



Taos Mountain Charter School Application

Submitted to the State of New Mexico
Public Education Department

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Acknowledgements: Great appreciation is extended to Susan Olson of AdminService, whose expertise offered guidance, substance and clarity during a critical time of charter development.

Susan Olson brings a wide range of experience and skills in the areas of school leadership, governance, organizational structure, policy development, and Human Resources. Since 2005, Susan has served as Executive Director of the Sebastopol Independent Charter School. She's been involved in Waldorf education in the private and public sector for 20 years. Susan holds a BA from Carleton College in Political Science and Education, an MA from UCLA in Geography, and an MS in Human Resources and Organizational Psychology from Claremont Graduate University. Susan currently serves on the Boards of Directors of Credo High School and the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, and is a Member Council Representative for the California Charter Schools Association.

Thanks is also extended to the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education and Stephanie Skinner.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission: Cultivating the Whole-Child

Our school will offer a Waldorf-inspired curriculum that meets New Mexico State Standards and is fully relevant to our community and local environment. With sustainable living practices as our foundation, the students will create meaningful connections between the physical, emotional, intellectual and social aspects of life. Sustainable living practices will be realized in our curriculum through an emphasis on gardening, farming, sustainable building practices and the exploration of our surrounding local environment. Nature and arts will be a focus in our curriculum. Our school will foster a supportive community of peers, parents and teachers which will help each student become confident, self-directed and engaged learners, invested in their own future. Community service will be integrated into the curriculum as part of the whole person development; each student will develop a sense of responsibility to help others, whether in the classroom or the larger community.

INTRODUCTION

Our school is inspired by and committed to the principles of Waldorf education and sustainable living. The Taos community is strongly embedded in the arts and the environment. The Waldorf-inspired approach to education has proven to be valued by the Taos community because it emphasizes an arts-integrated experience within a nurturing, multi-sensory, multi-cultural, nature-based approach to learning. The arts are integrated into all academic lessons, and cultivation of the child's imagination and creativity is a high priority. Music, theater, string instruments, wind instruments, visual arts, and hand crafts are all incorporated into the weekly curriculum. The full integration of sustainable living practices into daily school life is valued as a commitment to the environment in the present, germinating the seed of eco-responsibility that will bear fruit far into the future. We aim to open our doors as a K-6th grade plus 9th grade school in the fall of 2013. We will have one class per grade and expand to K-12 adding one upper grade and high school grade each year.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of our school is founded upon the conviction that children are innately curious about themselves and the world; they inherently want to learn, discover, and create. The role of the school is to nourish and guide this natural exuberance, energy and delight in the quest for meaning and knowledge. Creative approaches in which the arts are integrated into academic learning serve to wholly engage the child and provide an experiential, multi-sensory context for understanding intellectual concepts. The experiential study of world cultures enriches the student's expanding world-view, giving

an appreciation for diversity, flexibility of thinking, and an intrinsic empathic understanding of social and cultural issues. The school's overall educational approach is designed to instill in its students not only high standards for academic achievement and civic responsibility, but also a sustaining degree of intellectual curiosity, creative thinking, problem solving and creative self-expression, as well as valuable interpersonal and intrapersonal life skills. Typically, class teachers stay with the same group of students 1st through 8th grade, advancing through the grades for a number of years, allowing for trusting relationships to be established and true mentorship to take place.

In high school there will be three to four main subject teachers. These main subject teachers will specialize in Language Arts, Humanities, Math, and Sciences. The students in 9th through 12th grade will have specialty subject classes with the various subject teachers including music, strings, drama, handwork and eurythmy. Project-based learning will be a core element in the high school curriculum.

The Waldorf-inspired approach to education is developmental; it recognizes that certain capacities emerge in students at fairly predictable stages, while also allowing for individual rates of maturation and uniqueness. This appreciation for the metamorphosis of comprehension underlies both the organization of the curriculum and the changing methods of teaching. Such a developmental approach to learning often means that standards are taught on a slightly different schedule than is typical, but all students receive a full and rich academic experience as they complete the sequence of grades. Classrooms, materials used and curriculum cultivate a sense of beauty, wonder and deep respect for the natural world, affirming that the intelligence and imagination of the young child is best developed without the use of technology; computer technology is used only as a practical necessity for computer based testing, library and research purposes. Learning a second language begins in first grade. The joy of music enhances cognitive development throughout all of the grades. Cooperation and self-advancement is encouraged rather than outwardly directed competition. The goal of this educational experience is to enable students, as fully as possible, to freely choose and realize their individual path through life. The school community and the larger Taos community, is further connected through seasonal programs and festivals.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The Waldorf-inspired kindergarten cultivates and works in support of the child's deep, inborn natural attitude, belief, trust and basic reverence for the world as an interesting and good place to live in. Therefore, until age six or seven, children learn primarily through physical activity and imitation. A sense of goodness permeates the soothing, home-like environment of the kindergarten where warmth and toys made of natural materials encourage creative imaginative play. Through storytelling, arts and crafts,

daily, weekly and monthly rhythms, and healthy movement, a strong foundation is laid for formal academics beginning in first grade.

The kindergarten classroom is an open and warm space with different areas for play including drawing, make believe, building and a quiet area with books and pillows. The overall feeling in a Waldorf-INSPIRED kindergarten is one of magic and wholesome activity. A kitchen space is essential for the weekly participatory baking of bread and making of soup by the class.

In grades 1-5, children learn best when academics are conveyed through painting, drama, music, storytelling and other direct experiences that stir their emotions. A sense of beauty weaves throughout the day engaging children in their learning. The arts are used primarily as a means to learn to understand and relate to the world, and also as an avenue for personal self-expression. This builds an understanding for different subjects out of what is beautiful in the world in the broadest sense of the word.

In grades 6-8, the pictorial thinking of the earlier grades are now metamorphosing to more abstract thinking. For example during the teaching of Platonic solids, the teacher challenges students to inwardly picture a cube then transform it to other shapes (truncated cube to the octahedron to tetrahedron). This approach leads to an ever more conscious cultivation of observation and reflection, focusing on building an understanding of what is true, based on personal experience, thinking and judgment. The grade classrooms each have a specific color and painting style. They are warm colors and reflect the evolving consciousness of the children as they progress through the various stages of development. In general, there are no posters on the walls; instead, the classrooms are decorated with the students' artwork.

In high school, teenagers are alive with questions about the world and their place in it. The Waldorf-inspired education is experiential. When learning trigonometry the students go into the fields with surveying; carbonation is studied by making root beer; social science classes incorporate debates and role play. The world becomes the classroom. The subjects are integrated with connections between disciplines being made. For example while students read the Odyssey, they are also learning to weave as Penelope wove while awaiting Odysseus' return.

Our high school will emerge from a unique foundation of skills-focused sustainability and artisan entrepreneurship. Choosing from one of a range of sustainability-focused specializations, students will learn traditional academic content such as science and math through applied experience, with forward- focused thinking that addresses the vast environmental, economic, and social challenges faced in the world today.

Animal husbandry and other important elements of local farming will be a key aspect of our curriculum. We are exploring the standards and conditions required to have farm animals as part of the curriculum and are looking forward to further discussion as to how this innovative program can continue forward in a charter school context.

ACHIEVEMENT

The Waldorf-inspired method of education offers an academically rigorous curriculum presented in a developmentally appropriate and arts-integrated context. By combining elements of a traditional Waldorf curriculum, sustainable living, and New Mexico State Standards students will excel academically.

Student achievement will be measured and evaluated using the variety of methods indicated by the Waldorf education model such as portfolio reviews, parent teacher conferences, and in-depth written evaluations by the teacher. Students will have the opportunity to design and engage in independent research projects.

WALDORF STRATEGIES FOR ASSESSMENT

The Waldorf-inspired strategies for assessments will be an important tool in providing information on many aspects of how our students are learning including the many standards that are difficult to measure. Waldorf-inspired assessment strategies provide a comprehensive picture of what a student understands and their ability to work creatively and effectively. Because the teachers will be continuing with students through the years they will have a clear understanding of how the individual students learn and if they are on track. The portfolio / main lesson book assessments will provide a basis of how fully the students understand and are able to apply information.

A spirit of open and honest communication underlies all aspects of these evaluations. In addition, our school will utilize and benefit from state required standardized assessments. We will implement the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consistent with the timeline that New Mexico is following. Standards Based Assessments (SBA) will be implemented.

In 2013 the NM SBA will include current standards and there will be a grade 3 Bridge Assessment that aligns with the CCSS. In 2014 there will be a Bridge Assessment for all tested grades that looks and feels more like the PARCC assessment. In 2015 New Mexico will deliver the PARCC assessment. Taos Mountain Charter School will align with the Common Core Standards.

Performance results provide information for various stakeholders. This information will be used to:

- Determine whether students are on track toward being college- and career-ready
- Assess the full range of the Common Core Standards, including standards that are difficult to measure
- Measure student proficiency, including for high and low performing students
- Provide data during the academic year to inform instruction, interventions and professional development
- Provide data for accountability, including measures of growth or improvement in student proficiency

SCHOOL CULTURE

Our school will be a nurturing, intimate school community that fosters strong positive relationships between students, faculty and parents. People who come together to tend the school garden will illustrate community-in-action, sowing and reaping rewards that reach far beyond the edible result of this work. Children will eat natural, minimally processed, whole foods for lunches and snacks. They will also be given ample time for outdoor learning and play. Our school will be a school that gives young people a sense of belonging to a community that is grounded in respect for self, others and the natural world.

WHY OUR SCHOOL?

Typically, Waldorf education is only available in private school settings, accessible only to those in the upper economic echelon of our society. We strongly believe that education inspired by Waldorf methods and curriculum should be made public and tuition-free so that all who wish to attend have the option to do so, regardless of their socioeconomic status. In this way, we can ensure social justice in school choice. In addition, Taos, New Mexico is the ideal home for a public school where Waldorf and sustainable living methods are practiced; our school reflects and represents the values of a growing population in our community.

The Waldorf-inspired curriculum is ideal in its ability to meet students at multiple levels and with different learning styles. The integrated, multi-sensory instruction will engage the students mentally and physically in learning all subject matter. The outdoor campus with its extensive garden and play space will be the setting for hands on experiential learning opportunities.

THE NAME: TAOS MOUNTAIN CHARTER SCHOOL

The name, Taos Mountain Charter School was chosen in recognition of the surrounding land where we are hoping to be located. The school embodies the strength and

perseverance that we are working to instill in the students as well as the inspiration to strive higher. Taos Mountain reflects our intention that children who attend the school will reach great heights in their education, which they will emerge as wise human beings, possessing intellectual strength, and emotional, physical and ecological awareness.

WALDORF EDUCATION, PAST AND PRESENT

Waldorf education was developed by educator and scientist, Rudolf Steiner (b.1861-1925). It was based on the recognition that the human being is composed of body, mind and spirit. While Steiner believed that education should recognize the spiritual nature of the human being, he never intended this to be taught in the classroom, nor does our school. It is the intention of our school, as a public school, to ensure that no particular belief system will be subscribed to or taught to students within the school. It was with great insight, care and concern that Steiner developed Waldorf education. The Latin *educare* (the root of our word for education) means to "bring forth." Steiner said, "Education is an art—it must speak to the child's experience. To educate the whole child, the heart and the will must be reached as well as the mind."

Today, approximately 1000 Waldorf schools and 1,600 Waldorf early childhood programs span 83 countries and five continents, with 44 Waldorf-inspired public charter schools (and growing) in the United States, as well as an increasing number of European public schools integrating Waldorf methods. Waldorf education is truly global, not only in its scope, but also in its approach. Wherever it is found, the Waldorf curriculum cultivates within its students a deep appreciation for cultural traditions from around the world all the while being deeply rooted in its local culture and context.

WALDORF OR WALDORF-INSPIRED?

The term "Waldorf" is trademarked, protected and available for use only by private education institutions, with guardianship held by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). The use of standardized and required testing, as well as the removal of certain aspects of traditional Waldorf curriculum and practices, means that our school is not a true Waldorf school, and thus, cannot claim to be one in title. The rise of public, charter schools inspired by Waldorf methods and curriculum is leading to the possible development of criteria through which public, Waldorf-inspired charter schools could become accredited. The Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, of which our school is a member, is the primary support network and advocacy group for Waldorf-inspired charter schools in the United States. Our school intends to continue its membership with the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, remaining informed about future developments in this regard.

PROVEN DEMAND

Years of proven demand illustrate that Taos needs this type of education to take the form of a public school. The Waldorf community in Taos began as a home school group more than 20 years ago and developed into Taos Country Day School and then Taos Waldorf School (TWS), a private Pre-k through 8th grade school. Enrollment peaked in 2008 with 132 students, pre-school through grade eight. Due to the economic downturn at both the local and national levels enrollment numbers have fluxuated but never gone below 80 students (2011-12 school year).

We will be providing an important and needed educational opportunity to many students who are not currently being met. Taos Mountain Charter School will be offering a unique curriculum in the Taos area, there are no other schools offering a Waldorf-inspired curriculum with a focus on sustainability. In addition, we will be offering classes through high school which is an age group currently not being served with this kind of curriculum.

Not only will those who are currently attending Taos Waldorf School (TWS Board of Trustees has endorsed this application for a charter school endeavor) wish to attend our school, but the many homeschoolers in our community who are not able to afford this program currently will also be a target audience. Further, the waiting list at the only arts integrated charter school in Taos indicates that many others in our community wish to experience a curriculum rich in creativity. Taos Mountain Charter School will be incorporating our surrounding environment into everyday learning. Our curriculum will focus on integrating local traditions. We are located in a rural community and wish to bring elements of animal husbandry, farming, oral traditions, and multi-generational interactions into our classrooms. We will actively reach out and recruit enrollment from under-served populations for we are seeking a diverse community.

This educational niche in our community will be highly sought after. The incorporation of sustainable life practices, with an active farm experience for the children is reflective of the strong tie to the land that permeates life in Taos. The children will be working in the garden, harvesting the produce and enjoying all that they work so hard to cultivate. They will build with adobe and recycled materials (earth ships) and learn life skills. We will partner with members of the community for the high school students to have active internships and learn hands on practical skills.

WHO THE SCHOOL WILL EDUCATE

Our school proposes to begin operating in fall 2013. We aim to open our doors as a K-6th grade plus 9th grade school in the fall of 2013. We will start with one class per grade and expand to K-12 adding one upper grade and high school grade each year.

The school will educate students from kindergarten through 12th grade, ages 5 to 18 years old, from throughout the Taos community. The maximum enrollment is approximately 300 students. Meeting our classroom space requirements will dictate whether a class is 16 students up to 24 students. Our future classrooms will allow for larger class sizes. Recognizing our small class size goals we will be continually investigating additional funding sources to ensure a balanced budget and long term sustainability. We believe that partnerships involving our proposed gardening program will offer many opportunities for funding.

Our school will provide an exceptional, time-tested and research based educational experience for students. By supporting the local need for Waldorf-inspired methods and sustainability in a public school setting the school will inspire and educate families in our area.

OUR ENLIVENED COMMUNITY

Our school is a grassroots endeavor created and primarily supported by a dedicated group of local parents and educators. Since February 2012 many have volunteered their time and energy, working to bring our vision to fruition. While some of these board members will go on to the school Governing Council after the school opens, the current founders will identify and recruit additional Governing Council members within our community who are knowledgeable about the Waldorf educational philosophy and who, together, will comprise the well rounded skill set crucial for a functional Governing Council. Governance by this group, combined with the highly skilled faculty and Director will result in a high performing, high growth school that is guided by its Mission, the New Mexico State Standards and best practices for charter school governance.

There has been a significant growth in the number of Waldorf-inspired charter schools in the United States. Arizona and Colorado has seen several new Waldorf-inspired charter schools in the past few years. There is important research now available (presented in this application) illustrating the effectiveness of the Waldorf methods and how well students in Waldorf-inspired charter schools are testing.

II. EDUCATION PLAN

A. SCHOOL SIZE

Academic Year	Number of Students	Grade Levels	Student /Teacher Ratio
Year One	100	K-6;9	16:1
Year Two	138	K-7; 9,10	16:1
Year Three	174	K-8; 9-11	20:1
Year Four	190	K-8; 9-12	16:1
Year Five	194	K-8; 9-12	16:1
At Capacity (cap)	300	K-8; 9-12	20:1

B. VISION

Taos Mountain Charter School will offer a rigorous educational program where a whole-child approach to learning will result in student curiosity and enthusiasm, allowing each child to reach the fullest expression of their individual potential.

The school will integrate traditional Waldorf methods and curriculum, the New Mexico State Standards plus key aspects of the sustainability movement. Nature-based experiential learning will incorporate our local environment with farming and other traditions. Children will graduate as compassionate, creative thinkers who are engaged citizens with a strong work ethic, prepared to become stewards of the earth and its many diverse communities.

C. MISSION

Mission: Cultivating the Whole-Child

Our school will offer a Waldorf-inspired curriculum that meets New Mexico State Standards and is fully relevant to our community and local environment. With sustainable living practices as our foundation, the students will create meaningful connections between the physical, emotional, intellectual and social aspects of life. Sustainable living practices will be realized in our curriculum through an emphasis on gardening, farming, sustainable building practices and the exploration of our surrounding local environment. Nature and arts will be a focus in our curriculum. Our school will foster a supportive community of peers, parents and teachers which will help each student become confident, self-directed and engaged learners, invested in their own future. Community service will be integrated into the curriculum as part of the

whole person development; each student will develop a sense of responsibility to help others, whether in the classroom or the larger community.

D. STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

We believe that children should be active and creative forces in their own education. If students are engaged in deep and meaningful ways, their academic experience will be one that puts them on the path to becoming critical thinkers and life-long learners – growing and improving every year to reach their greatest academic potential. The goals, objectives and student performance standards will meet or exceed New Mexico expectations.

Like the New Mexico Department of Education, we believe that growth is the cornerstone of achievement. We will follow New Mexico's timeline with implementing PARCC assessments. We embrace the New Mexico Common Core State Standards and will strive to help our students achieve high growth each year.

We acknowledge that our goals may expand to meet needs identified in the future. The role of the staff in collaborating to create and polish SMART goals over time is essential to the Mission of our school as it targets excellence for actual students that staff has gotten to know, assess and educate. The skills and viewpoints of our staff will be critical to ongoing goal development and achievement.

SMART is an acronym referring to goals which are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. This approach to goal-creation allows individuals across diverse perspectives, skill levels, and backgrounds to participate in shared visioning and implementation of complex projects.

Therefore, the following goals are both general guides for the first year and beyond. When developmentally appropriate, in accordance with the school's Mission, the faculty will use grade level New Mexico State Standards for all subject areas including language arts, math and science to design lessons that teach students content skills and thinking processes.

Please note that the Waldorf-inspired curriculum may sometimes address the New Mexico Common Core State Standards at an accelerated or decelerated rate based on the educational model which our school Mission and community support is based. The students at our school will demonstrate the following upon graduation:

1. Mastery of the traditional Waldorf curriculum adapted for public schools

2. Proficiency in New Mexico Common Core State Standards (PARCC Assessments).
3. All students will show yearly growth in all subject areas.

We will meet or exceed State comparisons, demonstrating year over year school-wide growth. Taos Mountain Charter School will contract with an accrediting body to ensure accurate tracking and reporting of data.

STUDENT ACADEMIC GROWTH

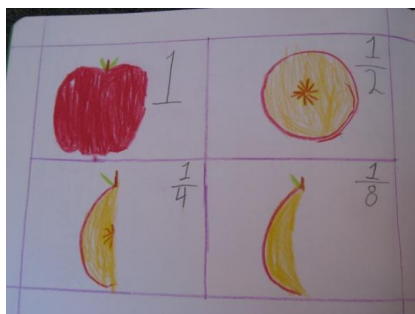
Taos Mountain Charter School recognizes the importance and the responsibility it has to the students and the State of New Mexico to ensure that State Academic Standards are met and measured.

1. Student Longitudinal Academic Growth- Each child's portfolio record and NMCCSS will track longitudinal growth. Taos Mountain Charter School will produce students that will be continually classified as "high growth."

2. Student Achievement Level- we expect to see a steady increase in student achievement as children continue to move through the school. In the early years children may display a "low status, high growth" classification. Upon graduating from Taos Mountain Charter School, and/or in the years prior, after attending Taos Mountain Charter School for several years, it is our expectation that students will have achieved "high status, high growth" classification. We will actively work to meet and exceed the NM Targeted Achievement goals in all measurable areas.

Mathematics:

Measure: Portfolio Review (Main Lesson Book review). Samples of a child's work are used to assess the progress that s/he is making. The class teacher, child, and parents are able to look over, and select samples of a student's self-created Main Lesson Book work to determine the progress made over time. Portfolios are reviewed weekly, monthly and annually. Portfolios will be formally assessed through the curriculum-based assessments outlined in the following measure.



Measure: Curriculum based assessments: 2 extensive parent-teacher conferences and 1 end of the year in-depth narrative report. Please see Appendix M-1, to view the Whole-Child Rubric (Grades 1-8) that will be completed for each parent-teacher conference.

Measure: Observation, formative assessments and daily review of material

Measure: Mathematics rubric specific to Waldorf education (see Appendix M-2 for Waldorf Mathematic Standards and Rubric, Grades 1-5).

Measure: After the second year of NM State required testing, each student's individual growth percentile will be established, as well as the school's median student growth percentile. These data will be used to create short-term goals for individual students and long-terms goals for the school. These goals will help Taos Mountain Charter School meet or exceed the State targets for growth.

Measure: Utilizing the State assessments' measurements, Taos Mountain Charter will close the achievement gaps for various sub-groups of students. We will achieve a grade level assessment of B or higher.

Strategies for Attainment:

1. Authentic Waldorf Curriculum for Math
2. Peer-teaching
3. Teacher guided self-assessment and daily reflection

Language Arts:

Measure: Portfolio Review (Main Lesson Book review). Samples of a child's work are used to assess the progress that s/he is making. The class teacher, child, and parents are able to look over, and select samples of a student's self-created Main Lesson Book work to determine the progress made over time. Portfolios are reviewed weekly, monthly and annually. Portfolios will be formally assessed through the curriculum-based assessments outlined in the following measure.

Measure: Curriculum based assessments: 2 extensive parent-teacher conferences and 1 end of the year in-depth narrative report. Please see Appendix M-1, to view the Whole-Child Rubric (Grades 1-8) that will be completed for each parent-teacher conference.

Measure: Observation, formative assessments and daily review of material.

Measure: Teachers determined use of Language Arts rubric specific to Waldorf education (see Appendix M-3 for Waldorf Language Arts Standards and Rubric, Grades 1-5).

Measure: After the second year of NM testing, each student's individual growth percentile will be established, as well as the school's median student growth percentile. These data will be used to create short-term goals for individual students and long-term goals for the school. These goals will help Taos Mountain Charter School meet or exceed the State targets for growth and proficiency for reading and writing.

Measure: Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA2) will be given to all 1st -3rd grade students and will be used to determine baseline reading and writing levels in the first year of operation so that goals can be set for subsequent years to ensure yearly student growth. Because of the unique, developmentally appropriate curriculum and distinct way that children are taught to read in the Waldorf educational approach, we will voluntarily continue to administer DRA2 to students through 4th grade in order to establish a greater body of evidence that will point to the efficacy of our reading and writing program, illustrating a high degree of proficiency and comprehension in students.

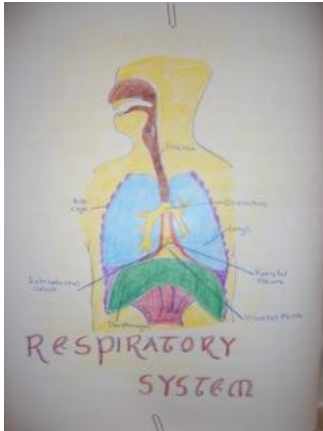
Measure: Utilizing the previously mentioned assessments measurements, Taos Mountain Charter School will close the achievement gaps for various sub-groups of students.

Strategies for Attainment:

1. Authentic Waldorf Curriculum for Language Arts
2. Peer-teaching
3. Teacher guided self- assessment and daily reflection

Sciences:

Measure: Portfolio Review (Main Lesson Book review). Samples of a child's work are used to assess the progress that s/he is making. The class teacher, child, and parents are able to look over, and select samples of a student's self-created Main Lesson Book work to determine the progress made over time. Portfolios are reviewed weekly, monthly and annually. Portfolios will be formally assessed through the curriculum-based assessments outlined in the following measure.



Measure: Curriculum based assessments: 2 extensive parent-teacher conferences and 1 end of the year in-depth narrative report. Please see Appendix M-1, to view the Whole-Child Rubric (Grades 1-8) that will be completed for each parent-teacher conference.

Measure: Observation, formative assessments and daily review of material.

Strategies for Attainment:

1. Authentic Waldorf-inspired Curriculum for Science
2. Peer-teaching
3. Teacher guided self- assessment and daily reflection

Social Studies:

Measure: Portfolio Review (Main Lesson Book review). Samples of a child's work are used to assess the progress that s/he is making. The class teacher, child, and parents are able to look over, and select samples of a student's self-created Main Lesson Book work to determine the progress made over time. Portfolios are reviewed weekly, monthly and annually. Portfolios will be formally assessed through the curriculum-based assessments outlined in the following measure.

Measure: Curriculum based assessments: 2 extensive parent-teacher conferences and 1 end of the year in-depth narrative report. Please see Appendix M-1, to view the Whole-Child Rubric (Grades 1-8) that will be completed for each parent-teacher conference.

Measure: Observation, formative assessments and daily review of material.

Strategies for Attainment:

1. Authentic Waldorf-inspired Curriculum for Social Studies
2. Peer-teaching

3. Teacher guided self-assessment and daily reflection

Physical Activity:

Measure: Since Waldorf education engages the whole child, in body and mind, students experience many opportunities to utilize and develop their physical capacities, throughout the curriculum. The Waldorf trained teacher observes and records all aspects of each child's development (including physically) throughout the year.



Measure: Children will demonstrate enthusiasm for outdoor, physical free play and activities.

Measure: A well-utilized information center at the school with comprehensive information about local youth athletic programs and activities.

Measure: Outings, relevant to the different Main Lesson Blocks, will be organized to focus on providing physical activities for students.

Strategies for Attainment:

1. Utilize the plentiful local resources in Taos such as recreation centers, parks and local farms.
2. Organized walks and bike rides to educational destinations.
3. Regular updates to athletic program information center.
4. One half hour is allowed after the Main Lesson for a snack and recess. In addition, one hour is given in the afternoon for fifteen minute lunch and 45-minute period of physical play (recess).

Children will be encouraged to participate in physically engaging activities and will go outside every day. There is no bad weather, only inappropriate clothing!

Artistic Expression:

Measure: Portfolio Review (Main Lesson Book review). Samples of a child's work are used to assess the progress that s/he is making. The class teacher, child, and parents are able to look over, and select samples of a student's self-created Main Lesson Book work to determine the progress made over time. Portfolios are reviewed weekly, monthly and annually. Portfolios will be formally assessed through the curriculum-based assessments outlined in the following measure. Portfolios will be formally assessed through the curriculum-based assessments.

Measure: Successful completion of Practical Works, as evaluated and measured by the teacher, including, crafts, handwork, fiber art, woodworking at developmentally appropriate levels.



Measure: A school wide performance at the end of the year engages all students and school community.

Strategies for Attainment:

5. Authentic Waldorf-inspired curriculum for grades K-12; art is integrated into each Main Lesson.
6. Eurhythmy (movement, balance, and spatial awareness instruction based on speech and tone) classes for all grades.
7. Singing integrated into class life and recorder playing in early years, combined with orchestral classes later, creates rich musical appreciation.

Character Development- Whole Person Development:

Goal One: students will develop a sense of responsibility to help others in their classroom, local and world communities, developing as skilled peacemakers both internally and externally.

Measure: Spontaneous peer teaching within the class and larger school community; in class cooperative learning games

Measure: Interactions with their peers demonstrate compassion, affirmation of others, active listening skills, respectfulness and peaceful conflict resolution.

Measure: Student participation in community services projects. All students will be required to be actively involved in community volunteer projects. In the upper grades there will be project based reports that will reflect their learning experiences from Friday Service Days.

Measure: Teachers will observe and note regarding each child's level of concentration, mindfulness, gratitude and self-reliance.

Measure: Portfolio Review (Main Lesson Books review) as referenced in previous goals.

Strategies for Attainment:

1. Teachers will practice Non-Violent Communication and will model peace in their relationships with others and within themselves. For insight into Non-Violent Communication see Appendix N, Compassionate Communication & Waldorf Schools by John Cunningham.
2. As budget constraints ease after the first year, Taos Mountain Charter School may utilize EQ (Emotional Intelligence which is a program being utilized in the Taos School District) in order to facilitate positive and peaceful relationships with self and others.
3. Parent education events will help families to learn more about modeling and practicing Non- Violent Communication and peaceful conflict resolution.
4. Students will perform service in the community.

ACHIEVEMENT GAPS IN BOTH PROFICIENCY AND GROWTH BETWEEN STUDENT SUBGROUPS

CLOSING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

Since Waldorf-inspired education is individualized in its approach, Taos Mountain Charter School believes that the factors that often play into gaps in student achievement will weigh less heavily on students' ability to achieve academic success. The power of an arts-integrated curriculum is itself both motivating and healing for students of all abilities and backgrounds. Our research illustrates Waldorf-inspired, arts-integrated education can and will continue to "close the achievement gaps." Due to the many positive and unique features of schools such as Taos Mountain Charter School, children are given opportunities to "stand in their own light" resulting in increased self-

confidence, community support and inner-creativity – all characteristics that contribute significantly to student's ability to achieve academic and personal success.

Data shows there is an achievement gap between ethnicity, gender, students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELL). With smaller student groups data can be expected to demonstrate some variance in year-to-year results. Progress over time will be more measurable as the school receives more longitudinal data from future NM standardized tests. Trend data from the school's supplemental assessments will also provide data for the body of evidence needed to determine student achievement growth.

We will design, in collaboration with our Student Support Director, an Intervention Plan. This plan will take a tier approach beginning with assessment and observation and progressing through more intensive interventions.

ATTENDANCE

Regular, uninterrupted classroom instruction, classroom participation, and interaction with classmates are essential to good learning. Also essential to students is the preparation and training for subsequent study or employment that includes the development of self-discipline through regular attendance. For these reasons, the New Mexico Compulsory School Attendance Law requires that all students of appropriate age and condition attend classes regularly.

Maintaining regular school attendance is the joint responsibility of students, parents, educators, and the legal system. In keeping with that obligation, a detailed Attendance Policy will be developed during our planning year as part of the Parent Handbook.

RECURRENT ENROLLMENT

PARENT EDUCATION

The success of Taos Mountain Charter School will involve a strong community commitment. Our goal is to actively involve parents, teachers and our larger Taos community in the educational experience at our school. We feel that the more involved and informed parents are about what is happening in the classrooms and for their children the more committed they will be to keep their children enrolled at Taos Mountain Charter School. Communication on many levels will be paramount.

There will be Class meetings at least 4 times a year where the teachers will present in-depth information about the curriculum. There will be School Open Houses where the

students work is highlighted and parents and community members will be able to learn about Waldorf-inspired curriculum and Taos Mountain Charter's exciting coursework. There will be workshops and lectures - at least two a year, where community members will have the opportunity to learn more about our curriculum.

Parent Education will be a primary focus. There will be individual meetings between parents and teachers as well as regular class meetings. These meetings will provide the opportunity to go over curriculum that students are engaged in as well as what is ahead. The more the parents understand and value the education the better.

The Student Newspaper, Yearbook, art exhibits at local venues and class performances will provide opportunities for the students to highlight their work for the community and parents.

HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE READINESS

Taos Mountain Charter School expects our high school graduates to be ready to excel in college or in a career. A study of Waldorf High School graduates from 1994-2005 found 94% of Waldorf graduates go on to college and once there, they excel.

GRADUATION RATE

High School graduation rate will meet or exceed 75%.

ACHIEVEMENT GROWTH OF LOWEST 25%

ACHIEVEMENT GROWTH

The Student Support Specialist (special education teacher) and potentially the social worker will work to identify roots causes of individual student challenges and develop an appropriate tailored tiered response involving the student's family if needed to provide comprehensive support for students who score in the lowest 25%. Examples of specific strategies that may be recommended include: individual counseling, tutoring, or therapeutic work such as sensory integration or occupational therapy.

E. ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

Goal One: To provide an authentic Waldorf-inspired environment for students, faculty and parents.

Goal Two: Taos Mountain Charter School will embrace a diverse community that reflects the populations of the community we serve.

Goal Three: Parents and community members will be active partners to ensure student success.

Goal Four: Taos Mountain Charter School students will be active participants in the Taos community through community service.

F. CURRICULUM: PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire”
-- William Butler Yeats

We believe that education should help children to become creative, critical thinkers whose gifts are allowed to unfold uniquely, not according to a uniform standard. In order to move through our ever changing, modern world with confidence, we believe that the educated person of our day must possess the following skills:

- Literacy
- Ability to communicate clearly, both orally and in writing
- Familiarity with, and ideally the ability to communicate in, more than one language
- Understanding of various cultures
- Understanding of the scientific process and the various scientific disciplines
- Knowledge of history
- Ability to think creatively, analytically, and logically
- Ability to observe, gather, organize, analyze, and synthesize information
- Understanding of the mathematical process including application
- Ability to critically assess data
- Lifelong learner who has developed competence, self-motivation, confidence, and Responsibility

We believe that the personal attributes, skills and capacities of the educated person of today include:

- Concentration, focus, and perseverance
- Ability to work cooperatively with others

- Adaptability and mental flexibility
- A strong sense of connection to and responsibility for the world
- Ability to value relationships, and have respect for others
- Ability to honor cultural, ideological, and philosophical differences
- Ability to solve problems by analyzing issues from multiple perspectives
- Resourcefulness, confidence, and motivation
- Enthusiasm, a sense of wonder, and curiosity
- A passion for lifelong learning
- Clearly developed emotional intelligence
- Self respect, self-control and self-actualization
- Ability to communicate with respect and compassion
- Respect for the environment

A Waldorf-inspired curriculum adapted to New Mexico State Standards will provide an education that will nurture the skills of the educated person in the 21st century.

