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MARIANA D. PADILLA  
SECRETARY DESIGNATE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM  
GOVERNOR

**Charter Schools Division  
2023-24 Annual Report  
Revised February 10, 2025**

**School Name:** Explore Academy - Las Cruces

**School Address:** 850 N. Telshor Blvd, Las Cruces, NM 88011

**Head Administrator:** Karen Casedy (July 2023- May 2024); Dr. Toni Hull (May- June 2024)

**Governing Board Chair:** Clara Welles Raley

**Business Manager:** Katie Rarick

**Authorized Grade Levels:** K-12

**Grade Levels Served:** 5-10

**Authorized Enrollment Cap:** 1200

**2023-24 Enrollment:** 318 (NMVistas.org: Enrollment Count from Avg. of 80 & 120 day Active Students Report)

**Contract Term:** 2021-2026

**CAPs or Conditions:** none

**Notice from 2022-23 Annual Report:** Satisfactory performance

**Unsatisfactory terms that need to be addressed from 2022-23 Annual Report:** the PEC has identified two areas of unsatisfactory performance related to academic growth in math on page 6 of the annual report and finances including the material weakness identified in the FY22 audit finding in indicator 2.b. on page 9 of the annual report.

### **Progress from 2022-23 Notice to 2023-24:**

- Indicator 2.b. Accounting Principles: the school earned Does Not Meet again on financial indicator 2.b. in 2023-24, as well as on indicator 2.c. Responsive to Audit Findings. (See PF ratings on page 11.)
- Math growth: NM Vistas changed the business rules for computing growth from 2022-23 to 2023-24, so comparative growth cannot be obtained. However, the school's math growth percentile in 2023-24 was 40.5th percentile; percentile ranges from 34-66 represent about a year's growth typical for the academic peer group.

**Waivers:** Driver ed, teacher evaluation, individual class load, length of school day, purchase of instructional materials, staffing patterns, subject areas, teacher load, and head administrator.

**Mission:** The mission of Explore Academy - Las Cruces (EA-LCS) is to provide all students, regardless of background, with a personalized educational experience through the power of student choice, allowing each student to create a personalized and engaging educational pathway in preparation for college.

### **Educational Program:**

5.1.1 Per its mission, Explore Academy will offer shorter learning modules (seminars) through which students will receive concentrated instruction over a smaller subset of academic standards. At the conclusion of each term, students will take an exit exam in each seminar to determine whether students have reached the required proficiency levels for each standard assessed for that seminar.

5.1.2 The school's choice-based philosophy of education provides students the freedom to choose from a set of seminar-versions. Since seminars are often offered in various versions, taught by different teachers, students will have the choice in the specific theme through which they will receive the instruction over the content of those seminars. Thus, the different versions through which each seminar is offered will be unique in their focus and instructional approach, thus allowing students to choose how they want to learn the content through a set of discrete options. This extends across all core and elective (PE, art) content areas, as well as into the school's unique upper division seminars.

5.1.3 Explore Academy students will have daily academic flex periods, allowing them to complete homework, collaborate, attend tutoring, pursue credit recovery, attend school meetings, visit teachers (and case managers in the case of special education students in compliance with their Individualized Education Plans, ), and complete make-up work as needed.

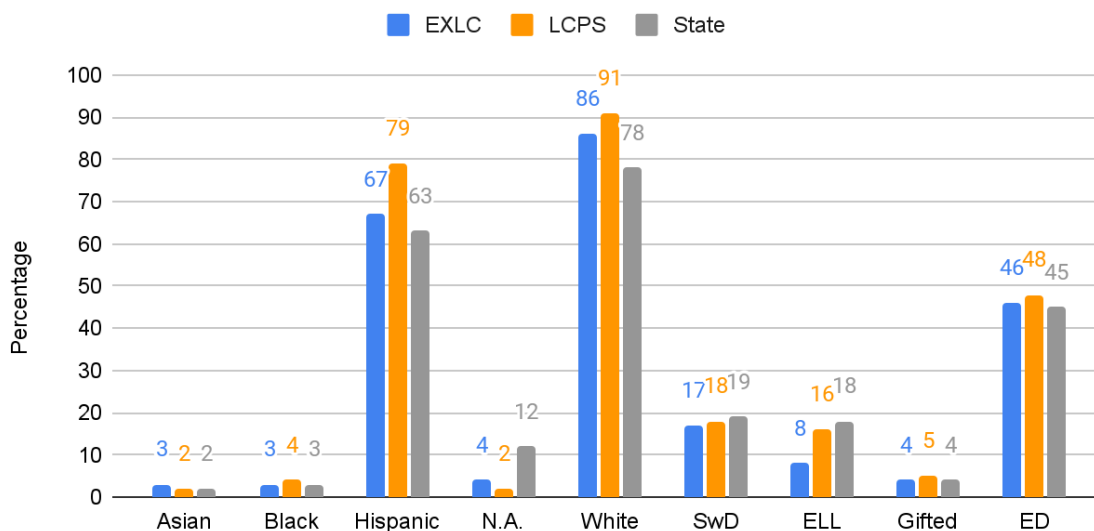
5.1.4 The school's staff will be provided with time for professional collaboration, such as in professional learning communities, to function as a forum for the sharing of best practices/instructional strategies, data analysis from seminar/exit exams, creation/modification of future exit exams, analysis of student satisfaction data, creation/modification of future seminars, etc. This collaborative component will be essential in allowing teachers to work together, share their experiences, and streamline their efforts as they work to implement this innovative form of education.

5.1.5 The school encourages parent involvement in all areas of its operation. The school will communicate with parents through its website and a monthly newsletter for the dissemination of general information, and as needed via phone and/or email for individual student cases (academic, behavioral, etc.). Parents will have the ability to monitor student progress through the parent portal component of the student information system.

## Demographics as reported in Nova 2023-24 (120-Day)

Note. Students are identified as Hispanic independently of their race.

