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SUSANA MARTINEZ
GOVERNOR

2019 Charter School Renewal Report

School Name: Taos Academy
School Address: 110 Paseo del Canon West, Taos NM 87571
Head Administrator: Traci Filiss
Business Manager: Deanna Gomez
Authorized Grade Levels: 5-12
Authorized Enrollment: 250
Contract Term: July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2019

Mission: *"The mission of Taos Academy is to prepare students in fifth through twelfth grade to achieve and maintain a level of excellence by supporting and promoting academic achievement, strong leadership skills, and social responsibility. Through the use of innovative curriculum, leadership training, and enrichment opportunities, we foster a community of self-motivated, independent, lifelong learners. The partnership of school, parents, and community creates a learning environment where students acquire the knowledge, leadership skills, and sense of responsibility needed to succeed in the 21st century."* (Contract, p. 34)

PED Recommendation

The PED recommends **renewal for a term of 5 years with defined goals for school improvement in the academic framework** because the school demonstrated substantial progress towards the Department's standards for excellence (NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-12[K][2]) during each year of its contract, but with a noted area of concern.

Academic. The school performed well in the majority of categories of the A-F School Grading Report since 2015. However, during 2016, 2017, and 2018, low achievement in *improvement of lower performing students* (Q1) was observed. Achievement of all school specific goals were also noted for all years except 2017 when evidence for one (1) indicator (implementation of post-secondary pathway plan) was not observed. However, it was corrected in 2018.

Financial. The school had 8 findings and no repeats during the last 3 audit years. One (1) finding, related to a component unit (Taos Academy Foundation), was at the significant deficiency classification.

Organizational. During the most recent year (2017-2018), the school received zero (0) *"Falls Far Below Standard"* ratings and one (1) *"Falls Far Below Standard"* rating the previous year in 2016-2017 (related to Next Step Plans for students).

5-Year Renewal Conditions. Below are proposed conditions for charter renewal:

- Implement a continuous improvement plan such as NM DASH to improve Q1 *student achievement* resulting in a letter grade of at least a "C" in the category on the A-F School Grading Report during each year of its contract (2019-2020 through 2023-2024).

Please see the sections of the renewal application package, as follows:

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*** Part B (Progress Report) Evaluation**
based on the rubric contained in application

Part A – Section 1. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE		
1.a	Department’s Standards of Excellence— A-F School Letter Grades	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
1.b	Specific Charter Goals	<i>Meets the Standard</i>
Part A – Section 2. FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE		
2.a	Audit	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
2.b	Board of Finance	<i>Meets the Standard</i>
Part A – Section 3. CONTRACTUAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND GOVERNANCE		
3.a	Material Terms	<i>Meets the Standard</i>
3.b	Organizational Performance Framework	<i>Demonstrates Substantial Progress</i>
3.c	Governance Responsibilities	<i>Meets the Standard</i>

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews were conducted on September 12, 2018 at Taos Academy. The participants included six (6) parents, six (6) students, two (2) Governing Council members, and four (4) staff members.

Parents commented about the growth that their students have shown during their time at the school, including parents of students with prior struggles in school, Asperger’s Syndrome, dyslexia, and different learning styles. The relationship between the school and the students was mentioned several times, for example, one parent stated “Even when a kid isn’t doing great, everyone is on the same team trying to find a solution”.

The students pointed out the things that they like about the school including the ability to work at your own pace, flexibility of the schedule, challenging coursework, earning college credits, more one-on-one help, and addressing individual needs. (One student shared that he is dyslexic and gifted and that teachers at other schools “didn’t really work with that” but “teachers here are willing to”. When asked about things they would like to change, one student wanted more STEM programs and one would prefer 9 to 5 for the school hours (instead of 8 to 4).

The Governing Council members seemed knowledgeable about the mission, have a tool and process for evaluating the Head Administrator, and were aware of the audit findings. They joined the board because they were invited due to their expertise (financial background and education).

