

**RÍO GALLINAS SCHOOL
OF ECOLOGY AND THE ARTS**

PART A

PERFORMANCE REPORT

(A Report on the Current Charter Term)

TABLE OF CONTENTS – PART A

Indicate the page numbers for each section in the designated column.

PERFORMANCE REPORT (A Report on Current Charter Term)	Page(s)
I. Report on Progress	A-3
A. Material Violations	A-3
B. Achievement	A-4
1. New Mexico Educational Standards	A-4
2. Student Academic Performance Standards	A-7
3. Other Student Performance Standards	A-10
4. Other Goals/Performance Standards	A-13
C. Fiscal Management	A-15
D. Compliance Review	A-16
II. Petition of Support From Employees	A-19
III. Petition of Support from Households	A-19
IV. Facilities	A-20
V. Term of Renewal	A-21
VI. Appendices	A-22

I. REPORT ON PROGRESS

The Charter School Act requires that each school seeking to renew its charter must submit a report on the progress of the charter school in achieving the goals, objectives, students' performance standards, state minimum educational standards, and other terms of the current charter, including the accountability requirements set forth in the Assessment and Accountability Act.

The Charter School can submit its own report on the progress of the charter school in achieving the goals, objectives, students' performance standards, state minimum educational standards, and other terms of the current charter, including the accountability requirements set forth in the Assessment and Accountability Act.

The Report on Progress is divided into four component parts which correspond to the findings in law that a chartering authority must determine that a charter school has violated in order to refuse to renew a charter. The questions and information requested in the Report on Progress provide data to assist in the analysis of the progress of the charter school over the term of the charter.

A. Material Violations

The Charter School Act provides:

A charter may be suspended, revoked, or not renewed by the chartering authority if the chartering authority determines that the charter school...committed a material violation of any of the conditions, standards or procedures set forth in the charter, 22-8B-12F (1) NMSA 1978

Please answer the following questions. If the answer is yes, please provide details.

Question	School's Response	
	YES	NO
1. Are there terms of the school's charter that the school has changed or that the school has not yet implemented over the past four years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Over the past four years were there any material terms of the school's charter which the District determined that the school was not in compliance and the District notified the school of the compliance violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

B. Achievement

The Charter School Act provides:

A charter may be suspended, revoked, or not renewed by the chartering authority if the chartering authority determines that the charter school... failed to meet or make substantial progress toward achievement of the department's minimum educational standards or student performance standards identified in the charter application, 22-8B-12F (2) NMSA 1978.

New Mexico Educational Standards –as measured by the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA) results.

- Using the NMPED School Accountability Reports from the following PED webpage: <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/ayp2009/index.html> complete the following chart.

NMSBA SCHOOL SUMMARY – ALL STUDENTS

Year of Charter Term	School Year Tested	Date of NMPED School Accountability Report	MATH		READING	
			% proficient	Met proficiency goal? (yes/no)	% proficient	Met proficiency goal? (yes/no)
1	2007-08	10-11-08	50.0%	YES	66.7%	YES
2	2008-09	10-02-09	49.1%	YES	68.4%	YES
3	2009-10	08-01-10	50.0%	YES	65.15%	YES
4	2010-11	07-22-11	33.87%	NO	56.45%	NO

Statement of Progress and Additional Information:

Although there have been minor variations in achievement by year, a pattern of progress for most years has been demonstrated in mathematics and reading proficiency has been consistently in the mid to upper 60th percent range. The staff continues to examine alignment of thematic expeditionary-based unit curriculum with standards and benchmarks through examination of formative and summative achievement data at the school in classroom level in PLC structures.

The membership of the school is diverse and reflects the community in which the school resides. When the AYP data are compared with the schools in the community as a whole,

it is apparent that students at Rio Gallinas are progressing and succeeding at an overall level above most of their peers even though 73% of the student body (2010-11 Accountability Report) qualifies as economically disadvantaged according to the free and reduced lunch application data.

Rio Gallinas has made AYP every year except for 2010-11 when proficiency rates declined dramatically. It should be noted that overall proficiency rates declined throughout the stat because the cut scores for the various proficiency levels were raised. All schools were faced with a dual problem – not only were the AYP targets (Average Measurable Objectives – AMO) for the percent of students scoring proficient or above increasing every year but the actual test score that corresponded to the minimum proficiency level was raised. The intention was to increase expectations but it makes comparability very difficult. Given the changes, only 13.6% of the schools in the state made AYP this past year.

- Using grade-level NMSBA data from the following PED webpage:
<http://www.ped.nm.us/AssessmentAccountability/AcademicGrowth/NMSBA.html>
report the percentages of the “All Students” category scoring “Proficient & Above” in Math and Reading for each year and grade tested.
- Using the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) chart from the PED webpage:
<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/div/psb/dl10/webEPSS/schools/amoChart.pdf>
indicate the appropriate Annual Measureable Objective (AMO) of your school configuration for each year.

NMSBA READING												
Percent Proficient & Above and AMO												
Grade	06-07	AMO	07-08	AMO	08-09	AMO	09-10	AMO	10-11	AMO		
3		45.0	58.3	56.0	90.9	60.0	28.6	64.0	57.1	75.0		
4							60.0				64.3	20.0
5							100				75.0	40.0
6	80.0				43.8						66.7	68.2
7	69.2				70.6						70.6	72.7
8	70.0				84.6						75.0	81.3

9										
11										

Statement of Progress and Additional Information – Reading: Missing data for individual classes indicates a class size less than 10 students. More than half of the grade levels for every year reported exceeded the AMO (64% of the grade level scores for the five years) and collectively exceeded the lower bound confidence interval so that the school has made AYP in reading almost every year that data have been gathered. Overall growth is indicated by the increased number of students scoring proficient and above. An examination of aggregated cohort groups (e.g. 6th grade 05-06 to 7th grade 06-07) for the entire school reveals mixed patterns of growth and is the subject of ongoing inquiry at both a school and classroom-level to create programs to address specific needs and to examine curriculum as well as teaching methodology.

NMSBA MATH										
Percent Proficient & Above and AMO										
Grade	06-07	AMO	07-08	AMO	08-09	AMO	09-10	AMO	10-11	AMO
3			50.0		54.5		54.5		28.6	
4					40.0		40.0		20.0	
5					70.0		70.0		33.3	
6	46.7	24.0	23.5	38.0	46.7	44.0	46.7	51.0	27.3	65.0
7	23.1		47.1		35.7		35.7		45.5	
8	70.0		38.5		61.5		61.5		56.3	
9										
11										

Statement of Progress and Additional Information - Math: Missing data for individual classes indicates a class size less than 10 students. Rio Gallinas students mirrored the state pattern of lower performance in math overall. On almost half (48%) of the data points in the table, Rio Gallinas students exceeded the AMO and performance has increased. As in reading, the staff is examining individual student patterns of growth to inform daily practice and long-term planning. Although this past year's scores were disappointing, the averages still exceeded many schools in the state.

2. STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE STANDARDS IDENTIFIED IN THE CURRENT CHARTER – as measured by the school’s selected Short-Cycle Assessments and/or other standards-based instruments

- List Student Academic Performance Standards contained in the current charter, the standards-based Short-Cycle Assessment or other standards-based instrument(s) used to measure student progress, the average annual data obtained using those assessments, the school’s statements of student progress towards the standards and the instructional modifications applied to enable students to progress towards achieving the standards in the next school year.
- Copy and paste additional sections as needed to include all measures.

Student Objective/ Performance Standard #1:

Students demonstrate high levels of academic achievement, appropriate for their grade level.

Standardized Short-Cycle Assessment or other Standards-based Instrument(s) Used

(Identify level of scores that indicate Proficiency):

MAPS data are used as a formative assessment with proficiency cut scores taken from the NWEA website established for New Mexico.

Grade 2: Reading -- 178 Math -- 177
 Grade 3: Reading -- 191 Math -- 191
 Grade 4: Reading -- 194 Math -- 202
 Grade 5: Reading -- 199 Math -- 212
 Grade 6: Reading -- 212 Math -- 222
 Grade 7: Reading -- 212 Math -- 229
 Grade 8: Reading -- 212 Math -- 231

Data:

Data reported in the following table are taken from the Spring administration of the test.

Grade	Average Scores			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
2	R-80%,M-80%	R-80%,M-70%	R-70%,M-90%	R- 55%,M-66%
3	R-50%,M-50%	R-50%,M-58%	R-50%,M-58%	R-85%,M-100%
4	R- 85%,M-71%	R-85%,M-71%	R-62%,M-64%	R-69%,M-38%
5	R-90%,M-60%	R-88%,M-60%	R-82%,M-63%	R-57%,M-50%
6	R-33%,M-28%	R-33%,M-35%	R-83%,M-83%	R-47%, M-65%
7	R-60%,M-67%	R-64%,M-57%	R-69%,M-50%	R-54%-M-69%
8	R-61%,M-38%	R-66%,M-58%	R-58%, M-58%	R-58%,M-81%

Statement of Student Progress:

Year 1: A comparison between the Fall and Spring administration would be misleading because the number of students tested in the Fall was far less than the spring and very few of those tested had scores for all areas. For example, no second graders were tested in the fall but 10 students had scores in the spring. Ten more third grade students has scores in the spring as well. Sixth through eighth grades had almost twice as many students tested in the spring.