### Enrollment by Subgroup (120D) 2023-24



Source: Nova Enrollment Subgroup Percentages with Averages

## Academic Performance

Academic Performance Framework Indicators	2022-23 Score (100 points possible)	2023-24 Score (100 points possible)
1: State Accountability System: NMVistas Overall Score	<b>ATSI.FRL 53.5</b>	<b>Traditional 49.1*</b>
2: Subgroup performance: high, middle, and low-performing quartiles	unavailable	unavailable
3: School-specific Goals: if two goals, average of points on each	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Overall Academic Score: average of indicators 1 and 3</b>	<b>64.25</b>	<b>74.55</b>

\*Note: Per NM Vistas, point totals from SY22-23 and SY23-24 cannot be compared due to changes in business rules. For more information about point differentials, refer to: [2022-23 Accountability Measures Overview](#) and [2023-24 Accountability Measures Overview.pdf - Google Drive](#)

**State Accountability System:**

State and federal statute mandates accountability for all public schools. This section provides a snapshot of the school’s academic performance according to data collected by the Public Education Department (PED) for the school years 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24.

The New Mexico State Accountability System ([NM Vistas](#)) gives every public school in the state an overall score. NM Vistas scored schools according to the following designations:

<p><b>Spotlight:</b> Top 25% of schools, excluding schools with designations of CSI, Graduation Rate or TSI/ATSI</p>	<p><b>Traditional:</b> No other designation</p>	<p><b>TSI (Targeted Support and Improvement):</b> Multi-year low performing subgroup(s)</p>
		<p><b>ATSI (Additional Targeted Support and Improvement):</b> TSI in the lowest 5% of schools. Exit from ATSI status requires an increase in subgroup performance in both of the next 2 years.</p>
		<p><b>CSI (Comprehensive Support):</b> Lowest 5% of all schools; OR 3 years in ATSI; OR 3-year average of 4-Year Graduation rate is below 66.67%</p>
		<p><b>MRI (More Rigorous Intervention):</b> on CSI for 3 years</p>

**Note:** According to the May 20, 2024 NM Vistas revision, the highest **overall** designation a school may receive is “Spotlight,” however, an additional designation/distinction of “Excellence” is assigned to schools scoring above the 90th percentile on specific indicators.

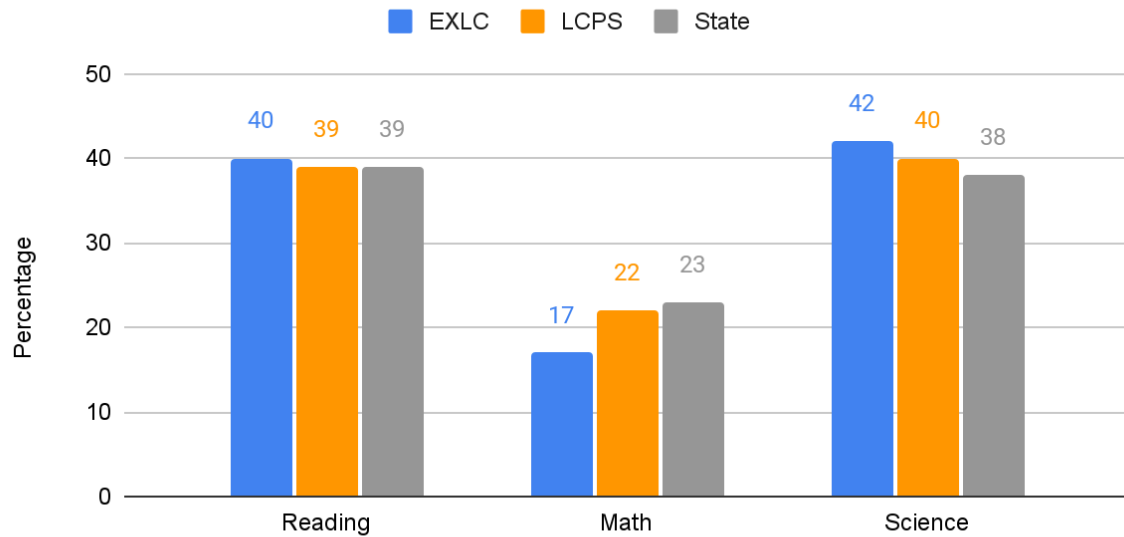
Refer to the [2023-24 Accountability Measures Overview](#) for a summary of indicators included in Vistas calculations. Further details and criteria for each designation are provided in the *Accountability Technical Manual* linked to the [NM Vistas](#) web page.

For the school year 2023-24, **Explore Academy - Las Cruces** received a designation of **Traditional**.

**Proficiency**

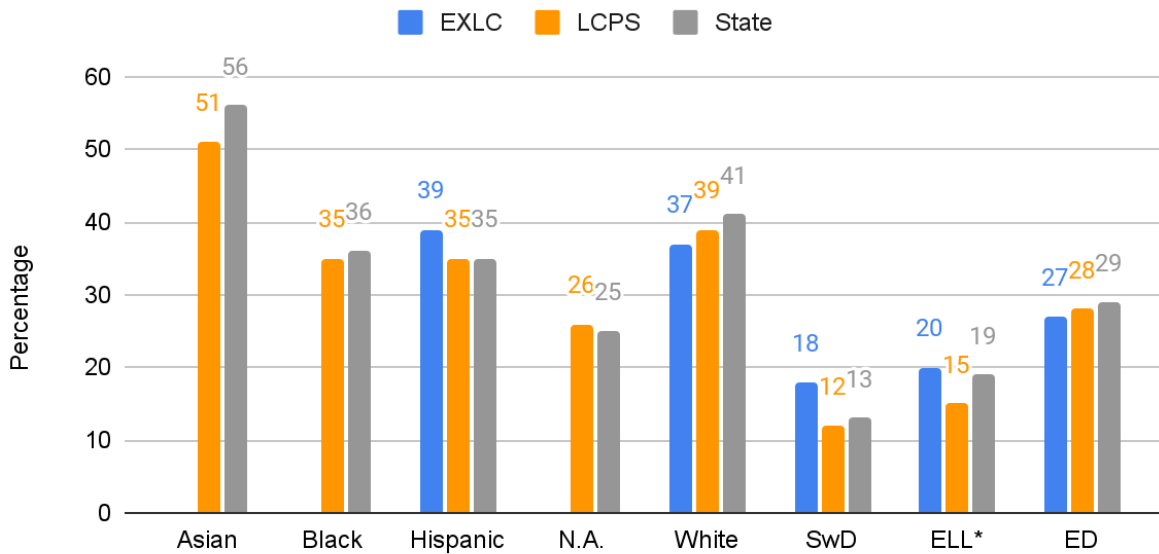
Because science is assessed only in grades 5, 8, and 11, schools that do not serve these grades do not have science proficiency data.

