taking -- in the seat time. But students do have to pass -- what's the assessment that they have to pass at the end?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: CLEP, CLEP Assessment. COMMISSIONER BRAUER: So I feel like I have a lot -- I have some trepidation. I'm still leaning towards renewal, for sure, like, I feel like that's where my heart is. I think that there's probably going to be some Commissioners -- I don't want to speak on anyone's behalf, and I'm not looking at anyone specifically -- that there might be some people who might say, instead of a five-year, a three-year.

I want to support your school. I think -- I want to make sure that we have this -- what I'm going to call an acute problem right now with that -- with the education plan. Because we know -- we know what's at stake, too. If we have 75 percent of our students becoming bilingual -- and, again, I just don't know of any other school or districts that does that that high. I just don't know, off the top of my head.

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I remember when I was getting my leadership degree, and I had somebody who said that there was 81 kids, 81 students who were graduating in all of APS -- that was in 2017-'18 -- who had a bilingual seal. So I think that is phenomenal.

So we've got to, like, right the ship on this and figure out how to do that.

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We've also got to double down and triple down, quadruple down on the math proficiency and really ensure that that's also an indicator of student brilliance. And I just -- I really want to see that happening.

I think we need time. But we don't have time to waste. And I thank you for, like, taking my questions.

> MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Thank you, Commissioner. THE CHAIR: Commissioner Carrillo.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: It's always great to see you, Danny, and Angela, and to the time I spent at your school. I really enjoyed being there. And I remember meeting Fin and coming to the event for The Empathy Project.

And it was really impressive. And the people in the community, other charters that were there and organizations.

work with.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: I work with Nicki [ph] out there.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: So it's -- I'll come back to that.

So I wrote down here in really big caps, like if I was the former president tweeting, all caps, in bold, I wrote down here with exclamation marks, "Interventions."

So I think that Commissioner Brauer used the word "acute". I would say "on fire, an inferno," relative, especially, to math.

You know, you know that there are a lot of schools who are below 15 percent on the math side. Coming out of the "P" word? No, it's just that a lot of people really suffered there.

And it's not just that only. It's the way we teach math and the way we do or do not accept where a student is at any given time learning math. Math-phobic is what I say a lot of the times.

We've had a couple of our State charters who have addressed that part of it. Maybe we're not teaching math in a way that kids can really hear us or that's relevant or that addresses their phobia around math. And that can be something to look

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into.

I know there's really good programs around that, specifically. And if you want to look at one 4 school that's knocking it out of the park that was 5 really suffering, NMSA. And they're our neighbors. And I'm sure Eric would be happy if you give him a 6 call and say, "Steve mentioned you guys turned this around, and this is why."

> So I would definitely contact Eric and see what their math people did.

While this is stuck on my list here, you'll know. Did they apply for the grant?

Okay. So your homework -- today is what? Today is Wednesday. They all blend together now. Your homework honestly by Friday is to apply for this, to open the e-mail we sent in October. I know you get a million e-mails from PE- -- sometimes I'm sure it's like, "Ay-yi-yi, another one."

We are taking back our part of the 2 percent that the State would revert back to the General Fund. Because it's your money. Doesn't it make sense that we have give it back to you? We're doing that now, with project-based grants, \$10,000 for a school that applies. And it just has to be used for something to improve an area from your

So that's a great thing that you've -that was the inaugural event, if I'm recalling correctly. I was happy to be a part of that. And young Fin was certainly a very impressive young woman, for sure.

And so I echo everything said to my right and to my left. And the soft skills being so incredibly important. You know, just taking -- most of my notes are on this other page.

Do you, at all -- and I imagine Marcos is the person at the community college who we've worked with in the past. Do you track the percentage of your students who have to take remedial classes?

I know at SFPS, when I was on the board, 12 percent needed to take remedial English and math. It's not just that district. I know it's all over the state. It means we're failing our kids.

Do you have any idea what it might be at your school?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: I don't have that number with me right now, you know. But, you know, it's definitely -- we have a great working relationship with them. It is something that I can reach out to and get those solid --

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: They're wonderful to

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performance framework. This could be a piece of the math intervention.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Correct.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Okay? And I'm going to call you on Friday morning, because I can.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: I know I can.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Because I'll see you on Friday.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: You better do it before --

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: The other school that -- Turquoise Trail. Ms. Behning said she's putting us at the very, very top of her to-do list. This is a school that was here yesterday.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: It's already there for us, sir. I see Angela writing it down. So we're going to take care of that.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Don't leave money on the table. Would any (audio distortion) leave ten grand sitting on the table?

