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September 27, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Education Study Committee

FR: David Harrell

RE: COMMITTEE REQUEST: FRAMEWORK FOR BUILDING CHARTER SCHOOL QUALITY

During the August meeting of the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC), Dr. Lisa Grover, Chief Executive Officer, New Mexico Coalition for Charter Schools (NMCCS), made a presentation about quality initiatives that the coalition was pursuing. As part of that presentation, Dr. Grover showed the committee an excerpt from a draft framework for building charter school quality in New Mexico that had been developed by members of the NMCCS as part of a national effort. In response to a request from the Chair of the LESC, Dr. Grover has provided the complete draft, which accompanies this memo.

According to Dr. Grover, the New Mexico framework is modeled on *A Framework for Academic Quality: A Report from the National Consensus Panel on Charter School Academic Quality* (June 2008). This report states that it is the product of a national effort called Building Charter School Quality (BCSQ), a three-year project funded by the Charter Schools Program in the US Department of Education. The NMCCS, Dr. Grover says, is the state implementation partner in this project.

Leading the project nationwide are four organizations associated with charter schools:

- the Colorado League of Charter Schools;

- CREDO (Center for Research on Education Outcomes) at Stanford University;
- the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools; and
- the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.

According to the report, the framework seeks to fill a void in the evaluation of charter schools: “The charter sector today has no basic, universal measures of school quality other than those shared with other public schools under the No Child Left Behind Act.” The BCSQ report continues to say:

To fulfill the promise of the charter school movement and maximize its success and impact, the charter sector nationwide needs to clarify and commit to a common set of basic quality expectations and performance measures to define and assess charter school success.

This report further suggests that the framework might be used by authorizers and charter schools to develop their own performance contracts, an initiative that the NMCCS has endorsed and the subject of another LESC request from the August 2010 meeting.

The BCSQ framework for academic quality in charter schools is built around four “essential indicators of academic quality and associated measures, metrics, and benchmark comparisons”:

- student achievement level (status);
- student progress over time (growth);
- postsecondary readiness and success (for high schools); and
- student engagement.

The framework developed by the NMCCS adds three more quality indicators: financial performance and sustainability, board performance and stewardship, and parent and community engagement. The intent of the NMCCS is to ensure that its member charter schools adhere to these standards.

Finally, the workplan that produced this framework, Dr. Grover says, has involved not only charter schools but also a number of authorizers. One task that remains is an evaluation of New Mexico law, which is expected to be completed in fall 2010. “It has been very good for us to work with the BCSQ,” Dr. Grover adds, because “it brought attention to the need for quality to our members and helped us make this a priority.”

NEW MEXICO				BCSQ		
Focus Area	Standard Indicators	Standard Indicators suggestion	Process (P) / Outcomes(O)	Indicator	Measure	Metric
<i>Academic Standard</i>	1.1 Schools commit to high achievement for all students and hold its leadership accountable to those ends.	<i>Schools commit to high student achievement</i>	O	Student Achievement Level or Status	Proficiency Levels on State Assessments by Grade and Subject College Entrance Exam Composite and Subtest measure High School Exit Exam	Percentage of students scoring at proficiency Percentage of students scoring at each state performance level (e.g., Advanced, Proficient, Below Proficient) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Attainment of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Percentage of students reaching score predictive of college success Median score Percentage of students taking college entrance exam Percentage of students passing, by disaggregated groups
<i>Academic Standard</i>	1.2 Schools create appropriate, flexible, and accountable systems, policies and procedures to promote student	<i>Schools promote student learning and growth.</i>	O	Student Achievement Growth	Annual Gains for Same (Matched) Students Longitudinal Growth Based on Similar	Percentage of students achieving or exceeding desired gains (e.g., one year's growth in one year's time) Median growth rate Percentage of students

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	learning and growth.				Starting Points	<p>achieving or exceeding typical or average growth rate</p> <p>Percent of students making or exceeding target growth rate</p> <p>Criterion-Referenced Longitudinal Growth</p> <p>Percentage of students making adequate growth to reach or maintain proficiency during a certain period of time</p> <p>Percentage of students already proficient or advanced who maintain or improve their performance level</p> <p>Percentage of students moving to a higher performance level</p>
Academic Standard	1.3 Schools create an articulated curriculum and instructional methods that are aligned with the New Mexico Standards and Benchmarks.		P			

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Focus Area	Standard Indicators	Standard Indicators suggestion	Process (P) / Outcomes(O)	Indicator	Measure	Metric
<i>Academic Standard</i>	1.4 School staff frequently assesses individual student achievement and analyze data. Teachers adjust instruction based on data for continuous instructional improvement.		P			
<i>Academic Standard</i>	1.5 Schools create a cadre of professional educators highly trained in their individual content areas, with the ability to teach and evaluate students effectively to insure student growth.		P			