## Percent of Students Proficient in Core Subjects 2023-24



Source: NMVistas.org

## Percent Proficient in Reading by Subgroup 2023-24

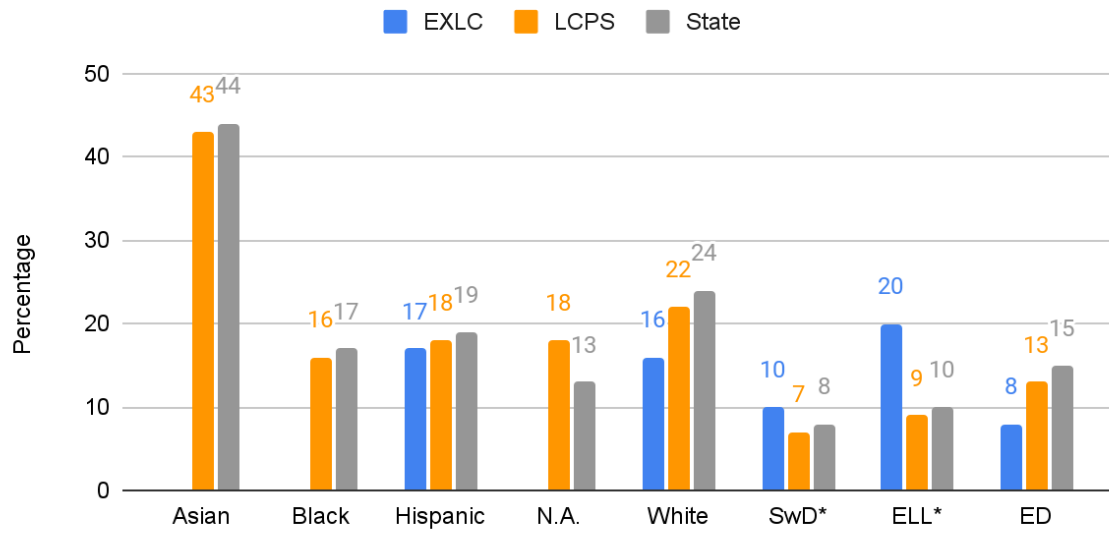


Source: NMVistas.org

**Note:** groups are masked due to population size, and/or some groups are not represented in the school.

**\*Note:** The school's ELL population is partially masked, ≤20% in reading.

## Percent Proficient in Math by Subgroup 2023-24

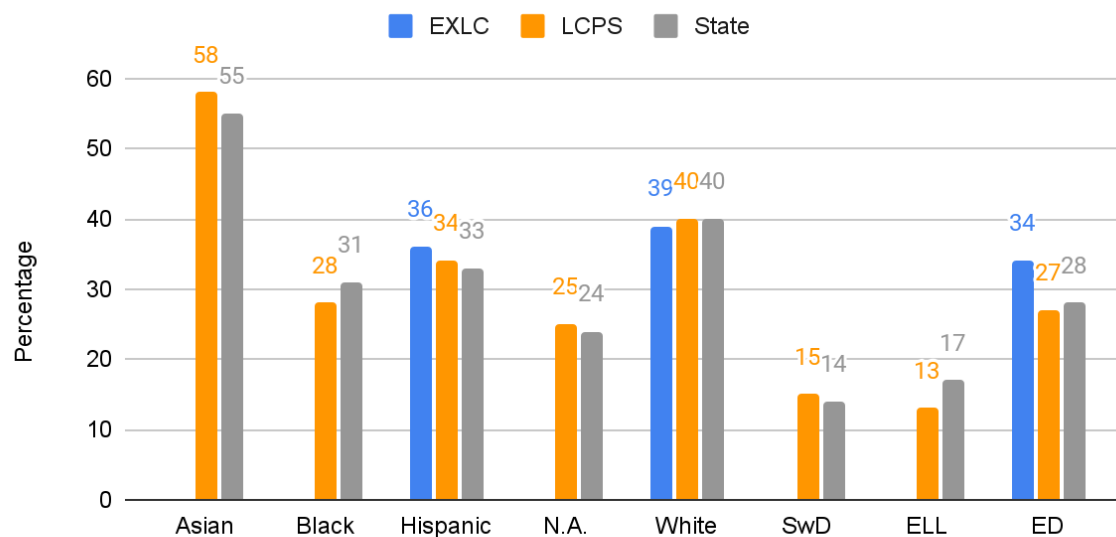


Source: NMVistas.org

**Note:** groups are masked due to population size, and/or some groups are not represented in the school.

**\*Note:** The school's ELL population is partially masked,  $\leq 20\%$ ; students with disabilities are also masked,  $\leq 10\%$  in math.