Year 2: The following progress was noted between the Fall 08 and Spring 09 administration of the test.

Grade 2 – Reading from 14% to 80% and Math from 25% to 70%.

Grade 3 – Reading from 66% to 50% and Math from 66% to 58%.

Grade 4 – Reading from 66% to 85% and Math from 26% to 71%.

Grade 5 – Reading from 72% to 88% and Math from 72% to 60%.

Grade 6 – Reading from 26% to 33% and Math from 46% to 35%.

Grade 7 – Reading from 50% to 64% and Math from 28% to 57%.

Grade 8 – Reading from 76% to 66% and Math from 92% to 58%.

Although variations in growth scores can be dramatically impacted by one or two students in a small class, the overall trend is toward increase (9 of 14 data points), with some of the increases being large.

Year 3: The following progress was noted between the Fall 09 and Spring 10 administration of the test.

Grade 2 – Reading from 30% to 70% and Math from 30% to 90%.

Grade 3 – Reading from 64%% to 50% and Math from 43% to 58%.

Grade 4 – Reading from 75% to 62% and Math from 58% to 64%.

Grade 5 – Reading from 71% to 82% and Math from 41% to 63%.

Grade 6 – Reading from 75% to 83% and Math from 67% to 83%.

Grade 7 – Reading from 69% to 69% and Math from 38% to 50%.

Grade 8 – Reading from 77% to 58% and Math from 46% to 58%.

Although variations in growth scores can be dramatically impacted by one or two students in a small class, the overall trend is toward increase (12 of 14 data points), with some of the increases being large.

Year 4:- The following change was noted between the Fall 10 and Spring 11 administration of the test.

Grade 2 - Reading from 50% to 85% and Math from 70% to 66%.

Grade 3 – Reading from 57% to 85% and Math from 42% to 100%.

Grade 4 – Reading from 40% to 69% and Math from 20% to 38%.

Grade 5 – Reading from 57% to 50% and Math from 42% to 50%.

Grade 6 – Reading from 66% to 65% and Math from 42% to 40%.

Grade 7 – Reading from 81% to 69% and Math from 45% to 69%.

Grade 8 – Reading from 70% to 81% and Math from 47% to 62%.

Although variations in growth scores can be dramatically impacted by one or two students in a small class, the overall trend is toward increase (8 of 12 data points), with some of the increases being large.

3. OTHER STUDENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS IDENTIFIED IN THE CURRENT CHARTER

1. List Other Student Performance Standards contained in the current charter, the measure(s) used to assess student progress, the average annual data obtained using those measures, the school's statements of student progress towards the standard and the changes, if any, applied to enable students to progress towards achieving the standard in the next school year.
2. Copy and paste additional sections as needed to include all Other Student Performance Standards contained in the current charter.

Student Objective/ Performance Standard #1:

Students demonstrate an understanding of local ecology, culture, and history, and are able to make connections to regional, state, national, and global issues.

Measure(s) Used: The MAPS testing in Science was used as a measure to indicate growth in science. Student portfolios for each expeditionary unit were developed and utilized to determine progress toward standards and benchmarks but those do not yield scores that are easily aggregated for a grade level summary.

Data: Please note that there are no proficiency cut scores reported on the NWEA website for New Mexico in Science so an arbitrary proficiency level was established to examine growth. These were: 3rd above 180, 4th above 190, 5th above 200 and 6th, 7th and 8th above 210.

The notation of G for General Science and C for Concepts & Process will be used.

The information in the table is from the Spring administration of MAPS.

Grade	Average Annual Data			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
3	No scores		G -57%,C-57%	G-100%,C-85%
4	G-85%,C-85%	G-85%,C-85%	G-78%,C-71%	G- 69%, C-84%
5	G-70%,C-70%	G-60%,C-60%	G-69%,C-75%	G-50%, C-43%

6	G-33%,C-25%	G-33%,C-25%	G-58%,C-50%	G- 55%, C-35%
7	G-60%,C-67%	G-78%,C-78%	G-38%,C-55%	G-53%, C- 69%
8	G-61%,C-46%	G-72%,C-54%	G-58%,C-50%	G-75%, C-87%

Statement of Student Progress:

Year 1: A comparison between the Fall and Spring administration would be misleading because the number of students tested in the Fall was far less than the spring and very few of those tested had scores for all areas. For example, no second graders were tested in the fall but 10 students had scores in the spring. Ten more third grade students has scores in the spring as well. Sixth through eighth grades had almost twice as many students tested in the spring.

Year 2: The following progress was noted between the Fall 08 and Spring 09 administration of the test.

Grade 4 – General Science from 80% to 85% and Concepts & Processes from 60% to 85%.

Grade 5 – General Science from 72% to 60% and Concepts & Processes from 72% to 60%.

Grade 6 – General Science from 26% to 33% and Concepts & Processes from 33% to 25%.

Grade 7 – General Science from 50% to 78% and Concepts & Processes from 50% to 78%.

Grade 8 – General Science from 84% to 72% and Concepts & Processes from 76% to 54%.

Year 3: The following progress was noted between the Fall 09 and Spring 10 administration of the test.

Grade 3 – General Science from 71% to 57% and Concepts & Processes from 86% to 57%.

Grade 4 – General Science from 75% to 78% and Concepts & Processes from 75% to 71%.

Grade 5 – General Science from 69% to 71% and Concepts & Processes from 53% to 75%.

Grade 6 – General Science from 50% to 58% and Concepts & Processes from 50% to 50%.

Grade 7 – General Science from 50% to 38% and Concepts & Processes from 56% to 55%.

Grade 8 – General Science from 69% to 58% and Concepts & Processes from 46% to 50%.

Science appears to be an area with great variation in scores. Examination of the particular areas (biology, geology, etc.) included in the exam at each grade level as well as item presentation are being conducted. Since the students' writing skills are well-developed overall and the expeditionary units employ a hands-on, reality-based methodology, it is more than likely a problem with the match between curriculum and assessment.

Year 4: The following progress was noted between the Fall 10 and Spring 11 administration of the test.

Grade 3 – General Science from 85% to 100% and Concepts & Processes from 71% to 85%.

Grade 4 – General Science from 60% to 69% and Concepts & Processes from 53% to 84%.

Grade 5 – General Science from 57% to 50% and Concepts & Processes from 57% to 43%.

Grade 6 – General Science from 47% to 55% and Concepts & Processes from 57% to 35%.

Grade 7 – General Science from 54% to 53% and Concepts & Processes from 54% to 69%.

Grade 8 – General Science from 58% to 75% and Concepts & Processes from 58% to 87%.

Science scores, overall, are good with the majority of students poised to score in the proficient range on the SBA tests. The staff continues to examine the curriculum and the thematic based units to determine whether there is maximum alignment with the content of the SBA tests. A school can be doing an amazing job of teaching science but if the content doesn't mirror the content being tested, the scores will not reflect the full range of student learning.

4. OTHER GOALS/ PERFORMANCE STANDARDS IDENTIFIED IN THE CURRENT CHARTER

1. List any other Goals/Performance Standards contained in the current charter, the measure(s) used to assess progress, the data obtained using those measures, the school's statements of progress towards the goal/standard and the changes, if any, applied to enable the school to progress towards achieving the standard.
2. Copy and paste additional sections as needed.

Goal/Performance Standard #1:
<p>The school is a safe environment in which students demonstrate growth and self-knowledge, intellectually, emotionally, and physically.</p>
Measure(s) Used: Refocus Referrals, Fighting Incidences
EL Implementation Review
Data: School Year
2009.2010 45 Refocus referrals 2 physical fights
2010.2011 25 refocus referrals 2 physical fights
2010-2011 EL Implementations Review School Culture and Character: 3.3 out 4
Statement of Progress:
<p>With the implementation of restorative discipline practices, Rio Gallinas School has seen a significant improvement in the school culture. More students and parents are actively participating in decision-making and school events. There have been remarkably few incidences of physical fighting amongst students. The refocus referrals have dropped.</p>
Changes Applied, if any: Restorative Discipline Practices

Goal/Performance Standard #2:

Students develop skills of collaboration, community participation, and service

Measure(s) Used:

EL Implementation Review, Expedition Plans

Data: School Year

2010-2011 EL Implementations Review School Culture and Character: 3.3 out 4

2010-2011 EL Implementations Review Learning Expeditions: 3.5 out 4

In Expeditionary Learning, the teaching strategies (reader's, writer's, and building background knowledge workshops) include collaboration in each lesson. Each day begins with a crew that focuses on collaborative learning and sharing.

