

APPLICATION COVER SHEET

School Information:

Name of Proposed Charter School Taos Academy

School Address (if known) _____

School Location (City/Town) Taos, New Mexico

Contact Information:

Primary Contact Person Traci Filiss

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City Taos State NM Zip 87571

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City El Prado State NM Zip 87529

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Partner Organizations (if applicable):

See section VI C., Partnerships, in the charter application.

Enrollment Information:

Grade span at full enrollment 5th – 12th Total number of students at full enrollment 200

Complete the chart if the school will phase-in grades.

School Year		Grade Levels	Total Projected Student Enrollment
First Year	2009-10	5 th -11 th	70
Second Year	2010-11	5 th -12 th	100
Third Year	2011-12	5 th -12 th	130
Fourth Year	2012-13	5 th -12 th	170
Fifth Year	2013-14	5 th -12 th	200

II. STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

This form must be signed by a duly-authorized representative of the applicant group and submitted with the final application. An application will be considered incomplete if it is not accompanied by the Statement of Assurances.

STATE OF NEW MEXICO)

COUNTY OF COLFAX County

I, ART MULLEGAN, after being duly sworn, state as follows:

1. My name is ART MULLEGAN and I reside in ANGEL FIRE, NM.
2. I am the authorized representative of the governing body, or applicant group, for TAOS ACADEMY (name of school) to be located at TAOS County, I certify that, if awarded a charter:

1. The CHARTER SCHOOL's admission process shall not discriminate against anyone regarding race, gender, national origin, color, ability level, or age.
2. If more students apply than can be accommodated, The CHARTER SCHOOL shall admit students on the basis of a lottery.
3. The CHARTER SCHOOL's admission processes shall be in compliance with Section 22-8B-4.1 NMSA 1978.
4. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall be a nonsectarian, non-religious, and non-home-based public school.
5. Except as otherwise provided in the Public School Code, the CHARTER SCHOOL shall not charge tuition or have admission requirements.
6. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall comply with all state and federal health and safety requirements applicable to public schools, including those health and safety codes relating to educational building occupancy.
7. The governing body shall not contract with a for-profit entity for the management of the CHARTER SCHOOL.
8. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws and rules related to providing special education services.
9. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall avoid apparent and actual conflicts of interest when administering grants and entering into contracts for equipment and services.
10. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall comply with conflict of interest provisions identified in the New Mexico Procurement Code, Section 13-1-128 et seq. NMSA 1978 and the Prohibited Sales Act, Section 22-21-1 et seq. NMSA 1978; and the federal regulations at 34 CFR 75.525 and 80.36.
11. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall ensure that criminal background checks are conducted on all employees in accordance with Section 22-10A-5 NMSA 1978.
12. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall develop written procurement procedures and conduct all procurement transactions in a manner that provides open and fair competition.
13. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall comply with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title VI

(Statement of Assurances page 2 of 3)

14. of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
15. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall provide equitable access to and participation in its federally assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.
16. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall be economically sound and the fiscal management shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws, regulations and rules relative to fiscal procedures.
17. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall provide to the Public Education Commission by the sooner of the end of the planning year or within ten (10) days of receipt of any federal or state stimulus funds a detailed plan indicating how the CHARTER SCHOOL will manage its fiscal responsibilities, the plan will include a description of the internal control procedures that the charter school will utilize to safeguard assets, segregate its payroll and other check disbursement duties, provide reliable financial information, promote operational efficiency, and ensure compliance with all applicable federal statutes and regulations and state statutes and rules relative to fiscal procedures.
18. Meetings of the CHARTER SCHOOL Governing Body shall comply with the New Mexico Open Meetings Act, Sections 10-15-1 et seq., NMSA 1978.
19. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall adopt policies and procedures of the governing body, that address governance, relationship to staff, professional development, the role of the governing body in policy-making, personnel decisions, budgeting, and operation of the school, including how decisions will be made.
20. The Governing Body or head administrator of the CHARTER SCHOOL shall recognize and work with employee labor representatives, if any.
21. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall produce a certificate of occupancy prior to opening a facility for use as a school; the facility shall meet all applicable federal and state health, safety and code requirements and be suitable for use as a school.
22. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall develop and maintain a plan for addressing code, accessibility, health and safety requirements as well as operation, maintenance and repair of any facility it seeks to use as a school.
23. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall develop personnel policies that comply with all applicable federal and state labor laws, regulations and rules implementing them and shall submit the policies to the Public Education Department for comment prior to the hiring of any employees.

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for a charter is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that I am the authorized representative of the applicant group, or the governing body, of this charter school.

[Signatures required on next page]

(Statement of Assurances page 3 of 3)

Art Mulligan
[Signature]

6-30-08
Date

Art Mulligan, representative of the applicant group, or governing body
member, of the proposed TAOS ACADEMY Charter School.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 30 day of June, 20 08.

[Notary Seal:]

Faith Morjas-Tafolla
[signature of Notary]

FAITH Morjas-Tafolla
[typed name of Notary]

NOTARY PUBLIC

My commission expires: March 01, 20 10.

Taos Academy

A 21 st-Century Learning Community

Mission Statement-

The mission of Taos Academy is to prepare students in fifth through twelfth grade to achieve and maintaining a level of excellence by supporting and promoting *academic achievement, strong leadership skills, and social responsibility*. Through the use of innovative curriculum, leadership training, and enrichment opportunities, we foster a community of self-motivated, independent, lifelong learners. The partnership of school, parents, and community creates a learning environment where students acquire the knowledge, leadership skills, and sense of responsibility needed to succeed in the 21 st-century.

Vision Statement-

Our vision is to be a model 21 st-century learning community developing strong leaders who have the academic and social skills necessary to succeed in the modern world.

III. Charter School Overview and Rationale

A.1 Who will Taos Academy serve?

Taos Academy will provide a free public educational choice to students of all ability levels and educational needs from grades five through twelve. Taos Academy will begin offering classes in the Fall of 2009 with an anticipated enrollment of 70 students. By increasing enrollment by approximately 30 students per year for the first five years, we project a total student enrollment of 200 students by 2013. We will select students using a lottery system as prescribed by New Mexico state law.

A.2 What will Taos Academy seek to accomplish?

Taos Academy will seek to develop the skills needed for academic and social responsibility in every member of our learning community. As a learning community, all stakeholders, including students, staff, and parents, of Taos Academy will be committed to high academic achievement, development of leadership skills, and involvement in community outreach.

A.3 Educational Philosophy and Approach

Philosophy-

Taos Academy will express and practice the belief that every learner deserves access to educational excellence regardless of his or her abilities. Taos Academy will be a hybrid school that combines direct and digital instruction with experiential curriculum to create a holistic learning environment able to meet each student's academic and social/emotional needs.

Taos Academy will be dedicated to providing a high academic standard that meets or exceeds New Mexico state standards. Using proven educational practices, intentional

instructional design, and meaningful assessments, the school will provide students with the individualized instruction necessary to meet their learning goals. Students will develop the leadership skills needed to succeed in the 21 st-century. Taos Academy will be devoted to developing a strong community of leaders throughout the organization, focusing our attention on 21 st-century learning skills such as communication, teamwork, technology, and research. Taos Academy will be committed to parental and community involvement utilizing resources to maximize student potential.

Methods and Approach-

Taos Academy will promote and support educational excellence regardless of student abilities. Taos Academy staff will interview each student upon entry. The purpose of the interview is to review academic records and needs of the student, assess student ability level, and inform the student and parent about Taos Academy's offerings and requirements. Using a data-driven process, Taos Academy staff will develop an individualized learning program for each student according to his/her needs and learning goals. This process ensures the appropriate placement needed for students to be successful learners. To provide support of educational excellence, administrators will assign a staff mentor to each student. Community connections for students and parent participation opportunities will also be discussed where appropriate. Each student will receive a schedule for all classes, both digital and on-campus.

Taos Academy will be dedicated to providing a high academic standard while meeting each student's social/emotional needs. Taos Academy will blend traditional classroom teaching methods with the latest technological advances, allowing students to benefit from both group and one-on-one approaches. After a thorough assessment, staff

will place students appropriately according to academic need. Placing students according to present performance levels ensures student success by building on their individual knowledge base rather than grade level. The school will provide academic classes to students in a highly interactive digital format with the flexibility of anytime, anywhere learning. After students begin digital studies, their staff mentor will monitor all academic activities through the web-based program. The staff mentor will have access to all daily academic activity, can able to track time spent on assignments, view scores of individual lessons and quizzes, and determine areas of weakness. Mentor and student will be able to communicate using state-of-the-art web-based communications with the capability for audio, visual, and written communication, or live face-to-face communication in a traditional manner. Students will have access to tutoring and instruction on a daily basis to ensure academic success.

Students will be required to successfully complete leadership training and enrichment classes along with their academic expectations. Leadership training programs will include but will not be limited to, classes in emotional intelligence, advisory groups, outdoor education, and service learning projects. Enrichment classes include, but will not be limited to, writing workshops, art, music, and development of technology skills. Instructional methods will include, but will not be limited to, direct instruction, guided teaching, and a constructivist approach (inquiry, analysis, synthesis, etc.). Students will attend these classes on campus on a regular basis, depending on their individual plan. Staff mentors will monitor student growth in these areas.

To further ensure excellence for Taos Academy students, we will require adequate yearly growth in literacy and mathematics, a minimum GPA of 2.5 for grade

advancement, concurrent enrollment for 8th- and 12th- grade students to earn high school and college credit, respectively, and foreign language instruction in every grade. We believe that our focus on academic excellence, rooted in 21 st-century learning skills and the development of strong leadership skills, will prepare all Taos Academy students to become independent, lifelong learners who will be confident and successful in their future endeavors.

Using meaningful assessments to drive our instructional design, students will receive personalized and individual attention to meet their learning goals. Student growth will be monitored through digital reports, short-cycle MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) assessment, NMSBA (New Mexico Standards Based Assessment) testing, as well as other content-specific assessments such as literacy levels, technology skills, emotional intelligence, etc. Teachers will monitor student progress daily and will meet a minimum of once a week to review academic plans and collaborate on school and academic issues. All coursework will be aligned with New Mexico content standards and benchmarks and performance standards. All Taos Academy teachers will be New Mexico certified and highly qualified for the areas they teach.

Taos Academy will be committed to parental and community involvement to further utilize resources needed to maximize student potential for success. Our parent cooperative model will form partnerships for parents to be actively involved in their child's educational growth through advisory roles, emotional intelligence training, volunteering, etc. Partnerships with UNM Taos and Bridges Project for Education will support students in academic success. Local businesses will contribute to student learning with internships, while Rocky Mountain Youth Corps will help with tutoring,

internships, and leadership workshops. Local health clubs and the Taos Youth and Family Center will sponsor physical education programs. Extracurricular activities will be offered from local clubs (skiing, biking, hiking, chess, yoga, and speech and debate).

How will Taos Academy know if its mission is being achieved?

Taos Academy plans to use several indicators to show that we are achieving our mission. To show continual yearly progress, we will administer digital assessment reports for content-specific growth, short-cycle MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) assessment for standards-aligned academic growth, and NMSBA (New Mexico Standards Based Assessment) testing for adequate yearly growth. These tests will give us the data necessary to show academic achievement for our students. High school students must pass the New Mexico High School Competency Exam. We also plan to use literacy testing for placement, technology skills testing for 21 st-century readiness, and an Emotional Intelligence pre-test and post-test for our leadership training. Teachers will use student portfolios to determine growth in leadership skills such as communication, collaboration, and problem solving. Students will present their portfolios to a group of teachers, parents, and community members for evaluation. The portfolio may include, but will not be limited to: observations, interviews, reflective journals, pictures, videos, and documentation of service-learning projects. Students, teachers, and parents will review all growth indicators quarterly to provide the best learning environment suited to meet each child's learning needs.

All members of our learning community will have an opportunity to participate in our advisory council, which will meet monthly. Students, parents, teachers, and community members will receive biannual satisfaction surveys to gather further

information. Increased enrollment, a low dropout rate, and a high percentage of students continuing to postsecondary schools or continuing in a workforce placement will be measured to indicate that we are achieving our mission.

A.4 Explanation of Need

Demographic:

Taos Academy will be centrally located in Taos County. Taos County relies on the tourist industry to support its population. This rural community has an average annual wage per capita of \$16,103 with 17.5% below poverty level. Only 25% of the population of 31,832 have a bachelor's degree or higher.⁽¹⁾ Taos County has an annual unemployment rate of 9.1 per 100 civilian labor force, as compared to the national average of 5.8.⁽²⁾ An educated skilled workforce could help alleviate some of this unemployment.

New Mexico is ranked highest in poverty in the 50 states. In 2002, there were 4,467 children ages 10-19 living in Taos County. Of that population 3,035 were of Hispanic ethnicity. One out of four children in Taos County is living below poverty.⁽³⁾ According to the National Center for Health Statistics, New Mexico had the sixth-highest birth rate for mothers 15-19 years old among the 50 states.⁽⁴⁾

New Mexico has a 54.1% high school graduation rate, compared to 70.6% nationally, the second lowest graduation rate in the United States.⁽⁵⁾ Hispanic students comprise 72% of the population at Taos High School.⁽⁶⁾ Graduation rates are much lower for minority students. Only about half of the nation's African American and Latino students graduate on time from high school.⁽⁷⁾ Thirty years ago, most dropouts could still find jobs that paid enough to support a family, but young people who leave school today face a lifetime of

economic hardship. Nearly 44% of dropouts under age 24 are jobless, and the unemployment rate of high school dropouts older than 25 is more than three times that of college graduates.

(8) In Taos, Liz Trujillo, finance director of Taos Municipal Schools, states that 212 students out of approximately 1700 students have dropped out of school so far this year; 158 high school students and 54 middle school students.(9)

Taos Academy plans to retain students by providing individualized interactive curriculum designed to keep a student's interest. According to Susan Patrick, President of NACOL (North American Council for Online Learning), "Research shows that online learning provides the interactive, collaborative and self paced learning environments where students can gain the skills needed to succeed."(10) Taos Academy will combine our strong instructional design with consistent academic support and meaningful assessments to ensure each student's success. We will also include emotional intelligence curriculum, which teaches specific skills related to self-awareness, self-direction, and self-management. "Research shows emotional intelligence is strongly linked to staying in school, avoiding risk behaviors, and improving health, happiness, and life success."(11) We feel that individual instruction plus a focus on strong interpersonal/intrapersonal skills will not only benefit our students, but keep them involved in their own success.

Academics

While strong academic support in high school will increase the graduation rate, support must begin earlier. For example, nationwide ninth grade English teachers say they spend one-third of their time trying to re-teach skills that students should already have learned in middle school.(12) About 70% of U.S. 8th graders are below the

proficient level in reading, and most will never catch up.(13) New Mexico State Public Education Department reports that 53% of schools in New Mexico did not make AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) in the 2005-2006 school year. In Taos, Taos Middle School and Taos High School have not met AYP for three years and are in corrective action. New Mexico reading proficiency levels for the 2005-2006 school year are as follows:

5th grade – 42%

6th grade – 35%

7th grade – 38%

8th grade - 47%

9th grade - 42%

11th grade - 45%

The amount of time that college students have to spend in remedial courses is rising. From 1995 to 2000, the percentage of colleges reporting that students had to spend at least a year in remedial courses increased from 28% to 35%.(14) The biggest predictors of college completion are taking rigorous high school classes and acquiring strong math skills.(15) Math proficiency levels for the 2005-2006 school year for New Mexico students at each grade level are as follows:

5th grade – 28%

6th grade – 19%

7th grade – 19%

8th grade - 22%

9th grade - 27%

11th grade - 23%

Taos Academy has chosen specific alternatives to overcome these failures.

- Taos Academy will begin instruction at the 5th-grade level to inhibit early academic failure.
- All students will have an individualized learning program aligned to their personal goals to ensure success.
- All student will be required to meet the following rigorous academic requirements:
 1. All students will show adequate yearly growth in literacy and mathematics.
 2. All students will have a minimum grade-point average of 2.5 to be promoted to the next level.
 3. Mid-level students will successfully complete one academic or elective high school level class to enter ninth grade.
 4. High school level students will successfully complete either coursework for two college-level classes or 100 hours of participation in an internship program.
- All students will participate in leadership training to develop personal and community life goals.
- All students will participate in enrichment opportunities to further enhance their educational experience.
- Students will have the opportunity for an extended year to further promote academic success.
- The school day will be from 8:00am to 4:00pm Monday through Thursday.
- Class size will be 1:18 teacher/ student ratio for traditional classes, slightly higher for online classes, and significantly smaller for academic tutoring.

- All levels will participate in foreign language instruction.
- One of the most important requirements for graduation from Taos Academy, whether from 5th, 9th, or 12th grade, is some evidence that the student is becoming or has become an independent, lifelong learner. That is, the student must demonstrate the ability to pose questions, marshal resources, and pursue learning with dedication, independence, imagination, and courage. Taos Academy will use a combination of portfolio presentations and evaluation, along with academic records to measure these abilities. “We are currently preparing students for jobs that don’t yet exist using technologies that haven’t yet been invented in order to solve problems we don’t even know are problems yet.”(16)

Growth Plan

Student Growth -Taos Academy plans to enroll approximately 70 students its first year. Our growth plan provides for an increase of approximately 30 students per year for the first five years, for a total projected student enrollment of 200 students by the fifth year.

Staffing Growth - A new teacher and support staff will be added annually to accommodate for this increase in students. Taos Academy will adhere to the state regulations on teacher/student ratio requirements of section 22-10A-20 NMSA 1978; class loads. By the second year, with increased enrollment Taos Academy hopes to have a full-time Certified Academic Language Therapist to address the needs of our students with dyslexia.

Facility Growth - Taos Academy understands and will meet the requirements of 22-8B-4.2A NMSA 1978; educational occupancy standards. For initial facility planning

please see section VI.G. of this proposal. Facility space will increase accordingly along with growth in student enrollment as per state regulations.

Curriculum Enhancement- Focusing on the needs of the 21 st-century learner, we will continue to research and provide the latest technological advances possible. Taos Academy will be dedicated to working with IDEAL-NM (Innovative Digital Education and Learning in New Mexico) to further support the state’s initiative for bringing digital education to all students in New Mexico. For a full curriculum framework see section IV. B. of this proposal.

Grant Opportunities - With grant funding we want to provide additional opportunities such as enhanced art and music programs, an agricultural sustainability component, and a state-of-the-art science and technology lab providing training in technology innovations such as tele-immersion programs (Second/Teen Life), advanced communications, and technology skills.

IV. Educational Plan

A. PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH TO INSTRUCTION

A.1. Describe the educational philosophy and/or approach of the proposed school, including a description of the educational methods to be used.

Taos Academy will express and practice the belief that every learner deserves access to educational excellence regardless of his or her abilities.

Taos Academy will offer both digital and traditionally delivered classes. The extended year calendar will accommodate a hybrid model for digital instruction. This hybrid model of the learning environment combines onsite with online instruction where students will attend traditional classes as well as take online classes in a virtual format. By providing two systems of delivery, Taos Academy will enable students to have the flexibility to work at their own pace as well as to participate in traditional instruction. Students must fulfill New Mexico's requirement for attendance and meet all state regulations for statewide adequacy standards.

Taos Academy will be dedicated to providing a high academic standard that meets or exceeds New Mexico state standards.

Meaningful assessments will enable students to work at their individual ability level. A dynamic interactive academic curriculum, delivered digitally, will enable teachers to focus on each student individually and on their academic and social/emotional needs. Students will attend school for tutoring, required

traditional classes, developing 21 st-century learning skills, and other enrichment experiences.

Academics (See Appendix A.1. for Sample Academic Standards of Instruction):

- Our rigorous academic requirements will promote high student achievement because our structure will meet individual students' needs. Our foreign language requirement will support leadership, achievement, and future workplace skills.
- Our interactive digital curriculum will be designed to meet a student's individual needs and promote technological proficiency. Students will be able to access academic classes via the Internet from Taos Academy's facilities or from anywhere they choose.
- Learning centers and classes designed for experiential learning at a student's developmental level will encompass art, music, science and technology, sports, cooking, reading, writing, and math. Professionally staffed workshops will expose students to diverse cultures and talents that are unique to Taos.
- A caring, committed, highly qualified staff will provide direct instruction, tutoring, mentorship, and guidance to each student. Staff mentors will provide the support needed for students to achieve and maintain excellent academic and social skills.
- Our grade levels will be divided into four families. This strategy will allow students to be appropriately challenged while continuing to develop their peer-related social skills.

Elementary Family 5th & 6th grades – (20-30 students) Requirements will include: individualized academics, foreign language, leadership training, and

enrichment classes. These classes may include art, music, technology skills, participation in advisory council, emotional intelligence, outdoor education, and local community service. Each student must show competency mastery, particularly in literacy and mathematics, to move to the next grouping.