## Percent Proficient in Science by Subgroup 2023-24



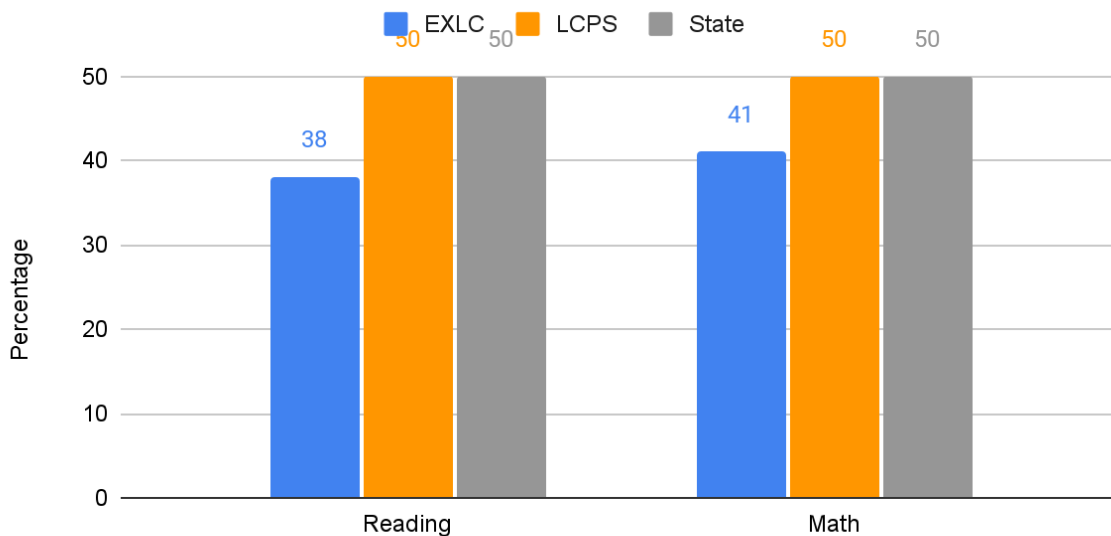
Source: NMVistas.org

**Note:** groups are masked due to population size, and/or some groups are not represented in the school.

## Growth

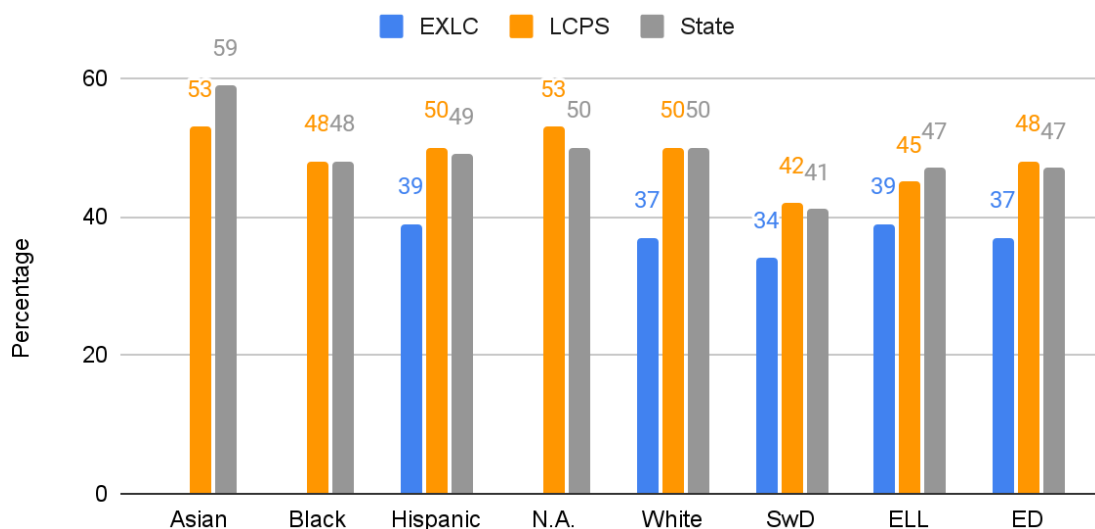
**Definition per NM Vistas:** median growth of students (Student Growth Percentile, or SGP) in math or reading compared to their peers who had similar scores on previous tests. Percentile ranges from 34-66 represent about a year's growth typical for the academic peer group. Growth is not available for high school students as data is limited to 11th grade SAT and Assessment of Science Readiness (ASR).

### Growth Percentile for All Students (2022-23 to 2023-24)



Source: NMVistas.org

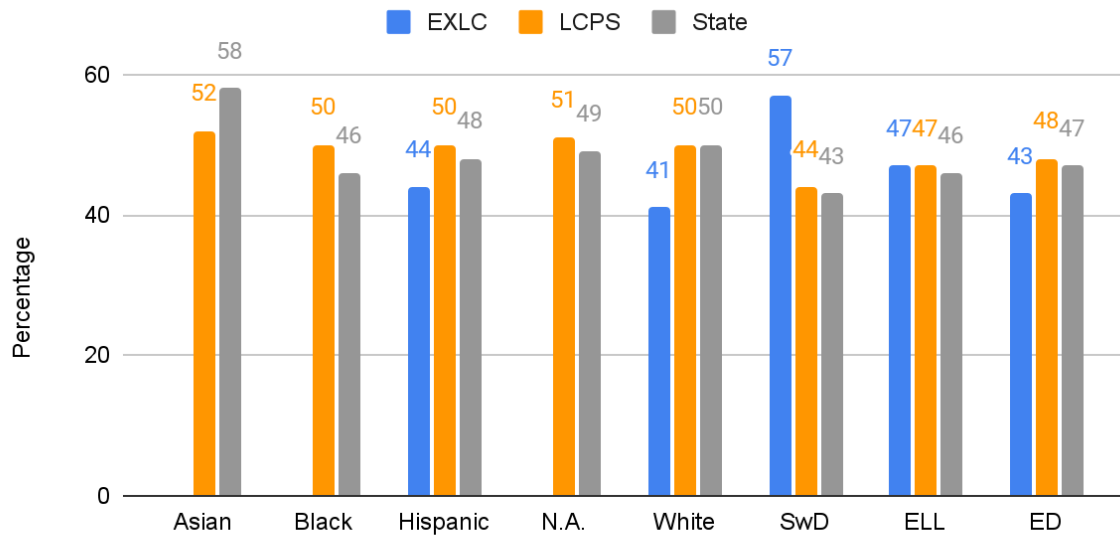
### Reading Growth Percentile by Subgroup (2022-23 to 2023-24)



Source: NMVistas.org

**Note:** groups are masked due to population size.

### Math Growth Percentile by Subgroup (2022-23 to 2023-24)



Source: NMVistas.org

**Note:** groups are masked due to population size.

### English Learner Progress (ELP):

English Learner Progress measures the percentage of students currently identified for EL services who are on track toward achieving English language proficiency (an ACCESS score of 4.7 or higher) within five years as measured by the ACCESS English language development assessment. (NMVistas.org)

<b>EXLC ELP: 13.6%</b>	<b>LCPS ELP: 17.4%</b>	<b>State ELP: 17.5%</b>
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Source: NMVistas.org



## Mission-Specific Goals

**Goal:** At the end of each term, 70-80% of students will pass\* 80% of the standards-based exit exams administered as a measure of proficiency on each seminar’s specific required standards and skills.