All Learning Expeditions include community participation and a service component. Each class has two learning expeditions per year.

Statement of Progress: On the implementation review, we scored the highest marks in six years.

Changes Applied, if any: We have implemented more EL training for the staff.

C. Fiscal Management

The Charter School Act provides:

A charter may be suspended, revoked, or not renewed by the chartering authority if the chartering authority determines that the charter school failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management, 22-8B-12F (3) NMSA 1978.

1. Provide a clear, concise narrative statement demonstrating that the school has competently and effectively managed its finances, including evidence from annual budgets, as well as, findings of independent financial audits.
2. Complete the following chart by providing any negative findings from independent audits for each fiscal year, and how the school responded.

AUDIT REPORT SUMMARY

Identify information from the <u>Component Unit Section</u> of the Annual Audit specific to the charter school.			
Year	Total # of Findings	Nature of Findings	School's Response
4	0		
3	1	Building owned by staff	
2	1	Building owned by staff	
1	1	Building owned by staff	See below
Planning Year	N/A		

3. Identify any changes made to fiscal management practices as a result of audit findings.

The complaint of the auditor was that the School leased the building as a sole-source provider, rather than going out to bid, and that the lease was with an employee. The School responded to that finding in these ways:

- a) the Governing Council prevented the Administrator from participating in any way in the acquisition of the lease
- b) the Governing Council established the criteria for a building lease bid, issued a Request for Sealed Bid, and selected the successful bid and signing the lease
- c) the Governing Council determined that no bid from the owners (who were the employees) would be accepted if received

This process is in complete compliance with all aspects of the Purchasing Act and all other statute.

D. Compliance Review

The Charter School Act provides:

A charter may be suspended, revoked, or not renewed by the chartering authority if the chartering authority determines that the charter school...violated any provision of law from which the charter school was not specifically exempted. 22-8B-12F (4) NMSA 1978.

Answer the following questions

Civil Rights & Special Populations

3. Was the charter school given a citation by any State or Federal agency for noncompliance with any statute or regulation over the past four years? Yes No

If yes, describe the nature of the noncompliance and how the matter was resolved.

4. Were any complaints filed with Public Education Department or the federal Office of Civil Rights over the past four years? Yes No
5. Have any special education due process complaints been filed against the school over the past four years? Yes No

If yes, how many complaints were filed?

Describe how each "due process" complaint was resolved.

6. Has the school provided a Home Language Survey for incoming students over the past four years? Yes No
7. Has the school tested students for English Language Proficiency using the state-required assessment over the past four years? Yes No

Governance

1. Over the past four years, have the governing body meeting minutes been available for public review? Yes No

2. Has any governing body member received any compensation from the school over the past four years? Yes No

If yes, describe the nature and amount of such compensation.

3. Did the governing body receive regular written reports from the school leadership in regards to key indicators of the school's progress? Yes No

4. Did the governing body conduct formal evaluations of the school's management?
 Yes No

The school's management was evaluated as part of the evaluation of the head administrator.

5. Did the governing body conduct annual evaluations of the school's head administrator performance? Yes No

6. Has the governing body developed and implemented a comprehensive conflict of interest policy and a code of ethics? Yes No

Has the governing body consistently abided by them through the term of the school's charter?

Yes No

7. Has the school instituted a process for dealing with complaints, made that policy clear to all stakeholders, and followed that policy, including acting in a timely fashion, on such complaints? Yes No

8. Has the governing body abided by its by-laws, including, but not limited to, provisions regarding member elections, removals, and filling of vacancies? Yes No

One vacancy occurred late in the year, and we extended our 60 day limit a few weeks until the June elections were held.

9. Has the governing body put in place a set of governing body policies which are reviewed regularly and updated as needed? Yes No

10. Since it became a requirement, has the governing body participated in the mandatory governing body training? Yes No

Administration

1. Did the administration develop annual plans derived from the school needs assessment, based on identified instructional weaknesses, teacher interests, and analysis of student performance outcomes? Yes No
2. Has the administration developed priorities that are responsive to and consistent with achieving the school's academic goals and that address deficiencies which are communicated to the school's instructional staff? Yes No
3. Did the school provide support and training to mentor novice teachers? Yes No (first-year mentorship program?)
4. Have the administration and the governing body put into place the required Public Education Department policies? Yes No

Curriculum

1. Is the school's curriculum aligned with New Mexico Standards and core academic subjects contain the essential knowledge and skills that are aligned with and as rigorous as the relevant state performance standards? Yes No
2. If applicable, have all courses required for Graduation been taught over the past four years?
 Yes No N/A
3. If applicable, does the school have an active Dual-Credit agreement(s) with higher education institution(s)? Yes No N/A

Licensure

1. Has the Director/Principal/Administrator held an administrative license over the past four years? Yes No
2. Have all teachers held the appropriate license(s) for the classes that they have taught over the past four years? Yes No
3. Have background check authorizations and results been on file for all staff members who have had contact with children over the past four years? Yes No

E-Occupancy

1. Has the school maintained an E-Occupancy certificate for its facilities over the past four years?
 Yes No

II. PETITION OF SUPPORT FROM EMPLOYEES

A certified petition in support of the charter school renewing its charter status signed by not less than sixty-five (65) percent of the employees in the charter school.

Include, as an appendix, a certified petition from not less than sixty-five percent (65%) of the **employees** of the charter school that indicates their support of the renewal.

In Appendix

III. PETITION OF SUPPORT FROM HOUSEHOLDS

A certified petition in support of the charter school renewing its charter status signed by not less than seventy-five (75) percent of the households whose children were enrolled in the charter school as identified in the school's 3rd reporting period of the fiscal year prior to the expiration of the charter.

Include, as an appendix, a certified petition in support of the charter school renewing its charter status from not less than seventy-five percent (75%) of the **households** whose children were enrolled in the charter school as identified in the school's 3rd reporting period report of the fiscal year prior to the expiration of the charter.

In appendix.

IV. FACILITIES

A description of the charter school facilities and assurances that the facilities are in compliance with the requirements of Section 22-8B-4.2 NMSA 1978

Provide a letter from The Public Schools Facilities Authority (PSFA) indicating that the school facility meets the requirements of Section 22-8B-4.2 NMSA 1978.

In Appendix.

V. TERM OF RENEWAL

A statement of the term of the renewal requested, if less than five (5) years. If a charter school renewal application does not include a statement of the term of the renewal, it will be assumed that renewal is sought for a term of five (5) years.

State the term of renewal requested if less than five (5) years.

Five Years.

VI. APPENDICES

Provide each of the following documents as an appendix:

- Petition of Support from Employees;
- Petition of Support from Households.
- Letter from PSFA certifying Adequacy

RIO GALLINAS SCHOOL

PART B

PROPOSED CHANGE FORM

(This document specifies the changes requested for the renewal term of the charter.)

PART B-PROPOSED CHANGE FORM

Instructions

As part of the renewal application process, changes from the current charter may be requested for approval by the Public Education Commission. Any requested change stated in the Proposed Change Form (page B-3) should be incorporated into the appropriate section or subsection of the Renewal Charter (Part C). A rationale for the change must be provided. A separate Proposed Change Form should be completed for each proposed change to be made.

Complete the Proposed Change Form as follows:

- **SECTION AND/OR SUBSECTION TO BE CHANGED:** Use the Section and/or Subsection Headings from PART C--The Renewal Charter Application to identify where the requested change is located in your renewal charter.
For example, if the grade levels the charter will serve is a proposed change for the renewal term, the first box should read as follows: "V. Educational Plan, B. Educational Program, 2. Grade Levels." The corresponding page number(s) from the Renewal Charter would then be indicated in the column to the right.

EXAMPLE

CHANGE #1-Section and/or Subsection to be Changed	Page Number(s) From the Renewal Charter (PART C)
V. Educational Plan, B. Educational Program, 2. Grade Levels	Pages 47-48 (PART C)

- **A SUMMARY OF THE CHANGE AS STATED IN THE RENEWAL CHARTER:** Clearly summarize the change to your current charter that will become effective July 1, 2012, if approved by the PEC.
- **RATIONALE FOR THE CHANGE(S):** The Rationale for the Change should contain a statement of need for the change that will be incorporated into the Renewal Charter.

CHANGE #1-Section and/or Subsection to be Changed	Page Number(s) From the Renewal Charter (PART C)
No substantive changes.	

**RÍO GALLINAS SCHOOL
OF ECOLOGY AND THE ARTS**

**PART C
THE RENEWAL CHARTER**

Directions

Part C–The Renewal Charter requires the applicant to write the school's proposed Renewal Charter using the sections, subsections, and prompts as a guide.

The completed Renewal Charter will be reviewed relative to:

- (1) Compliance;
- (2) Clarity; and
- (3) Completeness.