Pre-High Family 7th & 8th grades- (20-30 students) Requirements will include: individualized academics, foreign language, leadership training, and enrichment classes. Leadership and enrichment classes may include emotional intelligence, pre-teen counseling, outdoor education, local or national community service, participation in advisory council, art, music, technology, and telecommunication skills. Each student must show competency mastery in core areas or must take recovery classes to show academic success. Taos Academy requires students to leave the pre-high family with at least one high school-level credit.

Mid-High 9th & 10th grades- (20-30 students) Requirements will include: individualized academics and electives, pre-college preparation or remediation for credit and GPA, foreign language, and leadership training. Leadership classes may include emotional intelligence, teen counseling, outdoor leadership training, local, national, or global community service, telecommunications skills, and a leadership role in advisory council. Each student must have GPA of at least 2.5 to enter the next level or must take recovery classes to show academic success.

Senior High 11th & 12th grades – (20-30 students) Requirements will include: individualized academics, college prep/internship classes, foreign language, and leadership training. Leadership classes may include emotional intelligence, outdoor leadership training, telecommunication skills, a leadership role in

advisory council, national or global community service, and a college readiness class. Each student must graduate with at least two college-level classes, pass the New Mexico Competency Exam, and complete a minimum of 24 credits.

Leadership Skills

Our school will align classroom environments with real-world environments by infusing 21 st-century learning skills. Leadership classes will include emotional intelligence curriculum, civics program, outdoor education, and advisory council responsibilities.

- Emotional Intelligence (EQ) curriculum will teach students to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses and teach tools for improved communication skills. Emotional Intelligence is a way of understanding and shaping how we think, feel, and act. Improved emotional intelligence skills create higher achievement and improved social skills. Emotional intelligence contributes to successful interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships at school, at home, and at work.
- Outdoor education curriculum will help students practice and build upon their leadership and Emotional Intelligence skills. Students will learn to value our natural world through wilderness explorations and other special events. By traveling and experiencing education together, students will bond and mature, increasing their communication and intrapersonal skills.
- Our civics program will integrate meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach responsible citizenship, and strengthen communities. The program will support our

students who are planning to further their education after high school as well as enrich those students who do not pursue college.

- Advisory council will be a representative structure for students, through which they can become involved in the affairs of the school, working in partnership with school management, staff and parents for the benefit of the school and its students. The advisory council helps share students' ideas, interests, and concerns with teachers and school principals.

Community/Parent Involvement-

- Our parent cooperative model forms interactive partnerships with parents. The parents will actively contribute to the learning environment by volunteering to share their special skills and work cooperatively together in support of student learning needs. Parents will participate in emotional intelligence workshops as a way of sharing a common language and as a way to support staff and students with consistency between home and school. The advisory council will give parents an opportunity to have a voice in students' education.
- Cultivating a sense of belonging in the community is an important part of education. We will use a host of community resources to support students in achieving academic excellence and leadership skills.

A.2 Describe research that supports the educational philosophy and/ or approach.

Section III of this proposal describes the research of demographics and academic performance in New Mexico and Taos specifically that supports our educational philosophy and approach. In this section, we provide further research

for other categories of our educational philosophy and approach. These categories are in bold.

Extended Year Schooling – (See Appendix A.2. for Sample Calendar and Daily Schedule)

Taos Academy students will have an opportunity to have an extended year schedule supporting the needs of a variety of learning goals. Students will work at their individual learning level and therefore can remediate or accelerate based on learning goals rather than grade levels. If students lack mastery in particular skill areas or need credit recovery, they will be able to make up those deficiencies without the stigma of “failure.” According to an article on the PBS website, “Going To School Year Round,” August 8, 2001, “Students requiring academic support have the opportunity to work during the summer to progress. They will be able to catch -- and fix -- problems quicker.”(17)

A study by Dr. Harris Cooper of the University of Missouri, Columbia, found that summer learning loss is a reality, that all students (including the best) lose in math and spelling skills, and many, though not all, lose in reading skills over the traditional summer.(18) “In a study of 39 school districts about the effects of modifying the academic calendar in grades K-12 to do away with the long summer break while not increasing the length of the year... modified calendars were associated with higher achievement for economically disadvantaged students. Students, parents, and staffs who participated in modified calendar programs were positive about their experiences.”(19)

Foreign Language Requirement

Taos Academy students will be required to take a foreign language class each year. This requirement aligns with our 21 st-century readiness goal as well as enhancing academic skills. According to the American Association of School Administrators, knowledge of foreign languages is one of the most important skills that K-12 students will need to develop in order to prosper in the 21 st-century.(20)

Studies also show that learning another language enhances the academic skills of students by increasing their abilities in reading, writing, and mathematics. In a report on the impact of magnet schools in the Kansas City Public Schools, students in the foreign language magnet schools demonstrated significant achievement gains.(21) Moreover, children in foreign language programs have tended to demonstrate greater cognitive development, creativity, and divergent thinking than monolingual children. Several studies show that people who are competent in more than one language outscore those who are speakers of only one language on tests of verbal and nonverbal intelligence.(22)

The telecommunications industry has provided us with the opportunity to communicate on a worldwide basis. To keep pace with this new global marketplace, our educational system must provide learners with the interactive linguistic and cultural skills for the day-to-day situations of employment both at home and around the world.(23)

Technology

We are living in a technical age where new technologies are being developed every day. Most students have spent many hours a day using technology – televisions, MP3 players, video gaming, e-mails, computers, instant messaging, cell phones, and personal handheld devices. More than 70% of 4-year-olds in the United States have used a computer.(24) “The amount of technical information is doubling every two years. For students starting a four year technical or college degree, this means that half of what they learn their first year of study will be outdated by their third year of study.”(25)

Taos Academy intends to address the growing world of technology in our school by utilizing it to prepare our students for the 21st century. Opportunities abound to involve students in interactive digital learning – from interactive and engaging digital delivery of academics to virtual tours of libraries and museums around the world; archived video footage of historical events, use of remote instruments such as telescopes, electron microscopes, robotic vehicles, and satellites. Tele-immersion allows people to interact in real time as if they were in the same room even though they might be separated by time and space. Students will work on interconnected curricular projects where they will access and participate in shared folders, chats, and forums. Students will be “information literate” by learning a systematic process to conduct Internet research. They will learn how to find, use, apply, evaluate, and present information to specific academic needs and tasks. Technology applications will support higher-order

thinking by engaging students in authentic, complex tasks within collaborative learning contexts. Taos Academy will dedicate our financial and human resources to bring these advances to our students.

21 st-Century Learning Skills

Every child in America needs 21 st-century knowledge and skills to succeed as effective citizens, workers, and leaders. There is a profound gap between the knowledge and skills most students learn in school and the knowledge and skills they need in typical 21 st-century communities and workplaces. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, education is one of the biggest challenges facing the U.S. economy: “A country’s ability to compete in an ever more integrated world economy depends on a highly educated workforce. However, with many countries making more progress in this respect, the United States has lost its leading position.”(26)

As computers take over routine work tasks that do not require a lot of thinking, more jobs are demanding that workers have strong communication and problem-solving skills. But American students are not being prepared for the new job market. Fewer than half of our 15-year-olds are analytical, reasoning problem solvers who can communicate well about solutions—a rate that ranks 24th out of 29 industrialized democracies.(27) In an increasingly competitive global economy, it is not enough for students to acquire subject-level mastery alone. Skills such as creativity, problem solving, communication, and analytical thinking are necessary for all levels of success, from entry-level jobs to engineering and

technical fields. However, the U.S. K-12 education system as a whole does not teach and measure these skills directly.

To successfully face rigorous higher education coursework, career challenges, a globally competitive workforce, and increasingly diverse communities, students need the following 21 st-century learning skills.

- Information and communication skills (information and media literacy skills; communication skills)
- Thinking and problem-solving skills (critical thinking and systems thinking; problem identification, formulation and solution; creativity and intellectual curiosity)
- Interpersonal and self-direction skills (interpersonal and collaborative skills; self-direction; accountability and adaptability; social responsibility)
 - Global awareness (learning from and working collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work and community contexts.)
 - Financial, economic and business literacy, and entrepreneurial skills to enhance workplace productivity and career options
 - Civic literacy (developing entrepreneurial skills to enhance workplace productivity and career options.)
- ICT Literacy (Using digital technology, communication tools and/or networks appropriately to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information in order to function in a knowledge economy.)

Emotional Intelligence

“Eighty-four percent of employers say K-12 schools are not doing a good job of preparing students for the workplace; fifty-five percent say schools are deficient in preparing students with basic employability skills (such as attendance, timeliness, and work ethic); fifty-one percent cite math and science deficiencies; and thirty-eight percent cite reading and comprehension deficiencies.”(28) Taos Academy will directly teach employability skills through emotional intelligence curriculum. The curriculum teaches specific skills related to self-awareness, self-management, and self-direction. These skills are one of the foundations for high-performing students and classrooms. Emotional intelligence (EQ) is emerging as a critical factor for sustaining high achievement, retention, and positive behavior as well as improving life success. Increasingly, schools and educational organizations are turning to EQ seeking a systemic solution to improve outcomes - both academic and social (such as school attrition, student satisfaction, peer relationships, and health). In a study of 160 students, those with higher EQ (emotional intelligence) scores were recognized by teachers and peers both as cooperative and as leaders.(29)

Taos Academy is committed to consistent training for its teachers, staff parents and students to ensure success of the Emotional Intelligence model. We will also share our training and expertise in the community and with our collaborative partners as a way of creating a positive community for all youth.

Outdoor Education

There has been an intensified public awareness of the relationship between human well-being, the ability to learn, and environmental health. In 2007 the New Mexico Legislature approved the Outdoor Classroom Initiative, an effort to increase outdoor education in the state.(30) The health of children is at stake, and so is the health of the Earth. Taos Academy agrees that positive experiences in nature help to create future stewards of the Earth as well as a healthier society.

As more and more land is developed and children spend more time electronically, a detachment occurs in the relationship between children and nature. Reduced amounts of leisure time experienced by American families and more time in front of the TV and the computer contribute to growing obesity among adults and children because of diet and sedentary lifestyles. Obesity in children ages 6-11 increased from 6.5% in 1980 to 18.8% in 2004. Children ages 12-19 increased in obesity from 5% to 17.4% in the same years.(31) According to James Sallis, program director of the Active Living Research Program for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, “Indoor, sedentary childhood is linked to mental health problems.” Cornell University environmental psychologists reported in 2003 that a room with a view of nature can help protect children against stress, and that nature in or around the home appears to be a significant factor in protecting the psychological well-being of children in rural areas.(32)

In nature children find creativity, freedom, privacy, and peace. Direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy development and for physical and

emotional health. According to Steven Kellert, professor of social ecology at Yale, experience in a surrounding home territory, especially in nearby nature, is linked to shaping children's cognitive maturation, including developed abilities of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.(33) Nature experience has been linked to better performance by children in school. Studies of students nationwide showed that schools that used outdoor classrooms and other forms of nature-based experiential education were associated with significant student gains in social studies, science, language arts, and math. A classic 1998 study by Dr. Stephen R. Kellert of Yale University, with assistance from Victoria Derr, remains the most comprehensive research to date to examine the effects on teenage youth of participation in outdoor education. Pronounced results were found in enhanced self-esteem, self-confidence, independence, autonomy and initiative.(34)

Taos Academy will offer regular field trips as well as outdoor education classes to all of our students. Rocky Mountain Youth Corps will include Taos Academy in outdoor leadership training as part of a collaborative endeavor. Students will have the chance to interact with each other and with nature in meaningful ways. Our outdoor curriculum is associated with the Emotional Intelligence curriculum and encompasses measurable leadership skills such as communication, collaboration, problem solving, and creativity. Increases in these skills are linked with a rise in self-esteem and self-discipline. Stewardship is an important piece of the program. A student may also choose to relate outdoor education with our civics program in terms of environmental activism.

Civics Program

Research shows that as many as 60 percent of students are chronically disengaged from school. This report from the Coalition for Community Schools offers evidence that community-based learning—which integrates different strategies, including service learning, environmental and civic education, work and community service—can help re-engage students using real-world content and issues. The community-based approach is linked with higher attendance rates, improved academic performance, and on-time graduation.(35)

Taos Academy’s civics program will employ a model for community development that is used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards. Our students will be active partners in a service-learning project each year, with strong voices in identifying community needs and planning service activities. They will also play active roles in the evaluation of the project and its impact on the community. This nurtures youth ownership of the project, which in turn empowers young people to take control of their learning, develop leadership skills, and take their places as valuable, decision-making members of their communities.

Taos Academy will partner with the Town of Taos, Taos Community Foundation, Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, and other community services to provide ample service learning opportunities for our students. Please see Section VI. C. of this charter for partner organizations.

Advisory Council

The Taos Academy School Advisory Council (SAC) will be a team of people representing various segments of the community—parents, teachers, students, administrators, support staff, business/ industry people, and other interested community members. The purpose of the advisory council is to advise school administrators on budgets, curriculum, and rules and policies. School council members will also be expected to be champions for students in building community support for the school, develop creative ways to involve parents in schools, and where appropriate, help to connect schools and students to business resources and opportunities. This advisory council will not be our governing body and will not make decisions on policy. When community members have a voice in important decisions, they take ownership and play an active role in the development of a school. This is an important process in helping students learn leadership skills.

All students must participate in the advisory council. They will communicate on a web-based program, and they will be required to meet face to face on a regular basis. Each school family will be represented by a core group of students. The student body will go through an election process to decide core members and their individual roles. Student advisory council members will participate in training opportunities after being elected.

The core groups will meet with teacher facilitators on a regular basis. Core student council groups will communicate with students in their family group

to address concerns and to share successes. The leader of each group will meet on a regular basis with the leaders from the other families to disseminate information gathered from the student body. A representative from each of the core groups will be invited to attend each governance council meeting. The senior student council leader will be a non-voting member of the Governance Council and will be required to attend Governance Council meetings.

Parent and Community Involvement

Numerous studies have shown that parent participation in education is positively and significantly related to student achievement. According to Family Involvement in Children's Education: Successful Local Approaches Idea Book, a publication sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, students whose parents are actively involved in their education have better grades, test scores and long-term academic achievement.(36) Students also attend school more regularly, complete more homework and demonstrate more positive attitudes and behaviors than those with less involved parents. According to The Child Trends Data Bank, students with parents who are involved in their school are more likely to complete secondary school.(37)

Taos Academy will involve parents or guardians from the first day a family applies to our school. Through the initial interview with parents and a student, staff will focus on the needs of the student and the family. Community resources will be made available where needed. With positive rapport established, we will present parents with a survey of skills so we can incorporate their talents to the school's needs. A list of participation opportunities will be

offered, and expectations will be in written form. This method allows parents to plan their involvement in advance and increases the likelihood of attendance. Most families include working parents. With busy lifestyles, parents must be given the opportunity to plan activities in advance, which helps lower the stress of additional tasks.

Positive and consistent communication is the cornerstone to getting parents involved with the school. Parents will be informed through the school's web-based program, e-mail, phone calls, and newsletters. They will be able to visit our website for up to date information on school policies, homework, trips, and school events. Our website will also host a parent page where parents can get tips to help them support their student as well as communicate their ideas with other parents. Satisfaction surveys will be distributed twice a year, and parents may volunteer for the advisory council to have a voice in school issues. Child care and snacks will be provided during conferences, parent nights, and school events.

The U.S. Department of Education established in 1994 the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education to encourage businesses, community, and religious organizations, families, and schools to support parent and employee involvement in education. In keeping with this trend, Taos Academy will establish community partnerships that support both parents and students. Partnerships with UNM Taos and Bridges Project For Education will support students in academic success. Local businesses will contribute to student learning with internships, while Rocky Mountain Youth Corps will help with tutoring,

internships, and leadership workshops. Local health clubs and the Taos Youth and Family Center will sponsor physical education programs. Extracurricular activities will be offered from local clubs (skiing, biking, hiking, chess, yoga, speech and debate). Many local businesses are excited about the prospect of training students in their businesses. Many community members agree that educating and training our youth to make decisions in our community is a worthwhile cause. Please refer to Section VI.C. of this charter application.

A.3 Describe why the particular educational philosophy and/or approach was chosen.

We chose a hybrid approach that combines direct and digital instruction with experiential curriculum to create a holistic learning environment as our educational approach because we believe this method will best meet each student's academic and social/emotional needs. Digital curriculum allows students to work at their own ability level and at their own pace. The curriculum also provides for acceleration or remediation as needed. A student will be able work on modules for remediation instead of repeating a grade level or material he/she has already mastered. A gifted student will be able to take advanced courses to prepare for college-level classes while in high school. Our school will be able to offer classes that may not be available to strictly traditional schools. Another reason that digital curriculum was chosen is that teachers will have full access to and information about every aspect of a student's learning. Teachers will be able to use quality data immediately to design or modify instruction that meets a student's individual need.

We also chose to include traditional direct instruction as well, because we believe in the importance of positive student/teacher relationships. Concepts can be communicated face-to-face that may not be translated as clearly digitally. Direct instruction is a way to support each student's learning to ensure success and to provide opportunities for socialization. Because one of our goals is to give students leadership skills and prepare them for the 21st century, this socialization is imperative. Our leadership courses and extracurricular activities enrich students' learning experiences by providing them opportunities to communicate and collaborate with one another and school staff.

A.4. Explain why the educational philosophy and/or approach is/are likely to result in improved educational performance of students.

Students whose needs are met are likely to perform at a higher level and to be empowered partners in their own education. With individualized instruction a student has the opportunity to excel because he/ she is neither lost in fast-paced instruction nor bored with slower paced instruction. Since courses are aligned with state standards and benchmarks, students will have greater success with standardized testing. We chose the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) MAP short-cycle assessment because it aligns with New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA), giving students and teachers a way of examining data to improve achievement. Digital classes provide daily data that can be used for adjusting each student's instruction to ensure success.

As technology advances and students use more technological devices each day, our school will provide them with the means to educate themselves now and

in the future. Our curriculum will help them become self-directed and self-motivated. The 21 st-century workplace uses many technological devices and our students will be prepared to succeed. Students may need technology to help them communicate globally. Our foreign language requirements give them an advantage. Section IV – A.2.of this proposal gives research to support the success rate of students who are taught 21 st-century learning skills.

B. CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

B.1. Academic Curriculum has yet to be selected

Taos Academy will be selecting quality digital curriculum for academic instruction. We discuss our selection plan extensively in the following sections.

Why Digital Curriculum – Data

Taos Academy has chosen to follow recommendations from the US Department of Education regarding digital curriculum. According to the National Education Technology Plan, the US Department of Education has a national vision for technology in which virtual schools are seen as a strategy for attaining key educational goals:

“Essential measures of student success within the current global reality include a learner’s ability to demonstrate process-oriented skills; evidence of a collaborative spirit; and a willingness to dialogue, share, and create in a cooperative manner; other skills include leadership, independence, creativity, motivation, ambition, and desire to be a lifelong learner; still other skills include risk-taking skills, investigative and research-oriented

learning practice, and the capacity to respect diverse points of view.”

A study investigating the effectiveness of online learning compared to face-to-face traditional classroom learning demonstrated that online learners slightly outperformed their face to face counterparts on academic achievement measures, AP exams, motivation, and overall cognitive outcomes.(38) These findings support Taos Academy’s mission by supporting the use of digital education to promote academic excellence for our students. It further shows that the digital curriculum aligns with Taos Academy’s mission to foster leadership skills and community awareness as building blocks to prepare students for the 21 st-century.

How will digital curriculum enhance learning?

“Online virtual schools may be ideally suited to meet the needs of stakeholders calling for school choice, high school reform, and workforce preparation in 21 st-century skills.”(39) Using an interactive, technologically enhanced multimedia curriculum provides a new way to draw upon children’s natural fascination. This new media-enhanced curriculum uses highly engaging materials including interesting web-based text, voice override, music enhancement, high-tech visual graphics and animation along with traditional techniques to deliver instruction. Bringing the multimedia together with telecommunication capabilities means that we can expand student’s learning experiences by opening up social communications across geographical and cultural boundaries. Bertram Bruce states in “Technology as Media”, “Students can explore the relations among ideas and thus experience a more connected form

of learning. Perhaps most importantly, these new media are interactive, and conducive to active, engaged learning. Students can choose what to see and do, and they have media to record and extend what they learn. Learning is thus driven by the individual needs and interests of the learner.”(40) We believe that when students are engaged and excited about learning, achievement becomes automatic and success is therefore ensured.

What experience do founders have with digital curriculum?

Taos Academy founders have direct experience with the use of digital curriculum. As director and co-founder of Wheeler Peak Online Academy, Traci Filiss has first-hand experience researching, assessing, and implementing online curriculum. With a Master’s Degree in Distance Education – Curriculum and Design, Mrs. Filiss developed and implemented one of New Mexico’s first full virtual online programs. She states, “In the past 10 years K-12 digital curriculum has come a long way. We now have fully animated, interactive curriculum that engages the learner and encourages them to seek out more information on topics of interest. With the development of tele-immersion programs, students can now also engage with other learning forums to increase their global learning experiences. Digital curriculum is also prescriptive in that each student’s strengths and weaknesses align back to state performance standards to better evaluate where a student needs instruction.”