Performance Level	Target	Points
Exceeds Standard	At the end of each term, more than 80% of students, enrolled on the 40th and 120th day, will pass* 80% of the standards-based exit exams administered as a measure of proficiency on each seminar’s specific required standards and skills.	100
Meets Standard	At the end of each term, at least 60% of students, enrolled on the 40th and 120th day, will pass* 80% of the standards-based exit exams administered as a measure of proficiency on each seminar’s specific required standards and skills.	75
Does Not Meet Standard	At the end of each term, at least 50% of students, enrolled on the 40th and 120th day, will pass* 80% of the standards-based exit exams administered as a measure of proficiency on each seminar’s specific required standards and skills.	25
Falls Far Below Standard	At the end of each term, less than 50% of students, enrolled on the 40th and 120th day, will pass* 80% of the standards-based exit exams administered as a measure of proficiency on each seminar’s specific required standards and skills.	0

\*Pass is ≥80%, or as indicated on the IEP.

**Rating:** Exceeds Standards- 80% student attainment. **Score: 100**

## Organizational and Financial Performance Framework

**2023-24 Overall Rating: Does Not Meet Standard**

Pursuant to the [PEC Performance Framework and Accountability System](#), schools receive ratings of **Meets Standard**, **Working to Meet Standard**, or **Does Not Meet Standard** for individual indicators in the framework. Explanations for any rating other than Meets Standard are provided below.

The school also receives an overall rating of either **Meets Standard** or **Does Not Meet Standard** for the year. If a school receives a **Does Not Meet Standard** rating for three or more indicators, it will receive an overall rating of **Does Not Meet Standard**.

If a school receives a **Does Not Meet Standard** rating, on any indicator, the CSD and PEC may conduct a closer review the following year on that indicator, and/or the PEC may require the school to submit a corrective action plan in order to specify actions and a timeline to correct the performance deficiency.

A school may receive a **Working to Meet Standard** rating on multiple indicators and still receive an overall rating of **Meets Standard**. If a school receives this rating across multiple years, the CSD and PEC may conduct a closer review the following year on that indicator, and the school will need to address the issue in its renewal application at the end of its charter term.

## Screenshot of Multi-year Performance Framework Ratings

Explore Academy Las Cruces	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
<b>Organizational and Financial Performance Ratings</b>			
1a Mission and Educational Program	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
1b State Assessment Requirements	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
1c Rights of Students with Disabilities	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
1d Rights of English Learners	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
1e Meeting Program Requirements	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
1f NM DASH Plan	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
2a Financial Reporting and Compliance	Meets Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard
2b Accounting Principles	N/A	Does Not Meet Standard	Does Not Meet Standard
2c Responsive to Audit Findings	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Does Not Meet Standard
2d Managing Grant Funds	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
2e Staffing for Fiscal Management	Meets Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Meets Standard
2f Internal Controls	N/A	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
3a Governance Requirements	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
3b Nepotism, Conflict of Interest	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
3c Reporting Requirements	Meets Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Meets Standard
4a Rights of All Students	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Working to Meet Standard
4b Attendance and Retention	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard
4c Staff Credentialing	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
4d Employee Rights	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
4e Background Checks, Ethics	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
5a Facilities	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Does Not Meet Standard
5b Transportation	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
5c Health and Safety	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
5d Handling Information	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard

### Explanation of 2023-24 Indicator Ratings

2.a. FY24 quarter 1 report was submitted late.

2.b. Six findings on [FY23 audit](#); one material weakness, two significant deficiencies.

2.c. [FY23 audit](#): three repeat findings on audit.

4.a. Concerns raised: Most students providing their own Chromebooks is an issue when approx 40% of students are Economically Disadvantaged. The point system leading to removal of student(s) or coaching them out of EXLC is not in alignment with the Attendance for Success Act.

4.b. Attendance percentage rate is 91% (95% target), retention rate is 98% (80% target) and recurrent is 61% (70% target). After reviewing the school's Attendance Improvement Plan, the school has a plan to engage students and parents.

5.a. Safety concerns observed at site visit not resolved within 30 days.

**Site Visit Attendees**

February 8, 2024

**CSD Team:** Cheryl Rowe (lead), Dr. Brigette Russell, Lucy Valenzuela and Chris Perea (Ed. Plan Coordinator)

**School Leadership:** Karen Casedy (head administrator) and Karen Woerner (Director of Compliance)

**Governing Board:** Jenifer Lichtenfels and Lanell Pahe

# EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS CRUCES



850 N. Telshor Blvd, Las Cruces, NM 88011 (K-5)  
4201 Del Rey Blvd, Las Cruces, NM 88012 (6-12)

Chair Patricia Gipson  
NM Public Education Commission  
via email: [PEC.DistrictSeven@ped.nm.gov](mailto:PEC.DistrictSeven@ped.nm.gov)

November 8, 2024

Dear Chair Gipson,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Commission regarding the [SY24 Preliminary Report for Explore Academy - Las Cruces](#). Please know that there have been several issues with both the SY23 and SY24 preliminary reports for Explore Academy - Las Cruces. Last Spring, copies of both were apparently sent to Karen Casedy after she was no longer employed at the school. Also, I missed the email message from Cheryl Rowe sent to me on September 10th and was unaware of the SY24 Preliminary Annual Report until the notice about the October PEC meeting.

The letter from you, dated October 29, 2024, states that “the preliminary report already indicates that the school does not meet the organizational standards expected for that school year” and that the Commission asks “the school to take immediate action to remedy the issues already identified in the preliminary annual report.”