The staff members interviewed have been teaching at Taos Academy for one, three, six and ten years. The teachers explained that the lowest performing students are initially identified via MAP testing. From there, a plan is developed based on each student’s specific needs. They explained that they adjust the schedule and the curriculum for students, interact with students daily, and provide regular progress reports (via the advisory teacher), as well as facilitate peer work and tutoring with staff collaboration.

Part A: Data Report and Current Charter Contract Performance

SECTION 1. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

School Grading is part of state and federal statute that mandates accountability for all public schools. In 2011, New Mexico lawmakers enacted requirements that schools demonstrate progress through a grading system similar to that applied to students, A-B-C-D-F (§22-2-1, §22-2-2, and §22-2E-1 to §22-2E-4) (6.19.8.1 NMAC – N, 12-15-11). The statute requires the governing body of a charter school rated D or F to prioritize its resources toward proven programs and methods linked to improved student achievement until the public school earns a grade of C or better for two consecutive years (§22-2E-4 [E] NMSA 1978).

In 2011, New Mexico lawmakers also enacted requirements that each charter school authorizer develop a performance framework to set forth academic performance expectations. The statute requires each charter authorizer to collect, analyze and report all data from state assessment tests in accordance with the performance framework (§22-8B-9.1 NMSA 1978).

Each school in New Mexico is included in one of two School Grading systems either for elementary/middle schools or high schools. Although total possible points for either system add up to 100 in which points earned determine a school's letter grade, the two grading systems have different points allocation and components. The elementary/middle school grading system emphasizes *“more competency-based, while the emphasis in high school is on successful completion of high school and preparation for college or career. Charter schools are held to the same standards and calculations as regular public schools.”*¹ In addition, schools may earn up to five additional or *bonus* points for reducing truancy, promoting extracurricular activities, engaging families, and using technology. The School Grading Report Card also provides school leaders with information comparing their school to schools with similar student demographic characteristics.

The following information provides a snapshot of the school's academic performance over the last four (4) years. The analysis in this section will discuss the school's performance over time in each component of the letter grade report.

1a. Department's Standards of Excellence—A-F Letter Grades

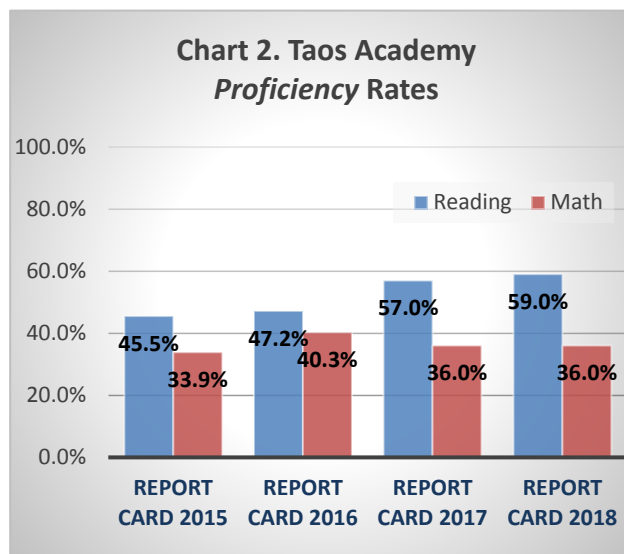
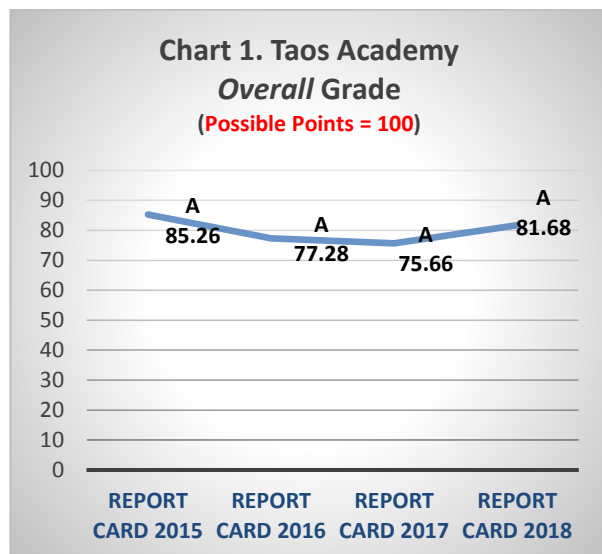
This section includes analysis of academic performance of the school towards meeting the Department's Standards of Excellence –A-F School Grading System through the 2017-2018 school year.