Karin Moulton is the parent of a high school on-line learner and teaches on-line classes. This experience has provided an insight into the benefits of digital curriculum. She has developed a program for Taos Municipal School’s

gifted education program in which the students are accelerated through digital curriculum. She states, “Being involved in various aspects of digital learning has provided me with recognition of the ways in which digital curriculum can support a variety of students and how it can be supported and enhanced in the classroom.”

Plan for curriculum selection and implementation-

The following is a description of the criterion to be used to assess effectiveness and quality of this curriculum. An evaluation and selection process will be used to choose the best curriculum for our students. The plan for choosing this curriculum follows the criterion.

Criteria for Curriculum Selection –

Rating Scale

0-Absent-component is missing

1-Somewhat satisfactory- needs targeted improvements

2-No improvement needed

Content:

- The course goals and objectives are measurable and clearly state what the participants will know or be able to do at the end of the course.
- The course content and assignments are aligned with state’s content standards. These standards are readily available.
- Course tasks and assessments align with the required state assessments that are associated with the course.
- The course content and assignments are of sufficient rigor, depth, and breadth to teach the standards being addressed.

- Information literacy and communication skills are incorporated and taught as an integral part of the curriculum.
- Sufficient learning resources and materials to increase student success are available to students before the course begins.
- A clear, complete course overview and syllabus are included in the course.
- Course requirements are consistent with course goals, representative of the scope of the course, and clearly stated.
- Issues associated with the use of copyrighted materials are addressed.
- Academic integrity and Internet etiquette expectations regarding lesson activities, discussions, e-mail communications, and plagiarism are clearly stated.
- Privacy policies are clearly stated.
- Assessment and assignment answers and explanations are included.

Instructional Design

- Course design reflects a clear understanding of student needs and incorporates varied ways to learn and multiple levels of mastery of the curriculum.
- The course is organized into units and lessons.
- The course unit overview describes the objectives, activities and resources that frame the unit.
- Each lesson provides multiple learning opportunities and paths for students to master the content based on student needs.
- The course is designed to teach concepts and skills that students will retain over time.
- The course instruction includes activities that engage students in active learning.

- The course offers a variety of learning styles to address differentiated learning needs.
- The course provides opportunities for students to engage in high-order thinking, critical-reasoning activities and thinking in increasingly complex ways.
- The course reflects multicultural education and is accurate, current and free of bias.
- The learning facilitator can adapt learning activities to accommodate students' needs.
- Readability levels, written language assignments and mathematical requirements are appropriate for the course content and the students.
- The course provides timely feedback of student progress.
- Opportunities for appropriate student to student interaction to foster mastery application of the material and a plan for monitoring that interaction will be available.
- The course provides opportunities for appropriate student interaction with the content to foster mastery and application of the material.
- Students have access to resources that enrich the course content.

Student Assessment

- Student evaluation strategies are consistent with course goals and objectives, representative of the scope of the course and clearly stated.
- The course structure includes adequate and appropriate methods and procedures to assess students' mastery of content.

- Ongoing and frequent assessments are conducted to verify each student's readiness for the next lesson.
- Assessment materials provide the facilitator with the flexibility to assess students in a variety of ways.
- Grading rubrics and models of partially to fully completed assignments are provided to the facilitator.
- Grading policy and practices are easy to understand.
- Testing security is addressed.

Technology

- The course architecture permits the facilitator to add content, activities, and assessments to extend learning opportunities.
- The course accommodates multiple school calendars.
- The course is easy to navigate.
- The course makes maximum use of the capabilities of the online medium and makes resources available by alternative means.
- Hardware, web browser, and software requirements are specified.
- Prerequisite skills in the use of technology are identified.
- The course utilizes appropriate content-specific tools and software.
- Interoperability among LMS systems and sharing of student information.
- The course meets universal design guidelines to ensure access for all students.
- The course provider offers school coordinator assistance with technical support and course management.
- The course provider offers orientation training.

Course Quality Evaluation and Management

- The results of student evaluations of course are available.
- Course provider uses multiple ways of assessing course effectiveness.
- The course is evaluated regularly for effectiveness, and the findings are used as a basis for improvement.
- The course is updated periodically to ensure timeliness.
- The course provider is authorized to operate in the state.
- Student information remains confidential.

21 st-Century Learning Skills

- The course intentionally emphasizes 21 st-century skills in the core subjects, and content such as:
 - Information and communication skills (information and media literacy skills; communication skills)
 - Thinking and problem solving (critical thinking and systems thinking; problem identification, formulation and solution; creativity and intellectual curiosity)
 - Interpersonal and self-direction skills (interpersonal and collaborative skills; self-direction; accountability and adaptability; social responsibility)
 - Global awareness (learning from and working collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work and community contexts.)

- Civic, financial, economic and business literacy, (developing entrepreneurial skills to enhance workplace productivity and career options.)
- ICT Literacy (Using digital technology, communication tools and/or networks appropriately to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information in order to function in a knowledge economy.)
- Using technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information, and the possession of a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information

Plan for evaluation and selection -

Upon charter approval, Taos Academy founders and governing council members along with an online curriculum specialist will invite a variety of quality curriculum providers to present their product. This selection will be made upon review of alignment to Taos Academy mission, alignment to state standards, benchmarks and performance standards, research and documentation of student improvement, and clarity of industry standards of usability. The team will then use the selection criteria to assess each provider's curriculum. The team will then use the data generated from the criteria list to select the most appropriate curriculum for the students at Taos Academy.

Schedule for evaluation, selections, and implementation -

A proposed timeline for this process:

September 2008 Charter Approval

October- November 2008 Presentations from Digital Curriculum Providers

November - December 2008 Evaluations and Clarification

December - January 2008 Data collection and review of participant's selection criterion results

January - February 2009 Selection finalist notified

February-March 2009 Develop a schedule for training and purchase of technology requirements

May 2009 Open house for potential students and families

August 2009 Student curriculum training

* When funding begins: training, implementation of technology requirements, specific instructional designs aligned to standards, support materials purchased, and quality assurances.

*When students arrive: Placement testing, specific instructional designs for students, student and parent training, support materials available, facilitator assigned and quality assurances in place.

B.2. Leadership Curriculum – Has been selected.

Description: Self-Science, Emotional Intelligence Curriculum

Self-Science is a process to teach skills and concepts. The curriculum gives teachers tools, specific techniques, and strategies to help improve pedagogy in many other curricular areas. It incorporates current research into the basic framework and key elements. It combines affective processes with cognitive processes to enhance and increase the learning experience.

Self-Science has roots in both affective and cognitive domains. Thirty years ago, the program grew from questions about how children change their ways of thinking, and how they develop socially and emotionally. The initial development was supported by advisors including Ralph Taylor, Head of the Behavioral Sciences Research Laboratory, and Ernest R. Hilgard, Head of the Psychology Department, both at Stanford University.

The curriculum also incorporates ideas and concepts from Carl Jung, Jean Piaget, Anna Freud, Eric Erikson, Jerome Bruner, and Abraham Maslow about how children think and learn. Nobel Laureate in Physics Luis Alvarez, renowned violinist Yehudi Menuhin, and 10 other major contributors to society were advisors in the development of this science-based program of study. Each lesson follows the format for scientific inquiry. Assessment is performed through a pre- and a post- test as well as journals, anecdotal records, and portfolio review.

Self-Science is designed to build emotional intelligence and to develop a learning community that fosters respect, responsibility, and resiliency. The program teaches fundamental skills:

- A. Recognize, understand, communicate, and manage feelings.
- B. Recognize and redirect patterns of behavior.
- C. Set goals and move towards them.
- D. Increase respectful communication, thinking, and behaviors.

“Research suggests that emotional intelligence shapes as much as 70-80% of ‘success’. Certainly, it is essential to interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships at school, at home, and at work. People are guided by a system of

understandings, skills, and patterns. This system develops in conjunction with other aspects of personality and intelligence. Demasio, for example, writes that emotions are ‘enmeshed in the neural networks of reason’.”(41) This interconnected system of reason and feeling has great influence on both day-to-day behaviors and long-term growth.

Structure, Scope, and Sequence –

In Self-Science, nonjudgmental acceptance and respect of others is central to the process of personal growth. It is central to simply hearing and seeing accurately and, thus, learning. Each lesson contains a focusing activity, or experiment, that builds trust and a sense of the group working together.

Two teachers work as a team in a Self-Science class. Team teaching is helpful for noticing and documenting what is happening in the group and for individuals. The team balances each other, debriefs afterward, discussing what worked and what did not work and anticipating future objectives. Having two teachers also allows one teacher to keep track of issues and take notes to which the group might later refer.

The size of the group is an important factor when determining whether or not each student learns experientially. Small groups ensure the opportunity for each individual to be actively involved. The optimum class size is 12-15 students. Group awareness and self-awareness reinforce each other; by sharing ideas and generating choices, the group becomes a unit of support for learning and a place for creative solutions. Class sessions last about 30-60 minutes depending on the age and developmental needs of the group.

Alignment: Self-Science curriculum aligns with Taos Academy’s mission to “achieve and maintain a level of excellence by supporting and promoting academic achievement, strong leadership skills, and social responsibility”. We will use Self-Science as our leadership curriculum, encompassing 21 st-century skills. As stated above, Self-Science curriculum is based on thirty years of research and practice. This research states that higher emotional intelligence skills create higher achievement and improved social skills. (42) The instructional design in Self-Science is based upon the premise that the more conscious one is of experiencing, the greater potential for self-knowledge. The more self-knowledge one gains, the more likely it is that one can respond positively to one’s self and to others. The premise is based upon a careful and critical study of respected research in the area of affective education. Self-Science draws principally from Maslow’s hierarchy of needs; Kelly’s psychology of personal constructs, child personality, and development studies, Gestalt theory; and scientific methods of inquiry.

Our mission also states that we will meet our students’ social emotional needs and foster a community of self-motivated, lifelong learners. Self-Science skills lead to greater self-esteem, higher motivation, creativity, and achievement, less violence, more accountability, and stronger classroom and school communities. Lawrence Kubie, noted psychologist, said, “Education without self knowledge can never mean wisdom and maturity; but self knowledge in depth is a process, like education itself, and is never finished....It is relative and not absolute.” (43)

Self-Science curriculum aligns with New Mexico Standards and Benchmarks and directly teaches leadership skills. A preliminary written alignment will be provided before the start of Taos Academy. As the curriculum is used in our classes, additional and revised alignment will be provided during the first and second years.

C. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

Taos Academy will be an accredited middle and high school in compliance with the New Mexico Statutes. Our curriculum choices will align with the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks and Performance Standards. The goals, objectives and student performance standards will meet or exceed New Mexico expectations. Student performance expectations are listed in section D. of this charter application.

Goal: Every student at Taos Academy will achieve and maintain a level of academic success.

Objectives:

- Each elementary level (grades 5-6) student will show yearly growth in literacy and mathematics.
- Each middle school level (grades 7-8) student will have a minimum grade point average of 2.5, show annual growth in literacy and mathematics, and successfully complete one high school level class to enter ninth grade.

- Each high school level (grades 9-12) student will show annual growth in literacy and mathematics, successfully complete either coursework for two college-level classes or 100 hours of participation in an internship program to meet graduation requirements.
- Seventy-five percent of students will demonstrate mastery in writing skills annually.
- Taos Academy students will meet or exceed 75% graduation rate.

Goal: Within 3 years of enrolling at Taos Academy, each student will demonstrate growth in leadership by developing 21 st-century learning skills.

Objective:

- Students will develop interpersonal and collaborative skills.
- Students will develop self-direction and accountability.
- Students will develop communication skills
- Each student will demonstrate growth in technology skills.
- Each student at Taos Academy will demonstrate growth in the area of social responsibility.
- Each student will increase global awareness.
- Each student will develop thinking and problem-solving skills.

Goal: Taos Academy will partner with parents and community to ensure student success.

Objectives:

- Parents will participate annually in school activities.
- Taos Academy will collaborate with community services on a regular basis throughout the year.

Goal: Taos Academy students will continue to utilize their learning skills to be contributing members of society.

Objective:

- Taos Academy will increase the number of students in Taos transitioned into college, technical school, or the workplace.

D. PLAN FOR EVALUATING STUDENT PERFORMANCE-

D.1. Describe the types of assessments that will be used to measure students progress toward the goals, objectives, and student performance standards.

Academics:

- Elementary level students will be assessed with the NMSBA, NWEA MAP short-cycle assessment, and online academic assessment through the curriculum program online.
- Middle school level students will be assessed with MAP short-cycle assessment, and online academic assessment through the curriculum program online, and at least one high school credit earned.

- High school level students will be assessed with the NMSBA for eleventh grade, MAP short-cycle assessment, online academic assessment through the curriculum program online, and college credits earned.
- All students must meet or exceed the minimum grade-level standard score for work assessed according to the NMSBA. We will also offer ACT and SAT where appropriate to aid students in postsecondary opportunities.
- In order to graduate from Taos Academy, students will complete New Mexico State Competency Exam and complete state requirements for high school diploma.

21 st-Century Leadership Skills:

- Interpersonal and collaborative skills will be measured by the Emotional Intelligence pre-test and post-test comprised of open-ended questions to necessitate higher-level thinking. Further assessments will include anecdotal records from EQ and leadership seminars, and a student portfolio and student presentation about their community involvement.
- Self-direction and accountability will be measured using progress reports for each student's academic work.
- Communication will be measured by anecdotal records from EQ and leadership seminars and communication records from Taos Academy's web-based tele-immersion (communication) program.
- Technology will be assessed through the technology literacy assessment from learning.com to measure technology proficiency and through the students' learning portfolio.

- Social responsibility will be measured by student portfolio for service learning and by documented participation in student council.
- Global awareness will be measured by the successful completion of one foreign language class each year and a service learning portfolio.
- Thinking and problem-solving skills will be assessed by documenting EQ and advisory activities and student charting of advisory council activities and service-learning activities (plan, do, study, act) (plus, delta)

Parent Involvement:

Parent participation will be assessed by documenting participation in school activities and a biannual satisfaction survey (EQ workshops, advisory council, parent nights, parent conferences, fundraising events) Community collaborations will be documented with contracts, photographs and written records.

D.2. Evidence that assessments will be valid and reliable measures of student progress toward achieving the identified student performance standards.

Academic Assessment Evidence

Taos Academy students in grades 5,6,7,8 and 11 will take the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment. The SBA is directly aligned to state standards and benchmarks as well as mandated by New Mexico Public Education Department.

The MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) from the North West Evaluative Association (NWEA) was chosen as our short-cycle formative

assessment because it is used successfully to evaluate students throughout New Mexico and the United States. NWEA conducts national studies that use data spanning the United States to investigate how to best measure student success and school effectiveness. NWEA goal structures connect the content from state standards to each reporting area of a state-aligned MAP test. Assessments are closely aligned with New Mexico State Standards and Benchmarks, reflect the instructional level of each student, and measure growth over time.

Online assessments through digital curriculum programs are both a formative and summative assessment. Taos Academy will evaluate our choice for online assessments using industry standards set by the Monterey Institute for Technology and Education.

Daily assessment for learning is crucial for students to gain skills and content; ongoing assessment is also valuable for teachers to assess their own teaching in order to alter curriculum and instruction as needed. This will be used with the assessments listed above to inform instruction to give students skills in the areas they need.

Leadership Assessment Evidence

Taos Academy will be using the EQ pre- and post- test periodically as a summative assessment. The Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence Assessment (SEI™) is an effective assessment that helps people develop and apply emotional intelligence professionally and personally. The SEI assessment can predict over 54% of important success factors: effectiveness, relationships, quality of life, and health. The assessment has proven effectiveness with clients such as Fed Ex, US

Navy and Marine Corps, GE, BMW, and Shell Corporation. Created by a team of emotional intelligence development experts, the SEI focuses on eight learnable skills. It comes with a detailed report with many specific and practical development suggestions. The test includes over 100 questions and two self-correcting indices to increase its statistical rigor. This assessment is supplemented with observations, interviews, reflective journals, and student portfolios.

In order to gather personal and meaningful information about student we will also assess through the development and presentation of a portfolio. This portfolio will demonstrate skills the student possesses and will be an invaluable tool when applying to colleges, jobs, and other post-secondary endeavors. The portfolio will contain anecdotal records, a resume, work history, letters of recommendation, and samples of each student's best work. Anecdotal records taken during class time and during leadership seminars and field trips will be a formative assessment of leadership skills. This assessment provides descriptive feedback designed to scaffold student improvement. It encourages students to use thinking and problem-solving skills to evaluate their own work.

Parent/Community Partnership Assessment Evidence

Documentation of participation in parent and community events will be a formative assessment. The school will provide a sign-in to meetings and activities as proof that the individual or group attended. Taos Academy will give the bi-annual satisfaction survey to parents, students, teachers and community member as a summative assessment. Community participation will be evaluated

through contracts, photographs, and written records that will offer both formative and summative evaluation options.

D.3. Provide a coherent strategy for using student assessment and performance data to evaluate performance and to inform instruction on an ongoing basis.

Family teachers will evaluate each student in their group weekly. Performance and assessments from digital curriculum will drive instructional design. Staff and administration will meet once a month to review data and formulate strategies to improve student and school performance. In monthly meetings, staff will also assess outcomes from previous meetings using a “Plan, Do, Study, Act” format from the Baldrige Approach to School Improvement. Educators will be trained to use the growth and achievement data from MAP assessments to develop targeted instructional strategies and to plan school improvement. Both MAP and NMSBA test results will help educators make student-focused, data-driven decisions. Staff and administrators will review NMSBA testing at the beginning of each school year to assess which areas are in need of improvement and to develop a plan for improving these areas.

Leadership assessment strategies will follow academic strategies. The formative assessments will be reviewed by family teachers weekly to make changes in direct instruction. The summative assessments will be reviewed by staff and administration annually to make improvement in the school’s overall performance and instructional design. Parent and community participation will be reviewed at an annual meeting and adjustments to policies or activities assessed.

Satisfaction surveys will be reviewed biannually by both staff and administration, and adjustments will be made where needed.

D.4. Provide a coherent strategy for providing corrective action that may include remediation for students not achieving standards, utilizing additional assessments, and creating additional reporting documentation in the event that student performance falls below the standards.

Taos Academy will be providing daily tutoring in areas of need. Using highly qualified, New Mexico certified teachers, students will have access to one-on-one or small-group (1:5 student/teacher ratio) instruction. Taos Academy will use recovery modules online that provide diagnostic evaluations to pinpoint skills needed in student performance standard areas. A pretest is given to determine mastery. If mastery is achieved, the student moves on to the next module of proficiency. If mastery is not achieved, a student is given instruction and practice in the needed skill areas and another recovery module assessment is given to determine mastery. Modules continue until proficiency is demonstrated in the student performance standard. Additional documentation is provided in the form of progress reports generated by the online program.

Students can also be placed according to academic need rather than grade. For example a student may need more skill building in Math than in Language Arts. Therefore the student may be in a recovery module for Math but continuing on in Language Arts. This flexibility in instruction promotes confidence and success for the learner.

D.5. Provide a plan for sharing student performance information with students and parents.

Students and parents have access to daily progress reports for academic work through the digital curriculum program online. The online program will provide progress reports for individual lessons, for the entire subject, and for the semester overview including all classes. Parents will have their own access to reports, separate from the student. Students meet with their teachers weekly to review their progress. Parent-teacher conferences will be held quarterly to review academic progress and portfolio work. Taos Academy believes that a strong partnership with parents creates successful students. Parents and staff will be in regular communication throughout the school year and will meet outside of scheduled conferences whenever needed. Our progress as a learning institution will be continuously updated on our website for students, parents, and community to review.

Taos Academy will supply student data to the state STARS program as regulated by the NM PED.

E. SPECIAL POPULATIONS

E.1. Describe how the school will comply with state and federal requirements for serving students with disabilities, including the procedures that will be utilized for identifying students with special needs, developing Individualized Education Plans and 504 plans, and providing a full range of services.

Taos Academy will comply with state and federal requirements for serving students with disabilities by employing inclusion for all students who are at risk.

Inclusion means that these students will (1) have membership in the same classrooms with all other students (2) have individualized, relevant learning objectives and (3) be provided the means to access classroom and curriculum materials.

Taos Academy will hire a full-time, experienced administrator for special education services. The initial interview with families upon entry into Taos Academy will provide staff with previous history of special education needs to be addressed. Administrators and staff will analyze prior school records to determine placement and any discrepancies that might indicate a special-needs issue. All students who enter our school will take a pre-test for individual placement academically. This placement test, along with prior testing in a student's file, will also help in identifying students with special needs.