HOW LEARNING BEST OCCURS

Taos Mountain School holds that learning best occurs when students are taught using a curriculum that integrates the oral tradition, visual and performing arts, foreign languages and movement into the teaching of English/language arts, mathematics, social studies and science.

Teaching methods and structures include:

- Academic components framed within an artistic, creative, and imaginative context
- Academic development in an environment that supports the unfolding of the physical, emotional, and social aspects of the individual child
- A model asserting that children have identifiable stages of development
- A curriculum designed to foster attitudes and habits that promote responsibility and confidence
- Beginning with whole-to-part learning, from synthesis to analysis
- Educational models that weigh process and outcome equally
- An approach that strives to increase capacities for self-motivated learning as opposed to one that focuses on an information-based model
- A partnership between home and school where parents have the opportunity to become deeply involved in their child's education
- The creation of a community wherein all members—including parents, teachers, and children—make a commitment to lifelong learning
- Staff who are sensitive to each child's personal rhythm and development
- Limited media exposure

- A cooperative, non-competitive environment where each child's uniqueness is honored
- Educational experiences both in and out of the classroom setting that engage the child intellectually, emotionally, socially, and physically
- Teaching methods that place a high value on relational experiences and inter- and intrapersonal Interactions

"I believe that Waldorf education possesses unique educational features that have considerable potential for improving public education in America....Waldorf schools provide a program that...not only fosters conventional forms of academic achievement, but also puts a premium on the development of imagination and the refinement of the sensibilities."

--Elliot Eisner, Professor of Education and Art, Stanford University Past President, American Educational Research Association

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Taos Mountain Charter School supports the idea that every child needs the balance provided by healthy intellectual, emotional, social, artistic, and physical development. The K-12 program at Taos Mountain Charter School is designed to foster the development of a fulfilling, creative, and productive life for all of our students. Our teaching approach and curriculum content are carefully tailored to meet students at various stages of child development.

The Waldorf kindergarten focuses on hands-on activities and experiences that promote students' physical development, sensory-motor skills, social development and creative play. In first through eighth grades, our teaching approach and curriculum emphasize the development of imaginative thinking (key to problem solving and analytic reasoning), while helping students deeply understand and connect to what they learn. Grades students engage in artistic activities that are directly integrated into the academic curriculum, thus deepening their social and emotional "feeling" or connection to their subject matter, with the goal of creating a lifelong love of learning.

Please note that the Waldorf-inspired model upon which the school's Mission and vision are based is developmental and determines that some of the New Mexico State Standards will be addressed at grade levels that may occasionally differ from those in the state academic standards framework. Some of the sequencing within the New Mexico State Standards shall be accelerated or decelerated at times. Taos Mountain Charter School commits that students will be well prepared for NMCCSS testing, grades 3-8.

The extensive task of mapping and aligning the Waldorf-inspired curriculum, in detail, with state standards will be achieved over time. We will start in 2012 during our planning year and build on it every year. It will be the ongoing and extremely important duty of teachers within the school to ensure that NMCCSS are integrated into each school day. By 2016, the curriculum of all grades served at Taos Mountain Charter School will be mapped and aligned with the NMCCSS. Each year Taos Mountain Charter School will conduct a thorough review to update our mapping document.

As a part of the enrollment, all parents will attend a Parent Information Meeting facilitated by Taos Mountain Charter School during which it will be explained that our Waldorf-inspired curriculum standards may not correlate grade by grade with the New Mexico State Standards—especially in the grades K-2. Each parent will also receive a folder with information further explaining our curriculum. We will make the Waldorf-inspired curriculum standards available to parents upon request at the beginning of each school year.

Using Waldorf-methods curriculum and the instructional approach outlined in this section, Taos Mountain Charter School ensures that each child will attain proficiency in both the New Mexico Academic Standards for K-12th grade students, and the Waldorf-inspired curriculum standards by the time he/she exits eighth grade.

Waldorf teaching methods stress a nurturing, multi-sensory, nature-oriented learning environment. The stimulation of the child's imagination and creativity is a high priority. Daily, weekly and seasonal rhythms will help provide consistent structure to the educational process. Multiple learning modalities are integrated into daily lessons to create a learning atmosphere that is supportive, challenging, and meaningful to each student. Waldorf teaching methods emphasize imaginative and creative play in the early years and build in complexity as the child progresses. Opportunities for artistic expression and intellectual development abound throughout the grades.

The academic program is strongly interdisciplinary, integrating the arts- drama, painting, music, drawing, and handwork- into the entire curricula. Several studies have shown significant correlations between academic success, enhanced critical thinking abilities and positive attitudes towards community in students who are educated in an arts-integrated curricula (Catteral, 1998; Seidel, 1999; Heath 1998). This model of education through the arts awakens imagination and creativity, bringing vitality and wholeness to learning. Lessons and activities will blend cognitive, auditory, kinesthetic, visual, and tactile approaches to address the students' various dominant learning styles. Taos Mountain Charter School will place a high priority on our students "learning how to learn."

The faculty will select curriculum materials, and instructional activities will be developed by the class teacher from the teacher reference library, the internet, and from the public library. Teachers develop their units of study (Main Lesson blocks). Since Taos Mountain Charter School will be integrating the New Mexico State Standards into study blocks, teachers are expected to be engaged in continuous communication with one another in order to best accomplish this task. A Main Lesson block rotation for the year, which is planned prior to the start of the school year is submitted to the Principal and distributed to parents at the beginning of each school year. Although Taos Mountain Charter School seeks to employ Waldorf trained teachers, we understand that it is quite possible that some teachers may not have extensive Waldorf training. Therefore, in order to provide detailed curricular resources for “new” teachers, as well as for those who are not so new to Waldorf, Taos Mountain Charter School aims to purchase the Live Education curriculum, which is a comprehensive Waldorf curriculum compilation for grades K-8. In an effort to ensure adequate teacher planning resources will be available for varying levels of Waldorf teaching experience, Taos Mountain Charter School understands it will be important to offer such curriculum guides within the teacher library.

All Waldorf-inspired curricular resources will be “starting points,” to be edited or added to, and into which New Mexico State Standards will be integrated to ensure students receive the scope and depth of education desired by both Taos Mountain Charter School and the New Mexico Department of Education. Taos Mountain Charter School believes that how we educate our children relates directly to the health of our society. Taos Mountain Charter School founders share a strong belief in public education as a means to cultivate and inspire the healthy citizenship of future generations.

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Seidel, S. Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning, The Arts Education Partnership and the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, Washington, DC, 1999:79-90.

Heath, SB. Living the Arts Through Language and Learning: A Report on Community-Based Youth Organizations. Americans for the Arts Monographs, Washington, DC, November 1998: 2, 7.

RESEARCH AND DATA

ARTS BASED CURRICULUM

Arts infusion has been shown to lead to both superior academics and success. It has even been suggested that the highest academic success may depend upon sequential arts education, which begins in the early grades of school (Lake, 1994; Hilger, 2006). Regarding economic success, creativity is recognized as the number one required ingredient. It is also recognized that creativity is both nourished and stimulated through the proper presentation and study of the arts. During a 19-country summit including the United States and several European countries in 2000, it was concluded that the arts are essential for both economic success and cultural viability (Sharp, 2000). The finding of this summit were: that stronger arts programs are needed during school hours; that these must creatively engage children; and that teachers must have the appropriate training to support increased arts. The number one concern among teachers participating in this summit was that they do not have the skills to bring arts into the academic classroom in a creative and integrated way. It cannot be emphasized enough that teachers being asked to teach arts infusion in the classroom must be supported by appropriate training and skill sets.



NEURAL AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ARTS INFUSION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

There are two main ways in which arts-infused education aids cognitive development and learning. Arts infused education acts physiologically to enhance neurological development, which in turn aids in the development of more intricate cognitive structures. It also facilitates learning by providing a broader frame of reference for new material. Because this expanded frame of reference includes auditory, verbal, kinesthetic, tactile, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and spatial dynamics, it speaks to all

learning styles, allowing all students to work from their individual strengths while assisting in development of their weaker areas.

It is well established that flexible, creative thinking requires intricate neurological structures. Developmental psychologists rank neural complexity on a scale of I-IV. While high degrees of basic intelligence can occur at all levels, stages III and IV are characterized by the ability to make connections quickly, the tendency to explore and use original approaches to problem solving; a higher level of memory retention, and an increased capacity for insight, among other things. Stages I and II, on the other hand, characterize thought processes that are either dualistic or multiplistic in nature. That is, people at these stages tend to think in black-and-white terms and to be hostile to new ideas if they are dualists, and to have trouble weighing and sorting among many possible solutions if they are multiplists.

The level of complexity in a person's thought processes depends on neurological pathways established in the brain. It is along these pathways that the electrical signals we associate with thinking travel. Neurologic pathways are established by force of habit; that is, people who use their bodies and minds a lot and in different ways will have more and better-established pathways than those who perform several similar tasks repeatedly. New pathways can be laid down at any time in a person's life, but they are more easily established before the age of 12. (This is one of the reasons why it's easier to acquire a second language or learn an instrument during the pre-pubescent years). Intellectual development continues, of course, as students progress on through high school and college and enter the workforce. However, most new information is processed along the already existing pathways in the brain. Thus, the capacities for creative and analytical thought later in life depend a great deal upon the structures laid down in childhood.

Because participation in the arts exercises so many areas of the brain, students who are exposed to arts infused education are more likely to have a higher number of neurological pathways. Assuming they are given the appropriate opportunities and instruction in their educational careers, these children will have a higher capacity for original and critical thought. For example, students who merely listen to a teacher or see a video on Ancient Rome are using a relatively small number of pathways in their brains. They are listening and watching. Even the visual activity is limited if they are watching a video or if their teacher doesn't move around much, because their eyes don't change focus. However, students in the arts infusion method who, while guided by their teacher, are writing and illustrating their own lesson books, sculpting after the fashion of the Romans, enacting Julius Caesar, reciting Roman poetry, building scale-model

coliseums, reconstructing musical instruments, sewing costumes, and proclaiming edicts are clearly using their brains and bodies more fully. Multiple pathways are engaged and exercised. What's more, these students are more likely to remember what they've learned about Ancient Rome. Research in cognitive development shows people learn primarily in terms of what they already know. People use prior experience to construct a frame of reference for processing new information. Therefore, the ability to assimilate and apply new concepts depends in large measure on the breadth of a person's frame of reference. Arts infused education, by relating conceptual information to tactile, auditory, kinesthetic, verbal, visual, and interpersonal experience, necessarily provides each student with a broader frame of reference for each new lesson. Students who learn this way are also more likely to internalize their lessons about Ancient Rome; some may even imagine living there themselves. This aids in the construction of a new frame of reference that will ease the study of later historical periods, such as the European Age of Reason.

Studies have shown that, due to a more complete exercise of mental faculties and the creation of a broader and more vibrant frame of reference, students who are systematically exposed to the arts improve their intellectual performance. It's well established that the brain is sub-divided into right and left hemispheres. The left is associated with the linear, analytical cognitive processes so valued in our society. Most public education focuses on these processes. The right hemisphere is associated with artistic, spatial, kinesthetic, musical, and intuitive processes. Recent research has demonstrated that these hemispheres are not as independent of each other as was previously assumed. Math, for example, is a left-sided activity, but much of math depends on a well-developed spatial sense, provided by the right side. Language is left-sided, but language acquisition is right-sided, evidenced by the fact that it is enhanced by musical training. Please note that additional research both prior to and since 1995 indicate the connections between the hemispheres are of vital importance to "intelligence." Because problem solving and learning involve both hemispheres as mentioned above, the more numerous and stronger the connections between hemispheres, the greater success enjoyed by any individual for these higher cortical functions. These hemispheric connections are fostered by active and creative engagement in the arts (Healy, 1999 and Pearce, 1992).

In fact, studies show that strengthening the right side of the brain in any way, leads to enhanced performance in all left-brain functions. Musical training is associated with higher levels of general intelligence, and advanced applications of math and science require the right brain functions of intuition and spatial understanding. This last point is worth mulling, for the United States trails the developed world in sending students to graduate school in mathematics and theoretical science.

The right and left hemispheres of the brain refer specifically to the structural hemispheres of the cerebral cortex. There is additional neurological research from a number of fields, which have begun to explore the role of sub-cortical structures in integrating the hemispheres of the cortex and otherwise supporting and impacting learning and development. (Please note, Healy and Pearce both describe three brains: (1) The Lizard brain, or the brainstem, which is evolutionarily speaking our most ancient brain, and deals with survival; (2) The limbic system, which is found to be the seat of our emotions; and (3) the neo-cortex, evolutionarily speaking our most recent brain, also nicknamed our ‘civilized’ brain. It is the cortex which is thought to be the main academic “brain,” supported by the limbic system, or “feeling brain.”)

Specifically, research into the identity and functioning of the “limbic system” has been illuminating. Neuro-physiologically, the limbic system is a structural and functional crossroads. Often referred to as the mid-brain, it is connected to both hemispheres of the brain (especially the right hemisphere), as well as structures of the lower reptilian brain, which are at the heart of the autonomic nervous system. Functionally, the limbic system is considered to blend autonomic process with the conscious association processes of thought and memory.

Examples of limbic system researchers in the past couple decades include Paul McClean, forerunner in “triunal brain theory,” Roger Masters, political scientist and researcher in the emergent field of Biopolitics, who has specifically studied the relationship of limbic system actions and interactions to political power; and, Gabrielle Rico, educator, author of *Writing the Natural Way*, who was involved in the development of the Bay Area Writing Project in the San Francisco Area.

Limbic system research is relatively young. Just which brain structures to involve in the system are unsettled, and how they precisely function is yet to be fully understood. There is, however, a consistent theme of research, which underscores the central role of emotion in learning and development.

Most people easily grasp the role of emotion in certain behaviors such as running when frightened, exploding in a fit of rage, or reaching out passionately for one’s significant other. But researchers such as those noted above extend the study of non-verbal, emotional dynamics into subtler, less obvious realms of behavior, such as the interest of a young child rolling a ball across the floor, the emerging power of an individual in a group, and the organizing of a student’s world of experience into coherent, meaningful prose.

WALDORF-INSPIRED CURRICULUM IS DEVELOPMENTAL

Many of the pedagogic elements in the Waldorf-inspired curriculum specifically support children's development of new skills and abilities. Waldorf methods stimulate pre-verbal neurological processes, as well as emotionally engage children's innate aesthetic sensibility, their precious sense of wonder and imagination, and their inherent connection to the world. Overemphasis on cognitive training is, ironically, less productive and potentially damaging (Oppenheimer, 1999).

Pearce analyzes large numbers of cognitive and neural developmental studies in his books, presenting them in layman's language. He discusses the fact that premature academic training for young children actually results in learning disabilities including poorer reading skills by fourth grade and above. Healy also analyzes this same body of research in her book *Endangered Minds* and arrives at similar conclusions. Other world-renowned educators and researchers such as Dr. Coulter have found the same results. In her book, *Moving into Literacy*, she discusses the physiologically appropriate age (5 ½ to 7 ½) for reading instruction to begin (Coulter, 2002).

We must therefore be very careful to distinguish rigorous but developmentally correct academics from premature academics. The Waldorf-inspired curriculum not only supplies arts infusion but also a developmentally correct curriculum, thus enabling rigorous and appropriate academics with success for all students.

Our cortex lays down myelin (myelination) of different pathways and brain areas at different ages. There is also a spectrum of development of these pathways, which varies somewhat from individual to individual. It is the myelination of nerves, which allows them to function as conductors for our brain, i.e. to serve as information conduits or pathways for skills, memories and so forth. Although a child can learn to "read," or recognize words and other symbols at any age, the pathways of the brain, which ultimately enable deep reading comprehension in later years are not ready for action prior to ages 5 ½ - 7 ½ (Coulter, 2002). In addition, a University of Otago researcher uncovered quantitative evidence that teaching children to read from age five is not likely to make that child any more successful at reading than a child who learns reading later, from age 7 (Galer, 2009).

If a child is taught reading (or other forms of academics such as numeracy) before these brain centers are ready, the brain, being extremely plastic and adaptable, utilizes different, but suboptimal, pathways. The problem is that these alternate pathways are not those, which can provide deep reading comprehension or appropriate cortical stimulation in later years. Because children are ready to read at different ages, a developmentally appropriate curriculum must provide some flexibility so children are

offered academic lessons when they are ready. Teachers must be both properly trained and supported by the school system to recognize this readiness. Our arts-based method offers this training and flexibility.

Healy also notes that reading comprehension test scores in the United States drop off in about fourth grade, despite earlier and earlier academics in many schools, while many learning problems such as ADHD and other attention deficit disorders often start to manifest then as well. This is believed to be partially caused by inappropriate neural and cognitive growth due to developmentally incorrect curricula. Research clearly shows that early readers are not necessarily more successful in school than late readers. In fact, studies are showing that later readers may be more successful than children exposed to prematurely early academics (House of Commons Select Committee Report, 2000; BBC, 2001; Sharp, 2002, OECD, 2001).

This explosive research means the current expectation at many schools that all students be reading in kindergarten is gravely troubling in terms of appropriate and optimal neural and cognitive development. Consider the following excerpt from the British House of Commons Select Committee Report in 2000: Comparison with other countries {to the UK} suggests there is no benefit in starting formal education before (the age of) six. The majority of other European countries admit children to school at age six or seven following a three-year period of preschool education, which focuses on social and physical development. Yet standards in literacy and numeracy are generally higher in those countries than in the UK, despite our earlier starting age (First Report: Early Years, paragraph 62, 2000).

Consider also this excerpt from a recent study comparing schools and student achievement in 32 different countries....Finland (which starts children in school at age seven)...scored very well in the latest Program for International Student Assessment (2001 PISA) study which assessed a quarter of a million students in 32 countries. In this survey of literacy, numeracy and scientific understanding, Finland scored significantly better than any other European country... (PISA-OECD, 2001).

And this excerpt from a lecture delivered to the British Royal Academy of the Arts: “First, it’s only in the long term that you can see the disadvantages of early formal instruction. Second, early formal instruction is particularly damaging to boys... on the whole, early (academic) learning damages the disposal to learn” (Katz, 1999).

An additional serious problem with premature academics is this: The area of the brain which takes over when students are required to perform academics tasks before their cortex is ready is the reptilian brain, which is our oldest brain, evolutionarily speaking.

This is the area of our brain concerned with survival. Stimulation of this part of our brain with premature academics (or anything else) results in aggression – the fight or flight response. This can result in impulsive, uncontrolled, possibly quite violent behavior in some students, and withdrawal, anxiety, and depression in other students - all problems plaguing many of our schools at this time. “Mere technical training inevitably makes for ruthlessness, and to educate our children we must be sensitive to the whole movement of life” (Krishnamurti, 1953).

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WALDORF SCHOOLS AND PERFORMANCE COMPARISON: VARIOUS STUDIES

“I believe that Waldorf education possesses unique educational features that have considerable potential for improving public education in America... Waldorf schools provide a program that...not only fosters conventional forms of academic achievement, but also puts a premium on the development of imagination and the refinement of the sensibilities.”

—Elliot Eisner, Professor of Education at Stanford University and former President, American Association for Educational Research

US WALDORF-INSPIRED CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS OUTPERFORM THEIR PEERS IN THE LONG RUN

Dr. Ida Oberman (2007) investigated the relevance of Waldorf education for public urban school reform. In her qualitative study “Learning from Steiner: The Relevance of Waldorf for Urban Public Education” presented at the American Education Research Association’s annual conference she stresses that there has been a real change in education methods over the past ten years. Now, funders and policy makers are taking into account more than high test scores. Moreover, she states that public schools using Waldorf methods are beginning to capture the attention of national foundations (Oberman, 2007). To illustrate her point she refers specifically to the Gates Foundation. Dedicated to developing education that prepares students to succeed in college, careers and as citizens, the Gates Foundation funded the first public high school based on Waldorf methods in the Sacramento Unified School District (Oberman, 2007; Robelen, 2006).

In addition to analyzing survey data from 500 graduates of private US Waldorf Schools, Oberman sampled urban public Waldorf-methods schools in California. Oberman’s sample was selected according to geography and district size then compared with students in schools of similar demographics. In her assessment Oberman found that Waldorf methods students were, on average, behind the top ten percent of their peers in language arts and math on the state’s annual second grade test, the California Standards Test (CST). However, by eighth grade, they matched the top ten percent of their peers, region and county wide, while they well outperformed the average scores statewide on the CST (Oberman, 2007).

It is important to note that the schools which had the highest percentage of Free and Reduced Lunch and English Language Learners, showed particularly remarkable gains. Students' scores went from 67% "Below Basic" in English Language Arts to 61% "Proficient or Above" by their eight-grade year (Oberman, 2007). Thirty-four percent of the students were "Below Basic" in math. However, by grade eight, 66% scored "Proficient or Above" on the state math assessments (Oberman, 2007). Oberman (2007) concluded that the Waldorf approach successfully laid the groundwork for future academics by first engaging students through integrated arts lessons and strong relationships instead of focusing on rote learning and preparing them for standardized tests. Observers of the study also noted that second-grade students gained a love of learning through child-friendly classroom activities that paid off academically in later grades (Oberman, 2007).

For full report please see Appendix O: Ida Oberman: Learning from Steiner: The Relevance of Waldorf for Urban Public Education, 2007.

SURVEY ON THE NORTH AMERICAN WALDORF GRADUATES - KEY FINDINGS

"Now I'm not saying that knitting got me into Yale. But Waldorf education helped me develop a vitally important capacity which I would call 'cognitive love' – the ability to embrace the world with one's thinking, to engage one's mind actively in loving dedication to a brighter future."

"For me, exposure to the arts and music, and learning by doing, are the characteristic traits of Waldorf education."

"Waldorf education prepared me for anything and everything!"

— Comments by US Waldorf graduates: excerpted from "Survey of Waldorf Graduates, Phase II by David Mitchell and Douglas Gerwin (Wilton NH: Research Institute for Waldorf Education, 2007)

The most comprehensive survey to date on the Northern American Waldorf alumni was conducted by the Research Institute for Waldorf Education (Mitchell & Gerwin, 2007). Their survey spanned more than 60 years of US and Canadian Waldorf high school graduates- starting with the first Waldorf senior class in 1943 and culminating with the class of 2005. Key findings of this survey show that 94% of the graduates attended college and 88% of the respondents have completed or were in the process of completing a college or university level degree at the time of the survey. The survey also showed that in both the US and Canada, Waldorf school graduates attend – and graduate from – "a broad range of fine colleges and universities, from small liberal arts colleges to large state universities (Mitchell & Gerwin, 2007).

Compared to the general US population (1991-2002 graduates), Waldorf graduates were nearly three times as likely as the general US college population to have studied arts and humanities. However, compared to their non-Waldorf educated peers, up to twice as many Waldorf graduates go on to study science overall in college, including both the life sciences and physical sciences (Mitchell & Gerwin, 2007). This is in sharp contrast with popular thinking that Waldorf alumni are choosing careers only in arts or attending art colleges (e.g. Schreiber, N. (2007, October 30).

Additionally, according to the US researchers from the Research Institute for Waldorf Education, in recent years a higher percentage of Waldorf school graduates from the younger Waldorf schools have gone into the sciences than those graduating from the more mature Waldorf Schools. Also, Waldorf graduates were nearly three times as likely as the general population to have studied the social or behavioral sciences, while the pursuit of a degree in business and management was about a quarter of the national average (Mitchell & Gerwin, 2007).

As a general observation, on a combined basis there is a relative parity between the Waldorf graduates and general population (17% versus 20%) in majors falling within the combined life sciences, physical sciences, mathematics, engineering, computer and information sciences. Yet, in case of Waldorf graduates there is a stronger emphasis on arts and humanities and social and behavioral sciences than on business and management (Mitchell & Gerwin, 2007).

Interestingly, while considerably fewer Waldorf graduates choose education as an undergraduate degree compared to the national average, teaching is the most popular profession over all other fields chosen by the Waldorf graduates later in life. This also suggests that Waldorf graduates are using their undergraduate education as a time for study rather than as training for a profession. Overall, the five most popular professions are: education, fine and studio arts, administration, performing arts, and health or medicine. All these professions involve development and use of strong social skills (Mitchell & Gerwin, 2007). Additionally, this survey included over two hundred comments by professors about the Waldorf school-educated undergraduates. The primary characteristics reported and comments were:

- Holistic and integrative quality of their thinking.
- Flexible, “outside the box” thinking and “integrating seemingly unrelated subjects with clarity and courage”.
- Ability to “think creatively, to assimilate information as opposed to memorizing isolated facts”; “All have the same broad approach to education. They are flexible,

creative, and willing to take intellectual risks.”

- Creative and imaginative capacities, not only in the practice of the arts but also in the study of science.
- “Moral ballast and social caring for others”, social awareness, communication skills, and personal initiative.

Several professors also commended Waldorf students for their “love – even their tenacity – for learning” (Mitchell & Gerwin, 2007). The survey noted the graduate’s self-professed readiness to ask professors for help and the ability to adapt to a different environment (Mitchell & Gerwin, 2007).

“I know how to seek out my professors to get their help (which many of my classmates don’t even think to do) because my high school teachers were always present and helpful...I was able to find my place at a large school – RIT [Rochester Institute of Technology] has 15,500 students – because I had made my place at this small school.”
— Comment by a US Waldorf graduate: excerpted from “Survey of Waldorf Graduates, Phase II”

In summary, a profile of a typical Waldorf graduate based on the full sample of all 1943-2005 graduates in the survey looks as follows:

- “After graduating from a Waldorf high school, attends college (94%)
- Majors in arts/humanities (47%) or sciences/math (42%) as an undergraduate
- Graduates or is about to graduate from college (88%)
- Practices and values life-long learning (91%)
- Is self-reliant and highly values self-confidence (94%)
- Highly values verbal expression (93%) and critical thinking (92%)

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- Expresses a high level of consciousness in making relationships work – both at home and on the job
- Is highly satisfied in choice of occupation (89%)
- Highly values interpersonal relationships (96%)
- Highly values tolerance of other viewpoints (90%)
- At work cares most about ethical principles (82%) and values helping others (82%)” (Mitchell & Gerwin, 2007)

MORAL DEVELOPMENT & COMPETENCY (WHOLE CHILD DEVELOPMENT)

Two independent research studies compared Waldorf-educated students to their peers in non-Waldorf methods schools and found that Waldorf-educated students exhibit stronger mores (Andersson, Dahlin & Langmann, 2004; Hether, 2001). Significantly,

these studies were conducted on separate continents yet reported similar findings suggesting a stronger correlation exists between Waldorf- educated students and higher moral and ethical values than one study could determine. In America Waldorf-educated students scored significantly higher on a test of moral reasoning than students in public high schools and students in a religiously affiliated high school (Hether, 2001). Swedish high school showed Waldorf pupils felt a responsibility for social and moral issues to a greater extent than municipal school pupils (Andersson, Dahlin & Langmann, 2004). Moreover, more Waldorf pupils thought they had a responsibility for the moral development of society in the future and felt that as adults they would have a responsibility to do something about the situations referred to in the evaluation questions. Comparisons between the students' answers showed that Waldorf students tended to refer to moral qualities such as love, sympathy, solidarity and moral courage to a greater extent than their municipal peers. They also seemed to be characterized by greater thoughtfulness, greater confidence in man's innate goodness and less confidence that more police or more severe laws can solve moral problems on a societal level. Instead the Waldorf pupils stressed individual responsibility (Andersson, Dahlin & Langmann, 2004). Waldorf students were also far more likely to volunteer opinions about the survey and research in general, suggesting possible improvements in the survey technique and offering new possibilities to resolve the moral dilemmas raised in the survey (Hether, 2001).

ACADEMIC KINDERGARTENS CAN LEAD TO POOR PERFORMANCE

Long-term research casts doubt on the assumption that starting earlier on the teaching of phonics and other discrete skills leads to better results. For example, most of the play-based kindergartens in Germany were changed into centers for cognitive achievement during a wave of educational "reform" in the 1970s. However, research comparing 50 play-based classes with 50 early learning centers found that by age ten children who had played excelled over the others in a host of ways. They were more advanced in reading and mathematics and they were better adjusted socially and emotionally in school. They excelled in creativity and intelligence, oral expression, and "industry." As a result of this study's findings German kindergartens once again returned to being play-based (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 1992).

STANDARDIZED TESTING: USA AND GERMANY

Despite their sometimes controversial lessened exposure to standardized testing (such tests are generally absent in the elementary school years), U.S. Waldorf pupils' SAT scores usually fall above the national average, especially on verbal measures (Oppenheimer, 1999) Studies comparing students' performance on college-entrance examinations in Germany found that as a group, Waldorf graduates passed the exam at

double to triple the rate of students graduating from the state education system, (Heiner, 1994; Oppenheimer, 1999) and that students who had attended Waldorf schools for their entire education passed at a much higher rate (40% vs. 26%) than those who only had part of their education at a Waldorf school (Heiner, 1994; Spiegel, 1981).

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TRACK RECORDS OF ARTS-BASED PUBLIC PRIVATE SCHOOLS

By the mid-1990's research was bearing out theoretical claims made for arts-based instruction. We have identified a school, The Lab School of Washington, which accepts only special-needs students, and whose track record is nothing short of incredible. Among the case studies cited below the reader will note excellent outcomes for these arts-based schools, no matter what location in the country, and no matter how many students at each school are at risk or economically disadvantaged.

a) Milwaukee Urban Waldorf School

Since switching to Waldorf methods, the Milwaukee Urban Waldorf Elementary School has shown an increase in parental involvement, a reduction in suspensions, improvements in standardized test scores for both reading and writing (counter to the district trend), while expenditures per pupil are below many regular district programs

(Doornek, 1996). The school converted to Waldorf methods in 1991, when it had 350 students, about 90% of them African American. On the Milwaukee public schools standard third-grade evaluation, the number of children reading above grade level went from 26% in 1992 to 63% in 1995 (McDermott, 1996).

Waldorf's adaptable and individualized curriculum has been mentioned as a factor in the school's success in addressing children of poverty and children of color (Phaizon, 1996). The school has been cited as a positive learning environment, in which the students as well as their background seemed to be treated with respect, and where pupils are both encouraged and trusted to be responsible. In addition, the Principal gave a strong positive evaluation of the Waldorf approach. The study cited the school's pleasing aesthetic, positive teaching environment, safe atmosphere and warm relations despite the "difficult life that surrounds UWS and many of its children".

b) T.E. Mathews Community School – Yuba County, California

The T. E. Mathews Community School in Yuba County, California serves high-risk juvenile offenders, many of whom have learning disabilities. The school switched to Waldorf methods in the 1990s. A 1999 study of the school found that students had "improved attitudes toward learning, better social interaction and excellent academic progress" (Monks, 2001; Babineaux, 1999). This study identified the integration of the arts "into every curriculum unit and almost every classroom activity" of the school as the most effective tool to help students overcome patterns of failure. The study also found significant improvements in reading and math scores, student participation, focus, openness and enthusiasm, as well as emotional stability, civility of interaction and tenacity (Babineaux, 1999).

c) The School of Arts and Sciences, Tallahassee, FL.

The School of Arts and Sciences is a public charter school serving K-8 students. It opened in 1999 and as of 2005; enrollment was 226 students with a waiting list of 400. Its Mission statement reflects the values of TMCS: To facilitate individual educational ownership and responsible lifelong learning through interdisciplinary approaches to arts and sciences in a safe and nurturing environment. The school was voted one of the eight best charter schools in the nation by the US Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement. It has received an "A" grade from the Florida Department of Education every year since state grading of schools began in 2002-3. This is largely due to student performance on Florida's FCAT accountability assessments for No Child Left Behind. The International Center for Leadership and Education, in partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, chose this school as one of our nation's model schools. At the time, the school had a per pupil spending amount of about \$5,000 per student. Twenty-two percent of the students are special needs, and 19% are

economically disadvantaged - both statistics tend to lower standardized test scores. However, this school's test scores exceeded the district average at every grade. Seventh and eighth grade math scores were the highest in the district, with the eighth grade math scores ranking second in the entire state of Florida.

Please see <http://www.artsandsciences.leon.k12.fl.us/default.aspx> for more information.

d) Pine Forest School, Flagstaff, AZ.

This Waldorf-inspired, K-8 public charter school was founded in 1995. Enrollment in 2005-6 was 225. Curriculum is arts-based and experiential, and closely aligned to a Waldorf methodology. Arizona lists this school as "Highly performing," with No Child Left Behind Adequate Yearly Progress met. Standardized test scores over a period of 10 years document a trend we predict for Taos Mountain Charter School: Scores rise as children progress from early to later grades. We predict this based on the sequencing and pedagogy of our arts-based curriculum. Lower scores in early grades linked to high test scores in later grades are preferable to higher scores in lower grades but falling test scores in upper grades.

For more information, please see <http://pineforestschool.org/>.

e) The Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Washington, DC.