THE CHAIR: So, unfortunately, the e-mail, when I sent it out it, it does say "PED" on it. And I think that's sometimes why people just go -but -- so it went to you, and it went to the head of

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Patty -- and who was the other person? -- and Bekka, Rebekka Burt.

THE CHAIR: (Inaudible due to simultaneous speaking) this year so that we're using it down. So that you can get it and potentially reapply. If there's still money there, it will be awarded. But there's no guarantee that it's going -- it's going to be there next year, because we don't know what that -- what that looks like.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Just talked about this. So I have a contract up right here. And I see where it's the one of the three.

I think you may be in a situation where you're going to have to rethink your school. Because we can't get teachers, and we can't get them maybe beyond the two years. They have to go back. And to get teachers with the certifications. And (audio distortion) of us that you need, thinking about what's realistic in terms of staffing.

And there's no question you and I -- I went to one of the dual language classes. You explained to me everything that's going on. And I understand the hardships you have when, all of a sudden, these people have to leave for whatever reason and we can't get new people.

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If I'm making widgets, and I can't get people to produce a certain widget, I have to

rethink what widget I'm making. That's a tough thing to say. And I

5 imagine you've had those conversations around the 6 table without me having to say it. But it's -- so 7 when the next contract time comes around -- and I'm

8 saying that because I fully intend to renew -- that 9 when the next contract time comes around, you're

shaping things in a way that you know you can live up to and staff.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Correct. VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Okay?

On the project-based learning piece, and in the same way that I suggested referring out to NMSA -- so -- was that this morning? Was that this morning? It all blends in.

The ASK Academy. Okay. They were here this morning.

SECRETARY BECK: It was this week.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: But, anyway, are you familiar with ASK Academy, the charter down in Rio Rancho? They're, like, 100 percent project-based learning. It's just what they do.

And they're really good at it.

So there's a link there for the -- to fill out -- it's a short application. If, for some reason you don't have it, send me an e-mail, and we'll -- I'll -- so Julia is going to resend it to you; okay?

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Okay. Thank you. THE CHAIR: Because it's a real, real

short application. It's hard to even call it an application.

10 MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Okay. 11

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: You're getting your money back is all you're doing. Yeah.

So...

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Is this a renewal grant? VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Probably apply for something else next year.

The thing -- it all depends on the monies that are available. But there's typically a certain amount of money that's left. And it doesn't make any sense at all for it to go into the General Fund and revert, when, in fact, it's your money that you paid out to begin with.

So we want to do everything we can to support you. That's why this exists now. And as the brain child of -- not me, the -- it was Mike,

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And, you know, I always say that one of the things I love working -- about working with -in the charter movement, and, specifically, State charters, is we all learn from each other. We see what works. And -- 'cause all of us want all of our State charters to succeed.

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I would say you may want to reach out to them. "This is what we've been doing. These are the hardships we're looking at. What's your suggestion how we get over the hump?"

I say that only because they are knocking it out of the park on that. That's their thing; right? And it's really around the bio-med fields and engineering fields.

I mean, like, that's it. They're laser-focused, obviously having to meet core content and everything else. So that that might be something that you want to look at.

I have a question about -- I'll get to scheduling next. But a -- the curriculum assessment. I'm going to tell you my perception of the bilingual seal. It's much like the way we graduate kids in districts. You can graduate with a D; right? You can graduate with a D. So to me, the diploma becomes a little bit of paper of time

New Mexico? One of the things that they suggested for districts in New Mexico, 'cause it's working all over the country -- because you said you were going back to a traditional schedule. And I was thinking what may -- something to look at also is the balanced schedule, not where people have ten weeks off, where you're in school year-round with those two- or three-week breaks so there's not the loss of learning.

And everywhere that's done in the country, kids are doing much better. And it's the whole loss-of-learning thing.

And I know it seems like -- I mean, for me, if I was a kid in high school, I'd be really pissed if the whole concept of taking away what I've learned to be my summer. My summer; right?