Taos Academy will use the three-tier Student Assistance Team (SAT) process to determine the needs of a student who may be having difficulty in one or more classes. The principal, teacher, counselor, parent, and student will meet on an as-needed basis to determine the areas of concern and how they may be adversely affecting the student's ability to successfully complete a course. The team will determine forms of appropriate interventions where necessary. The counselor and the principal will track each modification that is tried and its outcome before trying another. Modifications may be, but are not limited to one-on-one or small-group tutoring, computer-based skills tutor, computer labs, counseling, etc. Individual needs will be met through the following:

- Providing multiple, flexible methods of presentation in order to support diverse learning styles (e.g. printed text, digital text, audio – with captions, pre-testing background knowledge)
- Providing multiple flexible methods of expression in order to support learning styles (e.g. writing on a computer, spell-check, scaffolding use of native language).

Taos Academy will utilize formal IEP and 504 documents developed by the state and by Taos district to document the special education procedures. We will follow state guidelines and policies. A parent or a staff member will be able to start the process of referral with our special education coordinator. Our special education administrator will be a certified diagnostician and will administer diagnostic evaluations for our students. We will place special emphasis on articulating the student's individual educational goals and objectives as well as performance in activities to both the student and the teacher. The student's modifications may include a different instructional arrangement, lesson format, teaching strategy, or a change in the physical and social environment. To ensure that all students will be able to achieve the standards as defined by the New Mexico Content and Standards with Benchmarks, the table below suggests ways in which Taos Academy may make modifications or enhancements to meet the needs of all students.

Table 1: Accommodations to enable all students to achieve New Mexico Content and Standards with Benchmarks

Instructional Enhancements	Assessment Enhancements
<p>Use interactive groupings of students in structured and purposeful settings.</p> <p>Draw on Student background and knowledge.</p> <p>Teach skills explicitly as appropriate and ensure opportunities for students to apply and practice skills in a meaningful context.</p>	<p>Use multiple forms of assessment such as performance-based assessments.</p> <p>Create appropriate test settings; use magnification of print or sound, use color-coding to focus attention where appropriate, allow for frequent breaks, use of calculators and dictionaries, and minimize distractions and interruptions.</p>
<p>Use graphic organizers to model organization skills and to engage students in the process.</p> <p>Use manipulative and connect learning experiences to real life.</p> <p>Use community experts as resources and as models.</p> <p>Minimize interruptions and distractions during time-on-task.</p> <p>Check often for understanding among students.</p> <p>Teach students organizational and study skills.</p> <p>Ensure access to resources in the languages, reading levels, and interests of the students.</p>	<p>Integrate technology into a variety of assessment settings.</p> <p>Remind students to use self-monitoring strategies and clarify directions.</p> <p>Ensure that language and academic skills are assessed appropriately.</p> <p>Take dictation for students, allow for tape and/or video recordings.</p> <p>Use multiple measures of assessment to assess language and academic skills of two language learners.</p> <p>Include samples of second language learners' work as anchors when developing rubrics and other scoring devices.</p>

Standards Primer: A Guide to Standards-p8

Based Education in New Mexico Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations.

In special education, each identified student will have an IEP that includes a statement of the student's current level of performance and how the student's disability affects his/her ability to progress through the general education curriculum, a statement of measurable annual goals, and a statement of educational services, program modification and supports necessary for the student to be involved in the general education coursework including assistive technology. The means for learning and demonstrating proficiency will match the student's current level of functioning, however the state standards will not be changed. Assessment accommodations or alternative instruction procedures will be based on objectives in the student's IEP.

If a student has a behavioral barrier, Taos Academy will implement a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP).

- Under IDEA, the IEP team will consider, when appropriate, strategies—including positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports – to address that behavior through the IEP process (614(d)(3)(B)(i).
- In response to disciplinary actions (suspensions or placement in an alternate educational setting) by school personnel, the IEP team must, within 10 days, meet to formulate a Functional Behavioral Plan to develop a BIP (615(3)(D)(vi).

This information can be utilized by the SAT team to assist in the issue to be addressed.

E.2. Describe the school’s proposed approach to identifying and meeting the needs of English Language Learners tailored to the anticipated population, including modifications to the Educational Plan.

English Language Learners (ELL) students fall into three categories: (1) students whose primary home language is other than English, (2) students from heritage language groups needing enrichment and further development of English, while maintaining fluency in their heritage language, and (3) any other students needing enrichment and further development in academic English. Table 1: Accommodations to enable all students to achieve New Mexico Content and Standards with Benchmarks listed in E.1. of this section can be used by teachers to understand how students move through various stages of English language acquisition and the influence of various factors including language and cultural background, environmental factors, etc. Teachers will be provided with professional development on the characteristics of both first- and second-language acquisition and specific methods to modify instruction to meet the needs of individual students.

Taos Academy will provide most academic digital classes in Spanish as well as English. When needed, the school will contract with an appropriately certified ESL or bilingual teacher for ELL students. The contracted teacher can provide assistance to the student with the digital curriculum. The contracted teacher can also provide assistance to the student within the classroom and can provide support to the classroom teacher on scaffolding instruction to aid in student comprehension of content and objectives by adjusting speech or providing appropriate background information and experiences to assist the student’s grasp of

the concepts. In addition, teachers can use project-based learning as a way to transcend language barriers or instructors can use visuals and demonstrations to communicate content and develop language skills with ELL students.

E.3. Describe how the school will provide access to other services including, but not limited to, counseling and health.

Taos Academy will have a full-time counselor on staff to help students address social-emotional issues. Each family teacher will be responsible for tracking academic success of each student in his/her group and reporting progress to administrators. Academic support is offered daily. Emotional Intelligence/Self-Science courses will provide opportunity for each student to meet their social-emotional needs as well. Strong community collaboration will ensure that agencies and services will be ready to aid students with individual issues. Please refer to Section VI.C. of this charter application for a list of partnerships. Classes for postsecondary support will be offered regularly on campus. Health classes will be offered digitally. However, specialized classes designed for adolescent issues will be contracted and offered to students on site. Community connections will also offer physical education classes such as yoga, biking, hiking, and swimming.

V. Financial Plan

A. Budget

A1. Proposed Operating budget (See Appendix B.1. for Forms: 910B5 & Budget Spreadsheet)

A2. Narrative Description of revenue and expenditure assumptions.

Instruction-

Personnel – Three and a half teachers, each highly qualified in a different core subject area. One special education coordinator/diagnostician and an educational assistant. Substitutes (6 positions x six days per year x \$70.00 per day)

Other Purchased Services – Training for employees: EQ, technology, and leadership; contract for art instructor (10 hours per month x 12 months @ \$20 per hour for each position).

Supplies – Digital curriculum, trade books, software for enhancing curriculum, office supplies.

Student Support Services –

Personnel – Full-time coordinator subject matter specialist, part-time counselor/social worker.

Other Purchased Services – Employee travel and training to attend digital education conference.

Software – for coordinating programs and social work.

General Supplies and Materials for student use

General Administration –

Purchased Professional and Technical Services – Auditing, Bonding, Legal

Other charges are coalition dues

Other Purchased Services – Advertising and board training

School Administration

Personnel – principal, secretary/business manager, technology coordinator

Other Purchased Services - Employee travel and training to attend digital education conference, budget conference, and technical conference and training.

Also includes governance board travel and training.

Supplies – administrative software, accounting program, servers for digital instruction, short cycle and standardized tests

Property – fixed asset=copier

Operation and Maintenance of Plant –

Personnel – janitorial/maintenance services

Purchased Property Services – utilities based on 3500 square foot facility, rent is based on interest only loan for the first year of operation

Other purchased Services – figure is based on a similar facility of comparable size

Contracting for field trips

Transportation – students will be responsible for traveling to school on their own

Food – students will bring lunch where appropriate

Community Services Operations - summer school and after school will be offered on an as-needed basis, adult education is provided through UNM Taos

Facility – Funding will be applied for from Public Schools Facility Authority (PSFA) after approval of the charter application. Funding from PSFA will be used for a lease to purchase agreement for the school property.

Federal Stimulus – Funding will be applied for after approval of the charter application. Expenditures may include but are not limited to: computers, servers, office furniture, white board, copier, training for staff and board, testing materials, business management, technology and legal support, curriculum materials.

State Stimulus - – Funding will be applied for after approval of the charter application. We have not specifically planned for expenditures due to the ambiguity of available funds. If received expenditures would include contract support and additional curriculum materials.

Instructional Materials – Funding will be applied for From New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) after approval of the charter application. It will be used for digital curriculum.

Grant Funding – Grant funding applied for after approval of the charter application includes, but is not limited to the following:

National Endowment For the Arts, Walton Foundation, Daniels Foundation, Los Alamos National Laboratories, Intel Corporation, PNM Foundation, George Lucas Educational Foundation (GLEF) and private funding opportunities.

Growth Plan – Second year – Three and a half teachers will increase to four full time teachers. The special education coordinator/diagnostician will have a part-time teacher. Substitute and benefits will also increase accordingly. Contract services increase so the school can offer more programs to students and hire

ancillary special education services. A half time business manager is added by the second year. The salaries for additional support services specialist is for a full time Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT), literacy specialist, and special education assistance. Also in the second year, the school will purchase a 15 passenger van for field trips. Maintenance, insurance and gas have been increased accordingly. A second van will be purchased during the third year.

Third, fourth, and fifth year – Cost of living increases for all staff, an additional teacher's salary each year, additional substitute pay and benefits are considered. Additional training has been added for teachers to learn new technology advances. Fixed assets are office furniture for new teachers, increase in technology equipment and an additional van and facility space for the expanding enrollment. Contract services and supplies increase to provide additional services to students. A health assistant has been added half time by the third year.

B. FISCAL MANAGEMENT (See Appendix B.2. for Sample Economical Soundness and Fiscal Management)

This section contains Taos Academy's proposed plan for financial management systems, an adequate plan for budget allocations and audit obligations, and internal control provisions for meeting minimum insurance requirements. These internal control provisions will safeguard assets, segregate payroll and other check disbursement duties, provide reliable financial information and ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state statutes, regulations and rules relative to fiscal procedures.

B.1. Detailed Plan to Manage Fiscal Responsibilities

The Taos Academy Administration, under the guidance of the Taos Academy Governing Council, will be accountable for compliance with all local, state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to public schools.

Taos Academy Governing Council will adopt the State of New Mexico Procurement Code [13.1.21. et seq. NMSA – New Mexico Administrative Code] as our policy for all procurements.

Taos Academy will retain a Business Manager who is adept at using financial software to manage fiscal responsibilities, safeguard assets, provide reliable financial information, and promote operational efficiency that will ensure compliance with all regulatory guidelines. The Taos Academy Business Manager will be responsible for planning, preparing and presenting an annual school budget to the Governing Council for adoption that will follow all the procedural and maintenance requirements pursuant to 6.20.2.8 NMAC, 6.20.2.9 NMAC, and 6.20.2.10 NMAC. Business Manager will provide fiscal reports which will include revenue, expenditures and a balance sheet for each quarter.

Taos Academy Governing Council will establish a Finance Committee made up of knowledgeable financial advisors. The Finance Committee will work closely with the Business Manager to meet the fiscal needs of Taos Academy and ensure awareness and compliance with all the rules and regulations as outlined in 2.40.2 and 6.20.2 NMAC.

The Governing Council, the Finance Committee, the Administration and the Business Manager will take all the necessary steps required to 1) ensure that

all assets are safeguarded against loss and unauthorized use, 2) to ensure that Taos Academy will provide reliable financial information, 3) to ensure the efficient operations, and 4) to ensure that compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and procedures of the PED. All current expenditures will be funded from current revenues. Taos Academy will not postpone expenditures or accrue revenues so as to avoid paying for current expenditures at the expense of meeting a subsequent year's expenses. The assignment of fiscal duties to staff members in Taos Academy will be made with the intent of limiting their ability to cause and conceal errors, irregularities and illegalities.

In meeting the responsibilities of office, the Taos Academy Business Manager will use a modified accrual-basis accounting program to keep records for all school finances. This program will keep records available for timely access and reporting. Also, the Business Manager will review all purchase orders before they are issued for sufficiency of funds; prepare monthly financial reports; report the status of the budget monthly; present and track proposed Budget Adjustment Requests (BAR); maintain a positive balance by object code for all funds; and keep the Governing Council, the Finance Committee, and the Administration of the availability of funds for budgeting purposes. The Taos Academy business Manager will be responsible for ensuring that all of the accounting systems comply with GAAP. Quarterly fiscal operations and academic reports will use STARS and UCA for state reporting.

Pursuant to 6.20.2.18 NMAC, the Governing Council will establish written payroll policies and procedures which comply with state and federal

regulations and provide strict internal controls, close supervision and financial controls in accordance with GAAP. The Business Manager will use a payroll system for the calculation of wages, employee benefits and the processing of payroll on a semi-monthly basis for all Taos Academy employees. Taos Academy will maintain and have available for inspection the following records related to payroll: employment contracts, payroll action forms, federal and state withholding records, pay deduction authorizations, pay change notices, Educational Retirement Act records and direct deposit authorizations.

All payroll and employee information is confidential and will be safeguarded by policies and procedures implemented by the Taos Academy Governing Council in accordance with the Public Records Act, Section 14.3.1 et seq. NMSA 1978.

For heightened accountability, both the Taos Academy Administrative Assistant and the Taos Academy Business Manager will be trained on the Operating Budget Management System (OBMS) for the purpose of providing assurance that the information is in compliance with federal and state laws, regulations and procedures for the PED.

The Governing Council will establish written inventory control policies and procedures which comply with state and federal regulations and provide strict internal controls, close supervision and financial controls in accordance with GAAP. The Business Manager will use an automated inventory control system for the management, tracking and control of assets.

B.2. Specific description of the internal control procedures that the charter school will utilize.

Safeguard Assets:

In accordance with NM Statute 6.20.2 and Federal OMB Circular A -102, all state, federal, and other monies received by Taos Academy will be deposited in Taos Academy accounts within 24 hours or one banking day of receipt at an authorized banking institution per state regulations. The school shall account for public money placed in interest bearing deposits in accordance with Sections 22-8-40© through (G), NMSA 1978; Section 6-10-17, NMSA 1978; Section 6-10-31, NMSA 1978, and other federal and state laws applicable to the investment of public school money.

As required by law, Taos Academy will take responsibility for acquiring all necessary federal, state, and local tax and employer identification numbers to establish itself as a public school in the state of New Mexico. All bank accounts shall be established to require multiple signatures on checks or other forms of disbursement.

Taos Academy Governing Board understands and will abide by the prohibition in the 1999 Charter Schools Act against entering into any contractual arrangement that exceeds one year in length.

Financial/Business Operations

Taos Academy will operate in accordance with state law pertaining to fiscal solvency and responsibility. This will include but not be limited to establishing a control system pursuant to NM State laws. Charter schools are

funded through the state, under the School Finance Act. Taos Academy will reserve two percent of the funding for administration of the State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) finances. Tuition cannot be charged. Charter schools are responsible for formulating their own budgets in accordance with state audit guidelines. The revenue stream for the school will include:

1. State Equalization Guarantee Formula Based on 40, 80, 120 Day Count (2% of this goes to PED);
2. Other State and Federal Monies (e.g.; State and Federal Stimulus Funds, Instructional Materials Funding, Title II Professional Development monies, etc.);
3. Corporate and Not-For-Profit Grants;
4. Contributions from Private and Non-Profit Entities.

Cash Management

Appropriate cash management practices will be developed and used to ensure that all monies are adequately protected against loss or theft. These practices shall include but are not limited to:

- Monthly reconciliations of all cash accounts, including bank accounts, which are part of the responsibility of the business manager or the contract provider of fiscal management.
- Periodic internal audits will be made on all cash accounts. The frequency of these audits will be determined, but should not be less than twice each year.
- The separation of accountabilities and duties ensures sound fiscal control practices to protect from fraud by requiring that no person shall initiate and approve the same transaction in any circumstance.

Accounting Basis

Taos Academy financial records shall be maintained using a modified accrual basis of accounting with the capacity to convert financial statements and other financial reports, as needed, to a cash basis.

Compliance with GASB 14

In accordance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), Statement No. 14, "The Financial Reporting Entity" (Issued 6/91), Taos Academy will follow the standards defined for a financial reporting entity based on its site-based financial accountability as set forth in the 1999 Charter Schools Act. This shall apply to all financial reporting to ensure that the nature and significance of Taos Academy's relationship with the PED is in no way misleading or incomplete.

Compliance with Budgeting and Reporting Requirements of the PED

Taos Academy will utilize a web-based financial system that provides off-site backup of files to implement the required chart of accounts and to meet all budget submissions and reporting deadlines, including quarterly reports and end of the year reporting.

Compliance with the Anti-Donation Clause

Taos Academy will comply with the Anti-donation clause of the State Constitution which states: neither the "state nor any county, school district or municipality, except as otherwise provided in the New Mexico Constitution (Article IX, Section 14), shall directly or indirectly lend or pledge its credit or

make any donation to or in aid of any person, association or public or private corporation.”

Disbursement Process

Disbursements at Taos Academy shall be made as defined and scheduled by the Taos Academy Governance Board. In no instance shall the party initiating a request for disbursement be the same party who approves that disbursement. Nor shall the party approving the disbursement be the same party who distributes the payment. This separation of accountabilities shall be enforced to protect Taos Academy from any fraudulent disbursement of monies.

Payroll Procedures

Taos Academy Governance Board will determine the policy and payment schedule for all employee compensation. Taos Academy payroll payments will be made in the manner defined in policy in accordance with the appropriate separation of duties and approval of payroll time records to ensure that employees are paid only for services rendered. Time records will be maintained for all Taos Academy employees.

Non-Payroll Disbursements

Taos Academy shall be responsible for paying all approved and authorized school-related bills in accordance with school policy prescribed in the *1999 Charter Schools Act*.

Provide reliable financial information.

Taos Academy agrees to maintain appropriate financial records in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations. Taos Academy also agrees to contract for an independent, outside audit by a certified public accountant of its financial and administrative operations on an annual basis. The results of the audit shall be provided to the PED in written form and shall be published and posted as required by law.

Fiscal Management Compliance Plan

SEG and most other revenues will flow from the State of New Mexico directly to Taos Academy; however, the PED will retain 2% of the SEG for administrative expenses. Taos Academy will work collaboratively with the PED to assure timely reporting and other financial/fiscal processes. In accordance with the *1999 Charter Schools Act* and good business practices, Taos Academy will be held accountable for its fiscal performance. When classes begin in 2010, a revised budget will be prepared and submitted to the PED, based on the actual, rather than estimated or projected enrollment numbers for student population.

Promote operational efficiency

Taos Academy will be responsible for its operations within the limitations of funding provided by the State of New Mexico and other revenues derived by the school consistent with State law. The school shall have authority to independently exercise, in accordance with federal and state law, the following:

1. Contract for goods and services;

2. Budget preparation;
3. Personnel selection and determination of compensation;
4. Evaluation of personnel performance;
5. Payroll functions
6. Procurement of insurance;
7. Lease of facilities for school purposes;
8. Purchase or lease of furniture and equipment;
9. Procurement of instructional materials and supplies; and
10. Acceptance of gifts, donations or grants consistent with law.

Taos Academy will comply with all applicable federal statutes and regulations and state statutes and rules relative to fiscal procedures and policy. Taos Academy will furnish the PED copies of all policies or procedures that may be developed with regard to any operational or educational program, upon adoption by the Governance Council. Taos Academy policies and procedures will be provided to PED when adopted. Any policy and procedure not currently developed, will follow the requirements of PED and will be submitted for approval to the PED prior to implementation.

B3. Description of Annual Audit

Taos Academy will conduct an annual audit performed on its financial records as required by Section 12.6.3, NMSA 1978. The criteria and timeline for conducting the audit will be developed by the Governance Board and will comply with state requirements. The report from the independent auditor will include financial condition; accuracy of financial and asset record keeping; compliance

with applicable laws, policies, guidelines and procedures; effectiveness and economy of operations; and recommendations for improved operations. The audit and reports will comply with state and PED rules pertaining to these audits..

VI. Governance/Management Plan

A. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

A.1 Brief description of school Governance responsibilities.

Taos Academy will be governed by the Governing Council, who will act as a Board of Finance for the state-approved charter school. The Governing Council has a responsibility to ensure that Taos Academy operates in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, complies with the Open Meetings Act (NMSA 1978.10.15), and meets its commitments to the PED authorizer as reflected in its charter. In accordance to the 1999 Charter School Act, Taos Academy Governing Council will be held responsible for its fiscal performance.