The Duke Ellington School of the Arts, a unique partnership of arts and education institutions, is committed to preparing students for post-secondary education and/or professional careers through arts programs of the highest quality and strong academic and artistic challenges.

<http://www.ellingtonschool.org/home/index.html>.

The school, which opened in 1974, focuses on a combined and rigorous arts and academics curriculum. As of the mid-1990's, this nonselective, arts-based school sent 92 percent of its graduates to college, had only a 2 percent dropout rate, and "no weapons and no discipline problems". This track record is inspiring because during the mid-1990's the school served primarily inner city and at-risk students. As of August, 2004, the school's website identified 90 percent of the students qualified for free/reduced price school lunch program, and 92 percent of students were minorities. Impoverished and minority populations may be statistically at higher risk academically and thus this high school's excellent performance remains an inspiring example of the power of arts in education.

f) Studies of Schools in Germany

In the early 1990's German high schools were highly selective, and acknowledged to be among the best public schools in the world. At that time German students were tracked for college prep or vocational work long before they entered secondary school. In Germany, as in much of the rest of Europe, private Waldorf schools actually receive 80 - 100 percent of their funding from the state, so tuition is not as much of a limiting factor for their students as it is in the United States. Waldorf schools are also non-selective; any student who applies may enroll. Because of their non-selectivity and arts-based pedagogy, the German state long viewed Waldorf schools as inferior. A common criticism was that students are not prepared "for the real world." Hoping to prove the inferiority of Waldorf schools once and for all, professors at the University of Bonn analyzed survey results of 1,460 Waldorf graduates (der Spiegel, December 14, 1981). Of Waldorf students attending Waldorf schools exclusively from grades K - 13. Forty percent of these students passed the Arbitur exam, effectively allowing them to start college as sophomores.

By contrast, only six percent of students graduating from German public high schools passed the Arbitur (p 73, J. Almon, Winter, 1992). These results are particularly fascinating in light of the bias against Waldorf schools; in science, investigator bias is known to occasionally influence study results, yet here the results were exactly opposite of those expected by the educational authorities.

g) Waldorf schools in the United States

There are both public charter and private Waldorf schools in the United States. There are few Waldorf charter schools perhaps in part because of difficulties translating the pure Waldorf method into public school requirements in the United States. For example, the pure Waldorf method does not grade students prior to junior high grades 6-8, and sometimes not until high school. Instead student evaluations are achieved by thorough teacher observation, reports and recommendations, and portfolio assessments. Another very interesting difference about Waldorf schools is that students do not usually begin reading until first or second grade although they have extensive literacy foundation skill development prior to this. Such challenges aside, there are some very successful Waldorf charter schools in the United States. Todd Oppenheimer profiles them in his article for the Atlantic Monthly. Of particular inspiration is the fact that while average and gifted students can both excel, so especially do at risk and certain special needs students. This is apparently due to two main factors: (a) arts-based curriculum, and (b) developmentally correct curriculum (Oppenheimer, 1999).

h) The Lab School of Washington, Washington, D.C.

This school accepts only those children who are learning disabled and cannot be served by other schools. As of 2006, 330 students are enrolled in grades K-12. All students in

this school must go through a lengthy application process in which they prove their problems cannot be addressed in a regular school. The founder of the school, Sally Smith, believes arts are the way to reach these kids: "Children with learning disabilities tend to be passive learners because they have had many failures in school. They worry they may make a mistake or say the wrong thing. But there's no room for that in the arts. The arts demand involvement." Smith's arts based methods have been so successful that more than 90% of her graduates go on to college. Schools modeled after the Lab School have begun to open in other areas of the country. In the words of 10-year old student Marilena Siegel, who suffers from dyslexia, speech and auditory problems, "They break it down and tell it to me in a different way so I can actually understand it... it's like coming from a dark sky to a sunny day."

For more information, please see <http://www.labschool.org>.

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GENERAL DESIGN OF CURRICULUM

“The greatest scientists are artists as well. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination circles the world.”

--Albert Einstein

THE WALDORF-INSPIRED KINDERGARTEN

“In one sentence, Froebel, father of the kindergarten, expressed the essence of early-childhood education. . . . The natural world is the infant’s and young child’s first curriculum, and it can only be learned by direct interaction with things. . . . Learning about the world of things, and their various properties, is a time-consuming and intense process that cannot be hurried. This view of early-childhood education has been echoed by all the giants of early-childhood development—Froebel, Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky. It is supported by developmental theory Play facilitates the growth of children’s reasoning abilities. Children’s questions are a form of mastery play. In asking questions, children are creating their own learning experiences”

--David Elkind, Professor of Child Development Tufts University.

Education Next, “Much Too Early” forum, 2001, No. 2, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, California

KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

The Taos Mountain Charter School Kindergarten curriculum is developmental; that is, we meet the children “where they are,” while simultaneously laying the foundation for academic success in later grades. It is designed to enhance the young child’s physical development, which includes fine and gross motor skills, language development and sensory integration. In addition, the activities of the kindergarten are structured to strengthen the child’s imagination, creativity, social skills, and sense of self-confidence. Teachers involve the students in maintaining the orderliness and organization of materials, preparing the foundation for orderly thinking.

Literacy begins in the kindergarten with a rich oral language base. Teachers use storytelling, including classic and modern folk tales from various cultures, to develop the students’ attention span, concentration, vocabulary, speaking, and listening comprehension skills, and to lay down the basis for reading comprehension. Through drama, rhythmic poetry, nursery rhymes, and songs, the teachers further immerse the children in vivid and imaginative oral speech and literature. The teachers use puppetry, engage the children in acting out stories rich in vocabulary and imagination, as well as lead singing games to teach comprehension strategies such as story sequence and character development.

Kindergarten introduces the fundamental concepts of mathematics through creative play and daily practical activities. Mathematics begins in the kindergarten with sorting, one-on-one correspondence, counting from 1 to 30, patterning, and identifying shapes. Through daily practical activities such as setting the table, students learn to pattern, as well as to identify, sort, and classify objects by attribute. This approach, through imitation and creative play, uses natural materials such as logs, nature blocks and driftwood of different shapes and sizes, seashells, stones, pinecones, etc. By the end of kindergarten, students understand small numbers, quantities, and simple shapes in their everyday environment. They count, compare, describe, and sort objects, and develop a sense of properties and patterns. They explore economics through imaginative play that involves sorting and trading objects of different sizes and properties.

The science curriculum gives the children a multiplicity of experiences with the natural world. In the physical sciences, students' creative play involves them deeply in exploring basic physics principles, such as mass, density, gravity, balance, and the creation of pulleys and levers. Students experience the properties of heat and cold through time spent in the kitchen cooking with the teacher, as well as observing seasonal changes. Life science and earth science start with students observing common objects using their five senses. Students learn to communicate observations orally and through drawings. Nature tables as well as frequent nature walks provide an awareness of the seasons and a connection to the natural environment. The students experience the cycle of growth through gardening, from seed to harvest to transformation through cooking. Other activities involve students directly in the transformation of colors and natural materials into useful and beautiful creations. These activities include combining colors in watercolor painting, carding and felting raw wool, and making dolls from garden grasses. Finger knitting develops fine-motor skills and nurtures children's ability to focus and concentrate, while fostering hand-eye coordination. Students' development of fine motor skills and focus is essential for learning to read and write, as well as for doing mathematics and other academic work.



Problem-solving skills have their foundation in creative play that transforms the environment in inventive ways. Creative play provides students with opportunities to imagine, plan, and carry out increasingly complex activities. During creative play,

teachers guide students' growing capacities for creative problem solving and social interaction. Early childhood research shows that free play is serious work for young children, forming the basis for later scientific thought -- analytical critical thinking skills and problem solving (Elkind, 2007).

The quality of the environment of a Waldorf-inspired Kindergarten is integral to its goals for the children. A feeling of warmth and security is created by using only natural materials in the construction of the decor and toys; wood, cotton, and wool. Semi-opaque, pastel curtains transmit a warm glow into the room. In this warm environment are placed toys, which the children can use to imitate and transform the activities that belong to everyday adult life. In one corner might stand a wooden scale and baskets for children to pretend they are grocery shopping; a pile of timber stands ready to be constructed into a playhouse, a boat or a train; a rocking horse invites a child to become a rider; homemade dolls lie in wooden cradles surrounded by wooden frames and cloths the children can use to create a pretend family and play house. Pinecones and flowers are artistically dispersed; lovely watercolors adorn the walls. The effect of this beautiful arrangement of decorations and toys is a feeling of entering a "children's garden." where one can breathe easily, relax and play according to the impulses of one's heart.

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OVERVIEW OF CURRICULUM GRADES 1-8

One of the strengths of the Waldorf curriculum is its balance and depth: the emphasis on the arts....the rich use of the spoken word through poetry and storytelling... Above all, the way the lessons integrate traditional subject matter is, to my knowledge unparalleled."

--Ernest Boyer, President, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

READING AND WRITING: Letters are learned in the same way they originated in the course of human history. Human beings created drawings, and out of these pictures abstracted signs and symbols. Early elementary students hear stories, draw pictures, and discover the letter in the gesture of the picture. The important early reading skills integrated into songs, poems, and games help to establish a joyful and living experience of language. Students are taught how to read right from the beginning of first grade; it is done through writing. Writing is taught phonetically, the students copying the teachers' letters and sounds from his writing on the chalkboard into their Main Lesson Books. This process continues through block letters and cursive until, by the end of second grade, reading aloud in class is practiced out of a printed book, as the students have been

doing out of their self-created lesson books. Phonetics are essential, but most suitably taught through writing, since reading phonetically segments the experience of the child, thus diminishing comprehension. Writing also affords the opportunity for the children to use their whole body to learn reading. Throughout the grades, texts taken from a rich humanities curriculum provide material for reading practice.

WORLD LANGUAGE: Taught beginning in kindergarten or first grade, giving the children insight into and familiarity with another language and culture. These begin with stories and legends from various regions and expand into dedicated language learning. Through the grades, the world language program will expand to include reading, writing, grammar and conversation. In addition, aspects of classical and other languages (e.g., Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Japanese) may be introduced in the middle and upper grades. The languages used are typically from different subgroups of the Indo-European languages, and can also include Asian language as well as American Sign Language.

MATH: In the grade school, math instruction begins by teaching from the whole to the part before it moves to the normal $3+9=12$ (for example, answering the question of what is 12, $12=3+9$, or $12=4\times 3$). This encourages flexible thinking and discourages the one “right” answer way of thinking. Movement, stories, manipulatives, and games are used to actively learn counting, and the four processes (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division). Mental math problem solving is emphasized to develop and strengthen thinking. Steiner suggested that the study of numbers begin with the human being. Each of us is a unit, an indivisible whole: from this we derive the number one. We find the number two expressed by our hands and feet or by our eyes and ears. The number three may be found in the three major parts of our bodies: head, trunk, and limbs. To find the number four we can count our limbs; for five we can refer to the digits on each hand or the toes on each foot. By working in this way, the teacher can lead the children to the perception that we contain the world of numbers in our very being. The four arithmetic operations - adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing- are introduced in the first grade and progress into long division by the third grade.

THE SCIENCES: Science is taught experientially and begins with the honing of observation skills in grade one. Beginning in grade 6, through scientific demonstrations, children observe, recall, report on the facts and arrive at conclusions to learn the scientific method. Through this process, rigorous critical and analytic thinking and sound judgment are trained.

GEOGRAPHY: This area is divided into three areas: functional geography (the make-up of the solar system and the earth), physical geography (the land and water forms on

earth), and political geography (the study of countries, the capitals, flags and culture). The materials include models and pictures of the planet, globes, puzzle maps, models of different land and water forms.

BOTANY: This area contains many live specimens from the plant kingdom in their living environments. Students are taken through a sequence of nomenclature activities in which they learn to identify parts and types of plants, fruits and nuts. Taking the students to nature for study brings life and enthusiasm to this area. Our school community garden will provide a rich environment that will inspire and compliment such studies.

BIOLOGY: This area introduces the study of life using the five kingdoms. A microscope is used to see live specimens in the prokaryote and the protista kingdoms in later grades. Other materials such as pictures and story cards are used to give experience with the five kingdoms. This is another area of study the school garden will lend to. The materials and activities in this area follow a sequence that enables students to study plants and animals with the sense of order in which they appeared on earth. Live specimens offer an opportunity for observation and research. There is a complete set of nomenclature for vertebrates and invertebrates.

SOCIAL STUDIES/HISTORY: The philosophies, religions and cultures of the past have shaped humanity and continue to influence today's values and morals. Students learn about these from an historical and geographical perspective. Great care is taken to ensure students are not influenced toward any single belief system. The humanities curriculum begins in first grade with folk tales, fables and legends from around the world, and takes children through a full sweep of humanities' collective cultural heritage. Hebrew legends in grade three, Norse mythology in grade four, and the ancient cultures of India, Egypt, Persia, Mesopotamia and Greece in grade five all provide the background for the study of history and literary skills. These are presented through excerpts from original texts. Native American, African, and Far East Asian cultures provide additional rich content helping to illustrate the accomplishments and interrelatedness of human cultures. Care is taken to include all cultures that are represented in the student population. By living into these cultures through legends, biography, and literature, the children gain an appreciation for the diversity of humankind. By the eighth grade the students have journeyed from Ancient Cultures, through Greece and Rome, to medieval history, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Age of Exploration, up to the present day.

THE ARTS: Drama, painting, music, drawing, modeling, etc., are integrated into the entire K-12 curriculum, including mathematics and the sciences. The arts are also

offered as special subjects. In the first grade students are taught to play the wooden flute/recorder. Other instruments are gradually introduced, leading to choir and orchestra in the higher grades. Other arts such as beeswax modeling, drama, and painting, are taught by the class teacher, and add to the child's joy of learning. High quality art materials are available to students for any project whether it be painting a picture of an animal with all its parts or making a bowl out of clay like one of our ancestors made.



EURYTHMY: The art of eurythmy, is an expressive movement art originated by Rudolf Steiner in conjunction with Marie von Sivers in the early 20th century. Primarily a performance art, it is also used in education—primarily in Waldorf schools, and as a movement therapy. The gestures that build the basic movement repertoire of an eurythmist are connected to the sounds and rhythms of language, to the tonal experience of music and to fundamental human experiences (such as joy and sorrow). Once this fundamental repertoire is mastered, it can be composed into free artistic expressions. Eurythmy pedagogical exercises begin with the straight line and curve and proceed to increasingly complex geometric figures and choreographed forms, developing a child's coordination and concentration. When the first Waldorf School was founded in 1919, Eurythmy was included in the curriculum. It was quickly recognized as a successful complement to gymnastics in the school's movement program and is now taught in most Waldorf schools, as well as in many non-Waldorf pre-school centers, kindergartens and schools. Its purpose is to awaken and strengthen the expressive capacities of children through movement, stimulating the child to bring imagination, ideation and conceptualization to the point where they can manifest these as "vital, moving forms" in physical space. The eurythmist works to cultivate a feeling for the qualities of straight lines and curves, the directions of movement in space (forward, backward, up, down, left, right), contraction and expansion, and color. In the high school, the element of color is also emphasized both through the costuming, usually given characteristic colors for a piece or part and formed of long, loose fabrics that accentuate the movements rather than the bodily form, and through the lighting, which saturates the space and changes with the moods of a particular piece.

HUMANITIES: The humanities curriculum acknowledges that the cultures of the past have influenced humanity throughout time and continue to influence the values and morals of today's world. Children learn about world cultures from an historical perspective. Beginning in grade two, fables are taught; history and legends in grade three; Norse mythology in grade four; and the ancient cultures of India, Egypt, Persia, Mesopotamia, and Greece in grade five. By exposure to these cultures through their legends, literature, music, and arts, the children gain flexibility and an appreciation for the diversity of humankind. U.S. history, comparative government, and geography are brought to the student from fifth through eighth grade. Biography, mapmaking, timelines, and storytelling are essential methods of instruction. The performing arts curriculum is an integral part of these studies, culminating in an annual class play performance in first through eighth grades.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: Movement activities, dance, cooperative games, and other forms of creative physical expression are infused into the everyday curriculum. To the extent possible, classrooms and play yard space are organized to maximize the children's opportunities for movement and physical expression through games, circle-time activities, folk dances, sports, and physical education. Recognizing that the qualities of physical fitness and health enhance the students' overall well-being, each child is encouraged to recognize and rise to his/her individual physical potential.

HANDWORK: Crafts, handwork, and practical work such as fiber arts, woodworking, house building and gardening are an integral part of the curriculum from kindergarten through the grades. Boys and girls learn to knit in the first grade and crochet in third grade, creating many functional and beautiful objects, such as flute bags, knitted animals, pencil cases and puppets.

Decades before brain research confirmed the value of this type of activity; studies recognized a relationship between body movement and brain function. Learning to knit and crochet in the early grades develops fine motor skills, and leads to lively thinking and enhanced intellectual development later on, as well as being actually therapeutic for students with difficulty in arithmetic. Coordination, patience, perseverance, and imagination are also schooled through practical work. Activities such as woodworking, house building, gardening, and sewing are specifically included in the elementary curriculum, and give the children an understanding of how things come into being, as well as a respect for the creations of others.

TEACHING RHYTHM: Teachers take great effort in devising schedules that best reflect the way children learn at different developmental stages. The instruction will immerse the child in a subject through presentation, storytelling, writing, reading, recitation,

drama, painting, drawing, and movement. Writing is the mode through which reading is taught; first experienced through self-created “pictures” of each letter, storytelling, drawing, and movement. Nature stories told in the early grades will evolve into more advanced scientific investigations of zoology, geology, astronomy, botany, chemistry, physics, physiology, and anatomy.

The school day for the grades will begin with the Main Lesson, a two-hour instructional period focusing on the core curriculum and integrating a variety of learning approaches to encourage student learning through multiple modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.) and multiple intelligences. Each core subject, defined as mathematics, language arts, science and history/social studies/geography, is taught in a unit or block, generally lasting three to four weeks, thus immersing the student in a particular subject. However, lessons are given every day for reading and math to ensure these key subjects are always being built upon and polished; for example, children read aloud to the teacher each day to allow for formative assessment.

This uniquely multi-disciplinary, multi-sensory instruction style, combined with the unit block approach to academic studies, is central to Taos Mountain Charter School’s teaching strategy since it promotes and develops active listening, imagination, memory, and vocabulary. In addition to the main lesson, students spend two or three additional periods each day in core academic subjects. For one or two periods each day students attend non-core special subjects such as world language (i.e. Spanish), handwork, music, games and the arts.

HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

High school course work involves short intensive units to create variety, freshness, and depth. We will teach major academic subjects in rotating intensive blocks, so students take chemistry and biology, history and literature every year, each time from a different angle, each time at a deeper level of complexity. The education fosters creativity. Individual projects are frequent and allow students to explore their interests in unique ways. Students may draw on their art skills to illustrate a scientific concept, or produce a film for an assignment in Spanish.

Teenagers are alive with questions about the world and their place in it. At TMCS, we help students answer those questions, while challenging and empowering them. Our mission is to help teenagers become the adults they are meant to be.

We emphasize critical thinking, independent investigation, and applied academic and creative skills. Every student takes units of physics, chemistry, and biology each year, each with lab experience. Twelfth grade mathematics includes pre-calculus and

calculus. At the same time, every student takes one of two foreign languages, choir or orchestra, fine and applied arts, drama, physical education, and movement.

THE EDUCATION IS EXPERIENTIAL

Trigonometry is taken into the field with surveying; carbonation is studied by making root beer; chemistry is partially taught through the mysteries of the dark room. Social science classes employ role plays and debates, and the world becomes the classroom through field trips and frequent guest speakers.

SUBJECTS ARE INTEGRATED

Faculty will draw connections between disciplines, revealing the context for the development of ideas. A lesson in astronomy connects to the history of science. While students read the Odyssey, they learn to weave as Penelope wove while awaiting Odysseus's return.

Short intensive units create variety, freshness, and depth. We will teach major academic subjects in rotating intensive blocks, so students take chemistry and biology, history and literature every year, each time from a different angle, each time at a deeper level of complexity.

THE EDUCATION FOSTERS CREATIVITY

Individual projects are frequent and allow students to explore their interests in unique ways. Students may draw on their art skills to illustrate a scientific concept, or produce a film for an assignment in German. Individual attention and small class sizes will foster strong and independent students.

THE WALDORF CURRICULUM AND NMCCSS

The Waldorf-inspired method of education offers an academically rigorous curriculum presented in a developmentally appropriate and arts-integrated context. By combining elements of a traditional Waldorf curriculum, sustainable living, and New Mexico State Standards, students will excel academically.

CURRICULUM IS RESEARCH BASED

RESEARCH BASED CURRICULUM

Taos Mountain Charter School will integrate visual arts, music, classroom drama, and dance into the core curriculum wherever it naturally fits and whenever possible. The correctness of this pedagogy is demonstrated in the outcomes of the myriad research studies conducted on arts integration. Research in this section is taken from the work Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development. The

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the U.S. Department of Education (USED) awarded funding to the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) to commission and publish Critical Links. The focus of the studies in Critical Links was to identify strong arts education research that would make a contribution to the national debate over such issues as how to enable all students to reach high levels of academic achievement, how to improve overall school performance, and how to create the contexts and climates in schools that are most conducive to learning.

The following table, taken from Critical Links, summarizes where research has shown the arts having positive effects on academic and social outcomes.

Deasy, R. Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development, Arts Education Partnership, 2002.

Arts Learning	Cognitive Capacities and Motivations to Learn
Visual Arts	
Drawing	Content and organization of writing
Visualization Training	Sophisticated reading skills/ interpretation of text
Reasoning about Art	Reasoning about scientific images
Instruction in Visual Art	Reading readiness
Music	
Early childhood music training	Cognitive development
Music listening	Spatial reasoning, spatial temporal reasoning, quality of writing, prolixity of writing.
Piano keyboard learning	Mathematics proficiency, spatial reasoning
Piano and voice	Long-term spatial temporal reasoning
Music performance	Self-efficacy, self-concept
Instrument training	Reading, SAT verbal scores
Music with language learning	English skills for ESL learners
Classroom Drama	
Dramatic enactment	Story comprehension (oral and written), character identification, character motivation, increased peer interaction, writing proficiency and prolixity, conflict resolution skills, concentrated thought, understanding social relationships, ability to understand complex issues and emotions, engagement, problem-solving dispositions/strategies, general self

	concept.
Dance	
Traditional dance	Self-confidence, persistence, reading skills, nonverbal reasoning, expressive skills, creativity in poetry, social tolerance, appreciation of individual/group social development.
Creative dance	Creative thinking: fluency, originality, elaboration, flexibility
Multi-Arts Program	
Integrated arts and academics	Reading, verbal and math skills, creative thinking, achievement motivation, cognitive engagement, instructional practice in the school, professional culture in the school, school climate, community engagement and identity.
Intensive arts experience	Self-confidence, risk-taking, paying attention, persevering, empathy for others, self-initiation, ownership of learning, collaboration skills, leadership, reduced drop-out rates, educational aspirations, higher-order thinking skills.
Arts rich school environment	Creativity, engagement/attendance, personal and social developments, higher-order thinking.

VISUAL ARTS

Example 1:

In a study conducted by Karen Tisham Et al. called Investigating the Educational Impact and Potential of the Museum of Modern Art's Visual Thinking Curriculum, the researchers answered the following question: When children aged 9 to 10 are trained to look closely at works of art and reason about what they see, can they transfer these same skills to a science activity? (Transfer denotes instances where learning in one context assists learning in a different context.) A Visual Thinking Curriculum (VTC) was used in which 162 9- and 10-year-olds were trained to look closely at works of art and talk about what they saw in the works. Over the course of a year, these students participated in an average of seven to eight VTC lessons of about 40 minutes each.

All of the classes visited the Museum of Modern Art in New York City at least twice. On the art assessment, children in the control group performed equivalently to children in the VTC at the pre-test, providing evidence that the two groups were commensurate.

After a year of the VTC, children achieved higher scores on evidential reasoning on the post-test than did the control group. They were also less likely to use circular reasoning, and were more aware of the fact that their interpretations were subjective. Thus, the students in the VTC appeared to have looking and reasoning skills acquired from looking at works of art that they then deployed when given a scientific image. Tishman S, MacGillivray D, and Palmer P. Investigating the Educational Impact and Potential of the Museum of Modern Art's Visual Thinking Curriculum, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, 1999.

Example 2:

In a study conducted by Jeffery Wilhelm called Reading Is Seeing: Using Visual Response to Improve the Literary Reading of Reluctant Readers, the author answered the research question: Can the visual arts be used to help reluctant learning-disabled readers begin to enjoy reading? Two seventh-grade boys who were learning disabled and who were “reluctant” readers were helped in a nine-week session to visualize stories through the visual arts. They were asked to create cutouts or find objects that would represent characters and ideas in the story they were reading, and then use these to dramatize the story. They were also asked to draw a picture of strong visual impressions formed while reading a story. And they were engaged in discussions of how the pictures in illustrated books work along with the words. Students were also asked to illustrate books, and to engage in “picture-mapping,” in which they depicted visually the key details of nonfiction texts. The final activity was to create a collage that represented their response to a particular piece of literature.

The two students became much more sophisticated readers through the course of the nine weeks of visualization training. They took a more active role in reading, and began to interpret text rather than just passively read it. The researcher suggests that visual art provides a concrete “metacognitive marking point” that allowed these readers to see what they understood. It is also possible that because these boys were particularly interested in visual art, the use of visual art in reading made them more motivated to read. Wilhelm JD. Reading Is Seeing: Using Visual Response to Improve the Literary Reading of Reluctant Readers, Journal of Reading Behavior, 1995, 27 (4): 467-503.

MUSIC

Example 1:

In a study conducted by Lois Hetland called Learning to Make Music Enhances Spatial Reasoning, the author answered the following research question: Does active instruction in music enhance preschool and elementary students' performance on spatial tasks? The researcher conducted a literature search for published and unpublished studies that examined the relationship between music and nonmusical

cognitive outcomes. Fifteen studies were selected for meta-analysis according to these criteria: (1) they were reported in English, (2) participants were taught to make instrumental or vocal music, (3) they contained one or more control groups, (4) they contained outcome measures on mental rotation or spatial visualization, (5) sufficient statistics were provided to compute an effect size. Consistent effects were found across the studies in the first meta-analysis. According to the author, “active music instruction lasting two years or less leads to dramatic improvements” in spatial-temporal reasoning.

Effects remained robust with group lessons and instruction without notation. Another metaanalysis demonstrated that effects of music making are not limited to spatial-reasoning performance, but may include other spatial tasks as well. Hetland L. Learning to Make Music Enhances Spatial Reasoning, *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Fall 2000, 34 (3-4): 179-238.

Example 2:

In a study conducted by Kathryn Vaughn called *Music and Mathematics: Modest Support for the Oft-Claimed Relationship*, the author answered the following questions: Is there a relationship between music study and mathematics achievement? Does music instruction cause increases in mathematics achievement? Does listening to background music while thinking about mathematics problems enhance mathematics ability?

A search of published and unpublished studies considering the relationship between music and mathematics was gathered. The initial harvest yielded 4,000 references. These were reduced to a set of 25 studies, first by excluding articles deemed to be advocacy pieces or programs descriptions, and then by excluding three other types of studies: (1) when music was used as a reward for high mathematics performance, (2) where musical “jingles” were used as memory aids, and (3) where the studies focused on music and mathematics aptitude rather than achievement. The studies were then assigned to one of three groups: co relational, experimental music instruction, and experimental-music listening. A separate meta-analysis was performed within each group.

The meta-analysis of the correlational group indicated a significant relationship between music study and mathematics achievement. Students who take music classes in high school are more likely to score higher on standardized mathematics tests such as the SAT. Vaughn K. *Music and Mathematics: Modest Support for the Oft-Claimed Relationship*, *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Fall 2000, 34 (3-4):149-166. For more evidence on how music (playing instruments, reading music, listening to music)

contributes to brain development and enhances cognitive skills and concrete reasoning, please refer to Appendix M.

CLASSROOM DRAMA

Example 1:

In a study conducted by Sherry DuPont called *The Effectiveness of Creative Drama as an Instructional Strategy to Enhance the Reading Comprehension Skills of Fifth-Grade Remedial Readers*, the author answered the following research question: Does a program of creative drama integrated with children's literature contribute to the growth of reading comprehension skills of fifth-grade remedial reading students?

The study looked at three groups of fifth-grade students in remedial reading classes that demonstrated comparable skill levels in both the California Achievement Test and the Reading Diagnostic section of the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT6). Each group had 17 students. Groups One and Two received a structured remedial reading program for six weeks using six selected children's stories. Group One used creative drama to support story comprehension. Group Two used "traditional," non-remedial methods to support story comprehension—they read the same stories as Group One, followed by vocabulary exercises and teacher-led discussions. Group Three was the control group and continued the ongoing remedial program. The study finds that "...when children have been involved in the process of integrating creative drama with reading they are not only able to better comprehend what they've read and acted out, but they are also better able to comprehend what they have read but do not act out, such as the written scenarios they encounter on standardized tests." This is an important finding that warrants scrutiny and additional research—that drama not only contributes to the immediate subject of a dramatic enactment but also associates with comprehension of written stories unrelated to the drama activity. This is an instance of transfer of skills in one arena to skills useful more generally, albeit a closely related transfer. DuPont S. *The Effectiveness of Creative Drama as an Instructional Strategy to Enhance the Reading Comprehension Skills of Fifth-Grade Remedial Readers*, *Reading Research and Instruction*, 1992, 31(3): 41-52.

Example 2:

In a study conducted by Michaela Parks and Dale Rose called *The Impact of Whirlwind's Reading Comprehension through Drama Program on 4th Grade Students' Reading Skills and Standardized Test Scores*, the authors answered the following research question: What is the impact of a collaboratively developed reading comprehension/drama program on reading skills, standardized test scores, and drama skills? The study utilized a 10-week drama program, two hours per week, which engaged four classes of fourth-grade students in each of four schools, which were then

compared to four control classes, one in each of the respective schools. Professional artists worked together with the classroom teachers. The three components of each session included “Game Time” for physical and vocal warm-up and getting focused, “Acting” for advancing acting skills and applying these to specific narratives, and “Observation/Conversing” for writing in journals and discussing the work of the session. At the end of the 10 weeks there was a specific theater presentation exercise along with a performance assessment. In the spring prior to the program year and in the spring at the close of the program year students were given a section of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills designed to measure reading comprehension.

Participant students’ reading comprehension scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) improved three months more (in the standard grade-level metric) than the control group, with high statistical significance. ITBS scores improved the most with respect to student ability to identify factual information from written text. Parks M and Rose D. The Impact of Whirlwind’s Reading Comprehension through Drama Program on 4th Grade Students’ Reading Skills and Standardized Test Scores, 3D Group, 1997, Berkeley, CA, 25.

DANCE

Example 1:

In a study conducted by Sandra Milton called Assessment of High School Students’ Creative Thinking Skills: A Comparison of the Effects of Dance and Non-dance Classes, the author answered the following research question: Is there a relationship between dancing and creative thinking?

Two hundred eighty-six high school students (15 years old, on average) who were enrolled in dance (experimental group) and non-dance (untreated control group) courses participated. Students studied under six dance teachers in beginning and advanced courses for a wide range of dance forms. Dancers participated for about five to eight hours a week, in and out of school, for a semester. Controls attended classes in business accounting, English, health, interpersonal communications, and psychology. Experimental and Control subjects were pre- and post-tested in groups on the three parts of the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT). TTCT is norm-referenced on five factors: fluency (number of ideas), originality (novelty of ideas), abstractness of titles (imaginative titling that captures the essence of a drawing), elaboration (detail identification), and resistance to premature closure (completing figures in non-simplistic ways). Elaboration, originality, and abstractness of titles correlated with higher levels of dance experience. Although results are compromised by potential selection bias (and can only be generalized to high school students who choose dance classes), there is evidence against an interpretation that higher creativity scores resulted because those

who took dance started out more creative: dancers scored lower, on average, on pre-tests for all five creativity factors. Thus, it is not likely that the creativity gains resulted from a more creative group in the dance treatment but, rather, from the dance instruction itself. Minton S. Assessment of High School Students' Creative Thinking Skills: A Comparison of the Effects of Dance and Non-dance Classes, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO.

Example 2:

In a study conducted by Dale Rose called The Impact of Whirlwind's Basic Reading Through Dance Program on First Grade Students' Basic Reading Skills: Study II, the author answered the following question: Can first-graders' reading abilities be improved through a dance program in which children learn to use their bodies to physically represent letters? In 1998-1999, a Basic Reading through Dance (BRD) program was implemented in three Chicago public elementary schools. The goal of the program was to improve first-graders' reading ability through dance. The program lasted over 20 sessions. Each session was led by three dance specialists. The heart of each session consisted of teaching students to physically represent sounds by making shapes with their bodies to represent letters and letter combinations. Nine schools served as control schools. All 12 schools served predominantly African-American poverty-level children. A total of 174 BRD children and 198 control children were pre- and post-tested in reading using the Read America's Phono-Graphix Test. The test assesses the ability to recognize sounds for letters as well as phoneme segmentation ability. The study compared gain scores in the BRD and control children over three months. While both groups improved significantly in reading, those in the BRD group improved significantly more than those in the control group on all measures assessed by the reading test. They improved more in their ability to relate written consonants and vowels to their sounds, and to segment phonemes from spoken words, including nonsense words, compared to the control children. Rose D. The Impact of Whirlwind's Basic Reading Through Dance Program on First Grade Students' Basic Reading Skills: Study II. February 1999, 3-D Group, Berkeley, California.