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Focus Area	Standard Indicators	Standard Indicators suggestion	Process (P) / Outcomes(O)	Indicator	Measure	Metric
<i>Academic Standard</i>	1.6 Schools focus on continuous improvement through professional staff development that addresses needs identified by the school's internal and external evaluation process.	<i>School conducts an internal and external evaluation process which informs professional staff development and continuous improvement.</i>	O	Board Performance and Stewardship	Setting Expectations	<p>Percentage of short and long-term board approved academic and operating performance goals (for external accountability) that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound)</p> <p>Short and long-term, board approved, SMART performance goals including at least one of the following areas: student achievement, student academic growth over time, financial health, operational efficiency, and organizational development</p>
<i>2. Governance Standard</i>	2.1 The Governing Council commits to high student achievement through the school's vision, mission and values.		O	Board Performance and Stewardship	Setting Expectations	<p>Percentage of short and long-term board approved academic and operating performance goals (for external accountability) that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound)</p> <p>Short and long-term, board approved, SMART performance goals including at least one of the following areas: student</p>

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						achievement, student academic growth over time, financial health, operational efficiency, and organizational development
2. Governance Standard	2.2 The Governing Council holds its School Leader accountable through an evaluation process based on the school's performance goals described in its charter.		O	Board Performance and Stewardship	Leadership Oversight and Evaluation	<p>Clear lines of authority, responsibility, and reporting</p> <p>Board monitoring of school/CMO leadership performance, as appropriate throughout the year</p> <p>Annual evaluation of school/CMO leadership performance against established performance expectations (SMART goals)</p>
2. Governance Standard	2.3 The Governing Council establishes written policies to ensure the integrity of its charter, its signed assurances and financial solvency.		O	Board Performance and Stewardship	<p>Regulatory and Reporting Compliance</p> <p>Contract Management and Oversight</p>	<p>Percentage of all required filings that are complete, accurate and on time</p> <p>Absence of violations of any regulatory or reporting requirements</p> <p>Fulfillment of terms of charter contract</p>

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2. Governance Standard	2.4 The Governing Council complies with the New Mexico Open Meetings Act. Full and accurate minutes of its meetings are maintained and available to the public.		O	Board Performance and Stewardship Parent and Community Engagement	Regulatory and Reporting Compliance Public Accountability and Transparency	Percentage of all required filings that are complete, accurate and on time Absence of violations of any regulatory or reporting requirements Clear, accurate, regular communication by the school on its academic and operating performance to key constituencies and the public through a variety of means that maximize access and understanding
2. Governance Standard	2.6 The Governing Council has developed a recruitment and leadership succession plan for its Administration and Council President.		P			
2. Governance Standard	2.7 The Governing Council has developed a		P			

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Focus Area	Standard Indicators	Standard Indicators suggestion	Process (P) / Outcomes(O)	Indicator	Measure	Metric
	yearly professional development plan.					
3. Ethical Leadership	3.1 Leaders effectively communicate and engage stakeholders in the mission, vision and values of the school outlined in its charter or at least a yearly basis.		O	Board Performance and Stewardship Parent and Community Engagement	Public Accountability and Transparency Satisfied Parents and Students	Clear, accurate, regular communication by the school on its academic and operating performance to key constituencies and the public through a variety of means that maximize access and understanding Percentage of students and parents who give the school a high (A or B) rating on satisfaction surveys , with response rates of at least 75% from parents and at least 80% from currently enrolled students , broadly representative of the student population. Re-enrollment ratio – School’s rate of student reenrollment from year to year, compared to the district average and/or the school’s prior year re-

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						enrollment
3. Ethical Leadership	3.2 Leaders generate and sustain school culture conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.		P			
3. Ethical Leadership	3.3 Leaders regularly monitor and evaluate the success of the school's program and hold themselves accountable for results.		O	Board Performance and Stewardship	Leadership Oversight and Evaluation	<p>Board monitoring of school/CMO leadership performance, as appropriate throughout the year</p> <p>Annual evaluation of school/CMO leadership performance against established performance expectations (SMART goals)</p> <p>Formal annual board review of performance and improvement against annual targets and long-term academic and operating goals</p> <p>Measurable improvement in the school's academic and operating performance over</p>
					Securing The Future/Continuous Improvement	

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Focus Area	Standard Indicators	Standard Indicators suggestion	Process (P) / Outcomes(O)	Indicator	Measure	Metric
						time, aligned with the school's performance contract goals
3. Ethical Leadership	3.4 Leaders make management decisions with the goal of optimizing successful teaching and learning experiences.		P			
3. Ethical Leadership	3.5 Leaders monitor the legal and regulatory issues and potential changes in the environment in which charters operate.		P	Board Performance and Stewardship	Securing the Future/Continuous Improvement	Documented board and leadership attention to significant changes in the school's environment including authorizing changes and legislative, regulatory and policy activity
3. Ethical Leadership	3.6 Leaders respect diversity and implement practices that are inclusive to all the types of learners consistent with the school charter.		P			