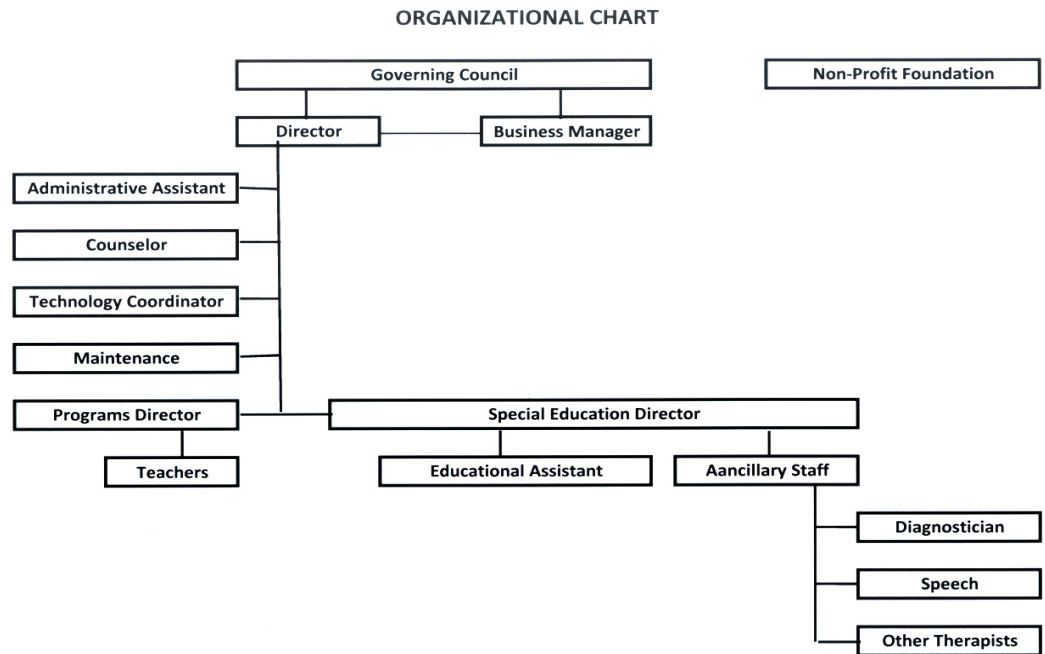
The Governing Council will be accountable for:

- Fiscal oversight
- Compliance with all local, state, and federal law
- Progress towards achievement of school's goals
- Strategic planning
- Policy development and review
- Community partnerships
- Hire and evaluate school's administration
- Charter compliance
- School facility funding
- Public Relations

The Educational Director/Principal will be directly accountable to the Governing Council for all school operations. The Director along with other leadership team members will be responsible for:

- Financial operations and academic reporting (Fiscal reports include: revenues, expenditures, and balance sheet for the quarter)
- State student reporting for STARS
- Hiring, supervising, and evaluating all employees
- School-wide inventory
- Student and staff recruitment
- Compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to public schools
- Developing and implementing strategic planning
- Ensuring student success and progress monitoring
- Ensuring compliance to educational goals and objectives
- Public relations

A.2a An organizational chart for the school with a narrative description of the proposed school site-based personnel reporting structure to the governing body.



Description of site-based reporting structure-

The governing council will have full fiscal responsibility along with other duties listed in A.1 of this section. The Business Manager and Educational Director of the school will have direct communications with the Council pertaining to the fiscal and legal operations of the school. In turn, the Administrative Assistant, Counselor, Maintenance, Technology Director, Special Programs Director, and Special Education Director will report directly to the Educational Director pertaining to day-to-day operations. The general education teachers will report directly to the Special Programs Director for student issues and report to the Educational Director for personnel issues. The educational

assistant and ancillary staff will report directly to the Special Education Director for all student issues and report to the Educational Director for personnel issues.

A.2b Roles and responsibilities for key school leadership positions.

Governing Council Responsibilities-

In accordance with the 1999 Charter Schools Act Taos Academy will operate with a school-centered Governing Council, site-based and autonomous fiscal management, and an innovative educational program. The Governing Council will be empowered to make decisions in school matters unless otherwise prescribed by the PED or other state and federal regulations. The Governing Council will not be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school other than on an advisory level.

Legal

- Ensure the charter school is properly managed. The Governing Council will have a way to validate information from the educational director.
- Maintain legal status; ensures proper paperwork is submitted to governmental agencies in compliance with all state and federal law.
- Review financial and business dealings and exercises proper judgment in self-dealing transactions to avoid conflicts of interest.
- Adopt and comply with all provisions of the Open Meetings Act. The Governing Council will advertise all meetings in the local media and post notices throughout the area in a timely manner and according to the provisions of the Open Meetings Act (NMSA 1978.10.15). Agendas will be made public and contain items of business to be discussed. Public participation will be

made available at a specific time in each agenda. Personnel issues will be discussed in closed session and reported thereafter.

Financial

- Held accountable for Taos Academy's fiscal performance in accordance with the 1999 Charter School Act.
- Acts as board of finance responsible for fiscal soundness.
- Approve annual budget.
- Review periodic financial reports such as balance sheets, income statements, and changes in financial position.
- Ensure proper internal controls are in place.

Planning

- Maintain mission and program direction for the charter school.
- Reviews strategic plan and progress.
- Assess compliance and progress in achieving educational outcomes.
- Assess program evaluation plan.
- Plan for school facility funding

Policy

- Develop and adopt written policies.
- Review policies periodically.
- Make policy changes when needed.

Personnel

- Sets and reviews personnel policies.
- Hire Charter School Educational Director and evaluate his/her performance.

- Approve all personnel based on the recommendation of the Educational Director.
- Procurement of insurance: Taos Academy will participate in the New Mexico Public School Insurance Authority.

Public Relations

- Develop Community/Parent partnerships
- Review satisfaction surveys and make changes if necessary.

Administrator Responsibilities

The Educational Director will be a leader for the community of learners, parents, and teachers. The Educational Director, teachers, staff, and students will be part of a leadership team that will collaborate to solve school issues and keep the school aligned to its mission and vision.

Legal

- Ensure compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to public schools.
- Adhere to state and federal laws, regulations and guidelines.
- Must provide information to the Governing Council to demonstrate that the charter is well managed.
- Compile information for annual state and federal filing requirements.
- Report any legal conflicts.

Financial

- Prepare annual budget with input from staff and business manager.

- Work with and support the Business Manager and Governing Council to ensure financial stability for the school.
- Oversee preparation of periodic financial reports
- Implement proper financial controls.
- Obtain additional funding through outside sources.
- Ensure all state and federal paperwork is correct and sent on time.

Planning

- Ensure mission and program direction are followed according to charter expectations.
- Develop strategic plan with staff input and records progress.
- Develop specific programming to meet goals and objectives specific to the charter mission.
- Oversee the physical plant maintenance.
- Implement growth plan.
- Student and staff recruitment.

Policy

- Ensure compliance with Taos Academy Mission and Vision along with the educational goals and objectives.
- Develop student and parent handbook.
- Identify need for new policy.
- Enforce policy and procedures to ensure a safe and positive learning environment.

- Ensure the implementation of policy and assist the Governing Council in analyzing policy options.
- School-wide inventory

Personnel

- Recommend changes in personnel policies to the Governing Council.
- Recommend all personnel hires and dismissals with the consultation of the governing council.
- Annually evaluates performance of staff members.
- Align teacher assignments to meet the educational objectives of Taos Academy.
- Facilitate the implementation of Professional Development.
- Provide periodic observations and annual evaluations of teaching staff and other personnel, as appropriate

Student Accountability

- Ensure progress for Adequate Yearly Progress standards.
- State student reporting for STARS
- Ensure student success and progress monitoring
- Ensure compliance with educational goals and objectives.

Public Relations

- Develop productive relationships with parents and community members to further ensure educational excellence.
- Review satisfaction surveys and make changes if necessary.
- Facilitate outreach to community resources

A.3 Describe the policies and procedures by which the governing body will operate, including board powers and duties; budgeting and operation of the school; and how decisions will be made.

In accordance with the 1999 Charter Schools Act Taos Academy will operate with a school-centered Governing Council, site-based and autonomous fiscal management, and an innovative educational program. The Governing Council will be empowered to make decisions in school matters unless otherwise prescribed by the Public Education Department or other state and federal laws and regulations. The Governing Council will not be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school other than on an advisory level.

Board Power and Duties

The primary powers and duties of the Governing Council will be to:

- Develop educational and operational policies
- Employ Educational Director and evaluate the director annually
- Review, approve and monitor implementation of the annual budget
- Acquire, lease and dispose of property, both real and personal to the extent permissible by laws applicable to public schools
- Initiate lawsuits or take all necessary steps to protect interests
- Authorize the repair and maintenance of all property
- Enter contracts consistent with approved budget for any service or activity that is required to perform in order to carry out the educational program
- Adopt rules and policies pertaining to the administration of all powers or duties of the Governing Council

- Accept or reject any charitable gift, grant, device or bequest
- Approve amendments to the Charter
- Acquire and dispose of property
- Amend procedures provided for in the Bylaws
- Delegate to the Educational Director the authority to implement the charter, policies and procedures, facilities plans, budget and such other directives and policies adopted by the Governing Council from time to time. To the extent reasonable, the Governing Council shall not be involved in the day-to-day operations of the school
- The Governing Council will have primary responsibility for the development and review of all major policies; be a resource for problem resolution escalated by the Educational Director to the Governing Council according to policies, procedures and appropriate protocol; and review recommendations submitted by the Educational Director and other Governing Council Advisors. Examples would include, but not be limited to, curriculum, budget development, and final approval of contracts
- Promote a cooperative relationship with its charter authorizer; to function in accordance with the New Mexico Charter School Act and resolve any dispute, that may arise between the School and its charter authorizer
- Such other powers and authorities as provided for by law.
 - Charter School Act (NMSA 1978 §§ 22-8B-1 et seq.)
 - School Personnel Act (NMSA 1978 §§ 22-10A-1 et seq.);
 - Procurement Code (NMSA 1978 §§ 13-1-1 et. seq.);
 - Open Meetings Act (NMSA 1978, Sections 10-15-1 et seq.);
 - Public School Finance Act (NMSA 1978 §§22-8-1 et seq.); and

applicable rules and regulations issued by the New Mexico Public Education Department (“PED”) (contained in Title 6 of the New Mexico Administrative Code)

Development and size of Governing Council:

From the term that begins upon the approval of this charter all members of the Governing Council shall be appointed by the founding members as listed in the charter applications. Positions that become available on the Governing council after this term shall be filled by the remaining majority vote of the Governing Council.

The Governing Council consisting of six (6) members shall govern Taos Academy. Taos Academy’s Educational Director will be the seventh member of this council and will have voting rights only to break a tie vote. The Governing Council may also include other non-voting members: student, parent, and staff member. This aligns with our advisory required participation.

A Governing Council member will hold office for three years from the date of their first election. Members may serve no more than two elected terms during an eight-year period. Terms will be staggered so that approximately one third of the terms expire each year. The seats on the Governing Council shall be assigned as follows:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Seat 1- | term expires on June 30 th , 2011 and every three years following |
| Seat 2- | term expires on June 30 th , 2011 and every three years following |
| Seat 3- | term expires on June 30 th , 2012 and every three years following |
| Seat 4- | term expires on June 30 th , 2012 and every three years following |
| Seat 5- | term expires on June 30 th , 2013 and every three years following |
| Seat 6- | term expires on June 30 th , 2013 and every three years following |

The governing body will be selected from the community. Due to the nature of the responsibilities of a Board of Finance, Taos Academy will recruit community members who have finance, business, law, and/or school leadership experience.

Individuals wishing to serve on the Governing Council need to submit their names, brief resumes, and a short statement outlining their interests, goals, and objectives in serving on the Governing Council. If a Governing Council Member resigns, the member's seat will be filled by a majority vote of the remaining Governing Council members until the expiry of the term without penalty against the two-term limit.

The Taos Academy Governing Council will manage the general property, business, and affairs of the charter school. The Governing council may exercise powers provided by the State Board of Education, the Taos Academy Charter Application, and the charter bylaws. The Governing Council will assign and reassign as necessary duties and responsibilities to appropriate committees.

Governing Council Meetings:

The Governing Council will meet at regularly advertised monthly meetings. All meetings will be open to the public and the Council will provide notices to comply with all provisions of the Open Meetings Act. All meetings will be advertised in the local media and posted throughout the area in a timely manner and according to the provisions of the Open Meetings Act (NMSA 1978.10.15). An agenda will be made public and contain items of business to be discussed. Public participation will be made available at a specific time in each agenda. Personnel issues will be discussed in closed session and reported thereafter. A majority vote will be required to pass a vote on school matters.

The general rules of procedures will be governed by a modified version of Robert's Rules of Order.

When necessary the Governing Council may proceed into Executive Session as provided by The Open Meetings Act to discuss personnel matters, litigation, and acquisitions or sales of real property. Final actions taken in Executive Session shall be taken into open session if required by the Act. Members of the Governing Council will be expected to adhere to the Code of Ethics for New Mexico School Board Members.

Role of Governing Council in Policy Making, Personnel Decisions, etc.

The decisions and role of the Taos Academy Governing Council in areas such as policy, personnel, budgeting, curriculum, contracts, and facility rests in the voting members of the Governing Council. The State Board of Education requires the Governing Council to be accountable for content standards, benchmarks, performance standards, state accreditation, standardized testing, and the school report card. Taos Academy Governing Council will uphold all those state requirements.

The Taos Academy Governing Council will make known and delegate all programs, policies, procedures, fiscal and otherwise, to the Educational Director and Business Manager, who will then be responsible for their implementation and administration on a day-to-day basis. The Governing Council will review and discuss annually the appropriate methods of implementing the school's program, policies, and procedures with all educators, staff, parents, and students. The Council will review the policies at least annually for compliance with all state and federal Acts and regulations.

Taos Academy will operate in compliance with all local, state or federal laws, acts, rules and regulations including constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination

on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, disability, age, creed, gender, religion, or ancestry.

Parental/Community Involvement:

Taos Academy Governing Council is committed to parental and community involvement to further utilize resources needed to maximize student potential for success. Our parent cooperative model forms partnerships for parents to be actively involved in their child's educational growth through advisory roles, emotional intelligence training, volunteering, etc.

Advisory council is a representative structure for students and parents, through which they can become involved in the affairs of the school, working in partnership with school management and staff for the benefit of the school and its students. The advisory council brings a forum to share ideas, interests, and concerns with teachers and school officials. Part of the advisory council's duties will be to assign a parent liaison to report to the Governing Council. This will ensure that decision making will be shared among all those associated with the school. The parent liaison has no voting powers.

Community members will be asked to participate in Taos Academy by offering internships to our students, time for special projects, student support, and/or expertise of any kind. Taos Academy will look to the community at large for ideas in developing community awareness, social responsibility, cultural enrichment, craftsmanship, sustainability, and civic leadership. The Taos Academy Governance Council will actively recruit this community involvement.

A.4 Outline the criteria and process that will be used to select the school’s leader and the process by which the school leader will be evaluated. (See Appendix C for Administrator Evaluation Criteria)

The Governing Council will hire and evaluate the Educational Director. The Governing Council will advertise the Educational Directors position. The Governing Council will follow [6.69.3(1-9) NMAC], PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMINISTRATORS, as criteria for an Educational Director. The Governing Council will interview possible candidates and select, by majority vote, a leader for Taos Academy.

The Governing Council will gather feedback on the Educational Director’s performance from the Educational Director, school staff, parents, students, and the community. Using performance evaluation requirements for administrators, the council will develop an evaluative tool to allow the educational community to fill out once per year. After considering the information from all sources the Council will provide a formal evaluation to the Educational Director. The Governing Council has the right to terminate the Educational Director at any time with a majority vote.

A.5 Describe the manner in which the annual audit of the administrative operations of the charter school is to be conducted.

Taos Academy will be audited annually by an independent state auditor. The audit will be performed on the school’s financial records as required by Section 12.6.3, NMSA 1978. The audit will be conducted in accordance with the Officer of the State Auditor Rule (93-2), generally accepted auditing standards and the Manual Governance Audits of Entities of the State of New Mexico. A criterion and timeline will be developed

by the Governing Council in accordance to state requirements. Cost of the audit is budgeted through a specific line item in the Taos Academy operational budget.

To ensure long-term financial stability, Taos Academy will conduct an internal audit. The Governing Council will develop a realistic timetable for these audits. The Chief Financial Officer or Governing Council designate will oversee the internal audit process. This council member shall identify areas for audit, develop a timetable for review, and review and report recommendations made in the audit.

A designated internal auditor will independently review, evaluate, and report through audits and management studies the status of the following: financial condition and/or soundness of practice of a function or program; accuracy of financial and property record keeping; compliance with applicable laws, policies, guidelines, and procedures; and effectiveness and economy of operations. All Taos Academy staff members will furnish any an all requested Taos Academy information and records within their custody including property, equipment, and facility for audit purposes.

B. DESCRIPTION OF GOVERNING BODY

B.1 A description of the responsibilities and obligations of the Governing Board as a whole, individual members and officers.

Taos Academy will be governed by the Governing Council, who will act as a Board of Finance for the state-approved charter school. The Governing Council has a responsibility to ensure that Taos Academy operates in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, and meets its commitments to the PED as reflected in its charter. In accordance with the 1999 Charter School Act, Taos Academy Governing Council will be

held responsible for its fiscal performance. The Governing Council will be obligated to uphold the following:

- Fiscal oversight
- Legal compliance
- Progress towards achievement of school's goals
- Strategic planning
- Policy development
- Community partnerships
- Hiring and supervising school's administration
- Charter compliance
- Public Relations

For a full description of the Governing Council roles and responsibilities, please see section A.2b - Roles and responsibilities for key school leadership positions.

The Governing Council will consist of: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and two additional offices to be determined.

President: The President will act as a liaison between the Governing Council and the Educational Director and Business Manager. The President will coordinate all orders and resolutions of the council with the Educational Director and Business Manager and will review progress with these individuals at the Governing Council Meetings.

Vice President: The Vice President will have all powers and perform all duties of the President in the absence, resignation, or incapacity of the President.

Secretary: The Secretary will keep full minutes of all meetings of the Governing Council.

Treasurer: The Treasurer will oversee the maintenance of records for all revenues and expenditures of the Charter School, maintain accurate and up-to-date records of the school budget, and oversee the monthly status of these records.

B.2 List of each Governing Council member and a description of their qualifications.

Arthur J Mulligan – CPA & CFO

Formal Education:

- B. S. Degree in Industrial Administration, with an emphasis in accounting and finance, Iowa State University, 1975.

Professional Experience:

- Currently **Chief Financial Officer** for the Red River Ski Area, Inc. since 2001. From 1999 through 2001 was the Chief Financial Officer for the Angel Fire Resort group of companies, which included real estate development, time share promotions and resort operations, including skiing, golf, hotel and property management, etc. From 1995 to 1999 was the Comptroller for the Red River Ski Area, Inc. Prior to moving to Red River in 1995, owned and operated a broker/dealer company in Texas primarily involved with private placement syndications and personal investments from 1982. Was a member of the NASD, SIPC and registered with the SEC. Worked for Merrill Lynch & Co from 1980 to 1982 as a registered representative. Upon graduation from Iowa State University in 1975 immediately joined the CPA firm of Peat, Marwick & Mitchell, now

called KPMG. Obtained a CPA certificate and practiced as a CPA until 1980.

Tracy Jaramillo - Charter School Consultant

Formal Education

- BA in Anthropology, Colorado College (1980)
- Alternative Teaching Licensure, Northern New Mexico (2002)
- MA in Curriculum and Instruction with emphasis in ECE, NMSU (currently enrolled)

Professional Experience:

- 2004-Present: NM Pre-K teacher mentor, trainer and assessment monitor
First Born, home visitor
- 1993-2004 **Anansi Day School & Anansi Charter School founder,**
administrator, Kindergarten and Preschool teacher
- 1990-1993 Leaping Lizards, Preschool teacher
- 1981-1990 Taos Valley School, Preschool and Kindergarten teacher

Traci Filiss – Taos Academy Founder & Virtual Education Consultant

Current Certification–

- Level 3 Instructional Leader New Mexico Teacher License – Elementary certification - K-8 - Highly Qualified in Science and Technology

- Level 3 Instructional Leader New Mexico Teacher License – Secondary certification – Science and Technology Endorsements

Formal Education –

- Education Specialist Certification: Educational Leadership
The University of New Mexico Albuquerque, NM. (2007-Present)
- M.Ed. Degree in Curriculum, Design and Instruction: Instructional Technology Grand Canyon University Phoenix, Arizona (2002 –2004)
- Upper Valley Teacher Training Program
Dartmouth College Hanover, N.H. (1991 - 1992)
- Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology with Business minor
Mars Hill College Mars Hill, N.C. (1986 - 1989)

Professional Experience –

- 2006 – 2008 Wheeler Peak Online Academy, Eagle Nest, NM
Director/ Coordinator
Founder of online school. See **virtual education experience** and qualifications.
- 1997 – 2006 Eagle Nest Elementary/Middle School, Eagle Nest, NM
Teacher: Middle school literature and math teacher, kindergarten special needs instructor, second and third grade classroom teacher and online instructional support teacher and curriculum director.
- 1995 – 1996 Enos Garcia Intermediate School Taos, NM

Teacher: Fifth grade inclusion classroom.