RÍO GALLINAS SCHOOL CHARTER RENEWAL
I. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Sections and Subsections	Page Number
I. Table of Contents	C-3
II. Renewal Charter Cover Sheet/Abstract	C-4
III. Statements of Assurance from Governing Body Members	C-6
IV. Charter School Mission And Statement of Need	C-7
V. Educational Plan	C-13
A. Curriculum Framework	C-13
B. Educational Program	C-77
C. Student Performance Expectations	C-78
D. Plan For Evaluating Student Performance	C-80
E. Special Populations	C-92
VI. Financial Plan	C-100
Fiscal Management	C-100
VII. Governance/Management Plan	C-105
A. Governance/Management Structure	C-105
B. Description of The Governing Body	C-106
C. Partnerships (if applicable)	C-108
D. School Organizational Structure	C-109
E. Employee Relations	C-110
F. Student Enrollment Procedures And Discipline Policy	C-111
G. Facilities	C-113
H. Other Student Services	C-114
VIII. Requirements Waivers	C-115
IX. Appendices	C-117

II. RENEWAL CHARTER COVER SHEET

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of Charter School: Río Gallinas School

Name of Principal: Catherine Sánchez-Praiswater

Daytime Tel: (505) 454-8687 Fax: (505) 454-8688

Alternate Tel: () - E-mail: director@riogallinasschool.org

Name of Governing Council President Kim Kirkpatrick

Daytime Tel: (505) 454-0598 Fax: () -

Alternate Tel: () - kirk@newmexico.com

Name of District Authorizer: West Las Vegas Schools

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Grade span at full enrollment K-8

Total number of students at full enrollment (enrollment cap) 125

Complete the chart

School Year		Grade Levels
First Year	2012-13	K-8
Second Year	2013-14	K-8
Third Year	2014-15	K-8
Fourth Year	2015-16	K-8
Fifth Year	2016-17	K-8

PART C—THE RENEWAL CHARTER

Abstract of Renewal Charter School

Provide an abstract (summary) in narrative form that succinctly describes the charter school. Include in the narrative, the school's location, grade levels, enrollment, mission, and educational philosophy and approach. This abstract is to be limited to one page. Do not include information that is not included in the renewal charter.

Río Gallinas School of Ecology and the Arts is named after the local river which flows through the town and touches on the most important aspects of our philosophy – place-based and outdoor education, community involvement, and local history. The school culture at RGS will make education not just a priority, but a fun, integral part of everyday life by incorporating the people and activities familiar to our students while broadening their perspectives on the ever-encroaching global community at our doorsteps.

Río Gallinas School of Ecology and the Arts will serve a culturally diverse population of kindergarten through 8th grade students in the Las Vegas and surrounding areas by providing a culture of academic excellence, service, and caring, and a safe, open, and creative environment which respects each student's abilities and honors each student's interests. RGS will address these needs by providing smaller class sizes; incorporating Expeditionary Learning for thematic, project-based service-learning experiences; stressing ecological education; implementing Spanish language learning; and enhancing community involvement. The school will serve 125 children in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Our expeditions will foster life-relevant connections for children through self-discovery and responsible participation in the local and global community, and will build on and develop their natural desire to learn and their abilities to think critically, reflect upon their world and promote positive change in their community. We believe that all children are naturally endowed with the desire to learn and our goal is to foster that desire with a fun, interactive, creative learning environment with the expectation that our students will succeed in all academic subjects and that this love of learning will take them through high school graduation and onto college.

With Expeditionary Learning as our partner, carefully selected teachers will stay engaged in their evolving lesson plans and project-based learning classroom strategies. Teachers will work as a team to plan and to share instructional responsibilities. Involved and interested teachers will make for involved and interested students. Add this to small classroom sizes where students will receive more individual attention and RGS makes for a culture of success.

Las Vegas is a diverse community of talented individuals. RGS will actively seek the community's involvement in several ways. One way is by bringing those talents to the students by inviting members of the community to share their individual expertise, including agricultural, language, fine art, music, writing, and traditional crafts among others – subjects that typically receive less attention in mainstream schools. Additionally, students will be involved in service-learning, which will involve determining community needs and implementing change. All Expeditionary Learning projects will culminate in a community presentation. RGS has partnerships with the United World College, Highlands University, and the West Las Vegas Schools.

With children actively involved in learning, participating in Expeditionary Learning projects that are meaningful to them and working together and with their community to complete these projects using two languages, in a small, nurturing, child-focused environment, RGS will foster both quality education and emotional and social development.

PART C—THE RENEWAL CHARTER

IV. CHARTER SCHOOL MISSION AND STATEMENT OF NEED

The Charter School Mission Statement should communicate the essence of the school to stakeholders and to the public and should provide the focal point to which all other sections of the school's plans align. In addition, the charter school and its mission must be in the best interest of the students and community that it serves.

1. Provide a clear **Mission Statement** for the school that includes the following components:
 - Who the school seeks to serve;
 - What the school seeks to accomplish;
 - What methods the school will use.

Statutory & Regulatory Reference(s): _
NMSA 1978 Section 22-8B-8A
6.80.4.9A NMAC

Río Gallinas School of Ecology and the Arts will serve a culturally diverse population of kindergarten through 8th grade students by providing a culture of academic excellence, service, and caring, and a safe, open, and creative environment which respects each student's abilities and honors each student's interests. Our Expeditionary Learning academic program will fully meet state and national standards, and will emphasize service learning, place-based, ecological and arts education, and Spanish language learning. Our expeditions will foster life-relevant connections for children through self-discovery and responsible participation in the local and global community, and will build on and develop their natural desire to learn and their abilities to think critically, reflect upon their world and promote positive change in their community.

PART C–THE RENEWAL CHARTER

2. Provide a response to the following question: **How will the school know if it is achieving its mission** as stated above? The response must include school-level or organizational goals that are measurable, directly support the Mission Statement, and written as SMART goals. *(NOTE: Specific measurable student performance expectations [student goals] should be addressed in section V, Educational Plan.)*

Statutory & Regulatory Reference(s):
 NMSA 1978 Section 22-8B-8B
 6.80.4.9A & B NMAC

GOAL #1 - To ensure students are receiving compelling, life-relevant curriculum aligned to NM standards and benchmarks and the mission of the school, and that is based on Expeditionary Learning Core Practices & Benchmarks, RGS will score an average of 3.0 out of 4 on the EL Implementation Review conducted annually and independently by the EL School Designer. Additional performance indicators and measures are listed for each supporting goal. (Refer to the Expeditionary Learning Core Practices and Benchmarks Beta Version in Appendix G)

Performance Indicator	Alignment with EL Model	Measure of Performance Indicator
Expeditions will be aligned with standards.	I. Compelling Curriculum: 1. Mapping skills and content (A, B, C) 2. Designing learning expeditions (A 1, 5; B 1) 4. Selecting case studies (B 1, 5) V. Dynamic Leadership 6. Aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment (A, B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2015, RGS will have compiled a legacy of 15 learning expeditions that are aligned with standards-based Scope and Sequence and electronically documented in EL Commons.
Learning Expeditions will feature experts, service learning, and fieldwork.	I. Compelling Curriculum 2. Designing learning expeditions (B 6) 4. Selecting case studies (B 2) 6. Incorporating fieldwork, experts, and service learning (A, B, C) IV. Compassionate Culture and Character 6. Engaging the community in the life of the school (E)	(1) Each expedition will include experts, multiple fieldwork experiences, and a service-learning component, documented in Lesson Plans in EL Commons
RGS will teach reading and writing across the disciplines. Core classes will include literacy targets as part of instruction.	I. Compelling Curriculum 2. Designing learning expeditions (A 4) 4. Selecting case studies (A 2; B 4) II. Engaging Instruction 4. Teaching reading across the disciplines (A – D) 5. Teaching writing across the disciplines (A – D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By October, 2011, 100% of teaching staff and director will be trained in the readers’ and writers’ workshop models as documented by in-service sign-in sheets Teachers will reflect literacy targets in Core course STA (standards-targets-assessments) plans and syllabus.

