

Taos Academy, a 21st-Century Learning Community

Taos Academy is an approved state-chartered public school. The school's mission is to prepare students in grades 5-12 to succeed in the 21st century using a unique combination of technology, direct instruction, and community collaboration. The school is a hybrid of online and in-class, face-to-face work with instructors, peers, and community members. Its founders are experienced local educators who have been working with a team of educational specialists and community members over the last year to plan this innovative school.

Unique features:

- State-of-the art electronic curricula will enable students to work from home and enable teachers to specifically tailor instruction to individual students' needs.
- Development of leadership skills through in-class and community work.
- Focus on 21st Century Learning Skills

Life and Career Skills –

Flexibility and Adaptability
Initiative and Self Direction
Social and Cross-Cultural Skills
Productivity and Accountability
Leadership and Responsibility

Learning and Innovation Skills –

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
Creativity and Innovation
Communication and Collaboration

Information, Media and Technology Skills -

Information Literacy
Media Literacy
ICT (Information, Communication and Technology) Literacy

- High academic standards
- High vocational standards
- Parent involvement
- Community collaboration

Mission Statement: The mission of Taos Academy is to prepare students in fifth through twelfth grade to achieve and maintain 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 21st century.

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

Who will Taos Academy serve? Taos Academy provides 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.

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.

Educational 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 necessary to succeed in the 21st century. Taos Academy will be devoted to developing a strong community of leaders throughout the organization, focusing our attention on 21st-century learning skills such as communication skills, teamwork, and research skills.

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 forms 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, speech, and debate).

How Taos Academy Proposes to Meet the Needs of Students in Taos

- Taos Academy will begin instruction at the 5th-grade level to inhibit early academic failure.
- All students will have an individualized educational program aligned to their personal learning goals to ensure success.
- All students 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 can attend school year-round to further promote academic success.
- The school day will be from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Thursday.
- Class size will be 1:15 teacher/student ratio for traditional classes, slightly higher for online classes, and very small 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.

A. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

Focus # 1: Students at Taos Academy will achieve and maintain a level of academic success.

- Goal #1- 100% of TA students in grades 5-12 will make at least a GLE(grade level equivalency) gain in reading of 1 year as measured by the NWEA reading assessment.
Assessment: Students will be assessed with the NMSBA annually, NWEA MAP short-cycle assessment three times a year, and online academic assessment through the curriculum program as prescribed by content.
Performance Indicators - Each student will demonstrate adequate yearly growth throughout the year as shown by increases on (MAP) performance progress graphs, proficiency levels on the NMSBA, and content module mastery prescribed through the curriculum.
- Goal # 2- 100% of students in grades 5-12 will make at least a GLE(grade level equivalency) gain of 1 year in Math as measured by the NWEA Math assessment.
Assessment: Students will be assessed with the NMSBA annually, NWEA MAP short-cycle assessment three times a year, and online academic assessment through the curriculum program as prescribed by content.
Performance Indicators - Each student will demonstrate adequate yearly growth throughout the year as shown by increases on (MAP) performance progress graphs, proficiency levels on the NMSBA, and content module mastery prescribed through the curriculum.
- Goal #3: 75% of TA students in will score proficient or higher on the NMSBA Writing sub-test.
Assessments: Students will be assessed using writing scores from the NMSBA, quarterly writing rubric scores for each grade level, and semester portfolio assessment criteria in writing processes.
Performance Indicators: Each student will demonstrate mastery in writing processes by showing proficiency on the NMSBA in writing, charting growth on writing rubric scores, and showing writing proficiency for portfolio presentation.

- Goal #4: By June of each year starting in 2011, Taos Academy will exceed a graduation rate of 75% as measured by student enrollments at the 40th and 180th day of each year.
Assessment: Assessment is measured by student enrollments at the 40th and 180th day and diploma earned.
Performance Indicator: Successful completion of requirements for a NM High School diploma at 75% by June of each year starting in 2011.

Responsibility and Processes for Student Evaluation and Improvement:

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.

Focus # 2: Students at Taos Academy will demonstrate strong leadership skills.

- Goal # 1 Students will have 95% attendance to scheduled academic and enrichment times as individualized plan indicates measured by attendance records.
Assessments: Self-direction and accountability will be measured using monthly progress reports for each student’s academic work and enrichment classes.
Performance Indicators: Students will be keeping up with their individual learning plans as indicated by an “on target” work pace and with adequate grade averages throughout the year.
- Goal # 2 100% of TA students will document at least two web-based tele-immersion sessions annually.
Assessments: Communication will be measured by ongoing anecdotal records from EQ and leadership seminars, and communication records from Taos Academy’s web-based tele-immersion (communication) program.
Performance Indicators: Students will show adequate participation in EQ and leadership classes as indicated through anecdotal teacher records.
- Goal #5 100% of TA students will complete at least one service learning project annually.
Assessments: Social responsibility will be measured annually by student portfolio for service learning attributes and by documented participation in student council. An annual assessment rubric of student portfolio and presentation showing the development of social responsibility skills as it relates to their community involvement.
Performance Indicators: Students will participate in student council meetings as documented by teachers. End of year student portfolios will show collaborative projects with social responsibility skills being utilized.
- Goal # 6 100% of TA students will earn credit or successfully complete one foreign language class per year.

Assessments: Global awareness will be measured by the successful completion of one foreign language class each year and a service learning portfolio. An annual assessment rubric of student portfolio and presentation showing the development of global awareness as it relates to their community involvement.

Performance Indicators: End of year student portfolios will show projects with global awareness being addressed.

Responsibility and Processes for Student Evaluation and Improvement:

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.

Focus # 3: Taos Academy will partner with parents and community to ensure student success.

- Goal #1: 100% of TA families will attend at least one school activity in the 2009-2010 school year.
Assessment: Documentation of participation in parent and community events will be a formative assessment performed by Taos Academy administrators. 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. Parent participation will be assessed by documenting participation (EQ workshops, advisory council, parent nights, parent conferences, fundraising events)
Performance Indicator: Parents will show an increase in participate in school activities. Satisfaction surveys will continually show progress in meeting parent needs.
- Goal # 2 : Taos Academy will create a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with two new community organizations for the collaboration with community services each year for the next four years for a total of eight new community partners by 2013.
- Assessment: Community participation will be evaluated through contracts, photographs, and written records that will offer both formative and summative evaluation options.
Performance Indicator: Community partnerships will be successful as shown by the continued collaboration of services.

Parent/Community Partnership Assessment Evidence and Responsibility

Documentation of participation in parent and community events will be a formative assessment performed by Taos Academy administrators. 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.

Focus # 4: Taos Academy students will be contributing members of society.

- Goal #1: 80% of Taos Academy students will transition into college, technical school, or the workplace.

Assessment: Taos Academy will utilize Career-Technical and Workforce Education Bureau performance based assessment systems annually to measure graduates' competence in employability skills. The Next Step Plan will document academic and career readiness biannually.

Performance Indicator: Students will show an increase in choosing to continue with higher education or skill development.

Responsibility for Student Evaluation and Improvement:

Taos Academy's counselor will administer and track these measures.