Overall Standing. Chart 1 illustrates Taos Academy's overall school grade in each of the last 4 years (2015-2018). The school earned an “A” each year along with bonus points that ranged between 3.99 to 5.00. Note that beginning in 2018-2019 bonus points will be eliminated as part of the state's federally approved Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan.² Overall points earned ranged from 75.66 to 85.26 during this

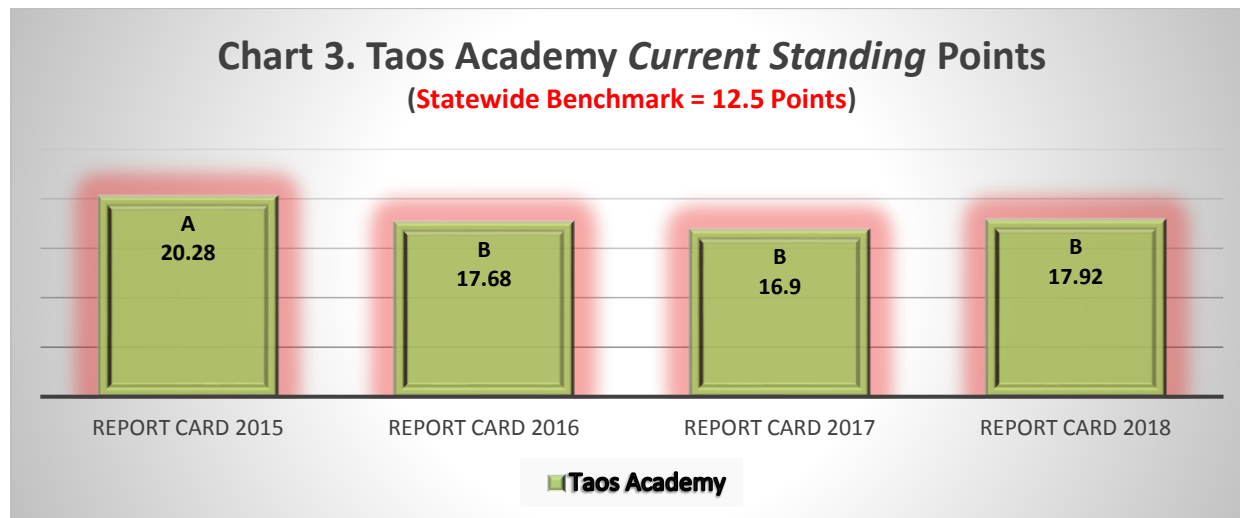
¹ The “A-F School Grading: Frequently Asked Questions [FAQ]” by the New Mexico Public Education Department may be obtained at: <http://aae.ped.state.nm.us/SchoolGradingLinks/1718/Technical%20Assistance%20for%20Educators/School%20Grading%20FAQs%202018.pdf>

² See New Mexico Rising: New Mexico's State Plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act, p. 71 which may be obtained at: <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/New-Mexico-ESSA-State-Plan.pdf>

four (4) year period with proficiency rates in reading steadily increasing during the four (4) year period and math rates increasing during the past two (2) years (see Chart 2).