MULTI-ARTS PROGRAMS

Example 1:

In a study conducted by James Catterall called Involvement in the Arts and Success in Secondary School, the author answered the following questions: Do students in middle and high school who have high involvement in the arts perform better than those with low arts involvement on a variety of academic indicators? And if so, does this relationship hold up when the sample is restricted to students from the lowest SES quartile in the United States? Data from 25,000 students participating in the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) of 1988 were examined for this study. Students

in the NELS study were followed from eighth to tenth grade. Students were classified in terms of arts involvement both in and out of school. Arts involvement was measured by number of arts courses taken, number of out-of-school arts courses taken, and attendance at museums outside of school. Students in the highest quartile of arts involvement were compared with those in the lowest art-involvement quartile on a variety of academic measures. Academic measures for eighth graders were: grades in English; scores on composite standardized tests; dropping out of school by grade 10; boredom in school half or most of the time. Academic measures for 10th-graders were: composite standardized test scores; reading scores; scores on a test of history/geography/citizenship. Tenth-graders were also assessed in terms of community service involvement and television watching. A sub-study was conducted on 6,500 students from the lowest SES quartile. The identical methods and measures were used.

The relationship between arts involvement and academic achievement was positive in both eighth and 10th grades for the broader sample of 25,000 students cutting across all SES levels. High arts students earned better grades and performed better on standardized tests. High arts students also performed more community service, watched fewer hours of television, and reported less boredom in school. When high vs. low arts-involved students from the lowest SES quartile were compared, the same findings emerged. High arts students again earned better grades and scores, were less likely to drop out of school, watched fewer hours of television, were less likely to report boredom in school, had a more positive self-concept, and were more involved in community service. Catterall J. *Involvement in the Arts and Success in Secondary School*, Americans for the Arts Monographs, 1998, 1 (9), Washington, D.C.

Example 2:

In a study conducted by James Catterall and Lynn Waldorf called *Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE): Evaluation Summary*, the authors answered the following research question: Do low-SES urban public school students in schools that integrate arts and academics (through partnerships with teachers and artists) perform better on standardized tests than do students who are in schools that do not integrate arts with academics?

This study examined the effect on test scores of the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE). CAPE schools brought artists and teachers into partnerships so that they could develop curricular units in which an art form was integrated with an academic subject. Fifty-four percent of the teachers reported having developed one arts-academic integrated unit, while 24 percent reported having created four to five such units. Units typically lasted four to six weeks. Typically it was a visual art form integrated into a reading or social studies unit. The reading and mathematics test scores for CAPE

schools were compared to scores from other Chicago public schools at grades 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11. In none of the comparisons made between CAPE and control schools did the control schools perform better than the CAPE schools.

Math: In K-8, 40 comparisons were made between CAPE and control school math scores. Of these, 16 comparisons showed CAPE schools increased their lead over control schools. At high school level, 8 out of 12 comparisons showed CAPE schools increased their lead.

Reading: In the K-8 grades, 40 comparisons were made between CAPE and control school reading scores. Of these, 25 showed CAPE schools increasing their lead over control schools. At the high school level, 7 out of 12 comparisons showed CAPE schools increasing their lead. The differences between CAPE and comparison students were statistically significant in elementary school, especially by sixth grade.

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Arts infusion has been shown to lead to both superior academics and success. It has even been suggested that the highest academic success may depend upon sequential arts education, which begins in the early grades of school (Lake, 1994; Hilger, 2006). Regarding economic success, creativity is recognized as the number one required ingredient. It is also recognized that creativity is both nourished and stimulated through the proper presentation and study of the arts. During a 19-country summit including the United States and several European countries in 2000, it was concluded that the arts are essential for both economic success and cultural viability (Sharp, 2000). The finding of this summit were: that stronger arts programs are needed during school hours; that these must creatively engage children; and that teachers must have the appropriate training to support increased arts. The number one concern among teachers participating in this summit was that they do not have the skills to bring arts into the academic classroom in a creative and integrated way. It cannot be emphasized enough that teachers being asked to teach arts infusion in the classroom must be supported by appropriate training and skill sets.

OVERVIEW OF CURRICULUM

GRADE-BY-GRADE OVERVIEW OF CURRICULUM

A grade-by-grade overview of the curriculum is provided below; variations in the general curriculum may occur depending on the teacher, the particular class, and the year.

A checklist/narrative system will be developed by the Taos Mountain Charter School Faculty, in conjunction with the Director, Curriculum Specialist, Student Support Director and the Governing Council, that will allow teachers to accurately track how the New Mexico Common Core State Standards are being met within the school. The following curriculum represents the Waldorf curriculum sequencing and content by grade level in the following areas of study. Please see Appendix A-2 to view Waldorf-inspired Student Scope and Sequence, with Benchmarks for Grades K-8.

KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

The Taos Mountain Charter School Kindergarten curriculum is developmental; that is, we meet the children “where they are,” while simultaneously laying the foundation for academic success in later grades.

Language Arts: Literacy begins in the kindergarten with a rich oral language base. The teachers use puppetry, engage the children in acting out stories rich in vocabulary and imagination, as well as lead singing games to teach comprehension strategies such as story sequence and character development.

Math: the fundamental concepts of mathematics are introduced through creative play and daily practical activities. Mathematics begins in the kindergarten with sorting, one-on-one correspondence, counting from 1 to 30, patterning, and identifying shapes. They count, compare, describe, and sort objects, and develop a sense of properties and patterns. They explore economics through imaginative play that involves sorting and trading objects of different sizes and properties.

Science: In the physical sciences, students’ creative play involves them deeply in exploring basic physics principles, such as mass, density, gravity, balance, and the creation of pulleys and levers. Students experience the properties of heat and cold through time spent in the kitchen cooking with the teacher, as well as observing seasonal changes. Life science and earth science start with students observing common objects using their five senses. Students learn to communicate observations orally and through drawings.

Problem-Solving: Creative play provides students with opportunities to imagine, plan, and carry out increasingly complex activities. During creative play, teachers guide students’ growing capacities for creative problem solving and social interaction.

FIRST GRADE

Math: Qualities of numbers; introduction to the four operations of arithmetic; geometric forms; whole number processes; counting rhythms; times tables 1 through 6 and 10

Language Arts: Pictorial and phonetic introduction to the alphabet; word recognition; writing; poetry recitation; and fairy and folk tales from around the world

Science: Nature stories; nature walks; observations; gardening; local environment; seasons
Music and Performing Arts: Singing games; interval and/or pentatonic flutes (developing finger coordination, concentration, breath control); songs based on seasonal themes; in-class drama

Art: Form drawing; wet-on-wet watercolor painting (emphasizing an experience of working with color rather than creating formed pictures); beeswax modeling; crayon illustrations

World Language: At least one world language (Spanish) will be introduced through plays, songs, rhythms, poems and games

Handwork: Knitting with two needles (promotes eye-hand coordination, fine motor skills, and arithmetic skills, sequencing, patience, perseverance and self-esteem); seasonal crafts

History & Social Studies: Fairy & folk tales, rhymes; poems; songs

Geography: Spatial orientation; body geography

Physical Education: Circle games, eurythmy

SECOND GRADE

Math: Continue with four operations of arithmetic; story problems; number patterns; times tables 7 through 12, two digit multiplication, carrying and borrowing, written calculations

Language Arts: Reading and writing; phonetics; elements of grammar; spelling, punctuation, beginning cursive writing; Animal fables and myths and legends of heroic people from around the world

Science: Garden and nature studies; school and local environment, seasons; animals

Music and Performing Arts: Singing; pentatonic flute; in-class drama and performance

Art: Continue form drawing; watercolor painting; beeswax modeling, crayon drawings

World Language: One or two languages continued (vocabulary, counting, animals, colors)

Handwork: Knitting patterns of knit and purl (pattern recognition and perpetuation, concentration, fine motor skill development); crocheting

History & Social Studies: Legends and stories of heroic people

Geography: Natural studies

Physical Education: Rhythmic games, line games, eurythmy

THIRD GRADE

Math: Memorization of multiplication tables (1 through 12) continued and strengthened; weight; measure; length; volume; money; time; continued two and three digit multiplication; long division

Language Arts: Elements of grammar (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs); continuing cursive spelling and punctuation; compositions; Stories from ancient history, continued reading

Science: Gardening; soil; nature studies; animal husbandry; conservation; cooking; house building; farming

Music and performing arts: Singing in rounds; pentatonic/C flutes/recorders; in-class skits; performance of annual class play; recorder music notation; possible addition of violin/cello

Art: Continue form drawing; painting; beeswax modeling; crayon and pencil drawing

World Language: One or two languages continued enhancing and holistically in support of the core curriculum (songs, plays, poetry, conversations, and vocabulary)

Handwork: Crocheting (pattern and placement recognition, finger dexterity); hand sewing

History & Social Studies: Study of practical life (house building, clothing, and cooking) around the world

Geography: History of Farming and House building

Physical Education: Traditional Games, dancing, eurythmy

FOURTH GRADE

Math: Continuation of long division; fractions; averages; factoring

Language Arts: Elements of grammar; continuing cursive, spelling and punctuation; book reports; creative writing; composition; Norse and Finnish mythology, Indian Legends and local history

Science: zoology, animals in their environment; continuation of gardening and nature Studies

Music and Performing Arts: Singing and flutes in rounds; possible addition of violin/cello; music theory; choir, reading music notation

Art: Advanced (woven) form drawing; painting; clay modeling

World Language: One or two languages continued (songs, plays, poetry, conversations, cultural activities, vocabulary, beginning writing)

Handwork: Cross-stitch; embroidery; knotting; braiding (creating patterns from front to back)

History & Social Studies: New Mexico and local history

Geography: New Mexico and local geography; map making

Physical Education: Folk dancing; Relay Races, eurythmy

FIFTH GRADE

Math: Decimals; fractions; metric system; geometry as it developed in ancient cultures

Language Arts: Elements of grammar and spelling; sentence structure; descriptive writing; continuing cursive, punctuation and compositions; Greek, Indian, Persian and Egyptian myths, business letter writing, report writing

Science: Botany; Inductive Method; continuation of garden and nature studies

Music and Performing Arts: Singing; flute; violin/cello; 3-part choir

Art: Freehand geometric drawing; painting; clay modeling, drawing

World Language: One or two languages continued (simple conversations, poetry, cultural activities, vocabulary, continued writing)

Handwork: Knitting in rounds; knitting socks, hats, or mittens (develop and follow written instructions), woodcarving

History & Social Studies: Mythology and life in ancient civilizations from ancient India through ancient Greece. Greek history through Alexander the Great

Geography: North American geography as related to vegetation, agriculture, culture and Economics

Physical Education: Greek Olympic games preparations (the pentathlon), eurythmy

SIXTH GRADE

Math: Percent; beginning algebra and negative numbers; ratios; proportions; geometric drawing with instruments and proofs; business math

Language Arts: Advanced grammar; descriptive compositions; expository writing, spelling; biographies; The Roman Empire and Medieval Literature, research methods and report writing

Science: Mineralogy; physics (acoustics, electricity, magnetism, optics and heat); beginning astronomy; continuation of garden and nature studies

Music and Performing Arts: Singing in parts; flute; violin/cello; choir

Art: Geometry with compass/ruler; painting; clay relief modeling; woodcarving

World Language: One or two languages continued, reading and translation stories

Handwork: Pattern making; 3-D construction (visualizing from two-dimensional to three dimensional finished product)

History & Social Studies: The Roman Empire and Medieval History

Geography: World Geography with an emphasis on European and South American Geography

Physical Education: Sport skills some in preparation of Medieval Games, eurythmy

SEVENTH GRADE

Math: Algebra; mathematical thinking/theory; geometry; graphing

Language Arts: English Literature; Grammar Review; research methods and Projects

Science: Physics (mechanics); physiology; astronomy continued; inorganic chemistry; nutrition and reproductive systems; continuation of garden and nature studies

Music and Performing Arts: Singing and flute in parts; violin/cello; music theory

Art: clay modeling human hand and foot; woodworking; painting; perspective drawing; recreations of masters

World Language: One or two languages continued, reading and conversation

Handwork: Hand-sewn clothing; carving wooden bowls; metalwork

History & Social Studies: Renaissance, Reformation and Age of Exploration

Geography: World geography with an emphasis on Africa and Asia

Physical Education: Team sports, eurythmy

EIGHTH GRADE

Math: Practical applications of arithmetic; set concepts; algebra; platonic solid geometry

Language Arts: Journalism; writing short plays; Shakespearean drama

Science: Physics; organic chemistry; physiology; human anatomy, continuation of gardening and nature studies through ecology; astronomy; meteorology

Music and Performing Arts: Singing and flute in parts; violin/cello; symphonic form; American Music

Art: Black and white drawing; painting; perspective drawing

World Language: One or two languages continued, dialogue and original writing

Handwork: Machine sewing of original garments; bookbinding; soapstone carving; clay sculpture; woodcarving; metalwork

History & Social Studies: World trade and economics; American history; Modern History

Geography: World geography; Asia and other culturally diverse regions around the world.

Technology: Computers skills and use are a part of the Main Lesson

Physical Education: Team sports, eurythmy

NINTH GRADE

Math: Algebra 1: combinations, permutations, variations, algebraic equations, binomial theorem, quadratic equations, systems of exchange, Euclidean geometry, begin typing on a computer keyboard

Language Arts: Comedy and tragedy as expressed in drama and the short story; Shakespeare through the Romantics, longer essays on themes from eighth grade history, introduction to shorthand, biography, mythology, grammar review, short story writing, poetry: ballads, summarization

Science: organic chemistry, physiology: homeostasis, immunology; physics: principles of power engines, electricity, magnetism, Doppler effect; Earth sciences: weather, climate, erosion, mineralogy

Music and Performing Arts: mixed choir and orchestra, individual and group recorder, musical literature of the past and present,

Art: Euclidian geometry, charcoal drawing and descriptive geometry with drawing board and set squares, black-and-white drawing and construction, calligraphy, colors on objects, the interplay of light and mood in landscape

World Language: one or two languages continued, reading and conversation in language(s), recapitulation of grammar

Handwork: sewing, spinning, embroidery, designing book covers, basketry, pottery, gardening, copper work; woodworking

History and Social Studies: modern history with emphasis on Europe and dealing with the inner historical motives of the political, social, and industrial revolutions from the late eighteenth century to present ; the great inventions

Geography: structure of the Earth's mountains, meteorology, mineralogy, plate tectonics – the new geology

Physical Education: gymnastics with apparatus: horse, parallel bars, ropes, high bar and rings; circus: juggling, balancing, tumbling; eurythmy

TENTH GRADE

Math: Algebra II; logarithms; plane trigonometry; land surveying; Euclidean, coordinate, and projective geometry

Language Arts: dramatic literature: the novel (Edda, Beowulf, Nibelungenlied, and Gudrun sagas), alliterative endings and sequels; creative writing: comparisons, short story writing, essays dealing with literature; research paper on a pre-Christian theme, history of language, epic poetry, speech exercises, study of meter and poetic diction

Science: chemistry – properties of metals, chemical reactions; physiology – embryology, organs and their functions; physics – mechanics; earth sciences – oceanography, ecology, crystallography, limestone cycle

Music and Performing Arts: mixed choir and orchestra; individual and group recorder; musical literature of the past and present

Art: drawing – simple interpenetrations; Euclidian, coordinate, and projective geometry; complementary colors, wet and dry paper,

World Language: one or two languages continued, reading and conversation in language(s), poetical literature and style

Handwork: metal working, weaving, dying, textiles, basketry, enamel work, pottery, stained glass work, gardening; woodworking

History and Social Studies: ancient history: the earliest Indian, Persian, and Egyptian history up to the decline of the freedom of the Grecian states under Alexander the Great

Geography: Earth explored structurally and physically as a whole

Physical Education: circus; Bothmer Gymnastics: tumbling and experience of the vertical; consciousness of height – headstands, cartwheels, rolls, flips; eurythmy

ELEVENTH GRADE

Math: Algebra III: logarithms, exponential equations, practical problems, spherical trigonometry, projective geometry, including mathematical astronomy and nautical triangles; computer math, programming; logic boards; Boolean algebra, logic tables, building small computers using bread boards

Language Arts: contrast is the theme of the year: outline/categorize; compare/contrast: Dante and Chaucer, Shakespeare, Mediaeval romance, Parsifal and the other Grail legends, story writing with contrast and analysis, essay writing from reading, dramatic poetry, research paper on a medieval topic

Science: chemistry – atomic theory; physiology – comparative between plants and animals, study of the common denominator of life; physics – electricity and magnetism; botany – structure of cells to monocotyledons and dicotyledons

Music and Performing Arts: individual and group recorder; mixed choir and orchestra; history of music – understanding of the aesthetics of music: keys, intervals, etc.

Art: drawing the human form, landscape, and projective geometry; painting – copying the masters in various media

World Language: dramatic readings; scenes from plays; classical drama; prose readings in the one or two languages studied up to this point

Handwork: batik, sewing, weaving, spinning, dying; bookbinding – boxes or simple books; blacksmithing, basketry, pottery, copper work, gardening, photography; woodworking

History and Social Studies: Roman, Medieval, and Renaissance history

Geography: Continue with study of Earth as a whole; Mercator projections and land surveying

Physical Education: circus; sports – eurythmy; rack, volleyball, basketball, softball, soccer, etc.

TWELFTH GRADE

Math: algebra and geometry are brought together – analytical geometry, statistics, probability, number theory, golden section, computer mathematics, and differential and integral calculus; programming logic; building simple computers

Language Arts: the Transcendentalists – Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau, and Whitman; modern literature – Goethe's Faust, Ibsen, Nietzsche or Hesse; Russian literature, great figures in literature, long research essay, lyric poetry, creative writing that synthesizes

Science: chemistry – the chemical process in humans; biochemistry; industrial chemistry; medical chemistry; physics – optics, photometry, mirrors, light, color, polarization, etc; zoology – thread all the realms of nature together

Music and Performing Arts: continued individual and group recorder; mixed choir and orchestra; history of music – understanding of the aesthetics of music: keys, intervals, etc.

Art: descriptive geometry as applied to practical problems of architecture; individual creation building on previous years' study of the masters

World Language: continued dramatic readings; scenes from plays; classical drama; prose readings in the one or two languages studied up to this point; survey of speech and cultural development of language; modern literature in languages studied

Handwork: batik, weaving, spinning, dying; bookbinding – gilding and marbling books, leatherwork – wallets, shoes, etc.; blacksmithing; jewelry making; pottery; gardening; basketry; woodworking

History and Social Studies: modern and world history survey; looking at history from our present perspective; communism, fascism, threefold order, etc.

Geography: continue with study of Earth as a whole; world geography and mapmaking

Physical Education: eurythmy; circus – help teach skills to younger children; drivers education for students sixteen years and older

Throughout All Grades:

Drama: Beginning in grade one or two, students present an annual production which is age appropriate, continuing through high school

Eurythmy: Students practice gestures and movement with speech and music exercises, progressing in complexity and challenge throughout all grade levels

CURRICULUM TIMELINE

The Waldorf-inspired curriculum is fully sequenced. During our planning year there will be further work on the cultural and nature based curriculum. Further research on curriculum development will be done looking at other Waldorf-inspired charter school models.

The initial contacts with other charter Waldorf-inspired schools have been made through the Coalition of Public Waldorf Education. This Coalition will provide expert advice.

STAGES OF REVIEW AND INPUT

Prior to the start of each school year, there will be in-service days during which each teacher will have the opportunity to review the NM Common Core State Standards and the curriculum for the upcoming grade and integrate the two thoroughly in a manner that reflects their individual teaching style. During the in-service, individual teacher curriculum plans will be reviewed by peers, mentoring teachers and curriculum specialists. This will be part of the Mapping process to correlate the Waldorf-inspired curriculum and NM State Standards.

DEVELOPING THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

The Director will work with consultants and other experts on more fully developing the curriculum during the initial planning year. A detailed planning document will be fully developed by January 2013.

TIMELINE FOR ALIGNMENT WITH NM STATE STANDARDS

During the planning year the Director will work with consultants and other experts on ensuring that the curriculum is fully aligned with NM State Standards. A Mapping document will be developed as the first step to ensure that there is a process of checks and accountability between the curriculum and NM Common Core State Standards. The extensive task of mapping and aligning the Waldorf-inspired curriculum, in detail, with state standards will be achieved over time. It will be the ongoing and extremely important duty of teachers within the school to ensure that New Mexico State Standards are integrated into each school day. By 2016, the curriculum of all grades served at Taos Mountain Charter School will be mapped and aligned with the New Mexico Common Core State Standards. Each year TMCS will conduct a thorough review to update our mapping document.

G. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:

Students must meet all portfolio and final project requirements as outlined by their teacher.

24.5 or 25 units to include:

- 4 units English
- 4 units math (one unit = or > than algebra 2)
- 3 units science (2 w/lab)
- 3.5 units social science, including United States history and geography, world history and geography and government and economics, and .5 unit New Mexico history
- 1 unit physical education
- 1 unit career cluster, workplace readiness, or language other than English
- .5 or 1 unit of health education* (may be taken in middle school)
- 7.5 units electives

One of the above units must be honors, Advanced Placement, dual credit, or distance learning. To graduate, a student must meet the cut score for high school graduation assessment on 11th grade SBA or use a portfolio alternate demonstration of competency.

H. INSTRUCTION

OVERVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND METHODS

"The importance of storytelling, of the natural rhythms of daily life, of the evolutionary changes in the child, of art as the necessary underpinning of learning, and of the aesthetic environment as a whole--all basic to Waldorf education for the past 70 years--are being 'discovered' and verified by researchers unconnected to the Waldorf movement."

~Paul Bayers, Professor, Columbia Teachers' College

INSTRUCTION METHODS

All curriculum that is presented by the class teacher is arts-infused, and therefore, ripe with the teacher's own creativity. The high quality, creative presentation of material by the teacher, inspires children to do their best in their own creative work during the school day. The heart of the education is the loving, creative, trusting, and respectful relationship between the student and the teacher.

In our program class teachers have the opportunity to take the same class of children through multiple years of schooling, teaching the main academic subjects. For the teacher, this means time to know the children deeply (as well as their families) and helps them unfold their gifts. This long-term relationship provides enriched opportunities to assess students over a long period of time, allowing the teacher to better meet the individual needs of the child. Both the class teachers and the kindergarten teachers have the responsibility to be deeply engaged and to continually pursue their own self-development; this provides a powerful modeling of active learning and personal growth for the students.

THE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

In addition to the benefits that stem from teacher continuity, the group of students that constitutes a particular class will stay together throughout their entire school career at Taos Mountain Charter School, grades 1 through 12. This unique feature of our school enables the creation of a class community, a class “family,” that allows students to establish and experience deep connections to their peers. This environment, that facilitates true relationship building, gives students the opportunity to learn the nature of inter and intrapersonal relationships in a safe and authentic way. In a society where children seem more and more subject to the power of their peers and the world at large, TMCS believes that fostering a classroom environment that nurtures strong, supportive, healthy relationships among students is key to each child’s positive academic and personal development. Our goal is to nurture a classroom community supportive of academic learning by helping students develop respect, confidence, acceptance, and other positive social values. In Waldorf methods education, the total child must always be considered. Thus, it is in the best interest of the student that home and school environments are consistent. For positive development of the child, TMCS teachers, staff, and parents work together to support the physical, mental, emotional, social, and academic needs of the child.

- Taos Mountain Charter School provides guidance in the area of behavior and attitudes, and recognizes that each child has a unique personality, likes and dislikes, values, strengths and weaknesses. Uniqueness of the child will be honored while providing guidance.
- At TMCS, children are encouraged to communicate in a respectful, assertive and socially acceptable manner. An atmosphere in which students feel safe to express their differing viewpoints will be provided, as well as guidance with conflict resolution.
- At TMCS, personal responsibility and accountability are taught and practiced.

- Guidelines, limits, freedom of choice, and consequences will be made understandable to the students.
- Each class establishes rules within the first week of the school year. These rules are set with the understanding that everyone will respect and follow them. This provides the child with ability to reason and think, and to experience natural consequences for her/his choices.

At the beginning of each school year (especially in grade 1) teachers and other staff members refer to the period when the class teacher is “forming the class.” This period, lasting six or more weeks, is a time when students are acclimating to their new environment, new instructors (such as Subject Specialists), and new classmates. This is also the time when students are learning how to use new classroom materials, and working to establish expectations and order within their classroom peer group. Once the class has been formed, parents will begin to observe a very wonderful rhythm and structure to the daily, weekly, and monthly classroom activities. Notably, Waldorf methodology recognizes this time as “forming the class,” and Montessori methodology describes a similar time as “normalization.”

COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION: Waldorf children are expected to treat one another with kindness and respect. This behavior is modeled by the teacher and other adults in the classroom. Insults and shunning behavior tend to be rare. Instead, we normally find children who have a great fondness and respect for one another. Children learn at their own pace and teachers refrain from comparing students to one another.

MAIN LESSON: A fully integrated two-hour period of instructional activities begins each school day through which the core curriculum is presented. The main lesson can be, for example, math, history, botany or physics, and involves storytelling, movement, art, biography, drama, writing, and any activity that might help bring the topic to life. This main lesson is taught for a three or four week block (unit of study), and may be continued later in the term. This approach allows freshness and enthusiasm, enriches content and skills by integrating them together as a powerful, concentrated, in-depth experience, and gives the children time to “digest” what has been learned. This format is used in first through eighth grades. Additional subjects augment the Main Lessons, which typically include handwork, woodworking and other “practical arts”, music, foreign language and eurythmy, in addition to physical education and the children’s’ on-going math and language arts practice classes.

MAIN LESSON BOOKS: The teacher, using textbooks, primary and other resources in the teacher library, creates the lessons and their presentation for the Main Lesson. Based on these lessons, the children make individual “textbooks” called Main Lesson

Books for each subject taught. In their Main Lesson Books, the students record and illustrate the substance of their lessons, a process which aids the students in being engaged with their lessons, helps to ensure they truly understand the content (since they must reflect this in their work), and encourages long-term memory of their learning. The Main Lesson Book approach to student learning builds students' skills of focus and concentration. These Main Lesson Books require the students to write in depth about their lessons, and are a significant tool for building writing skills. Richly illustrated by the children, Main Lesson Books are artistic and beautiful, and are an invaluable tool for assessing the progress of individual students in comprehension, writing and overall progress. During or upon completion of a lesson, the students artistically and creatively capture their lesson content through drawing (as well as other artistic media) and text (narrative or sample problems that illustrate how to do something) to solidify the learning of the material. By using all of their senses and creative impulses to create the Main Lesson Books for each main subject of study, the student creates a beautiful, living picture of their learning. The students are not just creating something - they are also learning to orientate in space; to slow down and work with care; to form letters and figures beautifully; and to develop a sense for the aesthetic. In simplest terms, the Main Lesson Book serves as a text book that is available as a reference tool in the future. At the end of the year, the books are carefully carried home, and referred back to during various points on their academic journey.

TEXTBOOKS: Appropriate and carefully selected textbooks can be a valuable aid for teachers and students throughout the grades. Depending on the grade and subject matter, our program uses textbooks in the classroom as teacher resources for lesson preparation, and important research tools for students to augment their lessons.

HOMEWORK: TMCS recognizes that homework can be a valuable way to extend and reinforce classroom lessons, giving students more practice and review time to assimilate new learning. Homework can also help students develop good study skills, discipline, and responsibility, while providing parents the opportunity to be involved and stay current with their children's education. At TMCS, little or no homework is given until third grade. From this point, homework is gradually introduced to allow students time to learn the discipline and responsibility involved. Homework assignments may consist of math lessons, spelling practice, reading, writing assignments, or research projects. Class teachers and Subject Specialists design homework that relates to the classroom instruction and reinforces and extends learning for the students' developmental and academic levels.

ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS CURRICULUM AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING: Everyday rhythms and routines of our school community help to cultivate a sense of

gratitude, respect and responsibility for self and all living things. Taos Mountain Charter School strives to build an ecologically informed community by focusing attention and care on the systems in which our school and community are embedded. Through our work with nature and organic gardening and animal care opportunities, children learn about the inter-relatedness of nature, self, and community. Additional sustainable living practices within the school will manifest in many ways: classroom materials made with renewable resources, gray water recycling, composting, recycling, and cleaning done with environmentally friendly products, waste and energy use reduction practices, and as funding allows local farmers will be suppliers for our school lunches. Students will be inspired by their experiences at a school rooted in sustainability, going on to pursue actions that are essential for sustaining our world.

MULTICULTURAL AND GENDER BALANCED CONTENT: Integrated throughout the curriculum by means of the humanities curriculum, incorporating biography, storytelling, and history; through crafts, art, music, and seasonal and cultural celebrations; and through world languages.

PARENT PARTICIPATION: A keystone of our program. A significant body of research (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Olmstead & Rubin, 1983) indicates that when parents participate in their children's education, the result is an increase in student achievement and an improvement of students' attitudes. Increased attendance, fewer discipline problems and higher aspirations also have been correlated with an increase in parent involvement. The active participation of parents both inside and outside of the classroom is essential in creating and implementing the school's educational program and maintaining its supportive environment. Taos Mountain Charter School honors and values the individual skills, talents and interests of its parent body, and strongly invites and encourages parent participation in many aspects of the school's operations. Parents provide a bridge between home and school, giving their children's education greater meaning and purpose by integrating the children's school life into their family life and into their community. TMCS will also provide on-going educational opportunities for parents to learn about various aspects of child development and Waldorf-methods education. These include parent education lectures and class meetings discussing child development and specific aspects of the curriculum.

MATERIALS: High quality materials designed for the Waldorf-inspired curriculum give students the experience of success in their school activities, promoting self-esteem, a sense of value for quality work and increased motivation for accomplishing schoolwork both in the classroom and at home. For example, using quality colored pencils, paints, crayons and paper, allow students to create rich colors, blend colors for subtle hues, and create detailed and beautiful writing, pictures, and designs. In first through eighth

grades, a variety of specially designed and bound, blank books are used to allow students to create their own thematic Main Lesson subject books for each unit block. In the kindergarten and lower grades, age-appropriate materials for creative play will be selected or hand-made, from wood, silk, wool, and other natural materials. Students feel more connected to the environment using materials made from the natural world; these materials are more ecologically sustainable than synthetics, as well. Students also tend to focus better and feel more relaxed and nurtured when warmly surrounded by an environment of beauty and simplicity, avoiding busy-ness in classroom décor.

HANDS ON AND ACTIVE LEARNING: In Waldorf-inspired education children are encouraged to experience their learning through all of their senses. Direct personal hands-on contact with either real things under study, or with concrete models that bring abstract concepts to life, allow children to learn with deeper understanding. Teachers incorporate movement on a regular basis to continually engage the children through all of their senses.

MOTIVATING FACTORS: Children are driven to learn new things and master new skills. For this reason, outside rewards to create external motivation are unnecessary. Children learn to be intrinsically motivated and able to pursue interests based on internal desire rather than fleeting external rewards. Children do not work “for the grade.” Instead, children learn because they are interested in things, and because of an intrinsic desire to become competent and independent human beings, as modeled by their teachers.

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ENRICHMENT AND VITALIZATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

High Support Level: Children will be fully supported by teachers and parent volunteers. The school provides a low pupil to teacher ratio. Specialists from the community will be invited into the classroom to share their expertise relevant to current curriculum. Parent

volunteers will be asked to assist in small, in class reading groups beginning in second grade with the supervision of the class teacher, and in a variety of other ways.

PEER AND CROSS-AGE INTERACTION: The children will support each other in many ways, including small-group learning and peer tutoring. Activities with mixed-age grouping will provide ample opportunities for older and younger children to interact, as well as children with similar and dissimilar abilities. Younger children are generally in awe of older children and find that working with an older child on any subject is a real treat. Older children who are asked to help instruct younger children gain a sense of confidence while reinforcing their own knowledge of subject matter through mentoring; for example, 4th graders presenting their book reports to the 3rd graders.

SELF-ESTEEM DEVELOPMENT: The self-confidence of the child will be fostered through a cooperative, non-competitive learning environment, where each child's uniqueness is honored. Awareness and shared recognition of the children's accomplishments such as displays of student work, performances, parent evenings and many successful experiences will promote self-esteem.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND SEASONAL FESTIVALS: In keeping with our focus on community, Taos Mountain Charter School will hold three seasonal festivals each year to bring families and children together in respect for the rhythms of nature and of our Earth. Frequently, these festivals include multi-cultural activities that connect our children and families to each other's cultures. Additional festivals may be added in the future based on our faculty, parent, and student community's recommendations. Careful attention will be given to the celebration of festivals and holidays, appropriately observing events within the school setting that recognize the world's diversity of celebrations. TMCS will strive to honor and represent the cultures of all its students through these festivals and celebrations.

EXPLANATION OF HOW THESE METHODS ARE EFFECTIVE WITH TARGET POPULATION

AN ASCENDING SPIRAL OF KNOWLEDGE

Each subject studied should contribute to the development of a well-balanced individual. In the Waldorf-inspired grades, the school day begins with a long, uninterrupted lesson. One subject is the focus; the class deals with it in-depth each morning for several weeks at a time. This long main lesson, two hours, allows the teacher to develop a variety of activities around the subject at hand. In the younger grades, lively rhythmic activities get the circulation going and bring children together as a group; they recite poems connected with the main lesson, practice tongue twisters to limber up speech, and work with concentration exercises using body movements. During the day's lesson, which includes a review of earlier learning, students record what they learned in their lesson

books. Following recess, teachers present shorter “run-through” lessons with a strong recitation character. World languages are customarily taught from first grade on, and these lend themselves well to the later morning periods. Afternoons are primarily devoted to lessons in which the whole child is active: eurythmy (artistically guided movement to music and speech), handwork, or games, for example. Thus the day has a rhythm that helps overcome fatigue and enhances balanced learning.