PART C—THE RENEWAL CHARTER

Performance Indicator	Alignment with EL Model	Measure of Performance Indicator
RGS will teach inquiry-based math, incorporating STEM (Science, Technology Engineering Mathematics) and other applied projects.	<p>I. Compelling Curriculum 2. Designing learning expeditions (A 4) 4. Selecting case studies (A 2; B 4)</p> <p>II. Engaging Instruction 6. Teaching math across the disciplines (A, E) 8. Teaching science (A, B)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STEM projects and complex problems will be incorporated into the math instructional sequence documented in semester STA plans.
RGS will teach inquiry based Social Studies & Science	<p>I. Compelling Curriculum 2. Designing learning expeditions (A 4) 4. Selecting case studies (A 2; B 4)</p> <p>II. Engaging Instruction 7. Teaching social studies (A, B)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry-based lesson plans will be documented for EL Implementation Review. • Experts, fieldwork, and service learning will be integral components to the Social Studies and Science expedition plans and documented through lesson plans and learning targets.
RGS will promote learning in and through the arts. Visual arts, movement, drama and music are used to make sense of concepts in the various disciplines.	<p>I. Compelling Curriculum 2. Designing learning expeditions (A 4) 4. Selecting case studies (A 2; B 4)</p> <p>II. Engaging Instruction 9. Teaching the arts (A – C)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning expeditions will include at least one arts-based project per learning expedition as documented through in lesson plans and learning targets.
Instructors will use multiple sources of formative and summative data (NWEA MAPS, SBA, writing assessment, teacher-made tests, etc) to improve student instruction. These data will be used to ensure equity.	<p>V. Dynamic Leadership 5. Collecting and using data (A – C)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through Professional Learning Communities, teachers will assist in maintaining segments of the EPSS (Education Plan for Student Success) to document student performance, achievement, and strategies to support student success. • Students performing below proficiency levels will receive targeted differentiated instruction and additional resources to support achievement as documented through SATs and lesson plans.

PART C–THE RENEWAL CHARTER

GOAL #2. To determine that an on-going safe, open, creative environment is being provided, the K – 8th grades will have an office referral rate for student discipline of below 10% and a suspension rate of below 2%, annually. By the end of the 2014-2015 year, the EL Implementation Review score in the domain of Compassionate Character and Culture will be a 4 out of possible 4.

Performance Indicator	Alignment with EL Model	Measure of Performance Indicator
RGS will use specific rituals, traditions, and keystone experiences to build an identity and high-expectations of community minded excellence.	IV. Compassionate Culture and Character 1. Building a community of learning (B) 3. Establishing structures for knowing students well (A, B)	A) Annually, RGS will document the keystone experiences it traditionally offers such as of Celebrations of Learning, Student-Led Conferences, Whole School Crew meetings, restorative justice circles, and public presentations. B) Through a monthly survey, students and staff will reflect on emotional literacy targets. C) Through a semester survey, parent will reflect on emotional literacy targets.

PART C—THE RENEWAL CHARTER

Goal #3. RGS is a community school that invites and inspires community and family participation. Its students contribute to the community as active citizens and participants. Parents and guardians are considered equal partners in the education of their children. Río Gallinas School sees families as valuable resources, competent, and essential to their children’s educational experiences. Parents and guardians are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the classroom activities. The school design includes family-focused assistance and workshops in how to work with students at home to strengthen skills and forge active links with the school.

By the end of each year families will demonstrate an average of 90% participation in keystone school experiences, such as Student-led Conferences, Celebrations of Learning, monthly meetings. (Participation will be determined by the attendance of at least one family member/friend or guardian at these events.)

Additional performance indicators will help to measure RGS progress in building and improving community:

Performance Indicator	Alignment with EL Model	Measure of Performance Indicator
Parents will be active agents involved in their child’s educational experience.	IV. Compassionate Culture and Character 6. Engaging the community in the life of the school (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families will volunteer an average of 10 hours per school year as documented through parent/guardian timesheets • Attendance at two or more monthly parent/guardian meetings • Attendance at Celebrations of Learning • Attendance at Student-Led Conference
RGS will prioritize communication with families	IV. Compassionate Culture and Character 6. Engaging the community in the life of the school (C, D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-Weekly newsletter • Teachers will provide monthly updates to family through progress sheet • Annually, based on the family survey, there will be 85 percent satisfaction rating.
RGS will be a participatory educational presence in the community.	IV. Compassionate Culture and Character 6. Engaging the community in the life of the school (E)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGS will sponsor at least two community events per year.

PART C—THE RENEWAL CHARTER

3. Describe how the charter school is in the best interest of the students and community that it serves. Include a demographic description of the student and community population within which the school is located.

Statutory & Regulatory Reference(s):
6.80.4.9P NMAC

Las Vegas New Mexico is a unique City in New Mexico. Situated in a wonderful Valley in the San Miguel County, this city has both Victorian and Spanish Influences throughout it's architecture. It is well known that part of the diversity of the city is due to the Train that ran through it making it a very popular destination for travelers in the early part of the century.

The Las Vegas area is better served to have a choice in public school.

Río Gallinas School of Ecology and the Arts, structured within an EL model that shows success with at-risk and rural populations, is in the best interest of the community and the students it serves by offering another, research supported option to families whose children may not thrive in the traditional classroom or model. Expeditionary Learning, with its emphasis in best practices, assists Río Gallinas School in providing a quality public education to these students who often "slide through the cracks."

Our student base, while adhering to the open admission policy requirements, historically includes students:

- Who have diverse backgrounds
- Who have not been successful in the traditional classroom
- Who have not been challenged in the traditional classroom
- That have special education needs
- That need the support of a personalized "community centered" environment
- That experience poverty
- Whose IEPs include enhancement and/or double exceptionalities
- That will be first generation college students
- Who have been retained and need support and motivation
- That need a therapeutic environment to develop character & behavioral management skills
- That are new to the public school system after a home schooling experience

RGS has met Adequate Yearly Progress goals in math and reading for six of its seven years.

PART C--THE RENEWAL CHARTER

V. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

The educational plan should describe who the school expects to serve; what the students will achieve, how they will achieve it; and how the school will evaluate performance. It should provide a clear picture of what a student who attends the school will experience in terms of educational climate, structure, materials, schedule, assessment and outcomes.

A) CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks and Performance Standards provide the content requirements and expectations for students in all public schools. The description of the curriculum should provide a sense not only of what the school teaches/will teach but also of how and why. (NOTE: Refer to the Glossary of Terms Used in the Renewal Application, page vi, to assist in the completion of this section.) The following components of the curriculum framework must be addressed:

1. Philosophy and Approach to Instruction

- Describe the educational philosophy and curricular approach of the school.
- Describe how the educational philosophy and/or approach aligns with the school's mission and student needs.

Statutory & Regulatory Reference(s):
NMSA 1978 Section 22-8B-8C
6.80.4.9C(1) & (4) NMAC

Educational Philosophy:

The Río Gallinas School approach to learning recognizes that students come to our school not as "blank slates," but as individuals who already have years of meaningful, diverse learning experiences in place, ready to be built upon. Students at Río Gallinas School learn to think critically, recognize relationships, analyze content, and apply knowledge, to use technology appropriately, to make meaning from their learning, and to express understanding through their own artistic visions.

Río Gallinas School recognizes students come with diverse abilities and learning styles and can learn and achieve at high levels, through participation in an literacy-focused, arts- and science-rich, family-centered environment that continually encourages work of the highest quality. Students compete, not with each other, but with their own best work, always striving to do better than they have ever done. They create multiple drafts of important, carefully crafted work that then becomes part of their portfolio of achievement.

Río Gallinas School of Ecology and the Arts (RGS) ensures academic excellence for RGS children and facilitates a deep understanding of the diversity of the world and their responsibility to it. RGS is an integral part of our community, inviting artisans, scientists, farmers, and family to be an active part of the learning experience. RGS has adopted an educational philosophy consisting of the following four pillars aligned to the school's mission:

PART C--THE RENEWAL CHARTER

- Through **place-based and ecological learning about their local bio-system**, students experience the interdependency of humans and nature and the necessity of keeping an ecological balance. To engage with the world and deepen a love for learning, students should study the needs of their human and natural community and come up with solutions to actively meet those needs.
- Students develop self-confidence and expertise by implementing **service learning projects**, and sharing the results in cumulative public presentations.
- In addition to the local bio-system, students also engage with local culture and history and broaden their perspective and experience with the world using the techniques of **teaching through the arts**.
- Students are continually taught about the ever-growing global community around them, both how other cultures and environments are similar to their own as well as how they differ, encouraging tolerance for all people and respect for the planet. And **integration of the Spanish language learning**, the language dominant in New Mexico for 400 years, reinforces these ethics and is essential to connecting to the local community.

Curricular Approach:

Río Gallinas School's curriculum revolves around a carefully structured series of Learning Expeditions, interspersed with periods of concentrated skill-building and exploratory experiences. This is a relevant, real-world-focused type of investigative learning that is rooted in the arts (including dance, visual arts, music and drama), and integrated with the sciences and other content areas (including investigation of ecological systems and cultural resources with emphasis on Las Vegas and the surrounding area). Every part of the curriculum has been aligned to the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks for each grade level.

At RGS, the approach to the curriculum and student learning is that students learn best when they are active participants in the learning process and not passive receivers of information. Because of this, we have designed our curriculum and approach to instruction around the tenets of the constructivist approach to education and Kurt Hahn's Expeditionary Learning model.

The basic principles and approach of Expeditionary Learning (EL) are founded in the philosophy of the constructivist approach to the education of children and Kurt Hahn's foundation for EL. Both of these approaches to the education of children fully support the philosophy of RGS.