But as schools have gotten in sync with that, and parents, also, it's been really successful. And -- you know, to address the loss -- learning loss.

And I'm saying all these things because, yes, I'm going to support your renewal definitely with conditions. We need to see this turn around. And I'm not going to be here in five years because my next term is only four. So somebody will be

served, not really what was accomplished.

When we started with the bilingual seal when I was on the Santa Fe board, I just got the sense that the rigor wasn't there, relative to achieving the bilingual seal. And I know what your intent is. We've talked about this in your dual language program and the intensity of that.

So the CLEP Assessment, what does -- is that a really rigorous exam or -- it is?

Okay. I'm happy that that's the case.

So when someone passes the CLEP exam, it's not just as though they've taken these classes; they've done well.

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: They've done well. And they've also earned some college credit in Spanish. I can't remember how many credits it is. It's anywhere between four and eight, Eva? Depending on their score, it's four college credits in Spanish or eight college credits in Spanish.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: I'm very happy to learn that. I had no idea. I have more confidence in the -- so the scheduling thing. I'm happy to hear that you're going to more traditional from block.

Do you know the organization, Think

coming around the following December and saying -holding us accountable for whatever we approved contract-wise. The answer is yes.

SECRETARY BECK: I just want to add one little thing about the scheduling. I want you to think about something. If you are in the educational plan going forward with project-based learning, it's really difficult to do that in a 40-minute period. Our block schedule was four blocks Monday through Thursday, and Friday, 40 minutes. And that worked really -- it was called a 4-and-1 or whatever it was.

I want you to really think through that, because then that allows for project-based learning. It's hard to do it in 40 minutes. Just a thought.

THE CHAIR: I'll echo that. I started project-based learning in the -- well, I started -- so I'm going to tell you. I started project-based learning in the full-year calendar. And in the 45 minutes that we had for each day, it was extraordinarily hard to really do, because by the time you start getting going, it's over.

And so it is difficult.

Then we switched to a block schedule, which was semester-ized. So I've taught -- loved

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it. And we saw incredible growth when we did just the semester-ized -- you know, 90 minutes. I mean, 90 minutes --

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SECRETARY BECK: Like, math would be, 90 minutes on Tuesday, 90 minutes -- we did --

THE CHAIR: We did Monday through Friday, 90 minutes. And then we ended -- then the course was over in January. And then the new courses started. We did what they're doing now. So we didn't do every other day.

SECRETARY BECK: Okay. We did. THE CHAIR: So we only did -- we did every day for half a year for each course. And it -- it was hard with AP-1, U.S. History-1. But...

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: I'm taking my floor back.

THE CHAIR: Sorry.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: So one of the (audio distortion) charter is just do what you think is best; right? And there's nobody sitting at 610 Alta Vista Street or somebody here at 300 Don Gaspar that's going to tell you what to do.

You know what's best for your families and your kids. You know what our expectation is.

And I want you to know that you're not

MR. DANIEL PEÑA: He was a board member. VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: I thought he was board president, maybe.

So, oftentimes, when we see a school struggling in a different area, often on the academic side, it's the board. It can't only be -it can't only be Mr. Peña and Ms. Martinez, because you and your board have to have oversight.

And I would say -- and I'm not being -- it is absolutely the case that when schools start to swirl downhill academically, generally, it's because the board is not performing their role in oversight.

I don't know what your board meetings look like. I haven't attended one.

On the agenda, typically, on very successful schools, there's always a section, even if there's just a placeholder, there's always a section on academic reporting, so you don't get to this point where math is at 5 percent. You see it going in a direction, and you're holding your head administrator's feet to the fire really early on.

So for me -- and I have no problem, you know -- (audio distortion) calling boards out. You shouldn't be at this point. We should not be at this point right now.

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getting a school where we're saying, hey, we're figuring out -- to the fire. I mean, like, on the fire, the coals, because of where we are.

And so when it's contract time, you come back with a good plan, we'll come up with conditions. Usually, I'm the one that only wants to give a school three years if I think they're really in trouble. But I'll support a five-year contract here.

The next section I am going to -- are there any board members here? And if you are, you're going to have to come up and answer a question, actually. So you may as well come and introduce herself and spell your last name, please.

We see Stewart, yeah.