The curriculum at a Waldorf-inspired school can be seen as an ascending spiral: the long lessons that begin each day, the concentrated blocks of study that focus on one subject for several weeks. Physics, for example, is introduced in the sixth grade and continued each year as a main lesson block in the upper grades.

As the students mature, they engage themselves at new levels of experience with each subject. It is as though each year they come to a window on the ascending spiral that looks out into the world through the lens of a particular subject. Through the main-lesson spiral curriculum, teachers lay the groundwork for a gradual vertical integration that deepens and widens each subject experience and, at the same time, keeps it moving with the other aspects of knowledge. All students participate in all basic subjects regardless of their special aptitudes. The purpose of studying a subject is not to make a student into a professional mathematician, or biologist, but to awaken and educate capacities that every human being needs. Naturally, one student is more gifted in math and another in science or history, but the mathematician needs the humanities, and the historian needs math and science. The choice of a vocation is left to the free decision of the adult, but one’s early education should give one a palette of experience from which to choose the particular colors that one’s interests, capacities, and life circumstances allow. Each subject studied should contribute to the development of a well-balanced individual.

As the ascending spiral of the curriculum offers a “vertical integration” from year to year, an equally important “horizontal integration” enables students to engage the full range of their faculties at every stage of development. The arts and practical skills play an essential part in the educational process throughout the grades. They are not considered luxuries, but fundamental to human growth and development.

The Waldorf-inspired curriculum works because it engages children. It presents new material only after specific developmental levels have been reached, thereby reducing frustration. Lessons are always presented in lively ways. The children are motivated to learn through the enthusiasm of the teacher, not through fear of failure. Periods of challenging mental work are balanced with artistic and physical activities so that the children move through their day in a healthy way.

Finally, the curriculum itself meets the fundamental need of the child to learn about the world in a way that conforms to the child's own logic. That is, starting from what is most familiar and moving outward. The Waldorf-inspired curriculum also works because of the dedication of the Waldorf methods teacher who stays with the same class for many years. Over this period a deep bond of respect develops between teacher and child, resulting in less attention to discipline and more attention to learning on all levels.

The curriculum emphasizes disciplined creativity, wonder, reverence and respect for nature and human existence. A comprehensive academic, artistic, and physical education program presented in a supportive, structured and non-competitive environment is meant to allow the child to develop in a healthy way, balanced in feeling, with initiative in action and clarity in thought. The aim is to strengthen the child to meet not only the challenges of school, but also those of life. The Waldorf-inspired education experience is meant to be the beginning of a life-long love of learning.



DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENT AND AGE-APPROPRIATE CLASSROOMS

TMCS will educate its special education students to the maximum extent appropriate in age appropriate general education classrooms with needed accommodations, instructional/curricular modifications and other supports.

Taos Mountain Charter School expects a variety of students to thrive under the Waldorf-inspired approach to education, and as specific special needs groups are discussed below, the strengths of a traditional Waldorf program will be highlighted for that group. The Waldorf methods curriculum is, by nature, multi-disciplinary, involving academic learning supported by a rich artistic curriculum along with movement instruction and social learning. Ideally, this creates a climate where all children succeed in some areas, while seeing their classmates excel in others. This learning atmosphere builds individual

self-esteem, as well as students' respect for each other as important members of their classroom learning community.

Specialists in this setting support instruction across the curriculum using a variety of service delivery models (co-teaching, pull-asides, and pull-outs). Their schedules are fluid and shift according to the specific needs of their students and the demands of the curriculum/educational setting. Special educators tailor all aspects of the curriculum to the individual needs of students by accommodating, paralleling, or overlapping the general content requirements. They also collaborate extensively with regular education staff, and show interest in learning and in-servicing staff on new and specialized approaches for atypical learners. Additionally, special educators provide strategic instruction in the areas of reading, written language, and math for identified students. They carefully track the progress of students with learning, attention, and behavioral deficits.

In order to assist special education students in successfully completing project-based assignments, the Student Support Director will assist students in developing options that inspire passion and motivation where students can build on their strengths. These educators carefully monitor each student's progress on their project, and break down tasks into manageable components. They also use numerous strategies to assist students in working as independently as possible. It is essential for the TMCS Student Support Director to use methods of best practice when complying with special education laws and procedures. Due process procedures and timelines will be accurately followed. The IEP process will be coordinated effectively and efficiently. The Director of Student Support develops comprehensive IEPs that incorporate transition needs and all necessary adaptations to ensure student success.

SYSTEM OF INTERVENTION

TMCS acknowledges and understands that all children can learn and achieve high standards as a result of effective teaching, and will use the Response to Intervention (RtI) model to provide resources to students in need of academic and/or behavior support. TMCS will regularly convene a problem solving team to identify students who are not making expected progress. TMCS's problem solving team will be known as the "Student Success Team" and will typically include TMCS's Director, a regular education teacher, a special education teacher, and as appropriate, the student's parents and classroom teacher.

THE ROLE OF RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION IN A WALDORF CLASSROOM

The purpose of Response to Intervention (Rtl) is to improve educational outcomes for all students. While Rtl plays a role in identifying students who may have learning disabilities, it is also a tool which can be used to assess all students in the school to determine which individuals may be at-risk and in need of more instruction, which students need accelerated learning plans, as well as to provide direction for modifications of overall teaching strategies to attain continued academic progress within the school. A major component of Rtl is regular assessment of school wide student progress, done throughout the year to assist in the identification of students who may need academic intervention.

The Waldorf method of education can be seen as taking a unique, yet very effective approach to Rtl. One of the key elements of Rtl, periodic assessment of students done on a daily and weekly basis, is done for all students within the Waldorf-inspired classroom. In most instances, a Waldorf teacher will be able to clearly identify which students may be in need of intervention to ensure adequate progress at any time throughout the course of the year. TMCS plans to implement Response to Intervention (Rtl) to meet the needs of all students. Rtl will be one of the key processes that will drive how things are done at TMCS. Every student will be given the attention they need to create an environment for them to succeed. The purpose of Rtl is that of a prevention model to limit, or prevent, academic failure for students who are having difficulty learning by providing "scientific research-based interventions" to bring students up to grade level achievement. Although there is no single Rtl model, the many variations that are emerging use a two-to-five tiered model. Each tier provides increasingly individualized instruction, continuous monitoring of progress to calculate gains, and criteria for changing interventions and/or tiers through a regularly-scheduled, and systematic team decision making process.

Taos Mountain Charter School plans to use a three-tiered system as follows:

Tier One (Prevention) includes high quality classroom instruction delivered by class teachers and regular assessments of all students to monitor their progress toward reaching grade level benchmarks. Provided in general education classrooms.

Tier Two (Selected Structured Intervention) includes targeted small group instruction and intervention provided with consistency by highly trained teachers, in class or outside of the classroom for students who are not meeting grade level benchmarks. Includes progress monitoring and assessments presented at students' instructional level to measure growth toward benchmarks.

Tier Three (Intensive Intervention) includes more intensive and possibly individual intervention for students who continue to be at risk. At this level a student may be designated referred for Special Education according to the Individuals with Disabilities in the Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), or gifted programs.

STUDENT SUCCESS TEAM

A Student Success Team (SST) uses a systematic problem-solving approach to assist students with any concerns that are interfering with success. The SST clarifies problems and concerns, develops strategies and organizes resources, and serves to assist and counsel the parent, teacher, and student. An SST is a general education function. All students can benefit from an SST, including but not limited to those students achieving below grade level, those who are achieving above grade level and require greater challenge, and students who have experience emotional trauma, behavioral issues, or language issues.

Anyone who has a concern for a student can refer that student to SST for consideration. Anyone connected with the student can be included in the SST to provide information about the student, including strengths, concerns, and strategies that have been used in the past. Team members may include but are not limited to teachers, parents, counselors, doctors, administration, social workers, and law enforcement. The meeting is designed to bring out the best in the people involved.

Our twelve SST meeting steps include:

1. Team members introduce themselves and their roles.
2. Purpose and process of the meeting are stated.
3. Timekeeper is appointed.
4. Strengths are identified.
5. Concerns are discussed, clarified, and listed.
6. Pertinent information and modifications are listed.
7. Concerns are synthesized; one or two are chosen for focus.
8. Strategies to address concerns are brainstormed.
9. Team chooses best strategies to carry into actions.
10. Individuals make commitments to actions.
11. Person responsible and timelines for actions are recorded.
12. Follow-up date is set.

After implementation of an SST plan and follow up, the plan will be further reviewed/revised to address concerns that have not been adequately addressed and/or effectively resolved. In addition, a referral for special education assessment might be deemed appropriate through the SST process.

TMCS will implement appropriate interventions for a student at the earliest indication of student need in order to ensure the student's success. The Student Success Team will consider all pertinent information and the unique needs of the child in order to generate strategies for meeting the child's needs in a non-special education setting. The Student Success Team will tailor appropriate interventions to meet the unique needs of each student identified. TMCS will use a continuum of tiered interventions with increasing levels of intensity and duration to address the full range of student needs.

TMCS understands that student results are improved when ongoing academic and behavioral performance data are used to inform instructional decisions. The Student Success Team will regularly monitor and document the progress of a student when the intervention is implemented. TMCS will also document how the interventions are implemented to ensure they are carried out as designed. The Student Success Team will develop criteria and indicators to determine whether a pre-referral intervention is successful. If the Student Success Team determines that an intervention has not been successful for a child, a new intervention with a higher degree of intensity will be implemented.

A referral to special education for an initial evaluation will be made if the Student Success Team suspects a child has a disability or the parent requests an evaluation. TMCS understands that the documentation of a student's progress when implementing an intervention will become part of the body of evidence used in determining if a child has a disability and is eligible for special education services.

TMCS understands that ongoing and meaningful involvement of families increases student success. The Student Success Team will be responsible for notifying the student's parents of the concerns involving the student and give the parents the opportunity to share information that may impact the student's learning or behavior problems. The Student Success Team will inform the parents of the intervention used for the child and the child's progress while receiving the intervention.

TMCS acknowledges that all members of the TMCS community must continue to gain knowledge and develop expertise in order to build capacity and sustainability under the RtI Model. At the beginning of each school year, the Student Success Team will conduct an in-service for TMCS's general education staff. The purpose of the in-service

will be to train TMCS's general education classroom staff on pre-referral interventions and the criteria and indicators for determining whether the interventions are successful.

It should be noted that TMCS plans to use the Rtl model in all instructional and behavioral situations. This is a key structure for the school. Though Rtl is discussed under the special education process for the school it is NOT considered as only a special education initiative but that it is good practice for the entire school.

AT-RISK STUDENTS

"At-risk", defined as "those students who because of physical, emotional, socioeconomic or cultural factors are less likely to succeed in school." TMCS expects to attract a diverse student body in socioeconomic terms, and the school will make a special effort to attract students who may be termed at-risk. As discussed above, Waldorf-INSPIRED classrooms are very inclusive, welcoming children of all abilities and socioeconomic levels. Because children have the same teacher for a number of years, and are with many of the same children over that period of time, the classroom can become like a second home for many students, not just those considered at-risk. Other factors that will help welcome at-risk students are the emphasis on grace and courtesy skills, mutual respect and cooperation, as well as practical life lessons. Differences in age, speech, looks or dress are not deciding factors on "who is my friend?" Rather, children in Waldorf programs develop a high-level of respect for all people, and tend to not categorize themselves or others as strictly as one might find in other programs.

Academically, at-risk students will be encouraged to become independent, self-motivated learners, just like every other child in the class. The highly nurturing and highly stimulating environment found in a Waldorf-inspired classroom will provide more individualized attention to at-risk students than they might receive in a typical classroom. Also, the emphasis on respect for self, respect for others and respect for the environment will create a comforting environment which will allow at-risk students to flourish.

PLAN FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE ACADEMICALLY HIGH ACHIEVING

"Gifted and talented" students are children who show, or have potential to show, a high level of performance in one or more areas of expression, such as intellectual or leadership capabilities, artistic or creative talents or specific academic aptitudes. Taos Mountain Charter School believes that the Waldorf Method can allow such children to move at an advanced pace, accepting greater academic challenges, while at the same time remaining in a social setting with peers of the same age. Children who present potential for greater academic or artistic achievement will be encouraged to challenge themselves, and will be presented with lessons of greater complexity. In certain

situations, the classroom teacher may find an adult mentor in an area of interest, such as mathematics, astrophysics or literature, whom the student may interact with and gain in-depth knowledge from. At the same time, the differentiated learning environment will develop their abilities as leaders through peer teaching and interaction.

If a child is found to be gifted and talented, TMCS will hold a meeting with the student's parents, the student, if appropriate, the student's teachers, the Director to determine whether the majority of the student's academic and social needs can be met within a Waldorf context. If deemed appropriate, a work plan may be established to meet the student's needs.

In addition to the Waldorf methods approach to learning, TMCS' plan for students who are academically high achieving includes:

1. Leveled reading groups engaging beginning to advanced levels of readers.
2. Differentiated instruction in such areas as math, writing, reading, and spelling to meet different student learning levels in the classroom. Examples include the teacher challenging students with different levels of math problems or spelling words on the chalk board or during other classroom activities. Extra credit problems and projects may be given to more advanced students.
3. Leveled math programs using Textbooks in sixth through eighth grades.
4. Our program may include a credentialed math teacher providing algebra instruction to seventh and eighth grade students ready for this challenge, as well as an independent study program for eighth grade geometry. Students are placed in math levels based on teacher recommendation/evaluation, and on placement tests.
5. The availability of supplemental materials to teachers, such as Waldorf-methods advanced mathematics materials. Teachers have the option to provide extra challenges to students as needed.
6. Teachers providing academic and artistic leadership opportunities for students, such as assisting their peers with math, grammar, etc.; leadership of group academic projects; and leadership of groups performing singing and recorder parts.
7. Eighth grade student projects (required for all students) allow academically high achieving students to select a subject of interest for in-depth research and reporting.
8. Student governance/leadership opportunities through service on a Student Board
9. High School students may take classes at UNM

I. SPECIAL POPULATIONS

PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

Taos Mountain Charter School will seek to educate students with special needs in the least restrictive and most inclusive environment possible. Waldorf-inspired education is very well suited to serving a variety of students who fall within the spectrum of “special needs,” from those individuals requiring Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to Gifted and Talented students.

It may seem extraordinary that a particular type of education can meet the needs of such disparate learners, but Waldorf-inspired education embodies techniques that work well for most students. In particular, the Waldorf-inspired approach of allowing students to learn at their own pace ensures that students can work at a variety of levels, and yet still be in social and educational settings with their peers. This keeps both the advanced and the challenged learners from feeling ostracized from their friends, or treated as an extra responsibility by the teaching staff.

Waldorf-inspired teachers are typically in an educational relationship with students for a number of years, and thus, get to know students’ individual learning styles. This allows the teacher to introduce new levels of challenges in a child’s studies, and in the case of children with IEPs or 504 plans, keeps children on track without having to go through a “starting over” phase each year as a new teacher is introduced to their particular learning challenges. Lessons are introduced either at the individual level or in small groups of two to three students, giving children more individual attention than they might normally receive, and yet still allowing the flow of the classroom to proceed without interruption. The lessons themselves are demonstrated in a very precise and orderly manner, emphasizing the orderly progression of a task from beginning to end, and are repeated by the student multiple times until proficiency is attained. The Waldorf-inspired lessons have built-in controls of error, allowing them to self-correct and internalize the lessons. This is helpful for all students, and particularly for students with IEPs, as it builds their self-esteem and increases their feeling of independence.

COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL AND STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION AND DISABILITY LAWS

Taos Mountain Charter School acknowledges and understands that it is subject to all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). TMCS will be accountable for purposes of assuring compliance

with federal and state special education and disability laws. TMCS assures compliance with special education and disability laws through audits of the schools special education program. TMCS understands that noncompliance with federal and state special education and disability laws may result in revocation of its charter.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Taos Mountain Charter School acknowledges and understands it is responsible for assuring that all special education students attending the school receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) under the IDEA. TMCS will be responsible for providing special education instruction according to the individualized education programs (IEPs) for each student with a disability enrolled at TMCS. TMCS will deliver special education instruction primarily within the regular classroom, and will provide resource room “pull-out” services as required by student IEPs. Appropriate spaces such as rooms and enclosures within the facility will be created to provide students the best learning conditions possible. Within this framework, Taos Mountain Charter School will provide all necessary accommodations and instructional/curricular modifications as required by student IEPs. The Student Support Director (special education teacher) will play the primary role in the academic planning and day-to-day learning experience of students with special needs.

EVALUATE AND MONITOR

INITIAL EVALUATION AND RE-EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The TMCS Student Support Director will be responsible for conducting all initial evaluations and reevaluations or setting up appropriate diagnostic evaluations, obtaining written parental consent for evaluations, tracking required timelines, scheduling, and facilitating eligibility determination meetings. If a child is determined to be eligible for special education, the TMCS Special Educator will obtain written parental consent for initial placement.

IEP DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW MEETINGS

The TMCS Student Support Director will be responsible for tracking IEP annual, triennial, and other review meeting timelines, as well as for the scheduling and facilitation of IEP meetings.

GRADUATING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Taos Mountain Charter School will follow the graduation options as outlined in New Mexico’s Graduation Options for Students with Disabilities.

BUDGET AND STAFF FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT

SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING

TMCS will receive all federal and state special education funds for which TMCS is eligible pursuant to the New Mexico Charter Schools Act and the IDEA-B. TMCS will hire its own Student Support Director and other support specialists as budget allows and will contract with providers for additional direct and indirect services as required by due process and or a student's IEP.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

The pedagogical and philosophical foundations of the Waldorf-inspired approach to special education include a teacher specifically trained in remedial support services. Our goal will be to find someone with credentials in both Special Education and a familiarity with Waldorf therapeutic approaches. This individual will serve as the Student Support Director. Further support staff will be determined over the initial few years.

Ideally, The Special Education Director will have a familiarity with Waldorf therapeutic training and a New Mexico teacher's license with appropriate endorsements. We will have an Academic Language Therapist on staff to work with children as needed, and a social worker.

HOW WILL SCHOOL SERVE STUDENTS WITH 504 PLANS

SECTION 504 ELIGIBILITY, SERVICES, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

TMCS will use the State's Section 504 policies and procedures for compliance with Section 504 requirements. TMCS will appoint a staff member to be the building level Section 504 coordinator and the Student Success Team will attend Section 504 training in order to become knowledgeable about Section 504 requirements and procedures. The Student Success Team will conduct an in-service at the beginning of each school year to train regular education staff on Section 504 requirements, including instructional modifications and accommodations in the general education classroom setting.

TMCS will include in its student handbook a notice of nondiscrimination on the basis of disability and also appropriately post the nondiscrimination notice within its facility. TMCS will be responsible for determining student eligibility for Section 504 services, and, as a best practice, will convene a Section 504 team as necessary when a TMCS student has been determined to be ineligible for services under the IDEA. TMCS will develop a written Section 504 plan for eligible students. It will also be responsible for delivering Section 504 services.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

HOW WILL SCHOOL IDENTIFY ELL STUDENTS

PLAN FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Taos Mountain Charter School will serve students with limited English proficiency in accordance with all applicable Federal Laws and Regulations. TMCS will adhere to the following plan with these students:

1. Upon enrollment into the school, all students will receive a home-language survey of languages spoken in the home.
2. Students whose dominant language is not English will receive assessment of English proficiency using instruments and techniques approved by the State, such as the Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey. The selected assessment will be administered upon admission into the school to determine English proficiency.
3. TMCS will report the number of ELL students attending the school to the state.
4. If TMCS is not a student's first New Mexico public school, then TMCS will attempt to retrieve a copy of the student's HLS from the prior school(s) of attendance.

SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR ELL STUDENTS

ELL STUDENT SUPPORT

All ELL students will be given the English Language Assessment each school year. The results will help TMCS track individual student progress in language proficiency over time, and determine optimal instruction for each ELL student. TMCS will also be able to compare earlier assessment results, when available, to determine student progress.

Educational Programs will be responsive to these specific needs and in compliance with state and federal guidelines. Just as with other special needs students, students with limited English proficiency (LEP) and non-English proficiency (NEP) will be included in their Waldorf-inspired classroom to the greatest extent possible. It is expected that LEP and NEP students will respond best to full-immersion in a predominantly English speaking classroom. TMCS will also align Waldorf-inspired curriculum to ESL services to ensure that ELL students can continue to learn in other subjects without being fluent in English. TMCS expects to purchase services from an ESL consultant, as needed, to assist teachers in strategies best suited for teaching ELL students. This may involve teaching techniques already used in a Waldorf-inspired classroom, such as

differentiated instruction, grouping ELL students with peer mentors or creating well-structured cooperative activities. Other techniques may include repeated instructional sequences with variances that connect to the overall curriculum and teaching within a context of learning.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

INSTRUCTION FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

In order to ensure that Spanish speakers acquire a fluency of English, TMCS may also place these students in a content-based instructional program, likely to take place either before or after regular school programming. This programming will emphasize English discussions and lessons that are based on activities done by the students throughout the day, in order to ensure comprehension of the material and of the English language. TMCS will also make every effort to hire Waldorf certified teachers who are also bilingual, primarily in Spanish. Our school Spanish teacher can provide lessons to English language learners in their native language when necessary, thus allowing ELL students to continue working on tasks without interruption. In the case that a bi-lingual teacher is not available for an ELL student, TMCS may also seek out volunteers to provide translation in that student's native language in the classroom. In addition, the instructional program for TMCS is designed to promote language acquisition and proficiency, oral language development, and enriched learning opportunities for all ELLs in the following ways: Students will interact through cooperative learning activities; Students will make oral presentations in all content areas; Students will collaborate for group performance and reports; Students will be provided with learning opportunities in recreation and performing arts; Students will be provided academic tutoring; Students will receive daily English language development information according to their English language proficiency levels as identified by testing

EVALUATE AND MONITOR PROGRESS OF ELL STUDENTS

RECLASSIFICATION TO PROFICIENT STATUS

TMCS will use State Board of Education-identified criteria to determine fluent English proficiency for ELLs consistent with legal requirements regarding standardized testing and other required assessments. In addition, the TMCS will monitor to ensure on-going academic success for reclassified students for at least three years from their reclassification date. Reclassification procedures will utilize multiple criteria in determining whether to classify a pupil as proficient in English including, but not limited to, all of the following:

Assessment of language proficiency using an objective assessment instrument

Participation of the pupil's classroom teacher and any other certificated staff with direct responsibility for teaching or placement decisions of the pupil to evaluate the pupil's curriculum mastery,

Parental opinion and consultation, achieved through notice to parents or guardians of the language reclassification and placement including a description of the reclassification process and the parent's opportunity to participate, and encouragement of the participation of parents or guardians in the school's reclassification procedure including seeking their opinion and consultation during the reclassification process

Comparison of the pupil's performance in basic skills against an empirically established range of performance and basic skills based upon the performance of English proficient pupils of the same age that demonstrate to others that the pupil is sufficiently proficient in English to participate effectively in a curriculum designed for pupils of the same age whose native language is English.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

The evaluation for the program effectiveness for ELLs in TMCS will include:
Adherence to TMCS adopted academic benchmarks by language proficiency level and years in program to determine adequate yearly progress.

ELLs demonstrate progress from year to year:

1. Students at Beginning, Early Intermediate and Intermediate will improve one level each year on ELA testing
2. Students at Early Advanced and Advanced with some subtests lower than intermediate will improve subtests to Intermediate or above
3. Students at Early Advanced and Advanced with all subtests at Intermediate or higher will improve to Early Advanced or above

ELLs getting to Proficiency in English:

1. Students with at least four years of ELA scores will be at or above Proficient.
2. Monitoring of student identification and placement
3. Monitoring of teacher qualifications and the use of appropriate instructional strategies based on program design
4. Monitoring of availability of adequate resources
5. Meeting annual measurable achievement objectives for ELLs under NCLB

BUDGET AND STAFF FOR ELL STUDENT NEEDS

Teachers of ELL students will be trained to use appropriate differentiated instruction to reach all levels of English proficiency in accordance with federal law. The Waldorf methods training our teachers receive, with its emphasis on a multi-sensory teaching methodology, the oral tradition and the cultural diversity of the curriculum addresses the needs of English Learners.

If a main class teacher is not bi-lingual in Spanish, the Spanish Language teacher will support individuals according to their specific study plan. If necessary, community volunteers may be engaged to support English Language Learners.

J. ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

HOW SCHOOL WILL MEASURE PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

Goal One: To provide an authentic Waldorf-inspired environment for students, faculty and parents.

Measure: Taos Mountain Charter School will remain aligned with the shared foundational standards of the major Waldorf education advocacy organizations and charter schools that share our vision. These standards include:

1. Teachers trained in the Waldorf philosophy and methodology for the level they are teaching.
2. Partnership established with the family of students.
3. A classroom atmosphere that encourages social interaction for cooperative learning and emotional development.

Strategies for Attainment:

1. Taos Mountain Charter School will continue to be members of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education.
2. We will consult with public, Waldorf-inspired education experts, as well as experienced Waldorf teachers from New Mexico schools to work with our staff and community to ensure the integrity of Waldorf education remains in our Waldorf-inspired school.

Goal Two: Taos Mountain Charter School will embrace a diverse community that reflects the populations of the community we serve.

SMART Goal: During the first year of operation Taos Mountain Charter School will develop its baseline data in order to understand various groups (racial, gender, FRL etc.) that comprise the student body. By comparing this data with other charter schools and neighborhood school demographics we will be able to identify various enrollment targets.

Measure: In each subsequent year of operation, Taos Mountain Charter School will create further strategies that are better informed through experience, to reduce the gap between our baseline and our long-term objective of achieving parity with District demographic enrollment percentages.

Strategies for Attainment:

1. The school will identify at least five community organizations serving diverse populations for target outreach programs.
2. Translate key website information and outreach materials to Spanish.

Goal Three: Parents and community members will be active partners to ensure student success.

Measure: There will be clear communication regarding our expectation of at least four hours a month of parent volunteer's hours at the school.

Measure: Parent attendance at class meetings, school workshops and lectures will be tracked with attendance sheets.

Goal Four: Taos Mountain Charter School students will be active participants in the Taos community through community service.

Measure: Community Coordinator will develop close ties with organizations in Taos Community and subsequent opportunities for field trips and volunteer involvement.

Measure: Friday Service Days will be integrated into the students curriculum and project reports will be evaluated.

Measure: There will be two Friday Service Days a month.

ASSESSMENTS

In order to remain consistent with our vision, our authentic assessment strategies will reflect TMCS's commitment to:

1. Promote an individualized approach to education
2. Assess students in both academic and non-academic areas
3. Recognize students' individual strengths and weaknesses
4. Avoid labeling students
5. Create a non-competitive environment for our students.
6. Provide broad in-depth assessments to assist TMCS families

TMCS teachers will work diligently to integrate common core state standards into daily lessons in order to ensure student preparedness for NMCCSS. The unique blend of Waldorf-inspired curriculum and New Mexico State Standards will provide students with a truly exceptional and rich educational experience. We will use the Discovery Education Assessments as our formative assessment.

Performance standards and assessments, as well as determination of successful student progress and attainment of outcomes for students with exceptional needs and English Language Learners, will be defined appropriately on a case-by-case basis, according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and/or English proficiency levels.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The following table lists specific assessment tools used to evaluate pupil progress, and identifies the grades that each assessment is used to evaluate. Descriptions of the assessment tools follow the table.

TEACHER MONITORING AND MASTERY OF CONTENT

The daily, weekly and monthly teacher monitoring and observation of students provides ongoing formative and summative assessments. This is the primary mode by which students are watched over and guided in order to ensure that they are on track to proficiency in meeting both Waldorf and New Mexico State Standards. All courses will be structured to include adequate and appropriate methods and procedures to assess students' mastery of content.

1. PARCC Assessment: The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is developing new assessments in grades 3-11 that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

2. The student progress reports (Whole-child Rubric, Appendix M-1) our teachers use to identify the individual strengths and needs of students in specific academic, social, and behavioral areas. Teachers complete this rubric in October and April as a basis for parent/teacher conferences.
3. Math assessment of students in first through eighth grades helps us determine areas of student strengths and needs (see Appendix M-2, Grades 1-5). For sixth through eighth grade students, math assessments from textbooks may be used to help determine appropriate placement in our leveled math program.
4. Discovery Education Assessments: formative assessments in -line with common core standards (grades 4-10).
5. Developmental Reading Assessment (K-4th grade)

Reporting to Parents—Taos Mountain Charter School identifies parents and teachers as two integral parts of the student's academic success team. As such, TMCS encourages parents and teachers to stay in close communication regarding each child's progress. In addition to informal discussions and communications throughout the year, TMCS offers formal opportunities for parents and teachers to meet individually to discuss the child's progress. These parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in October and April. During the conference parents receive a written summary of the student's academic progress and behavior, and review their child's self-created Main Lesson Books. Additional parent-teacher conferences may be implemented as needed on an individual basis.

End of Year Narrative Report—In addition to the objective measures of student achievement cited above, this end-of-year report provides an in-depth, personalized evaluation of each child's progress. The teacher writes the year-end report, a descriptive narrative of the child's achievements, challenges, and participation in major areas of schoolwork; math, reading, writing, social studies, science, specialty subjects, social/emotional interactions, and physical activities. These reports are mailed to parents in June and are placed in each student's record folder along with fall and spring Reports.

Individual Student Portfolio/ Main Lesson Book—Students' Main Lesson Books serve as part of a portfolio that include the students' work, and will also include various pieces of art, and practice papers. MSCS students will demonstrate academic achievement in all of the core academic areas. Portfolios will be assessed using Whole-Child Rubrics (Appendix M-1) with input from the class teacher and Subject Specialists across all content areas.

For students in the upper grades (6-12) Taos Mountain Charter School will begin to use a standards based grading model. The use of traditional grading, in addition to the continued use of Taos Mountain Charter School's Whole Child Rubrics and teacher narrative reports, will better prepare students for the transition to the grading system of high school.

The First Grade Readiness Assessment helps teachers and parents determine when students are ready to move on from Kindergarten to First Grade. The First Grade Readiness Assessment measures fine and gross motor skills; visual, tactile and auditory development; speech, language, and cognitive development; social and emotional integration; and other aspects of early childhood development. The need for this assessment is based on the fact that our first graders' learning experience requires significantly different developmental readiness than our kindergarten program. Much of our grades curriculum is delivered through the teachers' rich oral presentation of international and multicultural myths, histories and biographies. Students' experience with this material is enriched by listening, and then being able to recreate what they have learned orally, artistically, and in writing. This means that our students, beginning in first grade, need to be able to sit and focus quietly for extended periods of time during listening and seatwork activities, such as writing and illustrating.

The Second Grade Assessment is focused on evaluating students' motor-sensory development as a basis for continued academic learning. Areas evaluated include fine and gross motor skills; bodily coordination, such as crossing the midline, rhythm (which incorporates hearing and timing) and hand-foot coordination; and proprioception (balance and spatial and temporal orientation). Based on these assessments, the teacher has the opportunity to incorporate physical spatial exercises into classroom activities, with the goal of helping students further develop the motor capacities that support learning. Please see Appendix M-5 to view Elements of a Traditional Waldorf School Second Grade Assessment.

The class teacher will be responsible for monitoring each student's mastery of performance objectives and tracking progress in reaching state performance objectives. The teacher may track the progress through portfolio/Main Lesson Book review, summative assessments, and testing, hands-on activities/demonstrations, written materials, verbal responses and observations. The teacher will be responsible for keeping clear and accurate records for each student including the date the performance objective was introduced and the date that mastery was demonstrated. The teacher will provide on-going instruction and review to those who have not yet mastered the performance objective until all students in the class have shown mastery. Students may be divided into small groups based on the need for further instruction/practice until they

have demonstrated mastery level. These small groups can be made up of students with varying levels of accomplishment in the subject at hand, allowing for peer teaching/learning to take place; the student who is receiving help learns he/she can trust and learn through his fellow students, making progress, and the student helping experiences the joy and confidence that comes from being able to help a fellow student who needs it.

Student Projects: group and individual projects that students are responsible for researching and presenting. There will be smaller projects and larger ones like the 8th grade project which is a yearlong endeavor.

MULTIPLE ASSESSMENT TOOLS TO MEASURE STUDENT PROGRESS AND IMPROVE TEACHING

Longitudinal data is collected in a variety of ways. At all grade levels, direct observation is recorded to note the child's strengths and weaknesses in specific skill areas and is used as a continuous measure of student progress. These assessment reports are shared at faculty meetings and Governing Council meetings, when applicable and appropriate, to demonstrate growth in learning. Waldorf assessments are unique in that they "travel" with the child throughout their Waldorf-inspired education. Teachers pass along these assessments to each student's future teacher (for example, if a teacher or student must leave the class prior to completing the 1-8 grade cycle, or when moving on to high school). Through teacher training and alignment of the curriculum with New Mexico Common Core State Standards, these assessment tools are reliable and effective.

TMCS recognizes that NMCCSS testing are the cornerstones of accountability. The results of these assessments and the other Waldorf assessments will enable TMCS to better serve students, allowing the staff to identify each individual student's needs, providing challenges for proficient and advanced students, and also helping to identify growth patterns of lower achieving students to work towards proficiency in a measurable and goal centered fashion. Taos Mountain Charter School will use the Discovery Education Assessment as a formative assessment tool.