- 1992 – 1995 Woodstock Union Middle School, Woodstock, VT

Teacher: Eighth grade science teacher: my curriculum integrated chemistry, physics, and astronomy within an interdisciplinary team.

Virtual education experience and qualifications

As Director/Coordinator I performed the follow duties:

Administrator

- Provide direction and leadership to continue providing virtual education
- Develop progress plans for at risk students
- Monitor student/teacher performance
- Approve Teacher's Pay
- Coordinate all program delivery

Curriculum Director

- Responsible for selecting curriculum to be used
- Vendor negotiations
- Standards Alignments
- Select appropriate supplemental curriculum for blended students

Teacher training

- Provide all training for online teaching
- Training for use of on-line teaching tools

Parent Communication

- Contact parents and students on progress and attendance

- Current events i.e. field trips, picture day, academic contests, etc.

Student Communications

- Support students in academic and personal needs.
- Contact students of upcoming events

Registration

- Screen new students, enroll, and place academically
- Screen new teachers for “highly qualified” certifications
- Assign students to the appropriate teachers

IEP’s

- Support all IEP assessments and implementations

In Lab Coordination

- Coordinate “in-lab” student schedules with appropriate blended classes
- Provide supplemental curriculum for blended students

Testing coordinator

- Coordinate time and place for all standardized testing.
- Administer state mandated testing

State Regulations

- Stay current on state adopted regulations and laws
- Developed and made changes to policy as needed

Legislative Communications

- Continue to advocate for quality virtual education for the students of N.M.

Public Relations

- Provide information as needed to promote WPOA

Teacher

- On-line
- In-lab tutoring

Consulting

- Developed and implemented two neighboring successful online schools
- Consulted on IDEAL-NM original business proposal for the State Cyber Academy.

Karin Moulton – Teacher Consultant

Formal Education

- BA in Graphic Arts from Ringling School of Art and Design (1985)
- Level 2 New Mexico Teaching License – Elementary certification –K-8

Professional Experience

- 2006-present Taos Municipal Schools, **Teacher for gifted and talented** students, grades K-5, and district coordinator for gifted programming.
- 2007-present Wheeler Peak Online Academy, Teacher for high school French I, II, and III.
- 2003-2006 – Yaxche School – Teacher for grades 3-5
- 2000-2003 – Taos Municipal Schools, Teacher for grades 6-8, Honors Language Arts and Pre- Algebra
- 1997-2000 - Taos Municipal Schools, Teacher for gifted and talented students, grades K-5

Dennis Hedges – Special Education Consultant

Formal Education

- Formal Education – Level 3A Instructional Leader New Mexico Teacher License – **K-12 Special Education**, with endorsements in TESOL and Bilingual Education
- Master's Degree in Special Education 1980 University of Iowa
- Approximately 100 graduate hours in comparative education, educational technology and bilingual education (U. of Iowa and U. of New Mexico)
- Bachelor's Degree 1974 University of Iowa

Professional Experience

- 2007-Present: Adjunct Professor for the University of New Mexico -Taos (teaching classes in Mathematics and Education)
- 2006-07 Instructor for UNM Adult Education Program
- 1981-2003 Special Ed Teacher, Computer Coordinator & Teacher of the Gifted -Taos Municipal Schools -Taos, NM
- 1974-1981 Teacher and Director- Willowwind School- Iowa City, Iowa
- 1970-present Curriculum developer, grant writer, and presenter of many educational workshops (including National Bilingual Conference)
- Elementary Chess Coach (1989-present) winner of 11 NM State Elementary Championships and numerous National awards including 2001 National Coach of the Year

- 2005- Consultant for Mayatan Bilingual School and Instructor for Arte Acción- Copan Ruinas, Honduras, Spanish Language Studies in Cuernavaca, San Miguel de Allende, and Nayarit, MX; Antigua, Guatemala; Honduras, Cuba, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic

Darlene Archuleta – Teacher Consultant

Formal Education

- BA in Elementary Education from Adams State College, Alamosa, Colorado (December, 1990)
- Level 2 New Mexico Teaching License – Elementary certification –K-8
- Currently working on MA in Education with an emphasis in Math and Science from New Mexico State University (will graduate in December, 2008)

Professional Experience

- 1991 - Present Taos Municipal Schools, Elementary Teacher –Enos Garcia Elementary School. I taught 5th grade for 9 years and I am currently teaching 4th grade.
- 2007 – Present Grade-level Chairperson for 4th grade
- 2007 – Present School Council Member
- 2006 – Present MSA (Math and Science Academy) member
- 2004 – Present SQS trainer at Enos Garcia Elementary School
- 2000 – 2003 Discovery teacher – 4th grade at Enos Garcia Elementary School

B.3 Plans for board recruitment and selection, including the orientation process for new members and ongoing professional development.

From the term that begins upon the approval of this charter all members of the Governing Council shall be appointed by the founding members as listed in the charter applications. Positions that become available on the Governing council after this term shall be filled by the remaining majority vote of the Governing Council. The governing body will be selected from the community. Due to the nature of the responsibilities of a Board of Finance, Taos Academy will recruit community members who have finance, business, law, and/or school leadership experience.

Individuals wishing to serve on the Governing Council need to submit their names, brief resumes, and a short statement outlining their interests, goals, and objectives in serving on the Governing Council. For specific details please see section A.3 Development and size of Governing Council. Newly elected board members will be expected to participate in trainings, review the charter bylaws and content, and review meeting minutes. The Governing Council will support new member by ensuring he/she feels prepared to participate in the decision-making process.

The Governing Council will attend training in charter school law, budget, policy, procurement code, open meetings act, code of ethics, strategic planning and the Council will support the New Mexico Coalition for Charter Schools as appropriate. Taos Academy will provide each Council member travel and training expenses as appropriated by the Council.

B.4 Explanation of how staff, families, and the community will be notified of the opportunity to be involved in the governance of the school.

Taos Academy Governing Council is committed to parental and community involvement to further utilize resources needed to maximize student potential for success. The governing council, educational director, and staff will be responsible for communicating school-related news to parents and the community in a timely manner using newspaper, radio, e-mail, and web-site postings.

Staff, parents, and community members will be welcome to be involved in the governance of the school. For individuals wanting to serve on the Governing Council, vacancies will be posted as stated above, and prospective applicants will need to submit their names, brief resumes, and a short statement outlining their interests, goals, and objectives in serving on the Governing Council. The Advisory Council will be established for staff, students, and parents to participate in the decision-making process for the school. This program is spelled out in section IV, “Educational Plan,” of this proposal.

C. PARTNERSHIPS (See Appendix D for letters of collaboration)

Taos Academy will partner with the following organizations:

University of New Mexico Taos:

Jim Gilroy, Dean of Instruction

505-737-6224 gilroy@unm.edu

Judy Hofer, Director ABE/GED program

505-758-5904 judy@unm.edu

Taos Academy and UNM will work together to support student educational needs for bridging the high school/college experience. The ABE(Adult Basic Education)/GED program will offer additional recovery options for Taos Academy students.

UNM will not be involved in the governance of Taos Academy.

Taos Municipal Schools

Nadine Vigil, principal Taos Elementary

305 Don Fernando Street

Taos, NM 87571

505-737-6070, nadvig@taosschools.org

Taos Academy will partner with the Taos Municipal Schools to offer teacher and parent trainings in Emotional Intelligence.

Taos Municipal Schools will not be involved in the governance of Taos Academy

Innovative Digital Education and Learning - IDEAL New Mexico

Dr. Tim Snyder, Director

421 Quantum Rd NE

Rio Rancho, NM 87124

(505) 892-7222

We will be using IDEAL New Mexico curriculum, where appropriate. Taos Academy would be willing to collaborate on developing on-line curriculum with IDEAL New Mexico.

IDEAL New Mexico will not be involved in the governance of Taos Academy

Anansi Charter School

Michele Hunt, director

57 State Road 230

Des Montes, NM 87514

505-776-2256

Anansi Charter School and Taos Academy will collaborate on Emotional Intelligence training and share staff training where possible.

Anansi Charter School will not be involved in the governance of Taos Academy

Rocky Mountain Youth Corp

Carl Colonius, director

1021 Salazar Road

Taos, NM 87571

505-751-1420

Rocky Mountain Youth Corp (RMYC) and Taos Academy will share leadership training opportunities for staff and students. Included, but not limited to these opportunities are ropes course, forest service trail maintenance, Emotional Intelligence training, academic recovery options, sustainable agriculture projects, and green building projects. Should Taos Academy and RMYC both be in the Taos Youth Collaborate business complex for youth, we would also have the opportunity to share services such as office management, technical assistance, and janitorial.

Rocky Mountain Youth Corps will not be involved in the governance of Taos Academy

Town of Taos

Taos Youth and Family Center

Brian Greer, director

407 Paseo del Canon E

Taos, NM 87571

505-758-4160

Taos Youth and Family Center will provide space for meetings free of charge, swim classes, skating classes, recreation and PE opportunities for students. Taos Academy will provide nutrition and technology education classes for Town of Taos staff and community members and participate in youth activities offered by the town. Taos Academy students will have the opportunity to participate in the Town of Taos' Mayor Advisory Committee, advising the mayor on youth issues.

The Town of Taos will not be involved in the governance of Taos Academy.

Bridges For Education

Sue Goldberg, director

536 Paseo Del Pueblo Norte

Taos, NM 87571

505-758-5074

Bridges and Taos Academy will work together to assist students in seeking higher education through counseling, staff, parent, and student training, career readiness classes, and participation in college fair and a local alumni network.

Bridges will not be involved in the governance of Taos Academy

Taos Community Foundation

Lisa O'Brien

Grants Officer

114 Des Georges Lane

Taos, NM 87571

505-737-9300

Taos Community Foundation and Taos Academy will collaborate to provide volunteer opportunities in the community for Taos Academy youth.

Teambuilders Counseling Services, Inc

Lorraine Freedle, clinical director

1299 Paseo Del Pueblo Norte

El Prado, NM 87529

Team builders and Taos Academy will collaborate to provide social services to students.

Teambuilders will not be involved in the governance of Taos Academy

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern New Mexico

Director, Taos Satellite Offices 1-866-983-8360

Taos Academy will partner with Big Brothers and Big Sisters to provide services to students in need and to provide volunteer opportunities to high school students.

Big Brothers and Big Sisters will not be involved in the governance of Taos Academy

Rivers and Birds – Adventures in Learning

Roberta Salazar, director

480 Hwy 150

Arroyo Seco, NM 87514

505-776-5200

Taos Academy and Rivers and birds will partner to share curriculum ideas, staff training, and to provide out door education curriculum to students.

Rivers and Birds will not be involved in the governance of Taos Academy

Santa Fe Institute

GUTS (Growing Up Thinking Scientifically) Program

Greg Malone, outreach coordinator, 575-984-8800, greg@projectguts.org

Project GUTS will provide training to teachers and students on computer programming which teaches scientific thinking. Taos Academy staff will share their expertise with trainers in the areas of classroom management, technology, and science. GUTS program and the Santa Fe Institute will not be involved in the governance of Taos Academy

Northside Health and Fitness Center (NSHFC)

Sheryl Demotte, owner

1307 Paseo Del Pueblo Norte

Taos, NM 87571

505-751-1242

Taos Academy and NSHFC will collaborate on wellness, fitness, nutrition and exercise classes (such as spinning and yoga) for students and staff.

NSHFC will not be involved in the governance of Taos Academy

Taos Milagro Rotary

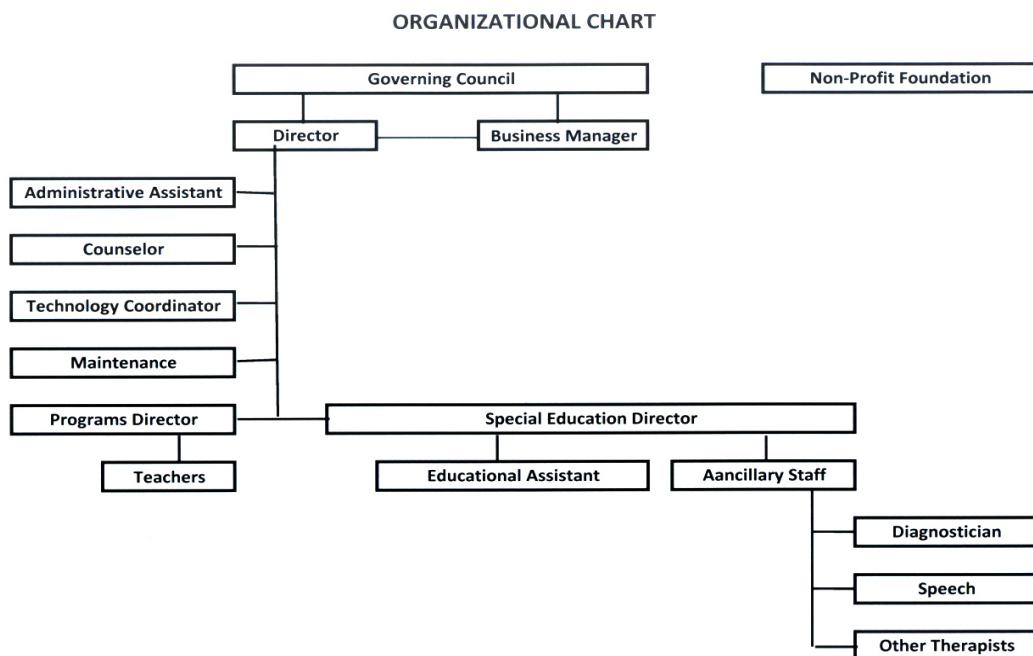
Amanda Lora, RYLA chairwoman, 575-770-1418

TA and Taos Milagro Rotary will work together to involve students in the annual Youth Leadership Association Conference (RYLA).

Taos Milagro Rotary will not be involved in the governance of Taos Academy

D. SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

D.1 Describe the site-based management structure at the school. Provide an organizational chart. Include job descriptions that identify key roles, responsibilities and accountability for each position.



The governing council will have full fiscal responsibility along with other duties listed in A.1 of this section. The Business Manager and Educational Director of the school will have direct communications with the Council pertaining to the operations of the school. In turn the Administrative Assistant, Counselor, Maintenance, Director of Special Programs and Director of Special Education will report directly to the Educational Director pertaining to day-to-day operations. The general education teachers

will report directly to the Director of Special Programs for student issues and report to the Educational Director for personnel issues.

The Educational Director will serve as principal of Taos Academy. Key roles, responsibilities, and accountability will include those listed in NM statute 22-10A-19. As part of the highly objective uniform statewide standard of evaluation for teachers, the educational director shall observe each teacher's classroom practice to determine the teacher's ability to demonstrate state-adopted competencies. At the beginning of each school year, teachers and the educational director shall devise professional development plans for the coming year, and performance evaluations shall be based in part on how well the professional development plan was carried out. At least every two years, the educational director shall attend a training program approved by the department to improve their evaluation, administrative and instructional leadership skills.

Specific responsibilities of the Educational Director are listed in Section A2b of this Charter application.

Business Manager:

- Develop, balance, and maintain the annual school budget and presenting it to the educational director and the governing council.
- Prepare and present the Budget Adjustment Requests (BAR)
- Responsible for impressed funds and disbursement of funds
- Prepare payroll, including payments to contracted staff
- Reconcile bank statements
- Prepare requisitions and monitor P.O.'s

- Keep up to date on all state statutes related to finances of a public school pursuant to NMAC, and follow GAAP standards
- Maintain all employees' earnings, deductions, and leave records
- Complete required PED financial reports and monthly, quarterly, and annual payroll tax-benefit reports required by federal, state, and local government agencies
- Accommodate and assists State Auditor in yearly audit
- Responsible for accurate financial record keeping-collect, record, and deposit money
- Train in using the Operating Budget Management System (OBS) to ensure that data comply with federal and state laws and procedures and the PED
- Work with the Educational Director and Director of Special Programs to obtain additional funding

Administrative Assistant:

- Order classes from curriculum providers
- Computer and book inventory
- Keep history of potential new student inquiries
- Answer phone and record messages
- Maintain inventory of assets
- Prepare agendas for all meetings and send out notification, prepares minutes from meetings.
- Provide general information for students, teachers, parents, administrators, and public.

- Keep all records organized
- Maintain students cumulative files and attendance records
- Monitor and input student information and changes.
- Create Governing Council Reports at Educational Director's direction
- Write and draft memos, letters, and communication
- Create forms as needed
- Coordinate the transfer of or request for any records from other schools
- Oversee and maintain office equipment and supplies
- Record and report staff absences and requests for leave
- Assist Business Manager with supply and instructional material orders

Director of Special Programs:

- Arrange and maintains collaboration with community agencies
- Help to arrange and maintain contractual services for special programs
- Arrange training for staff for special programs
- Help to schedule enhancement and leadership classes for students
- Communicate with teachers concerning minor student issues
- Help arrange internships, mentorships, and volunteer opportunities in the community
- Liaison with community to establish service-learning projects and opportunities.
- Work with the Business Manager and Educational Director to obtain additional funding
- Help to develop, revise, and enforce all policies and procedures of the school

Counselor:

- Support students in academic and personal needs.
- Contact students of upcoming events
- Coordinate time and place for all standardized testing.
- Administer state-mandated testing
- Collaborate with parents and teachers to communicate social or emotional concerns concerning a student.
- Help to arrange social or emotional services for students in need
- Help teachers with college prep-entrance tests, essays, applications, resumes and general information
- Career planning – interests and exploration, ability matching, long-term planning.
- Help organize internships in the community

General Education Teachers:

- Implement key foundations in the charter.
- Maintain appropriate certification to meet the “highly qualified” requirements of No Child Left Behind(NCLB) and the State of New Mexico
- Maintain current student performance level information.
- Collaborate in providing appropriate additional or alternative studies to students who are either not meeting or exceeding attainment.
- Keep accurate and concise records.
- Maintain work portfolios.
- Establish classroom procedures.
- Coordinate enhancement opportunities and volunteers in the classroom.

- Report all education-related activities to the Educational Director.
- Communicate regularly with families regarding student progress
- Analyze student data to drive instruction and track student progress
- Maintain close involvement with the community.
- Collaborate in their professional development plan.
- Attend Taos Academy staff meetings.
- Attend Governing Council meetings, if requested.
- Implement Taos Academy policies as approved by the Governing Council
- Attends school-related community events.

Director of Special Education:

- Maintain compliance of all New Mexico Special Education regulations for Taos Academy according to NM Chapter 22, Article 13, Sections 22-13-5 through 22-13-8, NM Chapter 6.31.2 NMAC and 6.11.2 NMAC.
- Communicate with administration, parents of students with special needs, their teachers, support staff, and other pertinent personnel regarding special education policies, procedures, and/or technical assistance.
- Create and maintain IEP and SAT forms and meetings for Taos Academy
- Manage and maintains special education confidential files.
- Help find and recruit special education teachers and contract providers
- Help with applications for state and federal special education funding
- Handle Medicaid school-based services
- Arrange diagnostic testing for qualified students

- Ensure that the appropriate state reports are correct and submitted in a timely fashion.
- Ensure that all special education students are receiving their required services in the Least Restrictive Environment.
- Assist with Professional Development as it pertains to all teachers working with special needs students, particularly differentiated instruction.

Educational Assistants:

- Support student learning in any way deemed appropriate by the teacher
- Participate in staff and professional development
- Assist with teacher clerical duties
- Maintain flexibility with assigned duties

Maintenance

- Provide janitorial services for Taos Academy
- Maintain building in good working order
- Keep facility safe according to NM state statutes
- Communicate with Educational Director about any issues with building maintenance

Expectations for all Taos Academy staff

Taos Academy employees are required to be appropriate role models for the students.

Employees will:

- Model and reinforce appropriate professional attire.
- Model and reinforce appropriate behavior.

- Maintain consistent supervision and behavioral expectations.
- Communicate immediately with parents when problems arise.
- Communicate appropriately when problems arise.
- Uphold the mission and vision of Taos Academy

D.2 Provide a staffing plan for each year of the first charter term, including the proposed student-teacher ratio.

Taos Academy anticipates growth of its students by 30-40 students per year after the first year due to the success of the staff and the program. The proposed student-teacher ratio is to be one teacher for every 18 students.

First Year: Taos Academy will staff the following positions: one full-time educational director, one full-time administrative assistant, one full-time special education director, one contracted special education service provider, three full-time and one half-time general education teachers, one full-time educational assistant, one full-time special programs director, a contracted art instructor, one half-time counselor, a half-time technology coordinator, and one half-time maintenance staff member.

Second Year: Taos Academy will maintain the same positions from the first year and will add the following positions: one half-time business manager, increase technology coordinator to three quarter time, increase contracted staff for art and Spanish, increased contracted services for special education providers, one full time Certified Academic Language Therapist CALT/literacy specialist, increase counselor to full-time, and increase general education teachers to four full-time teachers.

Third Year: Taos Academy will maintain the same positions from the second year and will add the following positions: increase general education teachers to five full-

time teachers, increase contracted staff for art, Spanish, science and outdoor education, add another full-time CALT/literacy specialist, increased contracted services for special education providers, increase technology coordinator to full-time, increase maintenance to three-quarter time. We will also add a part-time health assistant.