Within the constructivist framework, there exists a few basic beliefs:

- Constructivist teachers seek and value students' points of view. Knowing what students think about concepts helps teachers formulate classroom lessons and differentiate instruction on the basis of students' needs and interests.
- Constructivist teachers structure lessons to challenge students' suppositions. All students, come to the classroom with life experiences that shape their views about how their world works. When educators permit students to construct knowledge that challenges their current suppositions, learning occurs. Only through asking students what they think they know, and why they think they know it, the teachers and the students are able to confront their suppositions.
- Constructivist teachers recognize that students must attach relevance to the curriculum. As students see relevance in their daily activities, their interest in learning grows.

PART C—THE RENEWAL CHARTER

- Constructivist teachers structure lessons around big ideas, not small bits of information. Exposing students to wholes first helps them determine the relevant parts as they refine their understanding of the wholes. (Top-Down teaching strategy)
- Constructivist teachers assess student learning in the context of daily classroom investigations, not as separate events. Students demonstrate their knowledge every day in a variety of ways. Defining understanding as only that which is capable of being measured by paper-and-pencil assessments administered under strict security perpetuates false and counterproductive myths about academia, intelligence, creativity, accountability, and knowledge.

Kurt Hahn's founding influence on Outward Bound Wilderness, U.S.A., and Expeditionary Learning were derived from his outline of the 6 declines in modern youth (think 1940s):

- Fitness
- Initiative and Enterprise
- Memory and Imagination
- Skill and care
- Self-discipline
- Compassion (the worst decline, according to Hahn)

He envisioned the four antidotes to these declines to be fitness training, rescue service, expeditions (long, challenging, endurance tasks), and projects (relying on crafts or manual skills). Hahn's goal was the education of the whole child (Miner & Boldt, 1981).

Based on Hahn's educational philosophy, EL developed the following 10 Design Principles that serve as the foundation of curriculum and instruction at an EL school (Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound, 2003).

1. THE PRIMACY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

Learning happens best with emotion, challenge and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students undertake tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. A teacher's primary task is to help students overcome their fears and discover they can do more than they think they can.

2. THE HAVING OF WONDERFUL IDEAS

Teaching in Expeditionary Learning schools fosters curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.

3. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING

Learning is both a personal process of discovery and a social activity. Everyone learns both individually and as part of a group. Every aspect of an Expeditionary Learning school encourages both children and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.

4. EMPATHY AND CARING

Learning is fostered best in communities where students' and teachers' ideas are respected and where there is mutual trust. Learning groups are small in Expeditionary Learning schools, with a caring adult looking after the progress and acting as an advocate for each child. Older students mentor younger ones, and students feel physically and emotionally safe.

PART C—THE RENEWAL CHARTER

5. SUCCESS AND FAILURE

All students need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. But it is also important for students to learn from their failures, to persevere when things are hard, and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.

6. COLLABORATION AND COMPETITION

Individual development and group development are integrated so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear. Students are encouraged to compete, not against each other, but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.

7. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students investigate and value their different histories and talents as well as those of other communities and cultures. Schools and learning groups are heterogeneous.

8. THE NATURAL WORLD

A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the earth and of future generations.

9. SOLITUDE AND REFLECTION

Students and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas. They also need to exchange their reflections with other students and with adults.

10. SERVICE AND COMPASSION

We are crew, not passengers. Students and teachers are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others, and one of an Expeditionary Learning school's primary functions is to prepare students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service.

The curricular methods that emerge from the constructivist and Outward Bound foundation support the uniquely place-based educational philosophy proposed by RGS and are founded in the best practices of education. The Expeditionary Learning (EL) method of curricular design and implementation provides a clearinghouse of resources derived from the best teaching methods as elucidated in the research on teaching and learning from academia.

The EL framework focuses on learning that is relevant, engaging, and quality-based. It is a proven model of education that engages students and puts them at the center of their own education. Service and outdoor learning are at its core, while teachers also focus on literacy skills, quantitative reasoning, and scientific inquiry. The innovative program enhances teacher practices along with increasing student motivation using extensive staff development, character growth programs, improved school climate, and active learning pedagogy. With highly trained teachers creating engaging, rigorous curriculum, students are invested in their learning, less likely to have discipline problems and perform at a high academic level.

The comprehensive resource base provided by the Expeditionary Learning network is a valuable tool for educators attempting to truly instantiate a reform approach to educational praxis. From the use of protocols and differentiation of instruction to facilitate equity, reader's and writer's workshops in all content areas, the workshop model of lesson planning, to project-based learning, Expeditionary Learning provides an holistic resource combined with the continued support of exemplary professional renewal opportunities for teachers. The best practices of teaching advocated for and supported by the

PART C—THE RENEWAL CHARTER

EL model are integrated into a clear plan for the expression of learning through authentic projects that serve the local community.

The project-based approach to learning is crucial to fulfilling the mission of authentic learning to meet the needs of diverse students in a rural community. Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) outlined the 7 essential features that determine quality implementation of project-based teaching and learning.

- Create a need to know.
- A driving question.
- Student voice and choice
- A focus on 21st century skills.
- Inquiry and innovation.
- Feedback and revision.
- A publicly presented product.

All seven of these criteria are met with full implementation of the EL model; and, most importantly, students are motivated to learn and achieve.

Alignment With Mission And Needs:

The educational philosophy chosen by RGS supports the mission of the school and the needs of students primarily because it addresses the student's diverse backgrounds and learning styles.

Spanish language instruction acknowledges the language and culture of Las Vegas area and the importance of retaining language to ensure health of a community. The integration of the arts supports learning through many modalities. Through an adventure program and the focus on ecological education, children will be able to explore the natural world that surrounds them every day. And service integrated in authentic ways into the curriculum will function to meet real community needs. The learning expeditions and products will be designed to tap into student interests and will be authentic to Las Vegas and global community.

The goal of RGS is to educate the children of the Las Vegas about where they live in order to instill a connection to and pride in place. Hopefully, this connection to place will decrease the mobility of the population and students who leave to continue their education will return and contribute to building the economic capacity of Las Vegas.

Linda Darling-Hammond (2008) noted that to meet the needs of today's economic reality, and that of tomorrow, students need learning environments that promote the exploration of authentic situations and problems. Expeditionary Learning provides the curricular approach to support the creation of these learning environments – meeting exactly the mission of RGS and the needs of Las Vegas students in an educational milieu that has transformed to keep up with the changing nature of what people must know

Sciences: Place-Based and Ecological Education

Ecology: the study of the relations between organisms and their natural environment.

The sciences, especially the environmental sciences, bring learning to life for RGS students. The study of local ecology and sustainable systems encourages students to discover universal concepts and issues

PART C—THE RENEWAL CHARTER

within the context of their immediate surroundings. It gives meaning to abstract issues and allows students to grow beyond their initial limits into understanding about the world around them. The environmental intelligence (Howard Gardner, "Frames of Mind" and subsequent work) serves as an entry point into learning for students who encounter challenges in the traditional verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical intelligences.

The connection between experiential education and the local environment is indisputable. *A cornerstone of RGS school is the active exploration and critical understanding of the complex web of life within which we find ourselves. Students discover knowledge of place within the stories, the multi-generational experiences, the biological and investigative sciences, the histories and cultural artifacts, the land and the people.* Within a place-based approach to education in combination with rigorous academic projects, children can feel that they have an active role in achieving local ecological and cultural sustainability. An important goal in a time in which many children feel helpless in the face of what appear to be mounting ecological and social challenges.

The local area of Las Vegas is, historically, an agricultural economy with a reliance on acequia-based irrigation. In a community continuing efforts toward sustainable agriculture and water conservation, the resources for ecological educational experiences within a high altitude biome abound. Grounding of curriculum in a sense of place and purpose leads to a dedication to authentic fieldwork experiences, the reliance on local experts as "text," and the necessity of a collaborative learning environment between students as well as students and teachers.

RGS is also fortunate enough to exist within close proximity a Pecos Wilderness Area. As with EL, we believe that outdoor education is integral to a happy and healthy child. Through ecologically-based lessons, relevant to the local, rich bio-system, students will gain not only a unique intelligence about the natural world but a significant respect for it.

"All studies arise from aspects of the one earth and the life lived upon it" (Dewey, 1915, p. 91).

Smith and Williams (1999) outline the five key features of a place-based, ecological curriculum:

- There are practical outdoor experiences to foster an ethic of care.
- Direct experiences outside the classroom are as important as the content experienced in the classroom.
- Curriculum is multidisciplinary.
- The curriculum requires participatory action or service to the local community.
- The curriculum highlights the role of place in the self and the larger community.

Incorporating the uniqueness of the Las Vegas area into curriculum in order to meet state and national standards in authentic ways bolsters RGS' orientation to the principles of a place-based curriculum. At RGS, learning about the natural world through explorations in the Pecos Wilderness and other areas furthers the emphasis on the ecology of the area.