The growth percentile for each student will be used to determine what actions and strategies are needed to bring about the appropriate level of growth for each child. TMCS will also use the aforementioned assessments to monitor student progress and adjust the curriculum to fit the needs of the child in combination with the school's formal and informal curriculum based assessments. The school will follow the NMCCSS

schedule adopted by the state. In addition, TMCS will use the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2). The DRA2 assessment will be administered to all students in Kindergarten through fourth grade along with a regular program of reading assessments, to ensure progress in reaching our literacy goals. The extended application of DRA2 in our school is intended to expand data that will be used to validate the efficacy of our school's literacy program, wherein academic components of reading are introduced in 1st grade, a year later than in most schools. An individual literacy plan (ILP) will be developed for any student through third grade who is not reading at grade level based on results from various tests that form a body of evidence.

The school will use Home Language Surveys and English Language Assessment to assess the instructional language needs of our students.

BASELINE DATA

TMCS understands the important role that baseline data will play in the early operation of the school.

As with all Waldorf assessment tools, the students' progress will be followed with careful record keeping that will provide data toward the goal of one year's growth in one year's time for each student. The combination of these forms of data will provide sufficient baseline information to demonstrate progress.

For subjects not tested by NMCCSS the subject matter covered will align with state standards. Achievement of these goals will be measured by detailed student observation and documentation.

Assessment can be very informative, providing yearly information as to how well teachers are targeting state academic standards, how well instruction is being delivered, and how well the students are learning the information targeted by those standards. Each year, test results will be formally analyzed by the Taos Mountain Charter School Accountability Committee (SAC), teachers and administrative staff in order to make determinations of how to modify curriculum and instruction that will better meet individual student learning needs.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

PROCEDURES FOR CORRECTIVE ACTION

TMCS will take corrective action in the event that pupil performance falls below the achievement goals approved by the authorizer in the charter contract. TMCS will

employ assessments and educational methods that are routinely considered interventions in other school settings. These methods and techniques include: regular weekly meetings between the teacher and student, development of weekly and daily work plans, students receiving individualized lessons, and peer teaching (coordinated help from an older student, or partnering with a classmate who demonstrates proficiency in the particular subject in order to gain mastery). Should a student fall below performance standards and need corrective action, teachers will collaborate with the student and parents to develop an Individualized Learning Plan for the student, including specific teacher strategies for improved achievement. Close parental communication will be present in all previous steps as well.

MONITORING THE PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION

The Director will be largely responsible for overseeing faculty performance in implementing the program of instruction and integrating New Mexico State Standards. Regular visits to the class, lesson plan review, monitoring student assessment data and tracking forms, and faculty meetings will be the tools used to monitor implementation of the program of instruction. The weekly faculty meetings will provide a forum for continual monitoring throughout the school year, as well as providing faculty mentoring, development and support for the teachers.

Taos Mountain Charter School holds itself to high standards in all realms relating to the Mission and Vision of our school; Waldorf-inspired education practices, New Mexico Common Core State Standards, sustainable living, and state operational components. Therefore, the focus of monitoring of the program of instruction must be further placed in the context of the variety of professional development opportunities available to TMCS faculty and staff.

Performance standards and assessments, as well as determination of successful student progress and attainment of outcomes for students with exceptional needs and English Language Learners, will be defined appropriately on a case-by-case basis, according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and/or English proficiency levels.

REPORTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

UNIFIED IMPROVEMENT PLAN

In the early years of operation, the Administrative Assistant will be responsible for compiling results from NMCCSS and other standardized tests.

The Director will review and analyze the assessment data within one month of receiving the data and present the findings to the faculty and Governing Council. The disaggregated data will be used by the School Accountability Committee to monitor progress, report to the Governing Council and make recommendations for improvements. This information will be used to determine future staff and curricular development needs. These results will also be shared with parents and the community by posting on the school website, parent meetings and also in newsletter form.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

In addition to educational data, Taos Mountain Charter School will compile and provide to the Governing Council an annual performance report. This report may include the following data:

1. A summary of major decisions and policies established by the Board during the year.
2. Data on the level of parent involvement in the school's governance (and other aspects of the school, if applicable) and summary data from an annual parent and student satisfaction survey.
3. Data regarding the number of staff working at the school and their qualifications.
4. A copy of the school's policies and/or a summary of any major changes to those policies during the year.
5. Information demonstrating whether the school implemented the means listed in the charter to strive to achieve a racially and ethnically balanced student population.
6. An overview of the school's admissions practices during the year and data regarding the numbers of students enrolled the number on waiting lists and the numbers of students expelled and/or suspended.
7. Analyses of the effectiveness of the school's internal and external dispute mechanisms and data on the number and resolution of disputes and complaints.
8. Other information regarding the educational program and the administrative, legal and governance operations of the school relative to compliance with the terms of the charter generally.

Taos Mountain Charter School will develop the content, evaluation criteria, timelines and process for the annual performance report. Taos Mountain Charter School will use

the information compiled in the performance report to evaluate and improve upon its educational programming as necessary.

III. ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN AND GOVERNANCE

A. GOVERNING BODY CREATION AND CAPACITY

KEY COMPONENTS OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

GOVERNING COUNCIL UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY

The school's governance will follow the philosophical and practical indications offered by the proven historical track record of Waldorf-inspired school approach. Inherent within this approach is a focus on teacher-driven school development. "Servant Leadership" is a term that describes the role of administrative and Governing Council relationship to this teacher-centered consciousness. A Director will oversee implementation of policy, procedure, and carry out directives of the Governing Council, ensuring equity in the "rights" sphere. A Director of Curriculum will oversee strong implementation of the Waldorf-inspired curriculum in a manner that is fully aligned with the New Mexico Common Core State Standards. An Outreach Specialist will focus on community development, fundraising, and strong connections that reach from the school into the Taos community. This "three pillar" approach to governance will support the Governing Council comprehensively.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Governing Council, Director and leadership staff of the school will work in concert to ensure an efficient, well-run environment that best supports teachers in focusing on the challenging job of artistry-centered teaching. The Governing Council will recruit and hire the Director. The bylaws will be fully developed and adopted during the first meeting of the Governing Council.

DIRECTOR

The Governing Council relies upon the Director, who is its chief operating officer, to execute school policy and fulfill council expectations for operation of the school, including making all employment decisions. The Director participates in the school's fiscal procedures, manages contracts for various services to the school, including fiscal services of the contracted Business Manager. The Director supervises all instructional and non-instructional staff, including both salaried and hourly employees, overseeing performance of staff duties. The Director reports to the Governing Council.

CURRICULUM SPECIALIST

The College of Teachers will be mandated the pedagogical responsibility of a Waldorf-inspired curriculum. The faculty will have a College of Teachers made up of a group of teachers who have served on the staff of a Waldorf-inspired school for more than one year. The Chair of the College is a term appointment and will act as the Curriculum Specialist. The Curriculum Specialist will be responsible for supervising and supporting the implementation of a Waldorf-inspired curriculum. They will also be a class teacher. The Curriculum Specialist will report to the Director.

DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SUPPORT

The Director of Student Support will be responsible for being the Lead Special Education Teacher and they will have the over-site of New Mexico State Standards. Other support specialists including contracted therapists and social workers will report to the Director of Student Support. The Director of Student Support will report to the Director.

CONTRACTED BUSINESS MANAGEER

The Taos Mountain Charter School will contract business management services through an organization like the Coalition of Charter Schools. The Business Manager will report to the Director and the Governing Council.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH DIRECTOR

The Community Outreach Director will be responsible for developing and implementing a community involvement plan. The Friday Service Days will be an integral part of this program. Special guests will be invited to be specialists from our community will be visiting lectures or offer longer courses to support our curriculum. The Community Outreach Director will work closely with the main class teachers to develop programs and opportunities that will support what is happening in the classroom. The Community Outreach Director will report to the Director.

BYLAWS

Taos Mountain Charter School will be governed pursuant to the bylaws adopted by its Governing Council. These bylaws will be finalized at the first meeting of the Governing Council, and will follow the guidelines of this charter school application. The Governing Council shall operate by policies and procedures that are in compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations, including the Open Meetings Act. The Governing Council shall request to be designated a Board of Finance by the State of New Mexico. Its major roles and responsibilities will include involvement in the fiscal procedures,

approving all major educational and operational policies, and selecting and evaluating the Director.

The Governing Council will operate in a manner that honors the contributions of all members of the learning community, inspiring students and families to participate in the life of the school, staff to reach their professional potential, and community members and organizations to partner with the school.

Responsibilities of the Governing Council:

1. Apply to become a Board of Finance
2. Hire, evaluate and supervise the Coordinator
3. Develop major educational and operational policies
4. Fulfill budget and audit requirements of the PEC
5. Renew and amend the charter
6. Accept gifts on behalf of the school

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Responsibility to the New Mexico Public Education Commission for all educational, fiscal, and legal obligations of the school lies with the Governing Council, the Governing Body of the school, which also functions as the Board of Finance.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS

The purpose of the Governing Council is to govern the operations of Taos Mountain Charter School. The Governing Council holds collective authority over the school. Individual council members do not hold authority over the school. The Governing Council will work to fulfill the mission of Taos Mountain Charter School. In accordance with the Charter Schools Act, NMSA 1978, Sections 22-8B-1 et seq., the Governing Council will govern and manage Taos Mountain Charter School in a semi-autonomous manner subject to all other applicable federal and state laws and regulations. The Governing Council shall report to the Taos Mountain Charter School authorizer, the New Mexico Public Education Commission.

MEMBERSHIP

The Council shall be composed of not less than five members. Members of the Council are accountable to the PEC.

OFFICER POSITIONS

Officer positions of the Council will include Chair, Co-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The Governing Council will operate in accordance with applicable federal and state law and the proposed school's charter.

DECISION MAKING

Taos Mountain Charter School will follow a traditional decision-making model. At a meeting of the Governing Council, each member shall have one vote. A majority vote of a quorum of the Governing Council carries any issue. A quorum is defined as a simple majority of the Council. A quorum of Council members will not discuss school business whether in person, on the phone or electronically unless open meeting law procedures have been followed. The school will be structured so that there is not a quorum of Governing Council on any school councils or committees that discuss school business. A Council member may not participate on school councils or committees when doing so would create a quorum.

GOVERNING BODY RECRUITMENT

New Governing Council members will be invited to apply by standing Council members, or past members in good standing, as vacancies on the Council occur through expansion, through term limits or through resignations. New member applicants will also be recruited from the community, including parents, the greater educational community and the geographical community where the school is located. The openings on the Council will be advertised on the school's website, in the school newsletter, as well as in the local newspaper and on local radio stations.

Council applicants will be interviewed by a committee of Council members and selected by the Council based upon their experience relevant to the current needs of the school's Governing Council. The Council Chair shall be chosen from among members of the Governing Council. Persons who are the spouse, parent, in-law, or offspring of a current school staff member are not eligible to serve on the Governing Council while the relative holds a position at the school. Election of Governing Council officers, term limits, and term rotation will conform to the proposed school's by-laws.

TERMS

The Council Members shall normally hold office for a term of four years, except for initial Council Members whose terms will be for 2 years, 3 years or 4 years in order to stagger the terms. Initial council members first terms will be selected by the chair so that two serve a four year term, two serve a three-year term, and one serves a two-year term. A Council Member who chooses subsequent four-year term must go through the same application process as a new applicant. New Council Members will be selected according to the following criteria:

- Possess qualifications valuable to the Council, such as being a parent or guardian of an enrolled student, having appropriate legal, business, or school administration experience, or experience as a community organizer or selected government official.
- Committed to Taos Mountain Charter School and the educational mission of the school
- Commit to serving a full term.
- Be inclined to work collaboratively and seek consensus in making decisions as a group.

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

The School Advisory Council consists of parents of students enrolled in the school, students, teachers, other staff, the Director, and members of the community. The Director will collaborate with the SAC, supporting it in order to organize and function as an effective advisory group. The SAC shall advise the Director and the Governing Council with the perspectives of students, families, and staff. The SAC may advise the Director, report to the Governing Council on the effectiveness of decisions made by the Director and/or respond to decisions made by the Governing Council.

Pursuant to 2009 NMSA 1978 22-5-16, the School Advisory Council will assist the Director with school-based decision-making and function to involve parents in their children's education. The SAC's membership will be elected and its membership shall reflect an equitable balance between school employees and parents and community members. At least one community member shall represent the business community, if such person is available. The school Director may serve as chairman. The school Director shall be an active member of the school council. The council will receive training in how to be an effective advisory board. Decisions will be made through consensus.

The School Advisory Council shall:

1. Work with the school Director and give advice, consistent with state and school rules and policies, on policies relating to instructional issues and curricula and on the public school's proposed and actual budgets;
2. Develop creative ways to involve parents in the schools;
3. Where appropriate, coordinate with any existing work force development boards or vocational education advisory councils to connect students and school academic programs to business resources and opportunities; and
4. Serve as the champion for students in building community support for schools and encouraging greater community participation in the public schools.

By supporting a dynamic and active School Advisory Council, Taos Mountain Charter School intends to raise the level of student achievement, meet the requirements of New Mexico laws, involve families in the life of the school, build community support for the school, and lighten the work load of the Director. Parent Involvement in learning at home is one of the most important ways parents can help support children's development during the school years, and as such, meaningful family involvement in student learning is a primary goal of the school.

The Director shall promote a strong School Advisory Council that represents the variety of families and students of the school. In order to do so, recruitment for the SAC will begin upon enrollment, at which time such information shall be gathered from families that will allow the Director and staff to inventory the capacity of family members and students for leadership or other roles in the SAC, select best methods of communication with parents, and consider other appropriate opportunities for parent involvement in the school.

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL AND SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Governing Council shall maintain expectations for the Director to continuously promote, communicate with, and cooperate with the School Advisory Council and encourage all staff to do so. The School Advisory Council shall provide information on meetings and decisions to the Governing Council.

STAFF PARTICIPATION

Staff may advise the Governing Council through participation on the SAC, College of Teachers or in cooperation with the Director. The Director will express expectations to staff to participate in the SAC and welcome parent involvement.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Students participating in the SAC will be trained by staff to develop leadership skills and to formulate questions and conduct surveys relating to students' perspectives of the school, presenting the results of their inquiry to the Governing Council as a report of the SAC. Students' voices will be taken seriously. All members of the SAC have equal rights and responsibilities. By contributing to the life of the school, students otherwise marginalized by poverty, race and/or language will practice active participation in education.

GOVERNING COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Pursuant to CS/HB 227 & 251, at least two members of the Governing Council will be appointed by the Governing Council Chair to serve on the Finance Committee to assist the Council in carrying out its budget and finance duties by:

- making recommendations to the local school board in the following areas: financial planning, including reviews of the school's revenue and expenditure projections; review of financial statements and periodic monitoring of revenues and expenses; annual budget preparation and oversight; and procurement; and
- serving as an external monitoring committee on budget and other financial matters.

At least two members of the Governing Council will be appointed by the Chair to serve on the Audit Committee along with one volunteer member who is a parent of an enrolled student and one volunteer member who has experience in accounting and financial matters, and the Director and the Business Manager serving as ex-officio members.

The Audit Committee will:

- Evaluate the request for proposals for annual financial and audit services;
- Recommend the selection of the financial auditor;
- Attend the entrance and exit conference for annual and special audits;
- Meet with external financial auditors at least monthly after audit field work begins until the conclusion of the audit;
- Be accessible to the external financial auditors as requested to facilitate communication with the board and the superintendent;
- Track and report progress on the status of the most recent audit findings and advise the local school board on policy changes needed to address audit findings;
- Provide other advice and assistance as requested by the local school board; and
- Be subject to the same requirements regarding the confidentiality of audit information as those imposed upon the local school board by the Audit Act and rules of the State Auditor.

The completed audit report shall be presented to the Governing Council for examination and discussion. The audit report shall be a public record, and copies shall be filed with the state and other appropriate authorities.

The Governing Council will create a Facilities Committee that will report back to the Governing Council. The Facilities Committee will be responsible for hosting at least three public workshops to gather community input on long-range plans for the school's facilities. Teachers and students will be encouraged to be a part of this process.

The Facilities Committee will consist of at least one member of the faculty, Director, one member of the Governing Council, and three parents (one from the kindergarten, one from the high school and one from the elementary grades) and a student representative from the high school. They will host several community meetings to gather parent, faculty and student input on facility needs. A five year and ten year plan will be created looking at the budget and long range goals.

The Facilities Committee will report to the Governing Council who will have the final decision making responsibilities. The specifics laid out in HB 283 will be central to this process.

FOUNDING MEMBERS

Emily Cohen holds a M.S. in Environmental Planning. She works for a multi-national environmental firm on renewable resource projects. Emily has completed the Teaching level first year of study in Multisensory Structured Language Therapy program. This training course, which included 155 hours of classroom instruction and a minimum of 100 hours of supervised clinical teaching, is accredited by the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council. Emily served as the Enrollment Director and Community Outreach Coordinator, 2004-2010 at Taos Waldorf School. She has served as the head of several school committees including Parent Council and organized major fundraising events.

Allison Bradley holds a Ph.D. in Social Psychology, has completed graduate-level work in Leadership for Sustainability, and is currently a student in her second year of Waldorf Teacher Training. As a Waldorf parent for over twelve years, Dr. Bradley is intimately familiar with the Waldorf school environment and the demands and rewards it offers. With a background in organizational consulting ranging from non-profits to Fortune 500 companies, Dr. Bradley has seen many approaches to organizational design, and has been actively engaged in assisting groups of all sizes and compositions in developing solid approaches to organizational health and efficiency.

INITIAL GOVERNING COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Governance Council will be developed in such a way that all vital aspects of school function are represented in the Council's experience and/or expertise. Key examples are expertise in the legal arena, and financial management experience. Also

represented will be members of the parent body of the proposed school, and a reasonable cross section of the community at large.

Allison Bradley: Is a founding member. She has a strong background in organizational development. She also brings a Waldorf background with twelve years as a Waldorf parent, two years of Waldorf teacher training and much personal study. Allison's graduate work is in Leadership for Sustainability Education.

Emily Cohen: Is a founding member. She has a background in Waldorf education with ten years as a Waldorf parent and six years working as the Community Outreach Director at Taos Waldorf School. She has served as both a member and later the Chair of the Parent Council at her children's school.

Jesus Hernandez: Has extensive experience in education and business management. He has extensive experience as a school administrator, having served as principal, assistant principal, project director, and classroom teacher for twenty years. He has a Master of Arts Degree in Education Administration. He is also a graduate of the California School Leadership Academy, a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Accounting and Finance. He is also a graduate of the American Institute of Banking and has extensive training and experience with development, implementation and monitoring of budgets. As a school principal, he managed the school's General Education Budget, all special budgets, Block Grants, and other miscellaneous budgets. He has extensive experience in planning, evaluating and implementing staff development programs, including organizing training programs for major banks.

Paymaneh Ghaffari: My name is Paymaneh Ghaffari, I am a parent of two daughters who attend Taos Waldorf School. My oldest daughter started in pre-school at TWS and is going into 5th grade now. My youngest is going into 2nd grade and started in kindergarten. I have been very involved with the school for many years on parent council, fundraising committee, Board of Trustees and now Leadership Council. I am committed to the school. In the past I have built and run a horse boarding facility in Des Montes, NM. I have also completed a NOLS (National Outdoor Leadership School) semester in Patagonia in 1995. I have a Associates of Arts degree from Marymount college in Palos Verdes California and attended UC Santa Cruz as a Marine Biology major.

Michelle Simmons: An educational entrepreneur, Ms. Simmons has participated in the visioning, founding, and development of a number of educational initiatives. Among these accomplishments, Ms. Simmons is a co-founder of the Taos Charter School, and

is the sole visionary behind the Seeds of Hope Montessori School. Having worked with a variety of pedagogical models, Ms. Simmons became familiar with the Waldorf pedagogical approach in recent years, and has actively pursued it as a natural integration of effective teaching methods and process for holistically supporting student development. Ms. Simmons is in her second year of teaching using Waldorf-inspired methodologies, capping a career of twenty years in the teaching profession.

FUTURE GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS

MEMBERSHIP ON GOVERNING COUNCIL

Members will be actively recruited through public means, including methods such as word of mouth, professional networking, and use of media advertising (such as newspaper announcements). Members will be screened for integrity, orientation toward service, and genuine support of the school's wellbeing as an extension of community development.

New members of the Council shall be selected by the Council. The Governing Council Chair shall be appointed by the members of the Governing Council. Election of Governing Council officers, term limits, and term rotation will conform to the proposed school's by-laws, which are being developed with the goal of ensuring continuity of leadership. The by-laws will also provide a method for the expansion of the Governing Council.

A. GOVERNING BODY TRAINING AND EVALUATION

PLAN FOR GOVERNING BODY TRAINING

ORIENTATION PROCESS FOR NEW MEMBERS AND ONGOING TRAINING

The Chair is responsible for orienting new members to the Council. An annual budget line item is designated to cover the cost of Governing Council training. Members will be expected to satisfy SB148 requirements for a minimum of 5 hours of training annually and be familiar with the by-laws, policy manual, and charter of Taos Mountain Charter School. The Council will be trained in the Open Meetings Act, charter law, roles and responsibilities, ethics, conflicts of interest and financial procedures. Membership in the New Mexico Charter School Coalition will give the Council access to regular professional development opportunities. The Council will also participate in opportunities to experience Waldorf-inspired schools in order to acquire a shared vision for Taos Mountain Charter School.

The Governing Council will, at the beginning of each year, identify a set of goals for training linked to the goals of the Educational Plan of the school's charter, and create an annual calendar of board study and training sessions designed to attain those goals.

All members of the Governing Council will be trained according to requirements laid out in the New Mexico Public Education Division's most recent charter application and approval process. These may include on-line trainings, conferences or in-person trainings, or written work. Additionally, the school may design and hold retreats, one-day, or partial day trainings to further foster Governance Council development.

ANNUAL SELF-EVALUATION

Governance Council members will be evaluated annually as indicated in New Mexico Public Education Charter Division's guidelines.

A detailed policy outlining the evaluation process for the Governing Council will be developed during our planning year. The policy will reflect accepted organizational development practices.

B. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

GOVERNING COUNCIL WILL MONITOR OPERATIONAL, FINANCIAL AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

COUNCIL POWERS AND DUTIES

The role of the Governing Council is to provide policy, financial and legal direction, oversight, and to insure the long-term financial viability of Taos Mountain Charter School. Financial responsibilities of the Council will include approval and monitoring of the annual budget, the stewardship of the school's assets, the fostering of fund-raising through solicitation of donations and grants, and long-term planning regarding school facilities. The Council will enter into and revoke all contractual relationships, including the hiring and firing of the school Director. In addition, the Council will conduct a yearly performance review of the Director based on the Coordinator's job description, the competencies for principals as articulated in New Mexico state law, and performance in relation to stated goals and objectives. The Council will adopt a policies and procedures manual and will continue to add to and refine this manual with input from the administration and faculty. The Council will give final approval to any proposed changes

and additions to the school charter, by-laws, and policies and procedures. The Council is responsible for the school's compliance with this charter. The Council is composed of selected representatives from the parent community and the greater community to ensure that all school stakeholders will be represented. The school Coordinator will participate as a non-voting member.

In reporting directly to the Governing Council, the Director will ensure follow through on Council decisions, policies, and directives. As part of this, accurate recordkeeping will be kept ongoing for all students, employees, and finances and reports will be offered monthly to the Governing Council. Additional staff – regular or contracted – may work with the Director in a cooperative manner to assure the completion of said reporting.

BUDGETING AND OPERATIONS

The Director and the contracted Business Manager will work closely together to prepare a proposed annual budget and present it to the Council. The Business Manager will work with the Council Finance Committee to review the budget. The Finance Committee will then present the budget to the full council for its approval at a public meeting in which the public is allowed to comment on the school budget. An annual audit, as required by law, will take place with the full cooperation of the Audit Committee, the Director, and the Business Manager.

QUALIFICATIONS AND LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DIRECTOR AND PROCESS/TIMELINE

RECRUITMENT AND HIRING PROCESS

The Governing Council will recruit, interview, hire, and train a Head Administrator – otherwise known as Director, and will oversee his or her duties ongoing. The Governing Council will select the Director by majority vote, having recruited applicants for the position of Director through a public process, including advertising in local and national newspapers and professional printed media, referral, and through appropriate electronic recruitment mechanisms. This process will begin immediately.

In accordance with the Charter Schools Act and as a state-authorized charter, the Director is not an employee of the Taos County Schools, but shall be hired directly by Taos Mountain Charter School. All Taos Mountain Charter School employees will be hired in accordance with all state and federal employment rules and regulations and in compliance with the School Personnel Act.

LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

The leadership characteristics that will be essential include:

1. Ability to communicate with people from a broad range of backgrounds
2. Ability to Communicate clearly in writing and orally
3. Ability to interact with public, parents and students
4. Ability to foster collaboration
5. Ability to manage large and complex projects within a specified timeline
6. Ability to hold the Waldorf philosophy as a central part of our school
7. Familiarity with NM State Standards and ability to incorporate them within our curriculum.
8. Proven familiarity with the Waldorf curriculum.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF HEAD ADMINISTRATOR AND EVALUATION PROCESS

The Governing Council will create a detailed job description for the Director. The responsibilities and evaluation process will be communicated orally and in writing. The evaluation will be an ongoing process that involves clear communication of expectations and performance review.

DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

Taos Mountain Charter School will employ a Director who holds appropriate credentials and/or degrees, and/or has demonstrated abilities in administering a school or related management/administration experience. As well, the Director must be passionate about the goals and objectives of TMCS. There is a preference for charter school, Waldorf methods experience in management or administration. The Director is accountable to the Governing Council for all aspects of the schools operations, including enrollment, education programs, community relations, fiscal management, personnel management and property management. These responsibilities should be carried out in a manner consistent with the school's Mission and vision, and in the best interest of TMCS. The Director will delegate responsibilities, provide appropriate leadership, and work with the Governing Council, staff, parents, and community to effectively achieve the school's goals and objectives.

Specifically the Director is responsible for:

1. Management of the school.
2. Managing the office environment.
3. Oversight of the program of instruction, including the integration of New Mexico Academic Standards into instruction, curriculum alignment with the school's Mission, Waldorf pedagogy, and the analysis of student assessment data to improve and enhance instruction and curriculum.

4. Developing and maintaining effective communications systems to ensure regular and clear communication within the school community, and working directly with parents to address questions and concerns and facilitate problem solving.
5. Maintaining current knowledge of State policies and laws that apply to charter schools; applies that knowledge to ensure compliance.
6. Fiscal and administrative operations of the school, including oversight of contracted services, and supervision of the administrative assistant.
7. Investigating student misconduct and taking appropriate action in cases where suspension or expulsion is indicated.
8. Overseeing the planning and conduct of extracurricular activities such as field studies, festivals, multi-cultural events, etc. to ensure appropriateness and safety.
9. Supervising the faculty, and working collaboratively/overseeing the development of inner faculty mentoring and training, curriculum development, and implementing the annual ongoing school wide self-evaluation and improvement plan.
10. Overseeing the staff recruiting and hiring process.
11. Attending Governing Council meetings. Helping to facilitate and ensure open and positive communication among the school's Governing Council, the faculty, SAC and the Parent Council.

EVALUATION

The Director will be evaluated annually. The evaluation process spans the academic year starting with goals and objectives established at the start of the school year, and culminating with a written evaluation prepared and delivered in the spring. Input for the evaluations will be obtained from faculty; selected parents, including the leadership of the Parent Council, and TMCS Governing Council. Outside expertise in administrative evaluation, such as experienced professionals in similar positions in other schools, may be hired on a contractual basis to evaluate the Director annually.

The evaluation, while an ongoing process, will include the following guidelines and directions:

1. The Director will be evaluated each year
2. Feedback from Parents, SAC, Parent Council, Governing Council, and Faculty will be sought.
3. Director Evaluation Forms will be used. In addition to the form, additional written comments may be submitted by way of a separate letter.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND CHART

The Governing Council is responsible for the financial integrity and policy making of the school. They will create subcommittees including Finance and Audit to help support the financial integrity of the school. The governing Council is responsible for hiring/firing the Director.

The Director acts as the conduit for communication and effective policy implementation. The Director reports to the Governing Council.

The Business Manager is a contracted position that reports to the Director and Governing Council.

The College of Teachers will be a small group of teachers who will support the implementation of the Waldorf-inspired curriculum. The Chair of the College of Teachers is the Curriculum Specialist. They are responsible for supporting the implementation of the Waldorf-inspired curriculum. The Curriculum Specialist will report to the Director. The Curriculum Specialist will be a term position.

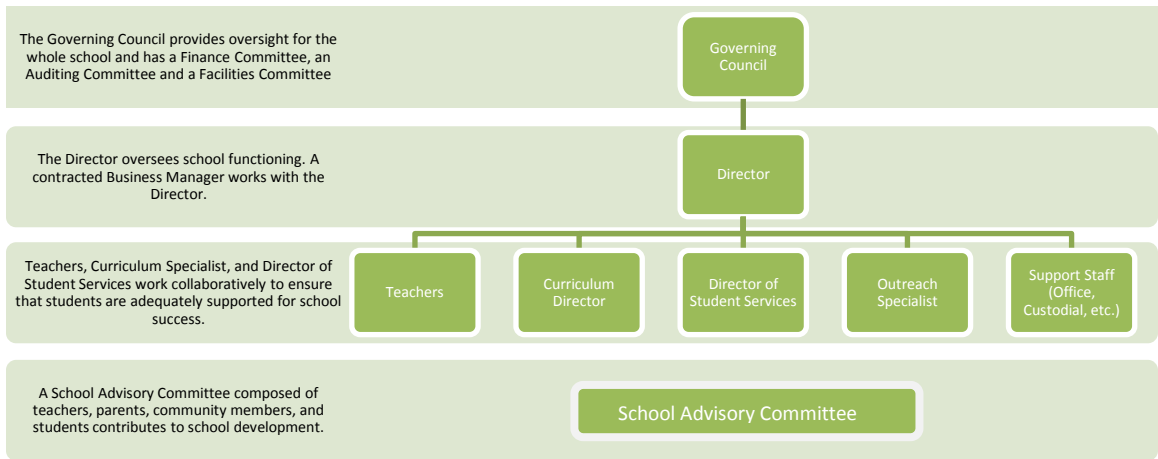
The main class teachers and specialty subject teachers will report to the Director. The faculty will meet as a Faculty Council.

The Director of Student Support will report to the Director. This position will supervise all support specialists and school social worker. They will work in conjunction with the Curriculum Specialist and Director to design individual support plans.

The Community Outreach Director will be focusing on fostering relationships with Taos Organizations and community members to support our students being active members of our larger community. They will also be responsible for spearheading the internships that our older students will be involved in on the Friday Service Days. The Community Outreach Director will report directly to the Director and work closely with the Curriculum Specialist and the Director of Student Support.

The Administrative Assistant supports the day to day activities of the school and reports to the Director.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Director

Taos Mountain Charter School will employ a Director who holds appropriate credentials and/or degrees, and/or has demonstrated abilities in administering a school or related management/administration experience. As well, the Director must be passionate about the goals and objectives of TMCS. There is a preference for charter school, Waldorf methods experience in management or administration. The Director is accountable to the Governing Council for all aspects of the schools operations, including enrollment, education programs, community relations, fiscal management, personnel management and property management. These responsibilities should be carried out in a manner consistent with the school's Mission and vision, and in the best interest of TMCS. The Director will delegate responsibilities, provide appropriate leadership, and work with the Governing Council, staff, parents, and community to effectively achieve the school's goals and objectives.

Curriculum Specialist

The Curriculum Specialist will serve as the Chair of the College of Teachers. They must have served on a Waldorf-inspired faculty for at least one year. In concert with the Director, this teacher/Curriculum Leader will have the responsibility to be a leader of the

TMCS team of educators, guiding professional growth and improvement, and centering on individual and team growth, and the best practices of Waldorf education. In addition, this Learning Leader will serve as the school's expert on Waldorf-inspired curriculum and Waldorf-methods teaching, and will also serve as a primary mentor to class teachers, and an advisor to the Director and Governing Council regarding Waldorf-methods curriculum.

Director of Student Support

The Director of Student Support must have a background in Special Education and a familiarity with social work and support services. They must be familiar with a Waldorf-inspired therapeutic support approach. They must also have a strong background in New Mexico State Standards. The role of special educator at TMCS is a dynamic position. They must be familiar with Waldorf-inspired education and have a New Mexico Certification in Special Education. The Director of Student Support will work as part of a consensus driven, teacher led, and collaborative team. In addition to special education duties, special educators are expected to take on leadership roles, attend frequent staff meetings, assist in many aspects of curriculum design, and provide expertise that benefits the program and student body as a whole.

Director of Community Outreach

The Director of Community Outreach is responsible for community outreach. One of the school's goals is to be an active member of the Taos community. The Outreach Specialist will coordinate with local organizations and facilitate student participation on projects in particular the Friday Service Days on the first and last Friday of the month. TMCS aspires to have our students be a contributing and valuable part of the larger community. The Director of Community Outreach will also work on networking to bring members of the Taos community into our school community.

TEACHING STAFF

The Director hires, supervises, and evaluates teachers and instructional assistants.