Fourth Year: Taos Academy will maintain the same positions from the third year and will add the following positions: increase general education teachers to seven full-time teachers, add another full-time educational assistant, increase contracted staff for art, Spanish, science and outdoor education, increase business manager to full-time

Fifth Year: Taos Academy will maintain the same positions from the fourth year and will add the following positions: increase general education teachers to eight full-time teachers, increase contracted staff for art, Spanish, science and outdoor education, increased contracted services for special education providers.

D.3. Explain the school's discipline process for staff that includes due process.

Taos Academy employees will be required to exercise their duties as specified in state statutes, PED regulations, federal regulations, and as assigned by the Taos Academy Governing Council in accordance with the approved charter. Failure or refusal to follow or implement the written policies and procedures of Taos Academy, or the lawful written or oral orders, requests or instructions of the Educational Director or a person acting under the authority of the Director, or the actual or implied willful refusal to follow written policies, regulations, rules, or procedures established by the Public Education Department and the Taos Academy Governing Council shall constitute insubordination and grounds for disciplinary action. Depending on the severity of the problem, the employee may receive any of the following:

- a. Informal counseling.
- b. Counseling and/or a written formal sanction to be placed in the teacher's personnel file.
- c. Initiation of termination or discharge proceedings.

Procedures:

Taos Academy will establish a fair procedure to ensure that all employees may bring legitimate complaints and disputes to the appropriate authority in order to secure equitable solutions. The goal is to provide a fair procedure to resolve expeditiously at the lowest possible administrative level problems that may arise affecting the welfare or working conditions of employees.

Step 1 An employee with a complaint or grievance should present it to the other party or parties involved in the complaint or grievance. The complaint or grievance must be in relation to school policies and procedures or federal or state regulations. The party bringing the complaint will discuss it with the individuals involved and will attempt to reach a satisfactory solution. Discussion key points and possible solutions will be recorded. If the grievance is not resolved informally to the satisfaction of the employee within 5 days of presentation to the parties involved, the employee may proceed to Step 2.

Step 2 The employee may make a request within 10 days of presentation of the complaint to the parties involved for a meeting with the Educational Director. The parties shall schedule a meeting within seven days of the request. The Educational Director will discuss it with the individuals involved and will attempt to reach a satisfactory solution. Discussion key points and possible solutions will be recorded. If the grievance is not

resolved to the satisfaction of the employee within 5 days of presentation to the Educational Director, the employee may proceed to Step 3.

Step 3 The employee may make a request after 5 days of presentation of the complaint to the Educational Director for a meeting with the Director and the Governing Council President. The parties shall schedule a meeting within seven days of the request. Discussion key points and possible solutions will be recorded.

Step 4 After this meeting, if the grievance remains unresolved the employee may request that the grievance be placed on the agenda of the next regular open Governing Council meeting. If appropriate, the agreement shall be addressed in Executive Session as provided for in the New Mexico Open Meetings Act.

Step 5 If the grievance still remains unresolved, the employee may make a written request for mediation by an outside mediator approved by both parties.

Employees shall at all times maintain the confidentiality of all disputes covered under this section, including disputes resolved and in progress.

Complaints and Disputes Between Employees

Employees shall not communicate grievances about other employees with anyone other than the Educational Director or the employee involved. In other words, an employee must not involve a third party other than the Educational Director in any interpersonal dispute. Doing so shall be grounds for disciplinary action and must without exception be reported by the Educational Director to the Governing Council.

Complaints Regarding Discrimination or Sexual Harassment

It will be the policy of Taos Academy to take seriously every complaint, actual or implied, involving alleged acts of discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex,

national origin, age or handicap, or complaints of sexual harassment. Taos Academy will investigate each complaint promptly and thoroughly. These complaints should first be directed to the Educational Director. The report must detail the nature of the alleged communication or behavior is, how often it was done, where, when, and if anyone else was present. If a teacher is informed of an act of harassment or discrimination by another party, it still remains his/her duty to report it to the Educational Director, without exception and within 24 hours. Failure to do so will be seen as grounds for formal action by the Governing Council. The Educational Director will interview the complainant, the alleged discriminator/harasser, and any other witnesses.

All information will be kept confidential to the extent possible. If appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken against the person(s) involved. If for any reason the complainant is unable or unwilling to take the complaint to the Educational Director, or if the complaint involves the Director, the complaint may be taken to any member of the Governing Council. These complaints should be submitted in writing.

Termination of Employees

Termination in the case of a certified school employee means the act of not employing the employee for the ensuing school year, and in the case of the noncertified employee, the act of severing the employment relationship with the employee. The notice of termination is a notice of intention not to reemploy for the ensuing school year. The reasons for termination may not be publicly disclosed by Taos Academy. Termination and its proceedings will adhere to NMSA 222-10-12; 22-10-14.

Employees With Less Than 3 Consecutive Years of Employment

Taos Academy may terminate an employee who has been employed fewer than three consecutive years for “any reason it deems sufficient.” If the employee requests, Taos Academy will provide written reasons for the termination to the employee within 10 days of the date of the request. The employee may request an opportunity to make a statement to the Governing Council if he/she submits a written request to the Director within 5 working days of the service of notice of termination.

Noncertified School Employees

Before terminating a noncertified employee, Taos Academy shall serve the employee with a written notice of termination.

Certified Instructors Employed for 3 or More Consecutive Years

Taos Academy may terminate a certified instructor who has been employed for three or more consecutive years only for “just cause.” “Just cause” is defined as “a reason that is rationally related to an employee's competence or turpitude or the proper performance of his/her duties and that is not in violation of the employee's civil or constitutional rights.”

Hearing Pursuant to 22-10- 14 NMSA

The employee may submit a written request to the Director for a hearing within 5 working days of the date of service of the notice of termination. The employee may also request a statement of the reasons for the termination decision, which Taos Academy must provide within 5 working days of the date of request. Within 10 working days of receipt of the written statement of reasons for termination, the employee may request, in writing, a meeting with the Governing Council. Such request must specify the grounds on

which the employee believes the termination decision was without just cause and set forth facts that the employee believes support his/her contentions.

The Governing Council will meet to hear the employee's statement in no less than 5 or more than 15 working days from the date it receives the employee's written statement. The hearing shall be conducted informally in accordance with the provisions of the Open Meetings Act. The Educational Director will first present the factual basis for the determination that just cause exists to terminate the employee, limited to those reasons that were provided to the employee in the notice of termination. The employee may then present his/her case as to why the administration lacks just cause to terminate, limited to the reasons specified in his/her written statement. The administration may then offer rebuttal testimony.

The employee and administration each have the right to be represented by a person of their choice. Both parties and the Governing Council have the right to question any of the witnesses who testify. State law prohibits the making of a record of the proceeding. The Governing Council may consider only the evidence presented at the hearing, and need consider only such evidence as it deems reliable. The Governing Council shall notify the employee and Educational Director of its decision in writing to the employee within 5 working days from the conclusion of the hearing.

Appeal Pursuant to 22-10-14.1 NMSA

An employee aggrieved by the Council's decision may appeal to an independent arbitrator by submitting a written appeal to the Director within 5 working days from receipt of the Council's written decision or refusal to grant a hearing, accompanied by a statement of particulars specifying the grounds on which the decision was impermissible

and a statement of facts supporting the employee's contentions. Failure to submit a timely appeal or a statement of particulars renders the Council's decision final. If a timely appeal is submitted with a statement of particulars, an arbitration hearing will be held pursuant to 22-10-14.1 NMSA.

Procedures Not Applicable to Certain Employees

The above hearing and appeal procedures are applicable to certified school instructors who have been employed for 3 or more consecutive years, but are not applicable to a certified school instructor employed to fill the position of a certified school instructor entering military service, or a person who is employed as a certified school administrator.

Discharge of Certified School Instructor Pursuant to 22-10-17 NMSA

To “discharge” means the act of severing the employment relationship with a certified school instructor prior to the expiration of the current employment contract. Dismissals from the school faculty and/or staff must be reviewed and approved by the Governing Council.

Notice of Intent to Recommend Discharge for Cause

The Educational Director must serve a written notice of intent to recommend discharge for cause on the employee in accordance with the law of service of process in civil actions, which notice will advise the employee of the right to a hearing before the Governing Council by giving the Director written notice of such an election within 5 working days of receipt of the notice to recommend discharge.

Discharge Hearing

The Governing Council will hold a discharge hearing no less than 20 and no more than 40 working days after the Director receives the written election from the employee. The employee will be given at least 10 days written notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing. The parties at the hearing may be represented by any person they choose.

The parties shall complete discovery by deposition and production of documents prior to the hearing. The Educational Director shall present evidence first, and has the burden of proving by a preponderance of evidence that at the time of the notice of intent to recommend discharge, he/she had just cause to discharge the certified school employee. The employee shall present his/her evidence thereafter. Either party may call, examine and cross-examine witnesses and introduce documentary evidence. An official record shall be made of the hearing at the Council's expense, and either party may have one copy. The Council shall render its written decision within 20 days of the conclusion of the hearing.

Appeal to Independent Arbitrator Pursuant to 22-10-17.1 NMSA

A certified school employee aggrieved by a decision of the Governing Council to discharge him/her after a discharge hearing may appeal to an independent arbitrator by submitting a written notice of appeal to the Director within 5 working days from receipt of the Governing Council's written decision. If a timely notice of appeal is submitted, a hearing will be held pursuant to 22-10-17.1 NMSA.

E. Employee Relations

E.1 Provide an explanation of the relationship that will exist between the school and its employees, including evidence that the terms and conditions of employment will be addressed with affected employees and their representatives.

Taos Academy will have policy adopted by the Governing Council for employee relations that centers on our emotional intelligence philosophy. This, as well as all school policy, will be approved before the start of school in August 2009. All parties will have training in EQ to further develop a healthy, community-based working relationship. Taos Academy will adhere to all state and federal regulation when handling employee-to-school relationships. Employees will be asked to follow the grievance policy when needed. If arbitration with an outside labor representative is needed, Taos Academy Governing Council and administration will participate in arbitration discussions where appropriate. Taos Academy administration and governing council shall comply with the requirements and procedures for collective bargaining as set forth in the Public Employees Bargaining Act as outlined at NMSA 1978, Section 10-7E-1 et seq.

E.2 Provide a description of the school's personnel policies and procedures that comply with all applicable federal statutes and regulations, and School Personnel Act. (See Appendix E.1. for Sample Personnel Policies)

Annotated Personnel Policy and Procedures

Taos Academy will be in accordance with Title 6, Chapter 60 -69, NMAC School Personnel, Article 10A, NMSA, School Personnel Act., and the Federal ADA/504. Appendix (D) provides greater detail for what is highlighted here. Taos Academy will

have full personnel policy and procedures adopted by the Governing Council before school opens in August 2009.

Equal Opportunity Employer - The Taos Academy will be an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, marital status, disability, handicap, or veteran status in employment or the provision of services. This includes, but is not limited to, admissions, educational services, financial aid and employment. Inquiries concerning the application of Title VI, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of PL 92-112, and the Age Discrimination Act may be referred to the Governing Council. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended, prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, and protects qualified applicants and employees with disabilities from discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, job training, fringe benefits, and other aspects of employment. The law also requires that covered entities provide qualified applicants and employees who have disabilities with necessary reasonable accommodations that do not impose undue hardship. It is the responsibility of the applicant or employee to inform the Governing Council that an accommodation is needed.

Background Investigation – Taos Academy will be in accordance with 22-10A-5 NMSA. Taos Academy may conduct work history, education history and/or reference investigations on each candidate recommended for hire, including but not limited to, substitutes and temporaries. Each candidate will be subject to a criminal background investigation, which may include mandatory fingerprinting at the candidate's expense, as a condition of further consideration for employment. Any offer of employment is contingent upon the satisfactory completion of all background investigations.

Staff-Community Relations - The Educational Director employs personnel who are specialists in the field of education to staff the school system. The Governing Council advises, however, that the task to be accomplished in the community by the professional school staff is not limited to the classroom. The Governing Council urges staff members to become active participants in community affairs and to set an example of good citizenship.

Staff members appearing before the public or professional groups may not speak for the Council or Director unless specifically authorized to do so. This policy is not to prohibit school personnel from speaking on behalf of the school system, its policies, rules and regulations, philosophies and programs.

Personnel Records- The Educational Director shall maintain a file on each employee. This file will be retained in the Director's office. The personnel records of the school system will comply with all State and Federal regulatory agencies. The records may include, but not be limited to, the following documents where applicable:

- a. Verification of previous service
- b. A complete transcript of college credits
- c. A current health certificate
- d. A current NM teaching certificate/license
- e. Retirement record
- f. Current contract or employment agreement
- g. Appropriate supervision reports
- h. A copy of birth certificate
- i. Background check

j. Results of drug testing

It shall be the policy of Taos Academy to protect the privacy of current, former and prospective employees to the extent permitted by law. Accordingly, all personnel information retained shall be considered confidential unless the Inspection of Public Records Act, NMSA 14-2-1 et. seq., requires otherwise.

Employee Leave Benefits- The following are categories for approved leave. Leave benefits do not apply to occasional employees.

Sick Leave

Maternity Leave

Family and Medical Leave

Personal Leave

Court or Jury Duty Leave

Worker's Compensation Leave Benefits

Other Leave of Absence

Military Leave

Instructional Leave

Professional Training Leave

Insurance Programs – Taos Academy will provide insurance benefits for employees as allowed by law. We will participate in New Mexico Public Schools Insurance Authority NMPSIA.

Retirement - All personnel are subject to the Educational Retirement Act. The general provisions are as published in a manual by the State Retirement Board.

Sexual Harassment – Taos Academy will be free from sexual harassment. The policy defined by Section 703, Title VII, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and New Mexico State Human Rights Act 28-1-7NMSA, forbids discrimination against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of sex. This policy similarly applies to nonemployee volunteers who work subject to the control of school authorities, and any other nonemployees including persons doing business with the school district.

Employee Safety- Taos Academy will maintain an effective "Hazard Communication Program" in accordance with the current New Mexico Occupational Health and Safety Act regulation 29 CFR 1910.1200. It is expected that all employees of this school district fully cooperate and participate in this program. Taos Academy will also develop policy for following all OSHA safety regulations including but not limited to Hazard Communication/Right to Know, Chemical Hygiene, Exposure to Blood Borne Pathogens, etc.

Clean Indoor Act/Tobacco-Free - Pursuant to the New Mexico Clean Indoor Air Act (Sections 26-16-1, NASA, 1978) and in recognition of the fact that smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco is one of the nation's greatest health hazards, smoking or the use of smokeless tobacco in any form is prohibited for use by students, school staff, parents, and school visitors in school buildings, on school property, in school vehicles, and by students at school functions away from school property.

Drug-Free Schools and Campuses/Drug-Free Workplace - The purpose of this policy is to ensure a drug-free environment for all employees, to establish a drug awareness program for all school personnel; to provide assurances to state and federal government agencies that the school is complying with the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace

Act of 1988 and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986, as amended in 1989, and all regulations promulgated there under; and to declare that the school shall make a good-faith effort to maintain a drug-free workplace.

Employee/Employer Relations – Taos Academy administration and governance council shall comply with the requirements and procedures for collective bargaining as set forth in the Public Employees Bargaining Act as outlined at NMSA 1978, Section 10-7E-1 et seq.

Contracts- All contracts or employment agreements with employees, except substitutes, shall be in writing; the salary shall be in accordance with adopted salary schedules and Title 6.66.1 NMAC, School Personnel. .

Salary Schedule- Taos Academy Director will prepare a salary schedule for each employee classification and in accordance to the licensure regulations of Title 6, Chapter 60, NMAC.

Recruitment- The Educational Director, within the limits of the school’s budget and the approved salary schedule, is committed to the policy of acquiring and retaining the most qualified personnel. Applications will be accepted on a year-round basis. All applicants will become part of the applicant pool and given consideration in filling positions. Applicants will be screened based on information submitted and selected applicants will be invited for an interview. All applications will be kept on file for one (1) year. Applicants may reactivate applications for an additional year by notifying the administration office in writing. Applications, job descriptions and requirements, and salary schedules will be available in the administration office.

Hiring - Upon the recommendations of the Educational Director, the Governance Council shall annually approve each employee.

Employee Assignment - Employees shall be assigned by the Educational Director to such duty and location as may be in the best interest of the school.

Supervision and Evaluation - Evaluation (both summative and formative) of all staff is accomplished according to Taos Academy's Staff Accountability Plan aligned to The New Mexico 3-Tiered Licensure System.

TEACHER PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FOR 3-TIERED LICENSURE-

The 3-Tiered Licensure annual teacher performance evaluation system provides a differentiated approach to teacher performance evaluation in compliance with the requirements on NMSA22-10A-4.B for each level of licensure: Level I Provisional Teacher, Level II Professional Teacher, and Level III Master Teacher. The teacher performance evaluation instrument has nine competencies with differentiated indicators for each licensure level. The teacher performance evaluation procedures and the Professional Development Plan (PDP) procedures are also differentiated for each of the three-licensure levels.

New Educator Support/Mentoring - Support will be provided to incoming staff by Educational Director, head teachers, retired and active teachers who have Level II or Level III licensure.

Suspension - An employee may be suspended from duty pending the outcome of a hearing or the investigation of charges, such suspensions to be made by the Director in accordance with the rights of the individual and the due process procedure. If the

Director decides to terminate an employee, procedures required by statute will be followed (NMSA, 1978, Chapter 22, Article 10).

Reduction in Force - The Educational Director will have the authority to discharge certified school instructors and noncertified school employees with rights created by NMSA 1978, 22-10-14(C) (hereinafter "tenured employees"), after notice and a hearing when a reduction in such personnel is required as a result of decreased enrollment or a decrease or revision of educational programs.

Resignation - A written notice of resignation shall be filed with the Director within thirty (30) days prior to the effective date of resignation of a certified school employee.

Arrangement for Substitutes - When it is necessary for an employee to be absent, it is his/her responsibility to notify the Director at his/her earliest opportunity of the probable duration of the absence. It is the employee's responsibility to arrange a substitute when he/she is to be absent. Upon the request of the employee, the building secretary may take this responsibility for emergency circumstances only.

Professional Employee Organizations- Membership in all professional/employee associations is voluntary. Association activities shall not interfere with a staff member's accepted responsibilities to the school.

Prohibiting Violence & Aggressive Conduct by School Employees -Violence or violent conduct by employees is inconsistent with the school's mission of developing a community of learners. The effective operation of the school requires that employees strictly avoid subjecting other employees or non-student third persons to violence, the threat of violence, or other forms of physical harassment or intimidation.

Guidelines for Employee E-mail and Computer Use - All computer Users are obligated to use these resources responsibly, professionally, ethically and lawfully. Employees are given access to our computer network to assist them in performing their job. Employees should not have an expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, or receive on the computer system. The computer system belongs to the Taos Academy and may only be used for business or education program purposes. Without prior written notice, Taos Academy administration may review any material created, stored, sent, or received on its network or through the Internet or any other computer network.

E.3 Provide a proposed salary schedule for all employees that complies with the minimum salary requirements as identified in the School Personnel Act. (See Appendix E.2. for Sample Salary Schedule)

Taos Academy Governance Council will approve its own salary schedule in accordance to the state's mandated three-tiered salary schedule, the School Personnel Act and all other state and federal regulation pertaining to employee compensation. Compensation for all employees will be based on experience, qualifications, and skill and technical level. All compensation decisions will be at the discretion of the Governing Council and within budget constraints.

E.4 Describe the evaluation process for staff which will include evaluation of teachers by a licensed school administrator.

The Educational Director will be responsible for designing and implementing an effective personnel supervision program. This program will have at its core an interest in the improvement and development of the entire staff. Evaluation (both summative and formative) of all staff is accomplished according to the Taos Academy's Staff Accountability Plan. Evaluation has many purposes including:

1. To assist in identifying and building upon teacher strengths.
2. To serve as the basis for the improvement of instruction.
3. To develop remediation goals.
4. To enhance the implementation of programs of curriculum.
5. To plan meaningful professional development.
6. To address accountability and teacher quality.

7. To support fair, valid and legal decisions for rehire, promotion decisions or termination.

TEACHER PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FOR 3-TIERED LICENSURE

The New Mexico 3-Tiered Licensure System created by the passage of HB212 and the Public Education Department Regulation 6.69.4 Performance Evaluation System Requirements for Teachers set forth specific requirements for a Highly Objective Uniform Statewide Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) for teacher licensure. New Mexico Statute 22-10A-4.B states that the New Mexico licensure framework for teachers is a progressive career system in which licensees are required to demonstrate increased competencies and undertake greater responsibilities as they progress through the licensure levels. PED Regulation 6.69.4.8.D states that the format for this evaluation shall be established by the department and shall be uniform throughout the state in all public schools.