MR. JOSEPH SALAZAR: Madam Chair, board members, Commissioners, my name is Joseph Salazar. S-a-l-a-z-a-r. I am the president of Tierra Encantada's governance board.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: So you became the board for this year? Because I remember there was another gentleman who spoke at graduation. He was the board president when I was there for grad?

So I would ask you, Mr. Salazar and the other members, to think about what you can do to be much more supportive of admin in reaching their goals and communicating regularly.

And I'm not just trying to scold somebody for the sake -- scold you for the sake of -- I'm not scolding you. I'm letting you know our experience with our 58 charter schools.

But that's what my experience has been in these last four years is that it's at the board level.

So I really -- my wish for you is to be much more hands-on with Mr. Peña and Ms. Martinez. And the minute you even see an ember in an area that could end up being a challenge, just stomp on that ember. Get on it. This is a serious situation today.

MR. JOSEPH SALAZAR: If I may, to Mr. Peña's defense, he has kept us aware of the situation. The financial and the academic aspects of finding the qualified personnel to do the work has always been the challenge. And, again, that being said, we have a great staff, teaching, facilities, admin.

But how do you recruit individuals to

24 FROM THE FLOOR: No. 25

fulfill the gap that you're needing that don't come forward, or you can't financially pay the higher end as private schools do?

Now, I'm an engineer by trade. My son started at this school. And I was a parent, just a parent. And he's progressed to the point where he graduated, got a degree at Highlands, and now he's in New Zealand getting his master's because of this school; all right?

I pulled him out of private schools because of that reason. He got a better education here than he did in a private school.

And, like parents said here -- and it -- I echo what they say -- is it's a family. There's no bullying. The teachers take account for the students, as far as their welfare, their education.

The bilingual aspect of it is something inherited (verbatim) to the geographic area of this state. That's what is so important, that both the relationship -- whether you're bilingual or not, you have that cultural interface with this society and this geographic area.

I own a business in this town, and I see that all the time. And it's very important that these students learn the cultural difference, as it We don't change out directors in the middle of a horse race.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: I agree.

MR. JOSEPH SALAZAR: And this is a tough situation.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: I agree. I remember -- and I've told you this, Danny, before -- I remember where the school was when you came on.

9 You and Angela took it to the next level and to the 10 next level.

Because I was on the Santa Fe board when we weren't going to renew you.

No, you -- I know that you see these happening, and you're going to tackle them. I have every confidence, and every confidence in you, sir.

MR. JOSEPH SALAZAR: I thank you for that. But all the credit goes to the director. We supervise the director.

And you're correct. Yes, we are the guardians of the land, per se. But, again, we have to leave it to the professionals that work with the students every day.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Absolutely. MR. JOSEPH SALAZAR: All right.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Thank you very much.

gives them the self-confidence to go out in society and excel themselves. That's the way I see it.

VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: And I agree with you. And I remember you. And I remember how you pulled your kids. It was down at St. Mike's, wasn't it? I remember our talking about that when I was at The Empathy Project as well as at the graduation.

My saying this doesn't mean I don't understand the incredible value and success on all these other levels of the school. I do. I get it. The kids that I spoke with, Danny, when you took me around, and I understand in listening to the people that came today, I get all that. And I also am acutely aware of where we are on certain academic levels.

And I'm just wanting -- anything we can do to help you, we're here to help. We'll never intervene, because that's the beauty of being a charter.

MR. JOSEPH SALAZAR: At the same time, I would like to say that, knowing Danny, he will focus on the aspects that you have seen as something that needs to be improved or as a deficiency. Knowing him and why we hire him from year to year is because those challenges, he does take on.

1 Thank you, sir, for your service. I'm good.

THE CHAIR: Yeah. Nope, it went down. Commissioner Ingham, do you still want to say something?

COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Yeah. I -- actually, I was concerned if there wasn't a board member there that was -- that was going to be very concerning to me.

But -- so I was thankful that Commissioner Carrillo did ask that question.

I am -- this is a rough situation. And we do have to call schools to account when they have this level of academic -- I'm just going to have to say failure.

And so I -- I know what we're -- the conditions we're going to put on you. We're going to ask you to come back by your contract negotiations with a strategic plan to change this.