K-12 LEAD CLASS TEACHER

A lead class teacher is hired as the primary teacher for each class. Each teacher will hold Waldorf certification or will enroll and complete a Waldorf Teacher Training program within five years of hire. The lead class teachers will hold appropriate state licensure as an educator or be enrolled in a New Mexico Alternative Licensure Program. The lead class teacher must be able to teach the core academic subject areas which include mathematics, the arts (visual, drama, and music), language arts, science, history, social studies and geography.

Additional desired qualifications and training will be determined by the TMCS Governing Council with recommendation by the TMCS Director. TMCS will seek trained Waldorf teachers. As mentioned previously, faculty members will meet weekly to discuss the life of the school and its students, and in order to provide time for ongoing professional development. TMCS aims to represent the organizational model of a “Professional Learning Community,” wherein faculty engages in peer mentorship, stimulating and motivating teachers to continually improve and develop their skills. This model also results in a high degree of self reflection, resulting in a school of engaged and mindful teachers.

In addition to their primary role as class teachers, the faculty ensures the quality of the educational program and maintains the highest possible standards in the conduct of the school’s activities.

Faculty Duties:

1. Teach a Waldorf curriculum in alignment with the program of instruction, Mission and methodologies of the school.
2. Integrate New Mexico State Common Core Standards into the curriculum in order to ensure that children are on track to proficiency each year.
3. Assess students for mastery of performance objectives and track student progress.
4. Keep accurate records of student progress and assessments toward meeting charter outcomes and State achievement targets.
5. Provide remediation and advanced learning opportunities for students using available classroom resources, volunteers, peers, and individualized programs.
6. Participate in school committees, development and implementation of IEPs, and Student Success Teams.
7. Attend trainings and continuing education classes related to the program of instruction.
8. Integrate teaching styles, philosophies, and methodologies outlined in the curricular emphasis into daily lessons.
9. Attend weekly the faculty meetings to participate in peer mentoring, child studies, New Mexico Common Core State Standards curriculum integration and planning of school-wide themes, special events.
10. Prepare lesson plans for teaching grade specific Main Lessons to students.

SUBJECT SPECIALIST TEACHERS

Our subject specialists may teach a variety of subjects, including, but not limited to, foreign languages, music, handwork, woodworking, games (PE), gardening, orchestra or strings, and eurythmy. Student assessments by subject specialists are included in the

students' end-of-year narrative reports provided by the lead class teacher, as well as in the parent teacher conferences that are held twice per year.

EVALUATION PROCESS FOR EDUCATIONAL STAFF

Teachers will be evaluated by the Director and the Curriculum Specialist or other qualified observer.

Staff Evaluations

The Director may use a range of formal and informal evaluations to measure teacher and staff performance, including on-going programs of self-evaluation for all teachers. These self-evaluations may consist of a statement that describes what the teacher accomplished since his or her last self-evaluation and what he or she plans to accomplish in the next few months. Staff members review their self-evaluation form with the Director, who attempts to coach those who haven't met their goals with suggestions as to how they might improve and continue their professional development.

The Director and an experienced Waldorf-methods teacher will evaluate TMCS teachers annually to measure their performance to contractual expectations. The evaluation process spans the academic year, starting with evaluation criteria established at the start of the school year and culminating with a written evaluation prepared and delivered in the spring. To improve student learning and teacher retention, teachers in their first year at TMCS will be evaluated in both fall and spring. The fall evaluation is designed to identify areas where the school can help new teachers succeed and thrive by providing them with additional support and mentoring. All staff will undergo a formal written evaluation by the Director at least once per academic year. All teachers and staff will also receive regular informal feedback from the Director and from their colleagues. Weekly faculty meeting will provides a space for sharing issues and concerns, and possible solutions. As well, Lead Teachers will have a mentor either within the school or outside of the school that they can refer to for reflection and problem solving. Teachers who do not meet expectations and do not follow the goals of their improvement plan may be subject to reassignment or termination.

Monitoring the Program of Instruction

The Director will be largely responsible for overseeing faculty performance in implementing the program of instruction and integrating of New Mexico State Standards. This will involve working closely with the Curriculum Specialist and the Student Support Director. Regular visits to the class, lesson plan review, monitoring student assessment data and tracking forms, and faculty meetings will be the tools used to monitor implementation of the program of instruction. The weekly faculty meetings

will provide a forum for continual monitoring throughout the school year, as well as providing faculty mentoring, development and support for the teachers. Taos Mountain Charter School holds itself to high standards in all realms relating to the Mission and Vision of our school; Waldorf Education practices, New Mexico State Standards, sustainable living and state operational components. Therefore, the focus of monitoring of the program of instruction must be further placed in the context of the variety of professional development opportunities are available to TMCS faculty and staff.

STAFFING PLAN

First Year Staffing Needs:

Lead Class Teachers: 7 main class teachers(full time), 1 Curriculum Specialist (full time; also serves as a main class teacher), 1 Director of Student Support(1/2 time), 1 kindergarten assistant (full time), 1 academic language therapist (1/4 time), 2 specialty class teachers (1/2 time), 2 high school specialty teachers (1/2 time), Coordinator (full time), Director of Community Outreach (1/2 time), Office support (1/2 time), Custodial/grounds (1/2 time), Nurse (contracted), Business Manager (contracted)

Second Year Staffing Needs:

Lead Class Teachers: 9 main class teachers(full time), 1 Curriculum Specialist (full time; also serves as a main class teacher), 1 Director of Student Support(1/2 time), 1 kindergarten assistant (full time), 1 academic language therapist (1/4 time), 2 specialty class teachers (1/2 time), 2 high school specialty teachers (1/2 time), Coordinator (full time), Director of Community Outreach (1/2 time), Office support (1/2 time), Custodial/grounds (full time), Nurse (contracted), Business Manager (contracted)

Third Year Staffing Needs:

Lead Class Teachers: 9 main class teachers(full time), 1 Curriculum Specialist (full time; also serves as a main class teacher), 1 Director of Student Support(1/2 time), 1 kindergarten assistant (full time), 1 academic language therapist (1/4 time), 2 specialty class teachers (full time), 4 high school specialty teachers (1/2 time), Coordinator (full time), Director of Community Outreach (1/2 time), Office support (1/2 time), Custodial/grounds (full time), Nurse (contracted), Business Manager (contracted), Social worker (1/2 time)

Fourth Year Staffing Needs:

Lead Class Teachers: 9 main class teachers(full time), 1 Curriculum Specialist (full time; also serves as a main class teacher), 1 Director of Student Support(1/2 time), 1 kindergarten assistant (full time), 1 academic language therapist (1/4 time), 2 specialty class teachers (full time), 4 high school specialty teachers (1/2 time), Coordinator (full

time), Director of Community Outreach (1/2 time), Office support (full time), Custodial/grounds (full time), Nurse (contracted), Business Manager (contracted), Social worker (full time)

Fifth Year Staffing Needs:

Lead Class Teachers: 9 main class teachers(full time), 1 Curriculum Specialist (full time; also serves as a main class teacher), 1 Director of Student Support(1/2 time), 1 kindergarten assistant (full time), 1 academic language therapist (1/4 time), 2 specialty class teachers (full time), 4 high school specialty teachers (1/2 time), Coordinator (full time), Director of Community Outreach (1/2 time), Office support (full time), Custodial/grounds (full time), Nurse (contracted), Business Manager (contracted), Social worker (full time)

LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY AND CALENDAR

We will follow the Taos School District calendar as closely as possible. There will be some variation in the calendar to allow for Taos Mountain Charter's specific curriculum. The school week will be 8:15-3:15 Monday through Thursday (four days / week) the first and last Friday of the month and 8:15-3:15 Monday through Friday the other weeks. The older grades (6th -12th grades) will have community service projects on the Fridays that they are off.

The final calendar will meet the hours required by New Mexico. Our school calendar will provide for 180 days and 990 hours for K-6th grade and 1080 hours for 7th -12th grade. Please note, the Friday Service Days will contribute to the total required hours.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

TEACHER SUPPORT

TMCS recognizes that teachers provide the heart of our school program, helping students at Taos Mountain achieve their potential academically, socially/emotionally, and in terms of physical ability (fine and gross motor skills). Teacher success is the basis for successful student learning. As mentioned previously, TMCS intends to support its teachers through increasingly competitive compensation packages, generous preparation time, opportunities for peer connection and support, and a strong mentoring and professional development program. TMCS recognizes the critical importance its professional development programs play in the long-term success of the school. As a public charter school inspired by Waldorf education, we recognize that early and ongoing training will have a direct impact on achieving our curricular vision, as well as meeting the requirements issued to all public schools in New Mexico. These two objectives will frame our approach to professional development.

Annual Professional Development Plans

1. The core component of a TMCS teacher's professional development is a highly customized individual growth plan. These plans will reflect the long-term and short-term nature of the growth cycle, be validated by a support team, tied to multiple growth indicators, and reflect TMCS values, strategic goals and student outcomes.
2. Teachers will be officially and unofficially observed frequently by their peers, mentors, and the school's Curriculum Specialist

Professional Development Days - Each year all teachers will be required to participate in 18.5 total professional development days that will include full days within each semester. Faculty meetings held on early release days provide teachers with at least 1 hour per week of professional development.

D. EMPLOYEES

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Equal Opportunity Employer

TMCS is an at-will, equal employment opportunity employer. TMCS will not discriminate against any employee on the basis of race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, sexual orientation or disability in the recruitment, selection, training, utilization, or termination of employees or any other employment-related activities.

Terms and Conditions

The terms and conditions of employment at TMCS will be reviewed with all employees in detail during the interview process and will be described in detail in the TMCS Employee Handbook that will be created by the TMCS Governing Council and Director.

STAFF RECRUITMENT

Upon hiring, the Director will begin an ambitious recruiting plan to find Waldorf lead teachers, and an administrative assistant. When interviewing teachers, we will also consider the following: Waldorf-methods training and teaching experience; understanding of the developmental model of the child; the ability/willingness to integrate art, music, movement/dance and/or drama to enliven academics for improved student learning; advanced degrees; Spanish/bi-lingual capabilities; public school teaching experience; and the ability to meet the needs of special education students mainstreamed into the classroom. The Director will examine the applicant's educational

philosophy, methods for classroom management, and her/his ability to communicate and work effectively with children, parents, and colleagues. Avenues of recruiting for teachers will include the same outlets as were utilized in seeking the Director.

STAFF SELECTION

TMCS will select its personnel directly without prior authorization from the State. TMCS will comply with all federal and state rules and regulations regarding employment. These include, but are not limited to, appropriate recruitment of applicants and the use of background and criminal checks, unless a specific waiver from the State Board of Education is obtained. The Director for TMCS may terminate the employment of any employee so long as such termination is not for unlawful reasons. All decisions of terminations of lead teachers and key staff will be made in conjunction with the Governing Council. Before being offered positions at TMCS, all teachers will be interviewed at least once by the Director.

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

Employment Policies

The Governing Council of TMCS, in conjunction with the Director, will further develop its employment policies and create its Employee Handbook during the first planning year. The TMCS Employee Handbook will be completed prior to the hiring of faculty.

Compliance with all Federal and State Non-discrimination requirements, as put forth in the 1999 Charter School Act, 22-8B-4A, NMSA 1999. The following Federal Requirements will be met:

1. Equal Pay Act of 1963
2. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
3. Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967
4. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
5. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
6. Age Discrimination Act of 1975
7. Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
8. Civil Rights Act of 1991
9. Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997
10. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Regulations and the State Requirements:
11. New Mexico Human Rights Act of 1969

Employee Welfare and Safety

TMCS shall comply with all state, and federal laws concerning employee welfare, safety and health issues.

Employee Records

TMCS shall comply with all State policies and regulations and state and federal laws concerning the maintenance and disclosure of all records. All employees must furnish, or will be expected to provide:

1. Medical clearance including proof of medical exam and tuberculosis (TB) testing
2. Proof of fingerprinting and criminal record check from the Department of Justice
3. Full disclosure statement regarding prior criminal record
4. Legal status to be employed by TMCS

Staff Retention

TMCS will develop its own policies, in full compliance with federal and state law, regarding the recruitment, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and termination of personnel, as well as complaint and grievance procedures.

Staff Compensation

The Director of TMCS, in consultation with the Governing Council, will develop the salary schedule for the school. TMCS will create a salary schedule based on Waldorf-inspired charter schools and private Waldorf schools in the region. TMCS aims to offer a competitive salary schedule in relation to other charter schools in Taos, and to use best practices in salary schedules among national charter schools.

Teacher Certification

Many of our teachers will be Waldorf Certified and may not have a New Mexico State Teaching License. These teachers will pursue alternative licensure options such as OPAL certification for alternative licensure. They will have three years to achieve their New Mexico Alternative Licensure.

Waldorf Certification

If a Teacher does not have Waldorf Teacher Training they must complete Waldorf Training during their first five years at Taos Mountain Charter School.

All main class teachers will be encouraged to attend Waldorf Training Seminars and additionally, teachers will meet all New Mexico continuing education requirements.

DISCIPLINE PROCESS

Taos Mountain Charter School's staff discipline process will be developed in accordance with expectations to provide due process during the initial planning year of the approved charter. All personnel policies and procedures will comply with applicable law. The Employee Handbook will be developed by the Director and Governing Council during our planning year. All employees will be given an updated copy of these policies during the first staff meeting of each academic year or when revised.

In addition, Taos Mountain Charter School will be guided in its development of such policies by the following principles:

1. Consulting and collaborating with employees;
2. Maintaining a balance of the school's responsibilities to safeguard employee rights and due process while maintaining the greatest commitment to the welfare of the students;
3. Adherence to the principle of progressive discipline and collaborative employee evaluation.

PROCESS FOR EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE

An Employee Grievance process will be fully developed in the Employee Handbook. The process will include meeting with the Director and possibly the Governing Council.

E. COMMUNITY, PARENT AND EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE

NATURE OF INVOLVEMENT

The creation of Taos Mountain Charter School has been led by a dedicated group of parents and educators. As TMCS becomes a reality, both the opportunities and importance of parent involvement will remain high. Indeed, the importance of dedicated parents cannot be underestimated.

Many different avenues have been utilized to keep interested parents informed.

TMCS acknowledges that the school will thrive with the active support of its parent community. Parents/guardians are asked to provide as many volunteer hours as possible. We will ask that parents volunteer a minimum of four hours a month for the school. TMCS's intention is to focus on the joy of service, recognizing the importance research has demonstrated that parent involvement improves student learning. Parent involvement at TMCS also shows students that their parents care about their school, and creates a community atmosphere. TMCS recognizes that some families may have limited volunteer hours to offer, due to economic restraints for example, and so parent volunteerism is not required, but highly encouraged.

Parent Council

Parent and community member involvement at TMCS begins with the school's Parent Council, a parent-governed committee. The Parent Council will work with the Director, Governing Council and the School Advisory Council. There will be a representative from the Parent Council on the School Advisory Council. Every parent/guardian of a currently enrolled TMCS student is welcome to participate in the Parent Council meetings. In addition, parents who serve as "Class Parent" (lead parent volunteer for each classroom) will serve on the Parent Council. This service enables dissemination of Parent Council information to the parent body of every class.

The Parent Council's Mission is to uphold the central role of the parents in preserving the vision of the school, and the role of parent volunteers in contributing to all aspects of the school community. The Parent Council, in conjunction with TMCS's administration and Governing Council, will publish the Parent Handbook and make necessary revisions annually.

The Parent Council consists of parent/guardian and grandparent volunteers who meet regularly (at least monthly) to support the life of the school. At least one member of the TMCS Governing Council will attend Parent Council meetings to ensure communication between the Governing Council, administration and Parent Council is continuous and effective.

The Parent Council will:

1. Create a forum for discussion of matters of interest and concern to the parents of the school.
2. Act as a communication channel between the parents and other individuals and groups, both within and outside the school community.
3. Facilitate cultural and social activities that contribute to the life of the school.
4. Coordinate and sponsor committees, clubs and other activities that contribute to the life of the school.
5. Coordinate fundraising activities.

In addition, the Parent Council provides general oversight of parent-led committees, and membership, (as needed) on administrative committees.

PARENT COMMITTEES

Festivals

The Festival Committee creates a festival life for the school. Working closely with the faculty, it coordinates the Harvest Festival, the Winter Festival, and the Spring Festival, creating meaningful celebrations for the entire school community and their families.

Library

The Library Committee organizes and maintains the student library, the parent education library, and the faculty reference library. The Library Committee selects and purchases library materials, based on faculty, student, and administrative recommendations.

Building and Grounds Committee

The Building and Grounds Committee maintains the school garden, allowing for gardening opportunities that teachers and students utilize as part of the school curriculum. Gardening creates beauty and a connection to the earth and the life-cycle of the plant world. It also gives students the experience of growing and eating the food they produce. In the summertime, this committee organizes the overseeing of the school community garden by creating a sign-up sheet that allows for at least 2 families each week of summer to maintain the garden. They also coordinate harvest and garden share pick-up for those families who participate in the school community garden in the summer months.

Additional Parent Involvement

To encourage additional parent involvement, TMCS shall also maintain a list citing a wide variety of participation opportunities for parents. Possible volunteer activities can include, but are not limited to:

- Service on a school committee or Board
- Assisting in the classroom in small reading groups beginning in second grade
- Playground supervision before and after school and during recess
- Assisting during festivals
- Assisting in a specialty class
- Hospitality (hosting a visiting teacher candidate or speaker)
- Site maintenance
- Service as a “Class Parent” - Each class has one or two class parents who are central to the parent support base for the classroom. Typically, class parents assist with communication between teacher and parents, using the e-mail and phone trees; help organize field trips and drivers; help schedule parent-teacher conferences; and coordinate parent volunteers for festivals, fundraising, class plays, and other class activities. The “Class Parent” also serves on the Parent Council.
- Service as TMCS Governing Council representatives
- Coordinating and chaperoning field trips

- Coordinating sets and costumes, and helping with rehearsals, for annual class plays
- Assisting with fundraisers
- Assisting in the school office

All parent volunteers will be required to read and sign a Volunteer Agreement prior to engaging in any volunteer activities. Parents who will be working closely with students will be required to undergo a background check to ensure child safety. Additionally, parents who offer to drive multiple students to and from school activities will be required to produce a valid New Mexico driver's license and provide proof that their vehicle is insured. The TMCS administration will develop a detailed field trip driving policy, to be published in the parent handbook.

Community Partners

The Community Outreach Director will establish and maintain close relationships with the larger Taos community. TMCS will develop partnerships with community organizations as appropriate. TMCS will maintain contact with interested organizations by sending them an annual newsletter of school accomplishments and activities, and direct communication. Local organizations will also be invited to attend and participate in TMCS's annual festivals. Local organizations that have relevant and age appropriate presentations will be invited to come to the school.

RESOLUTION PROCESS FOR COMMUNITY

GRIEVANCE PROCESS

The Grievance Process provides a means by which conflicts can be resolved. Parents or students may initiate this process. Such a request must be in writing and submitted to the Director for further action. The Director will then communicate with those involved in the conflict. A meeting will take place at the end of which a plan for resolution will be agreed upon. If, after completion of this meeting, the conflict has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the parties involved, it may then be taken to the TMCS Governing Council for a final ruling. The procedure for filing concerns is as follows:

1. The parties will make every attempt to communicate the concern directly to the teacher, the Director, or the parent(s) for resolution. An appointment should be set up where the concern can be expressed in private. Care should be taken to express concerns calmly and respectfully so that an environment conducive to resolution can exist.
2. If the parties are unable to come to a resolution, they may file their concern, in writing, with the Director.

3. In cases where the concern has been addressed with the Director, and any party remains dissatisfied with the decisions made to resolve the conflict at this level, that party may take their concerns to the TMCS Governing Council. Such a complaint will be made in a written statement, which details the violation, procedures taken and requested remedy, and the complaint shall be submitted to the TMCS Governing Council at least one week prior to the next Governing Council meeting. Complaints submitted later will be addressed at the subsequent meeting of the Governing Council. Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Governing Council responding at or prior to its next regular public meeting.

4. The Governing Council may hear arguments from the parties, review prior decisions and evidence, and make inquiries as it deems necessary. The Governing Council shall render a written decision within ten business days after the meeting unless additional time is needed. The Governing Council's decision shall be final.

F. STUDENT POLICIES

STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY

Taos Mountain Charter School will develop a complete Student Discipline Policy that will be included in the Parent Handbook. This policy will be developed during our planning year and will include the following components:

Student discipline and rights policies will comply with the Student Rights and Responsibilities set forth in the Public Education Department rules and regulations [6.11.2 NMAC] All students have the right to learn in a safe environment. At Taos Mountain Charter School there will be a shared responsibility between students, parents, and staff in providing a productive learning atmosphere. Enforcement of school rules, including disciplinary action, shall be the responsibility of the Director.

Taos Mountain Charter School will develop a complete Student Discipline Policy that will be included in the Parent Handbook. This policy will be developed during our planning year and will reflect the following philosophy:

Discipline is an integral part of Waldorf curriculum. Building self-discipline, establishing an aesthetic sense of order and rhythm, and understanding the consequences of behavior are central goals of Waldorf education. The purpose of discipline is to meet students' individual needs and the overall needs of the learning community; it fosters the healthy development of social life, while ensuring students learn that consequences exist for their actions. When a child knows what is expected of him/her, and

parents/guardians and teacher work together, most problems can be prevented or resolved. Safety of our students is of highest priority, and the following conduct expectations and community standards contribute to the security, well-being, and positive learning experiences of all. Our goal is to maintain an atmosphere of respectful, calm behavior that enables appropriate play and learning. The Taos Mountain Charter School Parent Handbook that will be developed will address these issues and expectations in detail for parents. The guidelines apply to behavior on school property and at all school functions, including field trips, festivals, and other community wide events.

TMCS's goal is to help each student attain the independence and self-confidence needed to become self-disciplined. In so doing, the school will provide a community with structure and order that aids them in the development of self-discipline. Behavior is based on cooperation, logical and natural consequences, fairness, consistency, and the belief that all people have the ability to look at themselves honestly, and to change and grow. TMCS's common goal is the creation of a supportive educational environment where an enthusiasm for learning is fostered. There are certain rights, responsibilities, and consequences that contribute to that environment. TMCS will take a progressive educational approach for a safe and peaceful learning environment. Starting at the earliest ages and whenever a student first enters the school, TMCS will provide the skills necessary not only to learn basic safety rules, but to interact with classmates, teachers, families, and the larger school community in positive and constructive ways.

Children will develop inner discipline at TMCS. Inner discipline at TMCS and beyond consists of four main components:

1. Distinct knowledge of safety rules;
2. Clear awareness of responsibility;
3. Respectful attitude towards the members of the school community and the larger global learning environment;
4. Understanding and preparedness of the proper way of acting in different circumstances/places.

Because of the open and respectful nature of this approach, students will understand that mutual respect, care and consideration for others, and an empathetic interest in the environment are important in school and all other places. The Waldorf/Steiner educator sees the child as consisting of body, mind and spirit and this evokes, within adults, a reverence and sensitivity for that child's being. The child deserves respect and dignity. It is the responsibility of the parents and teachers to guide the child during the early years of life. The adults in the school must be models of positive behavior and communication at all times. As part of our professional development program, and parent

education/information available at TMCS, the adults of our school community will learn about the benefits and practices of Compassionate Communication, also known as Nonviolent Communication. By giving the adult community at TMCS the proper tools, the children of TMCS will be surrounded by role models who embody the skills of productive and positive communication. Because it is the nature of children to imitate, all faculty and staff at TMCS will strive to be worthy of imitation.

Please see Appendix N, Compassionate Communication & Waldorf Schools by John Cunningham.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

Our school-wide goal is to maintain an atmosphere of respect, harmony, and community in the classroom, buildings, and grounds to support a focused imaginative learning environment. Maintaining a strong and reliable rhythm to each day, and an orderly and predictable classroom environment resolves most discipline issues through prevention. Behavior management includes the reflection on the part of the teacher on how he/she manages the children. Could we have handled a situation more effectively? What positive strengths can we build on? Have we really thought through the kind of things we want to draw out of the child or allow to unfold in the child to help him/her overcome difficulty? Depending on the age and development of the children, we also use guidance methods that are intended to help children internalize rules, get along with each other and become more self-directed in their behavior.

Therefore, behavioral guidance methods at TMCS include:

1. Giving limited choices.
2. Redirecting children to other activities (i.e. working alongside an adult).
3. Problem-solving through discussion.
4. Improving communication skills.
5. Allowing for safe natural consequences.
6. Promoting cooperation amongst children.
7. Reinforcing positive behavior.
8. Building self-esteem and confidence.
9. Setting and reinforcing limits.
10. The teacher must be worthy of imitation, modeling positive behavior such as kindness and respect.
11. Separating both aggressor and victim by giving a few minutes “time out.” This is for the children to recover and regain their grounding; verse or song may be used to lighten and heal the situation.
12. Communication and teamwork are very important in resolving behavioral problems as they arise; parents will be told of any difficulties at the end of the school day.

Children are encouraged to:

1. Care for and respect all other human beings (including oneself).
2. Care for and respect all living creatures and plants.
3. Care and respect school and personal property.
4. Solve their own problems when possible.
5. Attend school regularly and arrive promptly.
6. Participate in all classroom activities.
7. Come to school well-rested, well-fed, and prepared.
8. Complete all homework on time and in a thorough, neat manner (grades 3-8).
9. Be safe to themselves or others (includes verbal and non verbal).
10. Be respectful to others and use only kind words.
11. Make positive choices.
12. Be courteous and use manners.
13. Share playground and common areas and equipment.
14. Help clean up messes to the best of their ability.

DISCIPLINARY INCENTIVES AND CONSEQUENCES

Incentives for positive behavior will include full participation in Taos Mountain Charter School activities, including daily activities, field trips, and festivals. Additional incentives will be provided at the discretion of teachers and staff on an individualized and ongoing basis. Consequences may apply in certain cases where these guidelines are not being followed. Children will be talked to in a respectful manner, preferably in private, to discuss any behavioral concerns, prior to notifying parents and/or guardians. Discipline procedures shall be based on individual and class needs and expectations. Teachers will handle most cases of misbehavior in ways that are appropriate to the specific situation. Most situations are minor, remedied through healthy interactions between teacher and student. However, in some cases, further intervention and participation is required. Should significant or ongoing challenges arise between a child and others, the teacher will notify parent and/or guardian for further discussion and the following steps shall be taken:

1. The teacher will contact and meet with the parent/guardian the same day or the following school day.
2. A meeting between teacher, parent, and child will be scheduled.
3. A plan with steps and time frames will be drawn up and discussed appropriate to the degree of behavior.
4. Follow up meetings will happen weekly until the behavior is resolved. If this plan is not effective the following interventions become necessary.

RESTORATIVE PROCESSES

Following certain disciplinary situations, restorative processes may be implemented to foster healthy relationships for all people involved. A restorative process is aimed at repairing the physical, emotional, and/or social harm done. It also allows the person who has offended to reclaim self-esteem and community acceptance through personal effort. Typical restorative procedures, or “circles” include the “victim,” “offender,” and chosen support person for both parties. They also involve at least one community member, and two trained volunteer facilitators. Characteristics and guidelines of successful restorative processes include the following:

1. All parties agree on an appropriate contract for the “offender” to complete
2. The reparation will be relevant to the general area of the harm
3. The process will humanize the “offender,” nurture the “victim,” and provide harmony to the learning community

It is not essential that the process meets all characteristics and guidelines entirely, but it must reflect an effort toward a healthy and creative solution to repairing the harm done. Successful restoration is characterized by a lack of criticism, guilt, anger, shame, and/or resentment, and also by the full re-integration and acceptance of the “offender” within the community. A sense of being heard, with restored peace, confidence and safety exists for the “victim.”

THE 5 R'S OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Developed by Beverly B. Title, Ph.D. Longmont Community Justice Partnership

RESPECT: Respect is the key ingredient that holds the container for all restorative practices, and it is what keeps the process safe. It is essential that all persons in a restorative process be treated with respect. Every person is expected to show respect for others and for themselves. Restorative processes require deep listening, done in a way that does not presume that we know what the speaker is going to say, but that we honor the importance of the other's point of view. Our focus for listening is to understand other people, so even if we disagree with their thinking, we can be respectful and try hard to comprehend how it seems to them.

1. Attitude toward self and others
2. Openness to receive without judgment
3. Listening without judgment

Responsibility: For restorative practices to be effective, personal responsibility must be taken. It begins with the primary person who has caused harm being accountable for his or her own behavior, admitting any wrong that was done. Taking responsibility also includes a willingness to give an explanation of the harmful behavior. Ideally, the accountability then extends to everyone, as all persons in the circle may deeply search

their hearts and minds to discover if there is any part of the matter at hand for which they have some responsibility. Everyone needs to accept responsibility for his or her behavior; this begins with the offender.

1. Accountability
2. Admission of any harm

REPAIR: The restorative approach is to repair the harm that was done to the fullest extent possible, recognizing that harm may extend beyond anyone's capacity for repair. It is this principle that allows us to set aside thoughts of revenge and punishment. Once the persons involved have accepted responsibility for their behavior and they have heard in the restorative process about how others were harmed by their action, even if they did not intend the harm, they are asked to make repair. It is through taking responsibility for one's own behavior and making repair that persons may regain or strengthen their self-respect.

RELATIONSHIP: Relationships may be mended through the willingness to be accountable for one's actions and to make repair of harms done. Restorative justice recognizes that when a crime occurs, individuals and communities have been violated. It is the damage to these relationships that is primarily important and is the central focus of what restorative practices seek to address. When relationships are strong, people experience more fulfilling lives and communities become places where we want to live. **Reintegration:** For the restorative process to be complete, the offender, and any others who may have felt alienated, must be accepted back into the community. It is realized when all persons have put the wrongdoing behind them and moved on into a new role in the community that recognizes their worth and the importance of the new learning that has been accomplished. The person having shown him or herself to be an honorable person through acceptance of responsibility and repair of harm has transformed the criminal act. At the reintegration point, all parties are back in right relationship with each other and with the community. This reintegration process is the final step in achieving wholeness.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Taos Mountain Charter School will work with the Director of Student Support to identify alternatives for students as needed. The Director of Student Support will assist in developing a policy during our planning year.

G. STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT

PLAN AND STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITMENT

TMCS will continue working to educate all families in the community about the benefits of a Waldorf-inspired education, sustainable living, as well as the unique characteristics of a charter school education. It is also the intention of TMCS to model the Waldorf ideal of mutual respect and cooperation with community organizations and families.

TMCS remains confident that through increased marketing and outreach, the school will be able to meet or exceed its projected enrollment needs.

The foundation of our marketing plan has been, and will continue to be, about relationship building and increasing Taos Mountain Charter School's profile in Taos and surrounding areas. Through a thoughtful and aggressive marketing plan, we will reach or exceed our target enrollment of 100 students by opening day of school in fall of 2013.

We have identified the following locations, publications, and alternative media as places where TMCS will be able to broaden its marketing base to wider ethnic and socioeconomic audiences.

Our Target Audiences:

1. Families at Taos Waldorf School.
2. Other local families at gathering sites such as, but not limited to, Taos Public Library, Youth and Family Center, booths at community fairs and festivals, coffee houses, and recreation centers.
3. Customers of child-focused businesses such as, but not limited to, Twirl.
4. Parents at grocery stores.

Our Efforts Will Include:

1. Establishing a focused marketing committee that will establish a detailed timeline and goals for enrollment.
2. Producing printed materials (in English and Spanish) such as flyers and pamphlets
3. Creating a Waldorf-inspired speaker series to introduce our target audiences to this philosophy of education, and advertising the series at all of the above-mentioned venues.
4. Creating further book study opportunities where interested parties can read Waldorf-inspired education books and journal articles, and discuss these ideas with others.
5. Advertising in all available free, locally distributed, publications.

6. Online networking through continued use of our Google Group, our website, and other sites such as, but not limited to, Face book, LinkedIn, Twitter and Matterdaily.org.
7. Placing our printed marketing material on community board spaces at local establishments
8. Communication and placing our printed materials at local charity organizations,
9. Contact with Head Start programs in surrounding areas.
10. Advertising through local newspapers and radio stations.
11. Informing people at a grassroots level by word of mouth and encouraging our committed families to do the same.
12. Spreading the word through mutually beneficial partnerships with local businesses that share our values.

Our long-term goal is to close any gaps between our baseline enrollment data from year one and the State's demographic enrollment averages. Taos Mountain Charter School will work to achieve greater diversity in each subsequent year of operation until we meet our local enrollment demographics.

COMMUNICATION

The foundation of our communication plan has been, and will continue to be, about relationship building and increasing Taos Mountain Charter School's profile in the community. Those working to sustain the school will develop educational presentations and utilize local media outlets. We currently use written materials, public meetings, and a website to communicate information about the school.

Educational Presentations: We will further develop presentations to educate the community about Waldorf methods philosophy and continue to inform potential families about the program offered at TMCS.

Media Outlets: We will further use utilize local media outlets to generate broad awareness of the school. These include those previously mentioned, as well as newspapers and local publications, local radio and the internet.

Printed Materials: We will develop bilingual informational materials, including parent information packets. These materials and key educational presentations will be translated into Spanish.

LOTTERY AND WAITING LIST

A charter school that is oversubscribed and, consequently, must use a lottery, generally must include in that lottery all eligible applicants for admission. A charter school may exempt from the lottery only those students who are deemed to have been admitted to the charter school already and, therefore, do not need to reapply.