It is important to note that the school strongly opposes the *Does Not Meet* rating for Indicator 5a. Facilities, and the explanation for the opposition is provided below.

Indicator 5a of the Performance Framework reads as follows:

*“Is the school complying with facilities requirements?”*

- *The school meets PSFA occupancy, NMCI and ownership requirements. (NMSA 22-8B-4).*
- *The school has an e-occupancy certificate.*
- *The school has a PSFA letter verifying condition index.*
- *The school is in a building that is: (1) A publicly owned building, (2) Is leased to the school by a foundation formed for the purpose of providing a facility to the school or (3) Is leased by a private owner and there is no acceptable public facility available.*
- *The school notifies the PEC prior to any change in facilities.*
- *There are no verified complaints that demonstrate buildings, grounds or facilities do not provide a safe and orderly environment for public use. (Subsection P of 6.29.1.9 NMAC)*
  - *safe, healthy, orderly, clean and in good repair*
  - *in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act-Part III and state fire marshal regulations, Sections 59A-52-1 through 59A-52-25 NMSA 1978*
  - *Written records of pesticide applications will be kept for three years at each school site and be available upon request to parents, guardians, students,*

*teachers and staff.*

The CSD Site Visit Team noted the following two justifications for the “Does Not Meet” rating on this indicator:

- 1. Safety concerns observed at site visit not resolved within 30 days: buildings requiring a key to exit did not meet fire code; risk of being trapped in the building in a fire/emergency. (School informed CSD on 08.06.24 that locks have been changed to meet fire code; LC Fire Department confirmed.) Concrete/asphalt surfacing on the playground does not meet playground safety requirements per Consumer Product Safety Commission.***

School Response to #1: As you know, there are multiple exterior doors at the Telshor facility, more than any school needs. Since the school needed to secure the building, the doors were locked to avoid access from outsiders. There are multiple egress points and the evacuation routes led to doors that could be opened easily. There was no risk of staff or students being trapped in the building. However, the school wanted improved FOB access and push bars installed on all doors and started the procurement process in October 2023, hoping to get the work done over winter break. It took several months for the procurement process and then scheduling vendors to do the work. The project was completed on or around May 20, 2024.

Las Cruces Fire Investigator Michael Danner visited the school after the CSD Site Visit last Spring regarding a complaint received by his office, but the school was not cited for any non-compliance. Additionally, when the school received the SY24 Preliminary Report in October 2024, we contacted Las Cruces Fire Prevention, requesting a copy of any reports as a result of inspections or visits. Mr. Danner recalled visiting the school in the Spring but did not have any reports or concerns on file. He has since visited the school and provided a passed fire inspection report (attached).

- 2. Concrete/asphalt surfacing on the playground does not meet playground safety requirements per Consumer Product Safety Commission standards.***

First, how did CSD determine that the facility does not meet standard due to the concrete/asphalt playground for grades 5-10? Were all schools with similar play areas cited by CSD and rated “Does Not Meet”?

The cited Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines provide recommendations (“should”), but those are not listed as mandatory. Additionally, state regulations indicate that hard surfaced courts shall be provided for middle/junior high school and that playing areas and equipment shall be based on the program capacity and enrollment.

Regardless, the Governing Board and school administration definitely want to provide improved play areas for students. In fact, a playground is being installed at the Telshor facility in two phases this school year, as that location is now serving grades K-5. The second phase also includes some outdoor space at the Del Rey facility which serves grades 6-12.

The school acknowledges that the other two “Does Not Meet” ratings on the SY24 Preliminary Report, specifically 2b Accounting Principles and 2c Responsive to Audit Findings are due to the financial audit and are accurate. As noted in 22-23, the school changed the School Business Manager twice (which resulted in a Working To Meet rating that year) due to obvious issues with financial management. Since audits are lagged by one

year, it is not surprising that there were audit findings. It generally takes two years to clear up findings caused by prior School Business Officials and Explore Academy - Las Cruces expects to see drastic improvement due to the change to contracting with Axiom Analytics.

**Without the third “Does Not Meet” rating on 5a Facilities, which seems to be inappropriately determined, the school would be considered to be meeting organizational standard expectations.** We ask that the school’s overall rating be reevaluated in light of the explanations provided in this letter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Toni Hull". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Toni Hull  
Head Administrator



# Las Cruces Fire Department

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## Fire Inspection Results

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### Passed Inspection

**Inspection Status**  
Completed

**Inspected by**  
Michael Danner

**Completed at**  
10/17/2024

Address	Suite	City	State	Zip
850 N TELSHOR BLVD	--	LAS CRUCES	NM	88011
Business Name		Building Type		
Explore Academy Las Cruces K-5		Unknown		

Next inspection scheduled to be conducted on or after 10/17/2025.

### Inspection Signatures

**Occupancy Contact Signature**

Unable to sign:

Inspection form was completed at the fire station after the in-person inspection was completed.

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Reynaldo Gomez  
Occupant  
575-259-4062  
Reynaldo.gomez@explore.academy

**Inspector Signature**

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Michael Danner  
Inspector/Investigator  
--  
mdanner@las-cruces.org

## Clarification regarding 4a

### 4a. Is the school protecting the rights of all students?



- The school has received no complaints determined to be valid that demonstrate the school's lottery, admission, and enrollment practices are unfair, discriminatory, or legally non-compliant and a review of lottery, admission, and enrollment policies demonstrates compliance with legal requirements. (Contract Section 8.03 (a)-(e))
- The school has received no complaints determined to be valid that demonstrate the school's discipline hearings and practices are not conducted in accordance with law and due process. (NMAC 6.11.2. 1, et seq.)
- The school has received no complaints determined to be valid that demonstrate the school fails to respect students' privacy, civil rights, and constitutional rights, including the First Amendment protections and the Establishment Clause restrictions prohibiting schools from engaging in religious instruction.
- The school has received no complaints determined to be valid that demonstrate the school fails to comply with the requirements of the McKinney Vento Act and protects the rights of students in the foster care system.
- The PED has no information to indicate that the school does not have a board-approved complaint policy and dispute resolution process per 6.10.3D NMAC

	4.a. Is the school protecting the rights of all students?	No valid complaints re discipline, secular education; lottery policy on website meets CSD standards; complies with McKinney-Vento; complaint policy in alignment with 6.10.3 NMAC	1-2 complaints determined valid, with plan to correct; lottery policy largely meets CSD standards; school working to comply with McKinney-Vento; complaint policy not in alignment with 6.10.3 NMAC	3+ valid complaints, or 1-2 complaints with no CAP; lottery policy does not meet CSD standards; school does not comply with McKinney-Vento; no complaint policy
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CSD rated this indicator “working to meet standard” due to:

1. Most students providing their own Chromebooks is an issue when approximately 40% of students are economically disadvantaged.