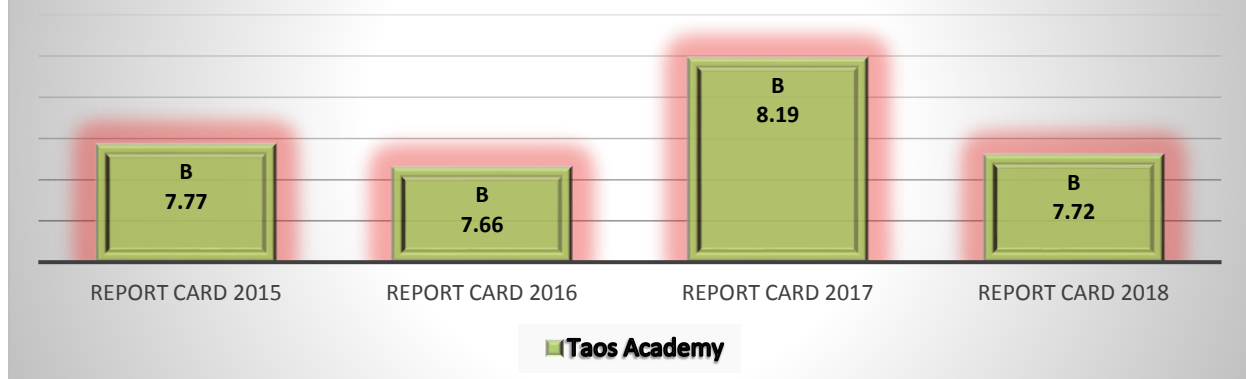
Current Standing. Current standing measures both grade level proficiency and student performance in comparison to expected performance based on statewide peer performance; statewide peers are identified based on prior achievement and student mobility. In 2018 (Chart 3), the school earned 17.92 points out of 30 possible points in this category, which was significantly above the statewide benchmark (established in 2012) of 12.5 points. The school has steadily maintained points earned in the category during the past 4 years.



School Improvement. The school improvement performance (formerly known as *School Growth*) on the School Grading Report compares overall student performance from year to year was examined as well as compared to similar schools. Growth can be positive or negative. When it is positive, school performance is better than expected when compared to others schools with the same size, mobility, and prior student performance. In Chart 4, the school earned between 7.66 – 8.19 points consistently earning a letter grade of “B” in the category for all four (4) years. All scores were above the statewide benchmark of 5.8 points.

Chart 4. Taos Academy School Improvement Points

(Statewide Benchmark = 5.8 Points)



Under the *school improvement* section of the School Grading Report, growth indices for both reading and math are presented (chart 5 to the right). A growth index of zero (0) indicates the expected score for each area when compared to other schools with the same size, mobility and prior student performance. A positive index indicates that the school performed better than was expected while a negative index indicates that the school did not perform as expected when compared to similar students.

In all years a positive growth index was observed in both reading and math.