And I do -- would encourage the board to get involved with that -- that planning and get this -- get some realistic -- 'cause Commissioner Carrillo always likes to say hope is not a strategy.

At this point, we have to have some real concrete ideas from you of how you're going to turn your academic ship around.

		1	05 (1 ages 254 to 257)
	254		256
1	I do applaud you with the your	1	Clahchischilliage.
2	bilingual with those students that are getting	2	(No response.)
3	that certification. But I I am anxious that, as	3	SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Burt.
4	a guardian of the public money, that when we have	4	COMMISSIONER BURT: Yes.
5	that small of a percentage of your population	5	SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Manis.
6	proficient, that is a really challenging	6	COMMISSIONER MANIS: Yes.
7	understanding.	7	SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Brauer.
8	So I also want to challenge the students	8	COMMISSIONER BRAUER: Yes.
9	in the room. If you really like this school, and	9	SECRETARY BECK: Vice Chair Carrillo.
10	you really are are committed to it, then you need	10	VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: Yes.
11	to be committed to your end of that bargain, and	11	SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Gipson
12	that is to be diligent about your studies and not be	12	Chair Gipson.
13	lackadaisical about this.	13	THE CHAIR: Yes.
14	Because this is a serious matter. And I	14	SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner
15	just want to reiterate. Thank you.	15	Clahchischilliage.
16	THE CHAIR: We've parsed it out. So we	16	(No response.)
17	need a minute here to get it all set.	17	SECRETARY BECK: Secretary Beck, yes.
18	(Brief period off the record.)	18	There are eight seven votes for, zero
19	THE CHAIR: Commissioner Carrillo.	19	goats against. The motion passes. Congratulations.
20	VICE CHAIR CARRILLO: It's that time.	20	MR. DANIEL PEÑA: Thank you very much.
21	The I move that the Public Education	21	THE CHAIR: And we are in recess until
22	Commission approve the renewal application for	22	8:00 a.m. tomorrow.
23	Tierra Encantada Charter School for a five-year term	23	(Proceedings in recess at 4:16 p.m.)
24	with the following condition:	24	
25	A. That the school's Record of	25	
	255		257
1	Performance demonstrates improved student academic	1	BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
2	growth and proficiency in all academic areas.	2	STATE OF NEW MEXICO
3	And, B. That the school identify a robust	3	
4	strategic educational plan to improve student	4	
5	outcomes, which includes:	5	
6	1. Appropriate staff professional	6	DEDODTEDIA GEDTIFICATE
7	development related to content instruction.	7 8	REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE I, Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR, CCR #219, Certified
8	And, 2. A specific plan to improve each	9	Court Reporter in the State of New Mexico, do hereby
9	academic area and each element of the educational	10	certify that the foregoing pages constitute a true
10	program.	11	transcript of proceedings had before the said
11	The specific immediate actions needed	12	NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, held
12	above will be outlined in the school's negotiated	13	virtually and in the State of New Mexico, County of
13	contract documents.	14	Santa Fe, in the matter therein stated.
14	The first Annual Report will confirm	15	In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my
15	completion of these items listed above, or, if the	16 17	hand on December 30, 2024.
16	concern is not corrected, will identify the	18	
17	uncorrected unsatisfactory performance on each item	19	
18	that will be subject to further PEC action.		Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219
19	THE CHAIR: Second.	20	BEAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.
20	There's a motion by Commissioner Carrillo,		201 Third Street, NW, Suite 1630
21	and a second by Commissioner Gipson.	21	Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102
22	Commissioner Beck.	22	License Expires: December 31, 2025
23	SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner Ingham.	22 23	
24	COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Yes.	24	
25	SECRETARY BECK: Commissioner	25	Job No.: 9246N (CC)
			,

1	BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
2	STATE OF NEW MEXICO
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6	
7	REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE
8	I, Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR, CCR #219, Certified
9	Court Reporter in the State of New Mexico, do hereby
10	certify that the foregoing pages constitute a true
11	transcript of proceedings had before the said
12	NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, held
13	virtually and in the State of New Mexico, County of
14	Santa Fe, in the matter therein stated.
15	In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my
16	hand on December 30, 2024.
17	
18	Cunthea Chaiman
19	Cynthia C. Chapman RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219
20	BEAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.
21	201 Third Street, NW, Suite 1630 Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102
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