**School Response:** How did CSD determine that “most” students provide their own Chromebooks? Elementary students have school-provided Chromebooks in classroom carts and do not need a device. The registration packet for grades 6-12 includes a question about a need for the school to provide a Chromebook. 101 students requested a Chromebook via that question in the registration process. Of the 374 currently enrolled secondary students this year, 110 have been issued a school "loaner" thus far this year (~30%).

**Chromebook Policy K-5 \***

- My student is in grade K-5 and will not be required to provide a Chromebook. The classrooms have sets of devices for students to use, if/when required.

**Chromebook Policy 6-12 \***

- I understand that a Chromebook is a required school supply for grade 6–12 and I will provide this for my student. I understand that PCs, Macs, phones, tablets, and other platforms are NOT ALLOWED. I also understand that a Google Management License will be added to the Chromebook at the school's expense. This allows the school to implement required security options and administer state testing with state-mandated technology. The license prevents students from accessing other resources when participating in online testing, as required by the state. This can be removed if/when my student leaves the school.
- Due to financial or other hardship, I cannot supply a Chromebook for my grade 6–12 student and understand that I must complete the NSLP (meal) application when it becomes available in order to qualify for a school-provided Chromebook.

This is also addressed in the [.LCS Student/Parent Handbook - READ ONLY](#) which says:



*Families that are unable to purchase a Chromebook due to financial hardship are advised to contact the school administration or counselor for assistance. If Chromebooks are provided by the school, a [Student Usage Agreement](#) must be signed by the student and parent. Students may maintain possession of the device as long as they are enrolled at Explore Academy and may keep it upon graduation. Should a student elect to disenroll from Explore Academy before graduating, the device must be returned to the school.*

2. The point system leading to removal of student(s) or coaching them out of EXLC is not in alignment with the Attendance for Success Act.

**School Response:** The point system is part of the discipline matrix and is only one tool employed by the school for discipline matters. The policy and procedure have been part of the Explore model since the first school using that model opened in 2014. It was reviewed by the school attorney for compliance with law. Also, there are no violations of the Attendance for Success Act contained in the point system. There was an apparent misunderstanding about “Tardy” in the Level I column. It has been revised to read: Tardy to class (repetitive, habitual; not proceeding to class timely); Tardy at the start of the school day is addressed as an attendance issue.

Further, students are not automatically expelled from Explore LCS. There are many strategies and practices we use to coach students and teach positive behaviors. Procedures outlined in [6.11.2.12 NMAC](#) are followed. See page 28 of the handbook.

 .LCS Student/Parent Handbook - READ ONLY

## Explanation for 5a

### 5a Is the school complying with facilities requirements?



- The school meets PSFA occupancy, NMCI and ownership requirements. (NMSA 22-8B-4).
- The school has an e-occupancy certificate.
- The school has a PSFA letter verifying condition index.
- The school is in a building that is: (1) A publicly owned building, (2) Is leased to the school by a foundation formed for the purpose of providing a facility to the school or (3) Is leased by a private owner and there is no acceptable public facility available.
- The school notifies the PEC prior to any change in facilities.
- There are no verified complaints that demonstrate buildings, grounds or facilities do not provide a safe and orderly environment for public use. (Subsection P of 6.29.1.9 NMAC)
- safe, healthy, orderly, clean and in good repair
- in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act-Part III and state fire marshal regulations, Sections 59A-52-1 through 59A-52-25 NMSA 1978
- Written records of pesticide applications will be kept for three years at each school site and be available upon request to parents, guardians, students, teachers and staff.

5.a.	Is the school complying with facilities requirements?	School has a current lease agreement with no PSFA concerns; no complaints about safety/condition/cleanliness of facilities, ; all documents listed in PF produced upon request; no safety concerns observed at site visit	Issues with lease agreement resolved within 30 days; 1-2 complaints, resolved within 30 days; requested documents unavailable upon request but produced within 30 days; minor safety concerns observed at site visit resolved within 30 days	Issues with lease agreement not resolved; complaints not resolved within 30 days safety concerns observed at site visit not resolved within 30 days
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CSD rated this indicator “does not meet standard” due to:

1. Safety concerns observed at site visit not resolved within 30 days: buildings requiring a key to exit did not meet fire code; risk of being trapped in the building in a fire/emergency. (School informed CSD on 08.06.24 that locks have been changed to meet fire code; LC Fire Department confirmed.)

**School Response:** There are multiple (in fact, too many) access/egress doors at the Telshor facility. There was never a risk of students or staff being trapped as most doors did not require key. Either way, the school had already arranged to have panic hardware and fobs installed. Las Cruces Fire Investigator Michael Danner inspected the school after the CSD Site Visit last Spring regarding a complaint received by his office, but the school was not cited for any non-compliance. Clearly, there was no risk of people being trapped in the building.

In light of the SY24 Preliminary Report, the school contacted Las Cruces Fire Prevention, requesting a copy of any reports as a result of inspections or visits. Mr. Danner recalled

visiting the school in the Spring but did not have any record of violations or concerns. Therefore, he visited the school in October 2024 and provided a fire inspection report (which is marked as 'Pass').

Regardless, all doors were upgraded with panic hardware in Spring 2024. The only remaining issue is the large wooden doors that the school would like to remove. The fire inspector indicated that those can be removed and closed in as there is another egress point within 15 feet.