As examples for the linking of ecological studies with literacy and art, students at Río Gallinas participate in multiple scientific study opportunities:

- Directly explore, observe, and document the diversity and biological interplay of the area, and create standards-based artistic responses integrating this learning.
- Identify, interview and document traditional knowledge, histories, and stories of community members as they relate to themes that reflect agricultural practices, natural resource development, weather patterns, water availability, species studies, etc.

PART C--THE RENEWAL CHARTER

- Participate and document regular visits and research at an environmental education satellite site and at one or more arts-focused satellite sites (theater, art studio, etc.).
 - Be introduced to the professionals in the fields of ecological studies and the arts through direct contact and exposure to their work.
 - Directly observe and research the region's ecology by means of species studies, water quality testing, photography, mapping, plant identification, etc.
 - Develop skills and knowledge of traditional folk arts based on indigenous local materials.
 - Be introduced to local medicinal plants and their traditional uses by interviewing, and / or video and audio recording of practicing *curanderas* (traditional healers).
 - Develop tools to provoke attention, interest, and engagement with participants, families, and the community that will include oral histories, video documentaries, and 'museums' to highlight the school's place-based investigations.
-
- Demonstrate knowledge of the cultural relevance and the ecological significance of acequias and farming to the region.
 - Become familiar with restoration ecology through both theory and site based demonstrations and observations.
 - Develop systems analysis through the exploration of food source and distribution in northern New Mexico.
 - Examine, research, and experiment with alternative sources of energy.
 - Develop critical knowledge of and seek solutions to the water issues facing this community.

Integration of the Arts

Río Gallinas School's arts education engages students and invigorates the process of learning. It restores to our children their birthright of artistic expression and the perception and discussion of beauty. *Connecting students to this rich cultural heritage through arts projects re-enforces the authentic nature of place-based learning, and broadens the possible types of service learning projects that students might engage in. In essence, the arts pillar acts to bolster the other three philosophical pillars described in this section.* And, with the long history of art in Las Vegas area, it is important that art plays a large role in RGS. All our expeditions will integrate the arts.

Arts projects help to engage aspects of students' creative process that are often neglected on traditional contemporary educational settings. For generations, families in the Las Vegas area have made a living from the earth and using their hands. This has, of course, begun to change, but teaching through the arts will connect students to this local tradition and re-enforce the sense of place and identity created by the place-based aspect of the curriculum. This extra level of engagement provides an alternate avenue for students to create authentic products and develop a life-long love of learning.

Educational researchers have shown that people use many routes to learning, including kinesthetic, visual, auditory, analytic (taking ideas apart), and synthetic (putting ideas together). An educational approach that integrates arts increases learning potential for all students. At the Guggenheim Elementary School in inner city Chicago, after the curriculum integrated the arts with other subjects, daily attendance increased to 94%. At the same time, 83% of students achieved at or above norms in reading and math. An art education builds values that connect children to themselves and to their culture.

PART C--THE RENEWAL CHARTER

Fourth, fifth, and sixth graders enrolled in a program of improvisational drama showed significant improvements in reading achievement (Gourgey). The researcher found students' attitudes, self-esteem, and expression improved, and they exhibited a greater sense of trust and acceptance of others.

The creative arts ("Critical Links," review of research, 2002) prepare and stimulate the brain for learning and communication like no other area of study. Research has shown that participating in music lays down fundamental thinking skills students will need for higher mathematics, and that creative movement prepares the brain like nothing else does for higher level thinking skills that cross domains and subject areas. The arts also engage multiple intelligences unlike "academic" teaching, which tends to focus on those children who already do well in school.

Literacy skills like pattern and shape recognition, sequence, order, shape, and rhythm are at the heart of the study of the arts and sciences. Eric Jensen's work ("teaching with the Brain in Mind" and "Arts with the Brain in Mind," ASCD Publications) shows that movement is essential for learning and that creative movement helps organize the brain's ability to learn and to communicate that learning.

Students at Río Gallinas become familiar with all the arts in the course of creating high-quality products that express and embody their learning in creative, meaningful ways.

Service Learning

A foundational belief at RGS is that children have a natural desire to learn; and at a young age, it is most important to foster a child's love of learning that they can carry with them throughout their lives and into the work force. In order to do this, children are treated as individuals and given a fair amount of freedom to pursue their interests and ideas.

But it is also critical to connect these interests to the local community and world at large in order to nurture the growth of well-rounded global citizens who thoroughly respect themselves and others. This bridge between self-interest and community purpose is made at RGS through service learning projects. Students are taken through the entire cycle of civic responsibility and engagement, from identifying a problem to developing and implementing real-world solutions.

The service learning approach to teaching and learning was chosen because depth of learning occurs best within an authentic context in which the skills of the content areas are actually used in authentic ways in service to the needs of the community. Through authentic projects, children of all ages become scientists, historians, mathematicians, readers, and writers (Daniels & Bizar, 2005).

Service learning is learning, not merely charity; it requires that crucial academic skills are used in the course of service. Students also learn that academic skills really can be used to build a better community while also further reinforcing the ethic of kindness and compassion integral to the culture in an EL school (EL, 2011). Furthermore, students are inspired by what they are learning in school and instills a sense of social responsibility – that one does not have to wait until getting out in the "real world" to make a difference; school is the real world (Grode, 2009).

Spanish Language Learning

Learning the Spanish language is crucial in heritage preservation in northern NM. The Las Vegas community is ancient, long preceding the formation of the United States, and much less influenced by recent decades of Mexican immigration than are the Borderlands. Three-fifths of the students in Rural 900 schools here are Hispanic" (from Why Rural Matters 2009, the Rural Education NM Report).

To reconnect with the roots of Las Vegas Community, RGS believes dual language skills are crucial to preserving the heritage of the community as well as equipping children with linguistic skills that will be important in the changing world. The percentage of English Language Learners (ELL) within the

PART C-THE RENEWAL CHARTER

Río Gallinas School is 16%. RGS will implement a dual language program that will assist these students in getting a better all-around education. And for English-speaking students, acquiring Spanish as a second language will not only demonstrate the value of New Mexico's two dominant languages, but will also enable students to be more active participants in the global community.

Collier and Thomas (2004) in their essay "The Astounding Effectiveness of Dual Language Education for All," found that students in two-way bilingual learning programs, which consist of native-English speaking students as well as ESL students, consistently tested better in both Spanish and English Reading Mean NCE scores (p. 7-8). Students in Heritage Language programs with students who were all native-English speakers with equal instruction time for two languages benefited enormously from their schooling in two languages. "After four years of the dual language program, former English learners who were achieving at the 40th NCE (31st percentile) before the program started had reached the 62nd NCE (72nd percentile) in English reading on the Terra Nova, well above grade level" (Collier & Thomas, 2004, p. 9).

The astounding effectiveness of dual language education extends beyond student outcomes, influencing the school experience of all participants. As the program develops and matures, teachers, administrators, and families in formal and informal interviews all express awareness that they are part of something very special. Most adults connected to the program and began to view it as a school reform, where school is perceived positively by the whole school community. The respect and nurturing of the multiple cultural heritages and the two main languages present in the school lead to friendships that cross social class and language boundaries (Thomas and Collier, 2004, p.11).

"A language gap exists between the generations. When grandparents address their grandchildren in Spanish and the young respond in English, the lack of a mutual language prevents a full dialogue" (Roberts, 2001, p.65).

In Las Vegas, many great grandparents speak Spanish as their first and primary language and many great-grandchildren can barely put together a sentence in Spanish. RGS seeks to eliminate this language gap in our community. RGS helps to strengthen positive attitudes toward the Spanish language.

In the classroom, heritage language programs like that used at RGS have been shown to demonstrate significant improvements in reading among student. (See above).

Expeditionary Learning:

The immersion of students within a learning expedition -- a long-term, interdisciplinary, and in-depth study of real-world connections -- alone inspires students to reach high levels of academic rigor. Students, within the learning expedition, are required to create products that cannot be accomplished without conducting original research authentic to the disciplines (e.g., as a scientist, historian, mathematician), engaging in critical thinking and authentic problem solving. The flow of learning in the classroom is from building background knowledge to the development of expertise based on student choices within the learning expedition framework in a gradual-release-of-responsibility model (Fisher & Frey, 2008).

The ultimate expression of student learning from participation in a learning expedition is in the form of an authentic product. The completion of the product requires the focus of teaching and learning to be placed on reasoning and craftsmanship rather than an overemphasis on facts. The cognitive psychologist, Jerome Bruner, of Harvard University, is a long-time proponent for project-based instruction and learning. The "mind is an extension of the hands and tools that you use and of the jobs

PART C—THE RENEWAL CHARTER

to which you apply them." (Bruner, 1996, p. 151) Often, we are engaged with the behaviors of our culture without yet having the ability to expound upon the principles underlying our behavior from the realms of science, history, mathematics, etc. Therefore, Bruner asserts, it is the good teacher who can transform those instances of doing into ones that demand explanation, reflection, and representation. "For one cannot know what one thinks until one can explain it." (Bruner, 1962) Products crafted by students are the representations that lead to the depth of student reflection necessary to solidify their understanding of content and their strengths and weaknesses as a learner. From this point, self-regulation of learning ensues.