Specifically, the following categories of applicants may be exempted from the lottery on this basis: (a) students who are enrolled in a public school at the time it is converted into a public charter school; (b) siblings of students already admitted to or attending the same charter school; (c) children of a charter school's founders (so long as the total number of students allowed under this exemption constitutes only a small percentage of the school's total enrollment); and (d) children of employees in a work-site charter school (so long as the total number of students allowed under this exemption constitutes only a small percentage of the school's total enrollment). When recruiting students, charter schools should target all segments of the parent community. The charter school must recruit in a manner that does not discriminate against students of a particular race, color, national origin, religion, or sex, or against students with disabilities; but the charter school may target additional recruitment efforts toward groups that might otherwise have limited opportunities to participate in the charter school's programs. Once a student has been admitted to the charter school through an appropriate process, he or she may remain in attendance through subsequent grades. A new applicant for admission to the charter school, however, would be subject to the lottery if, as of the application closing date, the total number of applicants exceeds the number of spaces available at the charter school.

Following the above federal recommendations concerning lottery policy for charter schools, Taos Mountain Charter School has developed a framework for the lottery process. It is anticipated that enrollment requests will exceed the capacity of the school, in both the first year of operation and in subsequent years. As such, TMCS will adhere to the following criteria for enrollment into the school.

TMCS shall admit all pupils who wish to attend the school up to capacity, accepting students based on the age guidelines. No test or assessment shall be administered to students prior to acceptance into the school. Although admission tests will not be required, individual assessments will be given to serve as diagnostics of students' reading, writing, math and physical skills.

RE-ENROLLMENT

Currently enrolled students have priority for enrollment in TMCS for the following school year. Beginning in January, parents, guardians or legal custodians of students currently attending TMCS must declare their intentions to return to the school in the next academic school year. The TMCS website will post a reminder to parents/ legal guardians of the need to return intent to reenroll forms, along with the forms and the final day that intent to re-enroll forms will be accepted. It will be the parent's /legal guardian's responsibility to return the intent to re-enroll form by the last business day in January. On the first business day of February, the Director will determine the number of spaces available for new students in each grade level for the upcoming school year.

If there are more applicants for positions than available spots, the Director will hold a lottery. Priority for available Kindergarten through 12th grade spots will be allocated to the following groups:

1. Children of Founding Families, defined as:
 - a. Children of current or former TMCS Board members; or
 - b. Children of full-time TMCS Teachers and staff
2. Siblings of Returning TMCS Students
 - a. Should there be more siblings of returning TMCS students than enrollment openings for a given grade; enrollment shall be offered by computerized random selection from within this priority group for the affected grade level.
 - b. Any child/ children living in the same household or with a common parent(s)/ legal guardian(s) in separate households. This includes children who become siblings by marriage and/or adoption. Any sibling born while a student is enrolled may retain that status even if the original student graduates from TMCS before he/she reaches Kindergarten.
 - c. Any sibling offered a position in the first semester must enroll or forfeit their position, and are then subject to general lottery rules.
3. All District Residents on the Enrollment List.
4. All non-District Residents.

Priority will be given to the following student subgroup:

1. Children of current or former TMCS Board members;
2. Children of full-time TMCS teachers and staff
3. Children of Founding families

In the beginning years of operations any children from these three categories who fall outside of the 20% limit shall be eligible for the general school lottery.

Kindergarten Lottery

1. TMCS will offer a full-day Kindergarten that will be subject to lottery.

Lottery Eligibility

1. Prior to enrolling in the lottery, interested parents/ legal guardians of potential students are strongly encouraged to attend an informational workshop. These workshops will be lead by the Director and/or faculty, and will provide an overview of Waldorf as it applies to child development, the academic content of the Waldorf-inspired curriculum, and details about TMCS and the enrollment process. Dates, times and places for the workshops will be listed on the TMCS website, local print media outlets, various community calendars and regional parenting blogs.
2. Parents who wish to be considered for the lottery must complete Intent to Enroll form by the last business day in January. The Administrative Assistant will compile a database of all families with completed Intent to Enroll forms in order to ensure their inclusion in the lottery.
3. Each lottery wait list will remain active for one school year. In order to participate in the subsequent year's lottery, parents must indicate that they want their child to be considered for that lottery, and must update their enrollment form by coming in to the school office and completing the appropriate paperwork prior to January 31st. Parents will be reminded via email, or phone if preferred.
4. Any potential student who is offered a position and refuses placement will lose any and all lottery positions for that potential student. Students may reapply for the lottery the following day; however their names will be placed at the end of the compiled wait list.
5. After available spots for each grade level have been filled by the lottery, remaining students will be placed on an "order drawn" list that will become the wait list for openings that may arise in the upcoming school year.

Lottery Dates

The school's hand-drawn lottery will coincide with that of the local school District, unless TMCS notifies otherwise, for available positions in the upcoming school year.

Families interested in having their child or children included in the lottery must have completed enrollment forms submitted to the Administrative Assistant no later than the last business day in February. Parents/ legal guardians whose children are selected in the lottery for available spots in the upcoming school year will be notified the same day by phone of their child or children's selection. If the parents cannot be reached on the same day, the Administrative Assistant will continue to attempt verbal notification for the next four (4) days. If parents/legal guardians are not reached during that time, they will forfeit their child/children's position in the lottery, and their child/ children's names will be placed at the bottom of the wait list. Notification in Spanish will be provided for those parents/ legal guardians who have indicated a Spanish language preference. TMCS must receive a verbal confirmation of intent to enroll each selected student no later than five (5) business days after the lottery and notification, and parents/legal guardians must complete an Enrollment Packet within ten (10) days after the lottery and notification.

Should a family not respond to the lottery notification after five (5) business days, their child's name shall be withdrawn and that available spot will be offered to the child at the top of the wait list. Should a position in the school become available from August 1st to October 10th, parents/legal guardians with children on the wait list will have two (2) days upon verbal notification to notify TMCS of acceptance of those positions. TMCS will attempt to contact parents/legal guardians for two (2) days only during this time period. It is the responsibility of the parents/ legal guardians of a potential student to maintain current contact information with the school.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

ENROLLMENT

The official TMCS Enrollment Application/ Enrollment Packet that will be distributed to lottery "winners" will be developed upon charter approval. The opening year Parent Handbook will also be distributed at this time. Parents of enrolled students of TMCS will be required, prior to the school year, to attend a school informational workshop that will provide an overview of Waldorf as it applies to child development, the academic content of the Waldorf curriculum and New Mexico Common Core State Standards, and details about TMCS.

WITHDRAWALS

Based on the needs of the individual student, the teacher will develop a transition plan for any student leaving prior to the eighth grade, with the knowledge of what is required by the New Mexico State Standards.

H. LEGAL COMPLIANCE

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Taos Mountain Charter School will comply with NMSA 1978 22-8B-5.2 (2011). A detailed conflict of interest policy will be adopted. See Appendix G.

SCHOOL OPERATIONS ARE TRANSPARENT AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES BY WHICH THE GOVERNING COUNCIL WILL OPERATE

The Governing Council will operate in accordance with applicable federal and state law and the proposed school's charter with the NMPED. Ongoing operations of the Governing Council will be guided by parliamentary procedures as codified by Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition), and informed by a thorough understanding of the needs of public charter school governance.

OPEN MEETING ACT: New Mexico's Open Meeting Act governs all Taos Mountain Charter School governing Council meetings. All Council meetings will comply with requirements for location, notice, agenda, and minutes. Meetings will be open to the public and conducted using public meeting guidelines. Executive sessions must follow procedural requirements and qualify under the seven authorized reasons for holding an executive session.

A PLAN FOR OPENESS

In order to promote transparency and accountability, the Governing Council will:

- Make available in advance the notices and agendas of public meetings at a publicly accessible area in the proposed charter school's office and/or the Director's Office so as to be available for review during regular business hours; and on the proposed charter school's website not less than six calendar days prior to the public meeting, unless a waiver is granted by the chair in the case of an emergency.
- Make available the minutes from public meetings on a timely basis at a publicly accessible area in the Administrative Office so as to be available for review during regular business hours, and on the proposed charter school's website.

I. PARTNERSHIPS

NOT APPLICABLE

J. WAIVERS

NMSA 1978	Requested?		Description of how waiver will support school's plan
	Yes	No	
Individual class load	X		The small class size will support the varied, active and hands on experience of learning
Teaching Load	X		Teachers will be teaching in a manner consistent to a Waldorf pedagogy (they will travel with a class through the grades and must be able to bring all subject matter to the students)
Length of school day	X		The school week with Friday Service Days will allow for strong community service which is a foundation of our mission
Staffing pattern	X		Teachers in the grade classes will travel with the class which is an important component of the Waldorf approach allowing for an in-depth understanding of the students
Subject areas	X		The subject areas will include several specialty subjects that are essential elements of a Waldorf-inspired curriculum
Purchase of instructional materials	X		The materials are very particular to a Waldorf curriculum
Evaluation standards for school personnel	X		The Director and Curriculum specialist will develop a staff evaluation policy
School principal duties	X		The Director will have many

			duties that are particular to Taos Mountain Charter School supporting the faculty
Drivers education		X	

K. TRANSPORTATION AND FOOD

TRANSPORTATION

Not applicable - - Transportation will not be offered.

FOOD SERVICES

We will meet all state requirements concerning Free and Reduced Lunch program. At Taos Mountain Charter School we believe it is imperative to teach students a healthy appreciation of diet, nutrition and earth sustainability from an early age. Students learn better when they eat wholesome, balanced meals and we will promote health and wellness. The school gardens will be an essential component of our curriculum. The school gardens will provide supplemental produce for snacks and salads.

The students will be responsible for bringing in brown bag lunches.

L. FACILITIES

FACILITY APPROVAL

See Appendix I for letter from New Mexico's Public Facilities Authority.

FACILITY IDENTIFICATION

Taos Mountain Charter School has identified a site for our proposed school. Taos Waldorf School, a private school in Taos, is located on approximately 11 acres in El Prado, New Mexico. The Board of Trustees for Taos Waldorf School has endorsed our Taos Mountain Charter School application. See Appendix I

FACILITY FUNDING

Taos Mountain Charter School will pursue all applicable funding sources. Further, grants and other partnerships will be pursued for specific projects that are elements of our curriculum.

If the application for Taos Mountain Charter School is approved the current owners of the proposed school's site, Taos Waldorf School will close. The land will be deeded to the Steiner Foundation (they hold the mortgage currently for TWS) and the Steiner Foundation will rent the facility to Taos Mountain Charter School following all requirements as outlined in HB 283. The Steiner Foundation has expressed a strong interest in supporting Taos Mountain Charter School.

IV. BUSINESS PLAN

A. BUDGET

Please see Appendix J and K.

The following elements helped to inform the overall budget at TMCS:

Enrollment: The Taos Mountain School budget is closely aligned with its mission to provide an arts-rich developmentally appropriate Waldorf-inspired curriculum, and the multi-year projection reflects a conservative estimate in student population. Because over 60 students have already expressed interest in our program without the school conducting any public relations or advertising campaign, we are confident that 100 students the first year is a conservative estimate. An additional 50 students have left the local private Waldorf school in the last two years, mostly due to financial pressures; most have indicated they would attend a public charter school that offered a Waldorf-inspired program. Indeed, it is not unusual for Waldorf-inspired charter schools in other communities filling up to capacity in their first year of operation, according to the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education.

Revenue: In addition to state funding, there is a modest assumption for per student revenue from donations towards field trips, sports activities, and other programs. Finally, with a .5FTE Development professional on staff, we feel confident that fundraising of about \$500 per student is a reasonable estimate for outside, private funding. Many of families interested in our program will be coming from private schools and they have indicated they will be willing to make significant contributions of both

volunteer time and funds to TMCS. According to dozens of other Waldorf-inspired public schools, most of which are located in Arizona and California, approximately 10% of total funding coming from private sources (including parent donations) is typical, even with up to a 25% FRL population (which is similar to what we anticipate). We feel confident that our revenue projections are accurate and fair.

Expenditures: Typically, schools spend 80% of their budgets on salaries and benefits. The expenditures at TMCS reflect a typical Waldorf-inspired school staffing model, with salaries paying competitively for our area, averaging about \$40,000 for credentialed class teachers and \$30,000 for enrichment/arts instructors. Special education staff and administration are sufficient to serve the student body. All school salaries reflect a 3% COLA for each year of the MYP. Full-time employees will enjoy medical benefits of up to \$400 per month and an employer retirement contribution of 3%. We've included a significant amount of professional development funding in the form of travel and training so that our teachers may obtain the appropriate and required Waldorf-methods teacher training each year, a very important part of our program.

We've planned for a relatively low student to teacher ratio in general and have also taken into consideration special populations in the budget. Using what is known about the students who have already expressed an interest in enrolling at TMCS as well as the demographic statistics from the surrounding area, we've estimated the mild/moderate special education population to be about 10% of the overall student population. State data for the Taos area helped to inform this projection.

Regular budget review and careful coordination with the Director (who will be responsible for enrollment) and the Development and Outreach staff member, in conjunction with the Governing Board and Finance Committee will ensure the budget stays on track.

STRATEGIES FOR POTENTIAL BUDGET SHORTFALL

The Business Manager and the Director will work closely with the Governing Council to ensure that all projects do not exceed the budget. The Director and Community Outreach Director will work closely with the Finance Committee on identifying grants and other funding sources. The school has budgeted to have expenditures total less than revenue, enabling a modest cash reserve at year-end to allow for flexibility and fluctuations in either funding or enrollment.

SALARY SCHEDULE

Please see Appendix L.

B. FINANCIAL POLICIES AND OVERSIGHT

FISCAL RESPONSILITIES

Taos Mountain Charter School will work with a contracted Business Manager to implement sound accounting practices and procedures in accordance with the Public School Code, follows the rules of the General Accounting Standards Board, the New Mexico Public School Finance Act, the New Mexico Procurement Code, the Public School Accounting and Budgeting Manual, and other applicable rules and regulations. The Governing Council will govern the fiscal oversight for the school's finances. They will be responsible for developing and adopting financial policies and assure their implementation. The Governing Council will engage in necessary training to understand public school finances, the school budgeting process and applicable laws and rules. The school will operate in a manner consistent with the New Mexico Public School Manual of Procedures and will develop its own internal policies.

INTERNAL CONTROL PROCEDURES

Taos Mountain Charter School is aware of the level of responsibility which accompanies its handling of public funds, and therefore expects to contract with New Mexico Coalition of Charter Schools for fiscal management, Business Office services, and the services of a Business Manager.

Accounting System

Our accounting system consists of methods and records that have been established to identify, assemble, analyze, classify, record and report Taos Mountain Charter School's transactions and to maintain accountability for the related assets and liabilities. We have focused on establishing methods and records to ensure the following:

- All valid transactions are identified and recorded;
- Transactions are recorded on a timely basis and described in sufficient detail to permit proper classification for financial reporting;
- The value of transactions is measured in a manner that permits the proper recording of their monetary value in the financial statements;
- Accuracy is maintained when determining the time period in which transactions occurred to ensure that transactions are recorded in the proper accounting period; and,
- Transactions and related disclosures are in the financial statements.

Internal Control Structure

Taos Mountain Charter School will maintain an internal control structure that ensures compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Our internal control structure consists of policies and procedures established to provide reasonable assurance that our fiscal management objectives will be achieved.

Control Procedures

We will implement policies and procedures to maintain a structure of internal accounting controls to provide that the following are in place:

- Segregation of responsibilities: authorization to execute a transaction, recording the transaction, and custody of assets involved in the transaction;
- A system of authorization and recording procedures to ensure that all transactions are properly approved and recorded;
- Sound accounting practices are in place in the performance of duties and functions.

This includes varied error-checking routines that are performed in connection with record keeping and comparing recorded amounts with existing assets and liabilities. Appropriate action shall be taken with respect to any differences;

- Employees handling significant amounts of cash must be adequately bonded. Access to assets is permitted only in accordance with management's authorization;
- Receipts, checks or warrants, purchase requisitions, purchase orders, and vouchers shall be sequentially pre-numbered;
- Proper safeguards are in place to protect unused checks and other pre-numbered forms and cash that has not been deposited and other receipts;
- All transactions are recorded as necessary to permit preparation of the financial statements in conformity with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP); and,
- Independent checks on performance and proper valuation of recorded amounts is being performed including clerical checks, reconciliations, comparison of assets with recorded accountability, computer-programmed controls, management review of reports that summarize the detail of account balances, and user review of computer generated reports.
- Budgets and financial reports are created and maintained;
- There is adequate monitoring of activities at each level of the organizational structure;
- There is a system of checks and balances in place which separates incompatible activities to preclude absolute control by any individual or unit. This system also provides supervision by higher levels of management and for the monitoring of the overall school activities.

PERSONNEL

Taos Mountain Charter School will employ a Business Manager. This will be a contracted position. The Business Manager will work with the Finance Committee, Audit Committee, Director and the Governing Council. They will be responsible for day-to-day financial tasks as well as preparing budgets. They must have appropriate experience with finances and accounting in a charter school context.

FISCAL OVERSIGHT

The Governing Council will establish a Finance Committee and Audit Committee Pursuant to CS/HB 227 & 251. At least two members of the Governing Council will be appointed by the Governing Council Chair to serve on the Finance Committee to assist the Council in carrying out its budget and finance duties by:

- making recommendations to the local school board in the following areas: financial planning, including reviews of the school's revenue and expenditure projections; review of financial statements and periodic monitoring of revenues and expenses; annual budget preparation and oversight; and procurement; and
- serving as an external monitoring committee on budget and other financial matters.

At least two members of the Governing Council will be appointed by the Chair to serve on the Audit Committee along with one volunteer member who is a parent of an enrolled student and one volunteer member who has experience in accounting and financial matters, and the Director and the Business Manager serving as ex-officio members.

SCHOOL SUSTAINABILITY

Taos Mountain Charter School will be sustained through conscientious long-range planning and focused community development.

Upon approval of charter, the Governing Council will begin a process for visioning, coordinating, and putting into operation its long-range plan for school health. Stakeholders relevant to the school community will be involved such that all perspectives are heard, gathered, and integrated into the plan. Key elements currently envisioned for the plan are as follows:

- 1) **Strategic fundraising plan targeting multiple funding sources:** grant-giving organizations that focus on sustainability, green building, social renewal, etc., as local and national foundations

- 2) **Community education and outreach:** regular workshops, classes, and community-based education will be made available to the Taos community at large on an ongoing basis, thereby strengthening not only community ties, but potential donor base
- 3) **Inbuilt Service Component within the Curriculum:** the Taos Mountain Charter School will provide regular service to the community, strengthening community ties and practical outcomes, potentially reducing strain on the budget while strengthening social capital. Example: on a Service Day, students repair a fence for a neighboring farmer. Out of goodwill reciprocity, the farmer later donates supplies for the garden, such that budgeted monies are not used for the supplies.

Working closely with faculty, staff, and Governing Council while maintaining a close eye on community outreach, the Director will oversee ongoing implementation of the long-range plan, facilitating adjustments as needed.

V. EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT

A. OUTREACH EFFORTS

INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

The founders hosted three Informational Meetings in February and March of 2012. These meetings were opportunities to update the community about the status of our charter application. The attendance was approximately 10 at each of the meetings. At the end of each of these meetings the question was asked: "Are you supportive of this charter school application moving forward?" The answer was: "YES!"

Additional meetings were held with the Taos Waldorf School Board of Trustees and they too gave their approval for this application.

WEBSITE

A website was developed to keep community members updated on the progress of the charter application.

Further meetings are planned during the summer of 2012. We are looking forward to hosting 4 Open Houses during our planning year (fall, winter, spring and summer 2012/13). We will host several events where we invite the community to come and

learn more about our school including Workshops and Lectures. There will be a minimum of three Workshops and Lectures during our planning year.

B. STUDENTS INTERESTED IN SCHOOL

There are currently approximately 63 students who have expressed interest in attending Taos Mountain Charter School starting in the fall of 2013. We have extensive plans for outreach events during the 2012 school year so that we will reach our target enrollment of 100 students in fall of 2013.

Kindergarten: 10

First Grade: 4

Second Grade: 4

Third Grade: 14

Fourth Grade: 3

Fifth Grade: 6

Sixth Grade: 12

Ninth Grade: 10

C. FOUNDERS TIES TO COMMUNITY

Emily Cohen has lived in Taos, New Mexico for over ten years. She has been actively involved in the Taos community in many ways. She was a volunteer at the Taos Public Library for several years working in the children's library section hosting a weekly story time. Recently, she has worked with the local middle schools and Taos High School organizing the Junior Poetry Slam (an event for middle school students that is supported by the THS Poetry Team). Emily worked at Taos Waldorf School for several years as the Community Outreach Director and is very familiar with that community as well.

Allison Bradley has been serving as the Coordinator of Taos Waldorf School starting the summer of 2012. She brings a great knowledge of Waldorf methodology and community service to our endeavor. A Waldorf parent for nearly thirteen years, Allison Bradley has developed a body of experience in a number of Waldorf-inspired environments ranging from small community co-operatives to large urban schools

informed by the Waldorf approach. Her background includes over two decades of non-profit program development, management, and administration, along with a Ph.D. in Social Psychology. Dr. Bradley's interest in sustainable systems led to additional post-graduate work in Leadership for Sustainability Education, complementing many years in the field of outdoor, experiential, and adventure-based education.

D. NETWORKING OR PARTNERSHIP RELATIONSHIPS

We are planning to be very involved in the Taos community. We look forward to partnering with artists, ecologically sound builders and non-profits that serve our community. Our students will be actively involved members of our larger Taos community. This community outreach is a cornerstone of our educational philosophy. The younger students may be planting flowers or singing songs at a retirement community, while the older students may help build homes for those in need or volunteering at the local animal shelter. This commitment to help and be a part of the larger picture is one reason we are having the first and last Fridays of each month as Friday Service Days.

There are several evolving partnerships that are consistent with Taos Mountain Charter's community goals. As our plans evolve the specifics of these partnerships will develop.

1. Waldorf Teacher Training Center: A residential summer professional teacher training program.
2. Biodynamic Farming Training Center: A residential summer professional training for biodynamic farming techniques.
3. Early Childhood Program: A pre-school that is fee based will be a part of the early childhood program
4. Community Farm: A facilitated community farming process with farm shares and cooperative labor.
5. Camps: summer camps that will either rent the campus space (i.e. Suzuki Violin Camp, Circus Camp) or a school based camp for certain age groups.

E. WHY TAOS MOUNTAIN CHARTER SCHOOL IS UNIQUE

TAOS MOUNTAIN CHARTER SCHOOL IS UNIQUE

The combination of a Waldorf-inspired curriculum and sustainable living practices is a natural fit for Taos. The integration of arts and a focus on the many natural elements of our rural community offers an educational curriculum that resonates for many in our community. Taos has many traditions including agriculture and arts that elemental to our sense of who we are, currently there are no schools offering this unique educational model.

F. LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Below is a sample of the community support for Taos Mountain Charter School:

Letter #1:

On Tue, 6/26/12, Eddie Dry <eddiedry@hotmail.com> wrote:

I highly recommend Waldorf School of Taos New Mexico be awarded charter school status. As assistant Boy Scout master for many of these youth, I see their level of maturity, love of learning, and excellent behavior that Waldorf has encouraged.

The School has significant parent involvement (I see the parents' participation in our scouting program).

There are several Waldorf youth that I regularly engage in rather sophisticated conversations with on medieval history, world economics, and cultural sensitivity; those conversations are a real joy to me!

The emphasis on love and appreciation of nature is a very strong point with Waldorf. These youth know and practice Leave No Trace outdoor ethics. I wish more schools would encourage an appreciation of nature.

Thirty-one years of university teaching has provided me with many insights into what makes a good pre-college education. Waldorf is one of the best schools that I have seen.

Please contact me if I can provide further insights into Waldorf of Taos.

Eddie Dry, PhD
Chair, Tourism Management Program (retired)
University of New Mexico
Box 548
Red River, NM 87558
575-754-3364 - home
505-250-0929 - cell

LETTER #2:

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to express my extreme feelings of support for the granting of a charter to Taos Mountain Charter School.

After having experienced Waldorf schools in several states and having spent almost 2 decades in great familiarity with the Taos community, I find it hard to imagine anything that would benefit our community more than making the high quality of Waldorf education freely available to the children of Taos.

If you have any doubts about the benefits that a Waldorf education could have for our community, you only need to meet the older children who have had the experience of going through the Waldorf curriculum. I have had the opportunity to meet many Waldorf alumni, and I have found them to be extremely well-grounded, moral, culturally aware, self-motivated creative problem solvers with a great love for learning. These qualities carry them through their higher education and careers with a tremendous sense of commitment and produces adults with an unusually high degree of contribution to their communities.

Clearly, in these challenging times, our community, as well as the world at large, desperately needs more individuals like these, and thanks to the New Mexico charter program, we have the opportunity to help foster them. This charter would benefit the students, their families, the Taos community, and the state of New Mexico, and I sincerely hope that you will make every effort to make this new school a reality.

Thank you very much for your consideration,

Andrew Salamone
25 Roberto's Lane
El Prado, New Mexico
87529

LETTER #3

Dear friends in the State of New Mexico Public Education Department,

My family and I stumbled onto Waldorf education by accident when we enrolled our then 3-year-old daughter in the closest pre-school to our house, which happened to be a Waldorf school. We had no previous knowledge about or experience with Waldorf education, but, now, 5 years later, we are passionate supporters.

We are very committed to preparing our daughter to succeed in college and graduate school, and we feel that the Waldorf approach is the best way to make sure that she has the tools to succeed in higher education.

One of the main things that has brought us to this conclusion is feedback from college professors, who consistently report that they are thrilled when they get a new student who came through the Waldorf system, as these students come to college with a real thirst for learning and passion about their education.

One of the other reasons we are committed to the Waldorf path for our daughter is the reports from families of students who have gone through Waldorf school and are now in college. For instance, a family we know in California enrolled their son at Stanford last year. He came back after his first semester saying that he loves Stanford, but he wishes that the other students were more passionate about school. Similar stories about Waldorf students are commonplace, and it is exactly this kind of excitement about learning that we want our daughter to carry through her educational life.

If there is some way that we could give the gift of Waldorf education to the children and families of Taos, we should do everything we can to make it happen. Please consider approving this charter application. We will all be thankful that you did.

Sincerely,

Lelia Salamone
Arroyo Seco, New Mexico

LETTER #4

*Paymaneh Ghaffari,
P.O. Box 442,
Valdez,
NM 87580
27th June 2012*

To whom it may concern,

I am a parent at the Taos Waldorf School. Both my children thrive at the school and I wish that the whole community had the opportunity to explore this wonderful education. I am all for the school to become a charter so that the doors can be open to all.

Yours Sincerely,

Paymaneh Ghaffari

LETTER #4

June 27, 2012

New Mexico Public Education Department
Charter School Division
300 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe NM

Dear Charter School Division:

As a member of the Taos community and music educator, I support the development of Taos Mountain Charter School. As a former professional chamber musician, I have collaborated with many musicians and been involved in a range of orchestras. What I have found consistently in the world of music is that while many players are technically prepared for collaboration, few are prepared as whole people. Many times in my professional music life I have wished there were a way for young musicians to be educated that helped them to not only play an instrument, but also develop personally as well.

Waldorf-inspired education provides this kind of development. In my twenty years of private studio teaching experience, I have worked with many students who are involved in Waldorf-inspired education. They have consistently been bright, adaptable, creative people who rise to challenging occasions. Many have been persistent and curious, seeking out their own way to engage with music. Most have been self-starters, requiring little assistance with home practice. I have found students from Waldorf-inspired educational settings who are also involved in private music instruction tend to go on to highly sought-after locales for advanced study, such as music conservatories. My impression is that some key elements of Waldorf-inspired education that contribute to this phenomenon are the emphasis on daily, weekly, and yearly rhythm; a foundation of artistic presentation for all content and subject matter; and an emphasis on personal initiative, character development, and accountability.

My experience with Waldorf-inspired education has been so positive that when I had children of my own, this form of education was the clear choice. If Taos Mountain Charter School becomes a reality, we will be involved.

Thank you,

E. Scott Esty

Taos, New Mexico

(503) 960.9105

LETTER # 5

To Whom It May Concern:

June 27th, 2012

I am writing in support of Taos Mountain Charter School in Taos, New Mexico.

As a mother, a business woman, college student, and a volunteer, I believe that a Waldorf-Inspired Charter School would be a great addition to the Taos Community as we are in need of educating options for our youth, especially those that are more financially accessible.

A Waldorf-Inspired School offers a fantastic blend of academics, music, and the arts which ensures a child's holistic education from the inside out.

Having a Waldorf-Inspired Charter School would allow parents the choice to educate their children based upon the learning system and not the financial strain.

My daughter, Jasmine, is 10 years old, moving into the 5th grade and she has been at a Waldorf School for six years. She reads beautifully, writes appropriately, communicates with her eyes and draws freely with confidence. We would love for her and her friends to have the option to have this very valuable education.

Please contact me if needed. Thank you for your time in this matter.

All the best,

Annette Patterson-Gano

PO Box 1436, El Prado, NM 87529
575.779.2464

LETTER # 6

June 27, 2012

New Mexico Public Education Department
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to express my support for the approval of Taos Waldorf School's proposal to become Taos Mountain Charter School. I am a resident of Taos County, a retired educator, and a grandparent of a child who has attended Taos Waldorf School for the past ten years. I believe that Taos Mountain Charter School will be a valuable asset to Taos County and be of great benefit to the children, families, and local community for the following reasons:

- Taos Mountain Charter School will fill a long-standing need in our community for an alternative to traditional public school education.
- Many families have abandoned traditional public schools and sought other alternatives including joining home-schooling and cooperative education groups, driven to choice and/or magnet schools miles from home, or opted for some blend of these approaches for quite some time. There is a strong commitment among parents to be actively involved in their children's education and to create an educational alternative for their children.
- Taos Mountain Charter School will provide every child access to a quality education through increased learning opportunities, programs designed to help each child succeed, and a learning environment designed to meet each child's

needs. The school will offer a Waldorf-inspired, sustainability-focused, innovative educational program- expanding beyond traditional teaching methods and learning standards. The school will hold high expectations of success for all students.

- Taos Mountain Charter School will provide a safe and exceptional environment that cultivates independent learning, character enrichment, and regional awareness while developing accountable leaders, community stewards, and diverse thinkers through project-based experiences.

I support the approval of the Taos Mountain Charter School application by the New Mexico Public Education Department. On behalf of our Taos community, I request that the New Mexico Public Education Department give this application a favorable response.

Sincerely,

Jesús Hernández
1126 Calle del Oso
Taos, New Mexico

Letter #7:

Stella Montoya,
P.O Box 552,
Arroyo Seco,
NM 87514
27th June 2012

To whom it may concern,

I have worked for the Taos Municipal Schools for over 30 years as an elementary teacher. I took a Waldorf Summer training course and used the methods in my classroom with much success.

I am in complete support of Taos Waldorf School becoming a charter school. I know the community supports the school because of the integration of the arts in the curriculum. It is such a financial hardship for many parents who send their children to the school. However they choose to make these sacrifices because of the incredible curriculum and teachers. It would be an amazing opportunity for the school to be open to anybody in the community who wished to have their children educated in this most positive way.

Yours Sincerely,

Stella Montoya

(575) 770-5427

LETTER #8

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this email/letter to tell you a little bit about my experience with the Taos Mountain Charter School formerly known as the Taos Waldorf School in Taos, New Mexico.

My husband and I first enrolled our daughter into the school back in 2003. She attended the school for several years. We currently have two other children enrolled. We personally feel very strong about their education and feel that this school offers what they need and what we feel that is important to their livelihood as young adults. We live in a tight community whose belief and cultural environment are very similar to that of the school they attend. We practice at home and in our native cultural the same teachings that they receive at TMC/TWS. Not only is their education based on the fundamentals of writing, grammar, math and science but music, agricultural and organic/holistic beliefs as well.

I am currently on the board at our local theater, the Taos Community Auditorium and strive to also have our younger adults participate on and offstage. Music, theater, and all around art programs are extremely important to us and they receive this at the school. By having this program offered to them, our oldest daughter is now attending the New Mexico School of the Performing Arts school in Santa Fe, NM. Without the background that she received in this school, she might not have chosen this path that will take her where she is headed in her future.

In closing, I thank you for your time, consideration and understanding for why we are asking for your help in offering the opportunity for a Waldorf-inspired school for all of our children.

Sincere blessings
Dawn Mirabal
active parent at TMC/TWS

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Dawn Mirabal
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575/758/4099
www.mirabal.com

redwillowvoices.blogspot.com
[facebook](#), [twitter/mirabalman](#), [you tube/robert mirabal](#)

LETTER #9

Letter in Support of Taos Mountain Charter School

To whom it may concern:

My name is Silke Markowski, State Lisenced Educator from Germany, Founder and Early Childhood Director of former Country Day School, currently Taos Waldorf School.

We founded a Waldorf inspired School in Taos in the year of 1995. The community had seen at that point already two Waldorf Schools who were greatly missed but were unable to sustain themselves due to lack of facilities and funding. Over the last 17 years I have seen an incredible amount of dedication, commitment and sacrifice to uphold this education for the children of Taos. Alumni's have successfully entered College's and former students have continuously expressed their thanks and have made a great difference in our community. High school teachers of the area have commented on the inspirational attitude our students bring to their school and Elders have found ways to connect with the children through Handwork, Gardening and Music. The life-long learning of a Waldorf student has begun for many adults as they enter the schools as parents, learning to sing, have creative learning experiences during the parent meetings, a sense of community during celebrations and festivals and support during challenging life transitions.

This education brings healing to a fragmented world and gives hope for the future. We are grateful to have this opportunity today and ask for you support so that we can continue to serve this community.

Sincerely

Silke Markowski

VI REQUIRED APPENDICES

Under separate cover