2. Concrete/asphalt surfacing on the playground does not meet playground safety requirements per Consumer Product Safety Commission standards.

**School Response:** How did CSD determine that the facility does not meet standard due to the concrete/asphalt playground for grades 5-10? The cited Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines provide recommendations ("should"), but those are not requirements. Further, 6.27.30.11 NMAC, "A school facility shall have area, space and fixtures, in accordance with the standard equipment necessary to meet the educational requirements of the public education department, for physical education activity." It also states that hard surfaced courts shall be provided for middle/junior high school and that playing areas and equipment shall be based on the program capacity and enrollment.

Regardless, the school administration definitely wants to provide improved play areas. In fact, a playground is being installed at the Telshor facility in two phases this school year. The second phase also includes some outdoor space at the Del Rey facility.

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## Explore Academy - Las Cruces

1 message

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**Karen Woerner** <karen.woerner@explore.academy>

Thu, Oct 17, 2024 at 4:40  
PM

To: mdanner@lascruces.gov

Mr. Danner,

Per our phone conversation yesterday, I am writing to confirm that, though Explore Academy - Las Cruces was visited last Spring (2024) in response to a complaint received by your office, no fire inspection report or notice of non-compliance was issued to the school. I also understand that you were going to schedule a fire inspection this week in order to have a report on file.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,  
Karen

Karen Woerner  
Director of Compliance / Board Liaison  
Explore Academy  
karen.woerner@explore.academy  
Google Voice: 505-218-6898  
Personal Cell: 505-250-4967



# Las Cruces Fire Department

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## Fire Inspection Results

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### Passed Inspection

**Inspection Status**  
Completed

**Inspected by**  
Michael Danner

**Completed at**  
10/17/2024

Address	Suite	City	State	Zip
850 N TELSHOR BLVD	--	LAS CRUCES	NM	88011
Business Name		Building Type		
Explore Academy Las Cruces K-5		Unknown		

Next inspection scheduled to be conducted on or after 10/17/2025.

### Inspection Signatures

**Occupancy Contact Signature**

Unable to sign:

Inspection form was completed at the fire station after the in-person inspection was completed.

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Reynaldo Gomez  
Occupant  
575-259-4062  
Reynaldo.gomez@explore.academy

**Inspector Signature**

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Michael Danner  
Inspector/Investigator  
--  
mdanner@las-cruces.org

# 2023-24 Annual Report Draft Feedback

Please read your school's Annual Report draft carefully and respond within one week of receiving it. Thank you very much for your time.

The name and photo associated with your Google account will be recorded when you upload files and submit this form. Your email is not part of your response.

Any files that are uploaded will be shared outside of the organization they belong to.

1. Email\* Your answer
2. School\* **Explore Academy - Las Cruces (581-001)**
3. Once you have reviewed the annual report **draft**, please check all that apply. Details regarding edits will be provided in the following questions. (**Note**: we will **not** be reviewing items that were on the Preliminary Annual Reports, as schools have been given ample opportunity to contest them on previous drafts.)\*

The report is correct; no edits required.

The NM Vistas rating or score is incorrect.

One or more data tables contains an error, i.e.: enrollment by subgroup, proficiencies, growth, graduation, ELP

Newly rated PF indicators contain an error: 1.b. (participation rates) or 3.b./4.b. (attendance)

Minor edits needed, e.g., formatting/typos, errors information section, etc.

Other: **Though this was due to a missed email and a new head administrator, the school was not aware of the revisions to the Preliminary Report ratings until notice of the October PEC meeting. The school was advised that it had missed the 20 days to respond. As follow up to the letter from the PEC, the school responded to the PEC Chair regarding the issues with the report, specifically regarding the egregious rating in indicator 5a that led to the unwarranted overall rating of "Does Not Meet" for the school.**

4. If applicable, please describe any errors/issues with your school's report.

a. Head Administrator was **Karen Casedy (July-May)** and **Dr. Toni Hull (May-June)**

b. Enrollment cap of **1,200** was approved at the March 2023 PEC meeting

c. Waivers: **All waivers were requested as submitted during the original contract negotiations, per the advice of Chair Gipson.**

d. Question regarding newly rated indicator 4b: ***The retention rate, students who stayed enrolled during the SY24 school year is listed as 98% but the recurrent enrollment, students who returned from the prior year (SY23-SY24), is listed at 60%. The latter simply cannot be correct. Ms. Faulkner provided the reports on which the calculation is based (on Dec 12th) and the school is researching.***

e. Previously rated Indicator 4a “Rights of All Students” is not accurate and is either an opinion or misunderstanding. See clarification provided.

f. Previously rated Indicator 5a “Facilities” should definitely not be rated as Does Not Meet. FIRST ISSUE: The fire inspector toured the school shortly after the CSD site visit and did not issue a violation. See explanation and evidence provided. SECOND ISSUE: Please provide the CSD rationale and basis for their determination about the playground surface for grades 5-10. And has this same concern been raised for other state charter schools?

5. Please upload any supporting documentation that the CSD team can use to verify the errors and or issues that you found on the report. Upload up to 5 supported files. Max 100 MB per file.

- a. School’s letter of response to PEC dated 11/8/2024
- b. Clarification on indicator 4a
- c. Rationale for indicator 5a
- d. Email to the fire inspector
- e. Fire Inspection Report

6. If you wish CSD to include a formal response from the school in the final report provided to PEC, please upload it here. Upload up to 5 supported files: PDF. Max 100 MB per file.

If the rating on the indicator 5a for Facilities shall not be revised by CSD to a “Working to Meet” and, therefore, the overall performance of the school remains at “Does Not Meet”, the school wants its strong opposition noted. In that case, please attach the following to the final report:

- a. This feedback response document
- b. All evidence provided for #5 above

7. Other comments or questions

On a separate but related note, are there any task force meetings or opportunities to review and discuss the Performance Framework and rubrics? As with any new system, there are some tweaks that will be needed. In some cases, the rubric is not actually capturing what the indicator is supposed to measure.