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**Inspira STEAM Academy New Charter School Application
August 21, 2025, Public Education Commission (PEC) Meeting
Charter Schools Division (CSD) Recommendation**

Inspira STEAM Academy proposes to open a school serving 240 students in grades K-5 within the boundaries of the Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS) district.

Peer Review

A peer review team composed of New Mexico administrators, educators, and business officials reviewed the application and then conducted an interview to assess the capacity of the applicant team to open a public charter school.

Peer Review Team Ratings	Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Number of Indicators	19	28	4

The peer review team rated the following indicators Does Not Meet the Standard: Food Services, 910B5 (Budget Spreadsheet), 5 Year Budget Plan, and Appropriate Financial Staff.

The reviewers found the school's mission compelling but did not find evidence to support the need for the school within the community.

The peer review team recommends Inspira STEAM Academy for **approval with conditions** related to addressing the deficiencies noted throughout their report.

Community Input

At the community input hearing held on July 7, 2025, 26 members of the community appeared and spoke in favor of the school opening.

A representative from LCPS appeared at the hearing and expressed opposition to the school opening on the grounds that existing district bilingual and STEAM programs already serve the region, concerns about Inspira's proposed budget for special education and the arts; and lack of

certified staff and defined curriculum for the proposed arts curriculum, but no other members of the community appeared in opposition.

The charter school division received four letters of support and no letters of opposition.

CSD Analysis

Now that community input has been received, the CSD finds that there is significant support within the community for the school and agrees with the peer review recommendations for conditions relating to the deficiencies noted in the peer review report, particularly areas relating to finances rated Does Not Meet by the reviewers.

Because mission-specific goals are integral to the very idea of a charter school, the CSD would add a condition related to this area, which was rated Approaches by the peers.

The CSD will provide technical assistance and support as needed by the founding team during the school's Implementation Year (IY).

CSD Recommendation

The CSD recommends Inspira STEAM Academy for **approval with the following conditions**, in addition to completion of the IY Checklist, which is required of all PEC-authorized schools:

- Food service: identify an area to serve and provide food, clarify which funds are being used to provide food service, and specify what funds are to be used for the cafeteria manager and custodial staff.
- 910B-5: recalculate the 910B-5 to include special education services, ancillary services, and P.E. units; recalculate the teacher cost index (TCI) units for the first year.
- 5-year budget plan: recalculate the budget not to include the Charter School Program (CSP) grant, recalculate educational assistants to match the staffing plan, and allocate sufficient funds for supply assets for office and classroom furniture.
- Appropriate financial staff: clarify the separation of financial duties.
- Mission-specific goals: develop goal(s) with clear metrics and associated rubrics to evaluate student progress toward targets related to mission.