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Focus Area	Standard Indicators	Standard Indicators suggestion	Process (P) / Outcomes(O)	Indicator	Measure	Metric
4. Business/Financial Practices	4.1 Schools monitor their financial allocations to insure priorities are aligned with the academic goals as outlined in their charters.		P			
4. Business/Financial Practices	4.2 Schools align financial guidelines with their charter contracts, state and federal laws and regulations and standard accounting practices.		O	Financial Performance and Sustainability Board Performance and Stewardship	Annual Audit Contract Management and Oversight	Absence of material or repeated audit findings in annual audit by qualified independent auditor Fulfillment of terms of charter contract
4. Business/Financial Practices	4.3 Schools establish internal financial controls to maintain operational integrity. Schools create a systematic plan of	<i>Schools establish internal financial controls to maintain operational integrity.</i>	O	Financial Performance and Sustainability	Annual Audit	Absence of material or repeated audit findings in annual audit by qualified independent auditor

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Focus Area	Standard Indicators	Standard Indicators suggestion	Process (P) / Outcomes(O)	Indicator	Measure	Metric
	checks and balances between fiscal and academic responsibility and report monthly to the Governing Council.	<i>Schools create a systematic plan of checks and balances between fiscal and academic responsibility and report monthly to the Governing Council.</i>		Board Performance and Stewardship	Leadership Oversight and Evaluation	<p>Clear lines of authority, responsibility, and reporting</p> <p>Board monitoring of school/CMO leadership performance, as appropriate throughout the year</p> <p>Annual evaluation of school/CMO leadership performance against established performance expectations (SMART goals)</p>
4. Business/Financial Practices	4.4 Schools submit a timely annual audit to their authorizer, monitor modifications or additions to audit requirements and utilize the annual audit findings as a tool to improve business and financial practices. Financial reports are filed in a timely way.	<i>Schools submit a timely annual audit to their authorizer with no material or repeated audit findings.</i>	O	Financial Performance and Sustainability	Annual Audit	Absence of material or repeated audit findings in annual audit by qualified independent auditor

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Focus Area	Standard Indicators	Standard Indicators suggestion	Process (P) / Outcomes(O)	Indicator	Measure	Metric
		<i>Schools prepare its students for college and the workplace.</i>	O	Postsecondary Readiness	Postsecondary Access & Opportunity High School Graduation Rate Postsecondary Admission Rate Postsecondary Enrollment or Employment	Percentage of students enrolled in a college-prep curriculum (based on state high school standards or admission standards for in-state public 4-year colleges) Percentage of graduates submitting applications to postsecondary institutions, by type of program (colleges, trade and apprentice programs) National Governors Association graduation rate formula Percentage of students gaining admission to postsecondary institutions (includes 4-year, 2-year colleges, trade and apprentice programs) Percentage of students submitting a complete Federal Application for Financial Student Aid (FAFSA) Percentage of Free/ Reduced-Price Lunch students admitted to college Percentage of graduates, by cohort, enrolled in postsecondary institutions (college, trade and apprentice programs)

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Focus Area	Standard Indicators	Standard Indicators suggestion	Process (P) / Outcomes(O)	Indicator	Measure	Metric
		<i>Schools engage students as a basis for improving their academic achievement</i>	O	Student Engagement	Student Attendance Rate Continuous Enrollment Rate Truancy Rate	Average Daily Attendance Percentage of students attending target percentage of days Percentage of students continuously enrolled throughout the year Percentage of students re-enrolled from one year to the next Percentage of students continuously enrolled for multiple years Percentage of students with fewer than X truancies in a given period of time
		<i>Schools manage finances to ensure that they meet their financial obligations and are sustainable</i>	O	Financial Performance and Sustainability	Student Enrollment Ratio Liquidity Sustainability	Actual Student Enrollment, per statutorily reported count(s)/ Budgeted Student Enrollment (Current Assets – Current Liabilities)/ Total Expenses Total Unrestricted Net Assets /

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Focus Area	Standard Indicators	Standard Indicators suggestion	Process (P) / Outcomes(O)	Indicator	Measure	Metric
		<i>over the short and long-term</i>			Occupancy Expense	Average Monthly Expenses Total Occupancy Costs (Lease or Mortgage) / Total Revenues
		<i>School boards are made up of members that have relevant experience and skills to ensure school success</i>	O	Board Performance and Stewardship	Board Member Skills, Knowledge and Commitment	Collective years of board member experience in each of the following critical areas, at a minimum: Finance, Legal, Education, and Board Leadership/Governance Percentage of board members who attend more than 80% of board meetings
		<i>Schools engage stakeholders to ensure demand for school</i>	O	Parent and Community Engagement	Excess Student Demand	(Current Enrollment + Valid Excess Demand) / School's Current Enrollment Capacity