The 3-Tiered Licensure annual teacher performance evaluation system provides a differentiated approach to teacher performance evaluation in compliance with the requirements of NMSA22-10A-4.B for each level of licensure: Level I Provisional Teacher, Level II Professional Teacher, and Level III Master Teacher. The teacher performance evaluation instrument has nine competencies with differentiated indicators for each licensure level. The teacher performance evaluation procedures and the Professional Development Plan (PDP) procedures are also differentiated for each of the three-licensure levels.

Required Performance Evaluation Components

Teacher Performance Evaluation Requirement:

PED Regulation Title 6, Chapter 69, Part 4: Performance Evaluation System Requirements for Teachers, states “every public school teacher must have an annual performance evaluation based on an annual professional development plan...Annual performance evaluations shall be based on, among other things, how well the professional development plan was carried out and the measurable objectives were achieved. The school principal shall observe each teacher’s classroom practice at least once annually to determine the teacher’s ability to demonstrate state adopted competencies and indicators for each teacher’s licensure level.”(6.69.4.8.D and 6.69.4.10.C & D).

Documentation Requirement:

1. Professional Development Plan (PDP) – required for every teacher every year.
2. Reflection on Annual Professional Development Plan (PDP) – required for every teacher every year.
3. Progressive Documentation of Teacher Performance - required for level II or level III licensed teachers for year one and year two of three year cycle.
4. NM Teacher Performance Summative Evaluation for Licensure – required every year for Level I licensed teachers, required every three years for Level II and Level III licensed teachers.

Professional Development Plan Requirement:

PED Regulation 6.69.4.10.B.1-3 requires that the teacher and the school principal create the Development Plan (PDP) no later than forty (40) days after

the first day of each school year. The Plan must have measurable objectives, and must be based on, among other things:

1. The nine teacher competencies and indicators for the teacher's licensure level
2. The previous year's annual evaluation (if applicable), and
3. Assurance that the teacher is highly qualified in the core academic subjects the teacher teaches.

Classroom Observation Requirements and Data Collection:

PED Regulation 6.69.4.10.D requires that the principal "observe each teacher's classroom practice at least once annually to determine the teacher's ability to demonstrate state adopted competencies/indicators for each teacher's licensure level". In addition to observations, collection of additional forms of data will ensure a valid assessment of each employee's ability to demonstrate the competencies. Options for additional data collection include but are not limited to: review of videotape; written documentation of activities; locally developed survey of staff, students, and/or parents; review of student work and performance; review of the teacher's contribution to the school's vision, mission, and outcomes; portfolios; information gained through peer observation and/or peer coaching; anecdotal records; reflective journals; self-evaluations; instructional artifacts; and other formats satisfactory to the teacher and the Educational Director.

Evaluation Criteria Requirement:

Evaluation for different purposes requires different procedures. The 3-Tier Licensure and Performance Evaluation System emphasizes teacher growth

through differentiated teaching indicators that are reflective of the competency levels of teachers and the creation of individual Professional Development Plans. Each of the three levels of licensure has nine (9) common competencies with differentiation occurring through license level-specific indicators. The performance evaluation system will indicate a teacher's proficiency in these license level-specific indicators and competencies. The nine common competencies are:

1. The teacher accurately demonstrates knowledge of the content area and approved curriculum.
2. The teacher appropriately utilizes a variety of teaching methods and resources for each area taught.
3. The teacher communicates with and obtains feedback from students in a manner that enhances student learning and understanding.
4. The teacher comprehends the principles of student growth, development and learning, and applies them appropriately.
5. The teacher effectively utilizes student assessment techniques and procedures.
6. The teacher manages the educational setting in a manner that promotes positive student behavior, and a safe and healthy environment.
7. The teacher recognizes student diversity and creates an atmosphere conducive to the promotion of positive student involvement and self-concept.
8. The teacher demonstrates a willingness to examine and implement change as appropriate.

9. The teacher works productively with colleagues, parents, and community members.

F. Student Enrollment Procedures and Discipline Policy

F.1 Describe the school's enrollment policies and procedures, including an explanation of the enrollment timeline, criteria and /or any preferences for enrollment, and lottery process.

In accordance with the Charter School Act of 1999, any student, regardless of location, may attend Taos Academy. Upon opening enrollment for the 2009/2010 school year a lottery system will be in place to select the number of proposed students in each grade level. All applications over the projected enrollment will be maintained on a waiting list, and selected at a future date if openings come available.

Enrollment requirements:

Students and/or parents can start by filling out an electronic "Student Pre-enrollment form" and reviewing the school from our website to assess proper philosophy for the student's personal learning needs. Once a pre-enrollment is completed, and the lottery is complete, the Educational Director will contact the student for an enrollment interview, registration and placement testing. The following documentation is required for registration:

- Student's immunization records.
- Original birth certificate or certified copy – Proof of Guardianship (if the student is living with someone other than his/her parent/guardian, a notarized power of attorney from the parent/guardian is required).

- Social Security Card
- Proof of residence that shows parent/guardian name and address (utility bill, lease agreement, purchase agreement). If a student is living with another family, the hosting family must submit a notarized letter stating that their residence is the primary residence of the student, and a document showing proof of residence (address) must be provided.
- If the student is currently enrolled at another school, a copy of the current class schedule.
- An official withdrawal from the previous school.
- 504 or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) if applicable.

Enrollment timeline:

Enrollment period open: May 1st- 30th, 2009

Lottery selection June 1st, 2009

Interview and registration August 1st through the start of school.

F.2 Provide the proposed student discipline policy that complies with the Students Rights and Responsibilities set forth in the public Education Department rules and regulations.[6.11.2 NMAC]. (See Appendix E for Sample Student Discipline Policy).

Taos Academy will be committed to maintaining a quality learning environment based on mutual respect between staff and students. We expect students to be fully aware of, and to carry out, their duties and responsibilities as a community in the educational process. Taos Academy will have policy and procedures for student conduct adopted by the Governing Council before school opens in August 2009.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Taos Academy believes that genuine student involvement requires responsible student action which is possible if students are guaranteed certain basic rights, among which are the following: (1) the right to free inquiry and expression; (2) the right to due process; (3) the right to freedom of association; (4) the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and petition; (5) the right to participate in the student governance activities of school; (6) the right to freedom from discrimination; and (7) the right to equal educational opportunity. Students have the rights of citizenship as delineated in the United States Constitution and its amendments; and these rights may not be abridged, obstructed, or in other ways altered except in accordance with due process of law.

ANNOTATED POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT CONDUCT

Administrative rules and regulations regarding student discipline, attendance, and behavior shall be conveyed to students and their parents through the Student Handbook and other building handbooks as published and will have the force of policy. Below is a brief guideline for student conduct. Upon charter approval, Taos Academy Governance Council will adopt full policy and procedures for student conduct.

The acts specified in Subsection A. of 6.11.2.9 NMAC below are prohibited in Taos Academy. Prohibited activities: The participation in the activities designated below is prohibited in all New Mexico public schools and is prohibited for students whenever they are subject to school control. Acts prohibited by this regulation:

- (1) criminal or delinquent acts;
- (2) gang related activity;
- (3) sexual harassment;
- (4) disruptive conduct;
- (5) refusal to identify self; and
- (6) refusal to cooperate with school personnel.

Regulated activities: Beyond those activities designated above as prohibited, all other areas of student conduct may be regulated within legal limits by the Governing Council as they deem appropriate. Activities subject to council regulation within legal limits include, but are not limited to:

Equal Educational Opportunities

It shall be the policy of the Governing Council to offer an opportunity for a quality education that provides all children with the necessary skills and attitudes, commensurate with their ability, to become effective citizens able to take their places in the community, the State and the Nation. This education shall be provided under a policy, that is consistent with the provisions of the Constitution of the State of New Mexico, the laws of the United States and the policies and regulations established by the State of New Mexico.

The Council will support equal educational opportunities for students free from limitations based upon ethnic or racial background, religious beliefs, handicaps, sex, economic, social, or medical conditions in compliance with state and federal law.

This concept of equal educational opportunity will serve as a guide for the Council and the staff in making decisions relating to school facilities, employment of personnel, selection of educational materials, equipment, curriculum and regulations affecting students.

School attendance

Any qualified student and any person who because of his age is eligible to become a qualified student as defined by the Public School Finance Act until attaining the age of majority shall attend a public school, a private school, a state institution registered with the school district as a homeschooler.

General Guidelines for Student Conduct

Standards for student conduct will be based on the premise that all students are entitled to an environment free from harassment or unsafe practices by those who choose not to maintain a quality learning environment.

Students should be aware that they are under the school's jurisdiction when they are on school premises and during any school-sponsored activity, regardless of time or location. Students will be expected to conform to school policies and to all classroom rules. Failure to comply with the regulations, that are set forth by the teachers and administration, will result in disciplinary action.

Appearance Standard

When, in the judgment of the Educational Director, a student's appearance, mode of dress, and/or cleanliness is distracting and disruptive of the educational process, or constitutes a threat to safety, or acceptable standards of sanitation, the student may be required to make requested modifications or be

suspended until such modifications are accomplished. Additional dress or appearance standards will be specified in each school building's handbook.

Student Publications

Under the supervision of a sponsor and the Educational Director a school-sponsored publication may be printed by the students. Students may distribute the publication free of charge or for a small fee set by the student publication class, sponsor and Director.

Harassment and Violence

It shall be a violation of this policy for any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel to harass a pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel through conduct or communication of a sexual nature or regarding religion and race as defined by this policy.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel to inflict, threaten to inflict, or attempt to inflict religious, racial, or sexual violence upon any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel.

The Governing Board will act to investigate all complaints, either formal or informal, verbal or written, of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence, and to discipline or take appropriate action against any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who is found to have violated this policy.

Weapons in Schools

Taos Academy will forbid the possession, custody and use of weapons by unauthorized persons on school property, or during school-sponsored events.

This policy will be enacted to implement the requirements of the federal “Gun Free Schools Act” of 1994, 20 U.S.C., 8921 and NMSA 1978, 22-5-4.7, and it is the intention of the Governing Council that it be interpreted broadly to conform to these provisions of the law.

Special Rule for Students with Disabilities

For purposes of this special rule as applied to students with disabilities who may be placed in an interim alternative educational setting for bringing a weapon to a school or school function, the definitions of a weapon set forth above shall not include a pocket knife with a blade of less than 2 and ½ inches in length. The procedures of Section V below shall apply to students with disabilities.

Student Grievances

Any student or employee of this school who believes he/she has been discriminated against, denied a benefit, or excluded from participation, in any school education program or activity, on the basis of sex, handicap, age, color or creed, may file a written complaint to the Director. If the complainant is not satisfied with such response, he/she may submit a written appeal to the Governing Council indicating with particularity the nature of disagreement with the response and his/her reasons underlying such disagreement. The Governing Council shall consider the appeal at its next regularly scheduled Board meeting following receipt of the response.

The Governing Council shall permit the complainant to address the Council in Public or closed session, as appropriate and lawful, concerning his/her complaint and shall provide the complainant with its written decision in the matter

as expeditiously as possible following completion of the hearing. Policy in accordance to:

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20USC&1681, Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended, 29USC&621, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29USC&701 et. seq., Americans with Disabilities Act, 42USC&2000d, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42USC&2000e.

Equal Access Act

The Director of the school can allow non-curriculum-related student groups (e.g., chess club) to meet on school premises during non-instructional time before or after school, student-initiated religious, political, and philosophical groups shall have the right, guaranteed by the Equal Access Act of 1984.

Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that governs the maintenance of student records. Under that law, parents of students or students if they are at least 18 have both the right to inspect records kept by the school about the student and right to correct inaccuracies in the records. Access to the records by persons other than the parents or the student is limited and generally requires prior consent by the parents or student. The Governance Council will adopt a written policy governing all the rights of parents and students under FERPA.

Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Abuse

In accordance with state regulation 81-1, Taos Academy will prohibit the use, possession, sale or transportation of alcohol, illegal drugs and/or tobacco on school property, at school, at school-sponsored activities, or in school-provided

vehicles. For this rule, illegal drugs includes controlled substances, prescription drugs used or possessed without a prescription, solvents or inhalants used for intoxication and those substances possessed, sold, and/or used that are held out to be, or represented to be, controlled substances, illegal substances, or counterfeit in any respect illegal or controlled substances.

The School will develop and implement an age-appropriate, developmentally based drug and alcohol education and prevention program to fulfill state requirements which addresses the legal, social and health consequences of drug and alcohol use and which provides information about effective techniques for resisting peer pressure to use illicit drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Every educational effort will be made to convey to students that the unlawful possession and use of illicit drugs, tobacco products and alcohol is wrong and harmful.

Student Organizations

Participation and membership in activities shall be governed by principles and policies that encourage wide participation. The activities program shall provide a means for increasing student leadership abilities, encouraging special student interest and skills and providing opportunities for giving students a voice in school affairs.

A well-balanced program provides opportunity for student participation in a variety of activities including special interest clubs, physical activities, student government and cultural affairs.

Gang Activity

Gangs and gang activities are prohibited at Taos Academy. Gang related communication, dress or symbols will not be tolerated and the use will be subject to disciplinary action.

Internet and Electronic Mail Use

Staff and students will be allowed access to Internet resources with the understanding that some material that can be accessed on the Internet is inaccurate; additionally, some resources contain material that is deemed contrary to prevailing community standards and is inappropriate for classroom use, and that access of such resources will not be permitted.

To gain access to e-mail and the Internet all students under the age of 18 must obtain parental permission and must sign and return the permission form to the school principal or designee. Students 18 and over may sign their own forms.

G. FACILITIES

G.1 If the school site has not been selected or secured:

G.1.a Explain the school's facility needs, including desired location, size and layout of space and how the facility will support the implementation of the school's educational program.

Taos Academy needs a space between 3,300 square feet and 4,300 square feet on one acre or less of land. The facility needs to be located in the town of Taos or within a 15-mile radius and have good exposure to the southern sky for technology access. The initial layout of the facility will include, but is not limited to, three large classrooms, two bathrooms, 5 offices (2 administration, 1 special

education, 1 programs director, and 1 counselor), 2 therapy rooms, teacher offices, and one large room for computer lab and tables for tutoring. The facility will comply with NMSA 22-8B-4.2 and meet E-Occupancy and Adequacy standards. The five-year budget included in Section V.A. of this charter provides for additional funds to be spent on expanding the facility in the fourth and fifth year to accommodate increased membership.

The facility supports the implementation of our educational program by providing space for 40 computers for the digital component of our program. Spaces for enhancement classes, tutoring and academic support are included in the facility plan. Therapy rooms are for special education services such as speech, counseling, and language and occupational therapy.

Taos Academy's facility design, construction, and maintenance will encourage, promote, and maximize safe, functional, and durable learning environments in order for the state to meet its educational responsibilities and for New Mexico's students to have the opportunity to achieve success.

G.1.b.Explain the strategy and schedule that will be employed to secure an adequate facility. (See appendix G for letters of consideration.)

September-October 2008 - Upon approval of the state charter for Taos Academy, a nonprofit organization will be set up for the school. The purpose of the nonprofit is to accept grant funding and donations for the charter school to be used for facilities for the charter school as per NMSA 22-8B-4.2.

November 2008-January 2009 - The school will pursue one of five options: Taos Academy would enter into a lease-to-purchase agreement on a

building constructed specifically for the school. The construction company would build a facility that meets the statewide adequacy standards developed pursuant to the Public School Outlay Act and meet educational occupancy standards required by applicable New Mexico construction codes and NMAC 6.27.30.1. The builder, LCI2 Inc., will consider financing the project.

Another option will be to collaborate with Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (RMYC) and Taos Youth Collaborative in a business complex located in Taos town limits and designed to serve the youth of Taos. Taos Youth Collaborative has received grant funding for architectural design of the youth complex to be built on land owned by RMYC. Buildings will incorporate green building techniques such as solar panels, water catchment systems and grey water reuse. RMYC and Taos Academy would have the ability to share services such as office manager, janitorial, and technology. We would also collaborate on sustainable agricultural projects and leadership ropes course classes already in place on RMYC's additional 20 acres of land adjacent to the building project. RMYC and Taos Youth Collaborative are willing to use its grant funding to build the project. Taos Academy would have a lease-to-purchase option on a facility built specifically for the school.

A third option will be to have a lease-to-purchase agreement in a business park located in the Town of Taos limits. The project is set to be built in the spring 2009 and would include a building designed specifically for Taos Academy. Please see attached letter from Roy Cunnyngnam, owner of the land and developer of the project.

The other option will be to buy an existing building. The facility would be subject to evaluation and renovation so that it meets the statewide adequacy standards (NMAC 6.27.30.1) developed pursuant to the Public School Outlay Act and meets educational occupancy standards required by applicable New Mexico construction codes. The owner, Timothy Peterson, would agree to lease the building with option to purchase (see attached letter). Taos Academy would follow NMSA22-26A-4 and obtain approval of a lease purchase agreement.

A fifth option is to find a public building owned by the school district, the state, state institution, political subdivision of state, federal government, federal agency, or tribal government.

February 2009-May 2009 – build the facility or renovate existing facility.

May 2009-June 2009 – opportunity for local authority or PSFA to inspect facility

June 2009-July-2009- move into facility

August 2009 – open school

G.1.c Describe the actions that will be taken to ensure the facility is in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies (including health and safety codes) and will be ready for the school’s opening.

Prior to the occupancy of the facility, Taos Academy shall notify the state facility council of the intended use, together with such other information as required by rule of the council. Within sixty days of the notification to the State Facility Council, the public school facilities authority and local inspectors shall assess the public facility in order to determine the extent of compliance with the statewide adequacy standards and the amount of outstanding deviation from those

standards. The results of the assessment shall be submitted to Taos Academy and the council. Taos Academy will provide documentation to PED on meeting health, safety, and code issues when a facility has been identified.

G.1.d Explain the proposed capital outlay needs for the facility, including projected requests for capital outlay assistance for the school.

Taos Academy will apply for facility money from the state of New Mexico Public Schools Facility Authority. Should the school obtain a public building, we would apply for capital outlay funds as needed in order to meet adequacy standards-NM22-8B-4.2- by July 1, 2014.

H. TRANSPORTATION AND FOOD SERVICE

H.1. Describe the school's plans for meeting the transportation needs of its students.

Students and families at Taos Academy will be responsible for their own transportation to and from the school unless the student's Individualized Education Plan specifies special transportation requirements. Taos Academy will develop alternative approaches to provide transportation to students in need.

Taos Academy will use operational, IDEA-B, and Medicaid funds as appropriate. Reimbursement for the transportation of a student as specified by an IEP is available and will be sought as Per Capita Feeder income, per 6NMAC9.4.1(12/31/98).

H.2. Provide any plans for contracting services for transportation, if applicable. Provide the proposed terms of the contract and the status of any preliminary negotiations. (See appendix H for letter of consideration.)

Field trips will be contracted with authorized public school transportation contractors. Permission for field trips will be obtained from each student's guardian. A standard contract used by Taos Municipal Schools will be used for contracting transportation services. Taos Academy will negotiate with Faust Transportation.

H.3. Describe the school's plans for meeting the food services needs of its students.

Students will bring their own lunches where applicable.

H.4. Provide any plans for contracting services for food services, if applicable. Provide the proposed terms of the contract and the status

There are no plans for contracting services for food services.

VII. Requirements

A. LEGAL LIABILITY AND INSURANCE COVERAGE

Legal liability and insurance coverage agreements of Taos Academy will be in accordance with the *1999 Charter Schools Act* and New Mexico Revised Statutes Section 22-2-6.3 NMSA 1978. Taos Academy will survey insurance companies for quotes for adequate coverage and contract for the lowest premium cost with a company that best suits the needs of Taos Academy.

Legal Liability

Taos Academy understands that the local Board of Education is not liable under the *1999 Charter Schools Act* for any and all acts or omissions made by Taos Academy or its Governance Council.

Faith and Credit

Taos Academy agrees that it will not extend the faith and credit to any third person or entity. The School is limited in its authority to contract by the amount of funds obtained from contracts to which Taos Academy is a party.

Insurance Coverage

Taos Academy will participate in the Public Schools Insurance Authority. Coverage will include both Employee Health and Benefits and Risk Insurance Program. To the extent permitted by the State PED, Taos Academy will arrange for a Risk Insurance Program that encompasses property, liability, automobile, Governance Council liability, crime and workers compensation Insurance. Coverage will extend to the Governance Council, employees and school activities.

B. WAIVERS

Taos Academy will meet or exceed all state requirements and is therefore not requesting waivers at this time. Upon approval, Taos Academy will apply for waivers on an as-needed basis to meet goals and objectives consistent with the mission and vision of the school. Waivers requested in the future will be in writing along with the appropriate rationale.

The *1999 Charter Schools Act* stipulates that Charter Schools challenge the system by providing innovative methods of teaching and assessment. In accord with that direction, Taos Academy will employ a full range of options for staffing, programming and accountability and therefore may need the option of a waiver.