With a commitment to the development of higher cognitive skills, even in the primary age student, standards-based test performance is generally not an issue. In fact, in an implementing Expeditionary Learning school, high stakes test scores outperform districts by 9.1 points in reading/language arts and an average of 4.5 points in mathematics, statistically significant achievement differences. Seventy-seven percent of schools that have partnered with EL for 4 or more years outperform district averages in reading, and 63 per cent of those implementing schools outperform their home districts in mathematics. The achievement effects of participation in an implementing EL school are especially pronounced for minority students (Hispanic subgroup +8.3 percentage points), SPED students (+11.4 ppts.), FRL students (+10.4 ppts.), and ELL students (+7.2 ppts.). All data are the result of 2 years average comparisons, 2008 and 2009, between implementing EL schools and district averages (www.elschools.org). These demographic categories predominately characterize the student population in northern New Mexico.

(The following data are reported from the Expeditionary Learning web site, www.elschools.org.)

Expeditionary Learning is proving to be a successful model for a diverse group of students.

Demographics

EL works with 165 schools in 30 states and D.C. The network reaches around 45,000 students and 4,000 teachers.

The schools are unusually diverse:

- There is a fairly even split of elementary, middle, and high schools.
- Most of the schools are urban schools; 20% are rural; and 20% are suburban.
- Most of the schools are public district schools and about a third are public charter schools.

The student populations are also diverse:

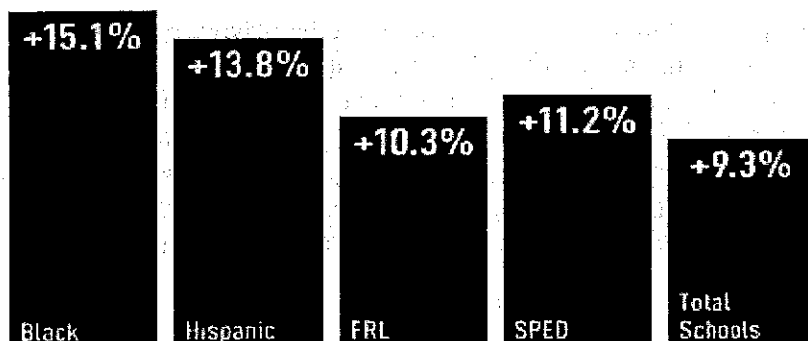
- Students of color make up more than half of the students while white students are the largest single racial/ethnic group.
- More than half of the students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.

2008-2009 Achievement data

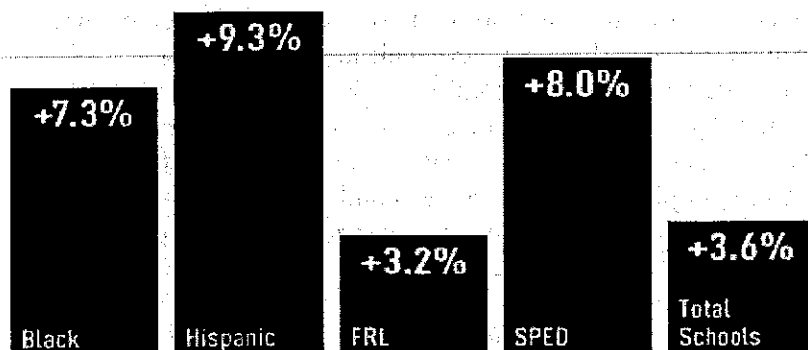
Looking at the two-year averages, in schools implementing the EL model, students are 9.1 percentage points above district in reading and 4.5 in math.

The graphs also show the percentage point comparison of black, Hispanic, FRL, SPED, and ELL students to their demographic peers. In all demographic subgroups, students in schools implementing the EL model outperform their district peers.

PART C—THE RENEWAL CHARTER



Expeditionary Learning schools compared to district averages nationwide on reading proficiency tests.



Expeditionary Learning Schools compared to district averages nationwide on math proficiency tests.

The longer a school partners with EL, the greater their achievement.

- ▲ The percentage of EL schools outperforming their districts rises quickly once a school has maintained their partnership for four years or more.
- ▲ That percentage increases even more the longer schools remain in the EL network

Doing the same comparison using EL implementation review data, which measures how fully a school is implementing the EL model, yields even more impressive results.

- ▲ While less than half of “early implementers” outperform districts, 100% of highly implementing schools outperform their districts in reading and 90% in math.

EL is also committed to collecting third party research. Two recent studies—one in Rochester, NY and one national—further substantiate the internal data with statistically significant findings showing evidence of EL impact on student achievement.

Study 1: Impact of the Expeditionary Learning model on student academic performance in Rochester, NY

Type: Quasi-experimental matched comparison group design

Location: Rochester, NY

Date: September 2010

Author: UMass Donahue Institute

PART C—THE RENEWAL CHARTER

Summary: In a recent study of EL schools in Rochester, NY, researchers compared the academic achievement performance of EL elementary and middle school students in Rochester, NY to matched comparison students in non-EL Rochester schools over two academic years.

Researchers found two important findings: Participating in an EL school resulted in substantial and statistically significant achievement advantages for elementary students in English/language arts and math, and for both years of middle school English/language arts.

These statistically significant positive effects predict that, on average, enrollment in an EL school would have lifted 19% of non-EL students into the proficient category.

Study 2: The relationship between Expeditionary Learning participation and academic growth

Type: Quasi-experimental study

Location: National

Date: August 2010

Author: Mountain Measurement, Inc.

Summary: In a national study of more than 11,000 students in eight states, researchers compared growth in reading, math, and language usage between students in EL schools to a non-EL comparison group. The researchers found that in mature EL schools – those that had implemented the EL program at a high level of fidelity for three years or more – students experienced significantly greater test score gains than non-EL students in four out of six comparisons in math, reading, and language usage.

PART C-THE RENEWAL CHARTER

2. Description of the Curriculum Aligned to New Mexico Standards

- Provide a detailed **description of the curriculum** that includes a scope and sequence that is aligned to the New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks and Performance Standards.

Statutory & Regulatory Reference(s):

NMSA 1978 Section 22-8B-8C

6.80.4.9C(2) & (3) NMAC

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Río Gallinas School curriculum encompasses integrated content areas through periodic, standards-based Learning Expeditions that challenge students to achieve at high levels, as well as continuous and rigorous skill development in literacy and mathematical thinking outside the Expeditionary Learning format.

Each class and each Expedition revolve around clearly stated, standards-based Learning Targets. Students see, discuss, and question these targets before each unit, and the targets are posted in the classroom so that everyone knows where they are heading. Daily assessments are built into the teachers' lesson plans so that students always know where they are in relation to those targets and what they still need to do in order to reach them. This clarity of objectives creates an atmosphere of high expectations without the anxiety typically found in classrooms where students do not know exactly what those expectations are or require of them.

The school year begins with a "mini-expedition" that immerses students and families in the school culture exemplified by the motto, "We are all crew, not passengers." This immersion creates excitement and curiosity, the "need to know" that drives inquiry and engagement in learning.

A Fall and Spring Expedition ends in a culminating activity that summarizes and celebrates learning from the expedition while providing focus to the service component(s) of the learning. Fieldwork takes students outside of the school building to learn about the community around them, but Expeditions take place as much in the school as outside of it. While students participate in the integrated Expeditionary Learning approach, they also take part in daily skill-building activities and classes focusing on literacy and mathematical thinking.

The RGS' curriculum map, as a working document that is continually crafted, describes a vertical cycle of learning expeditions and projects and are aligned with content and process standards at grade level and within each discipline. Repetition of content is minimized, with the understanding that mastery of skills and content takes time so that the maps present standards at levels of greater abstraction and rigor as students' progress through curriculum and learning expeditions.

For the purposes of this charter, the learning expeditions by grade cluster have been created in broad scope and have been aligned to content standards, thereby creating the beginnings of the content map for the RGS, grades K-8. These learning expeditions will need to be narrowed into specific case studies and the content maps revised in the first 4 years of the curricular cycle (i.e., each expedition will have been taught two times for the refinement of the entire content map).

The content map (alignment document) describes the foundation teachers will use to write learning expeditions based on NM standards. This document is organic and intended to be revised by the teachers who use it at RGS. As an early draft of the content standards map, it is a foundation for teachers beginning with enduring understandings derived from NM standards that lead to general descriptions of learning expeditions. These learning expeditions have then been aligned explicitly to content standards and benchmarks.