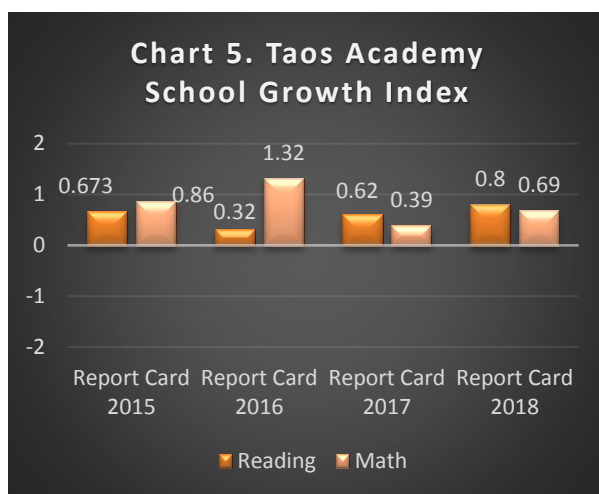
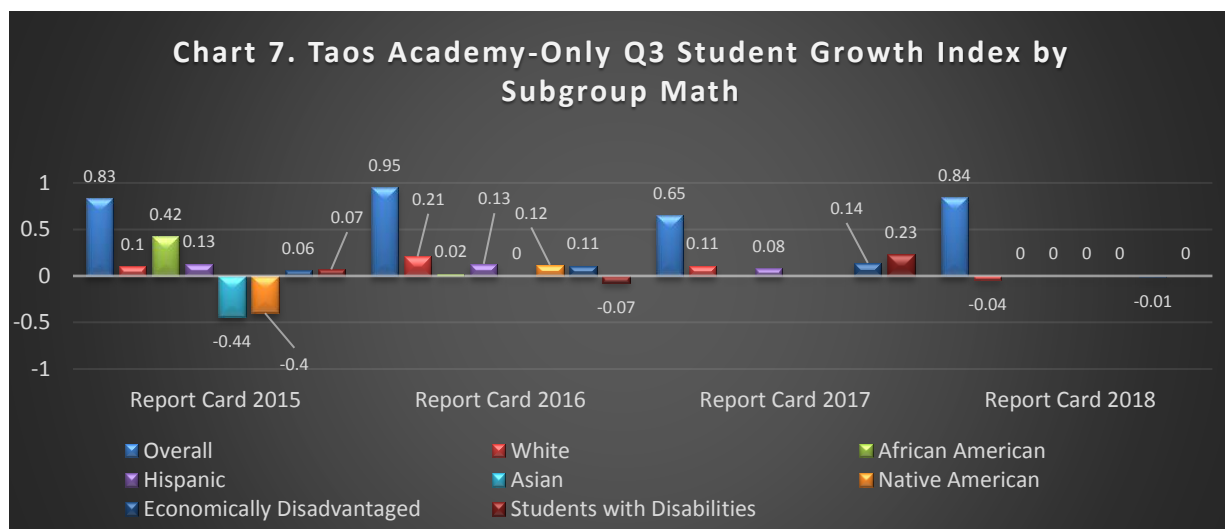
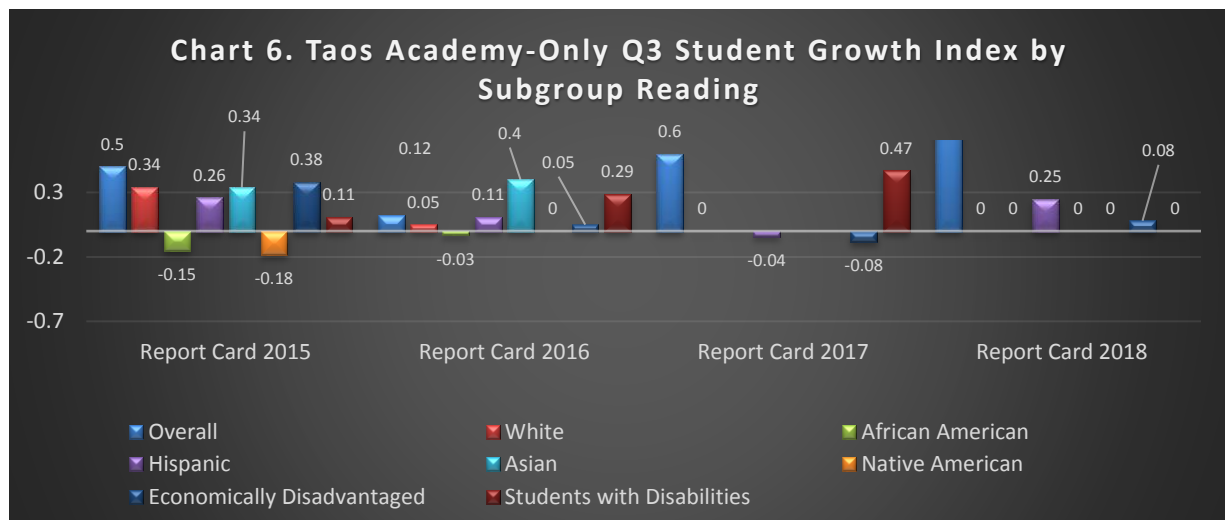


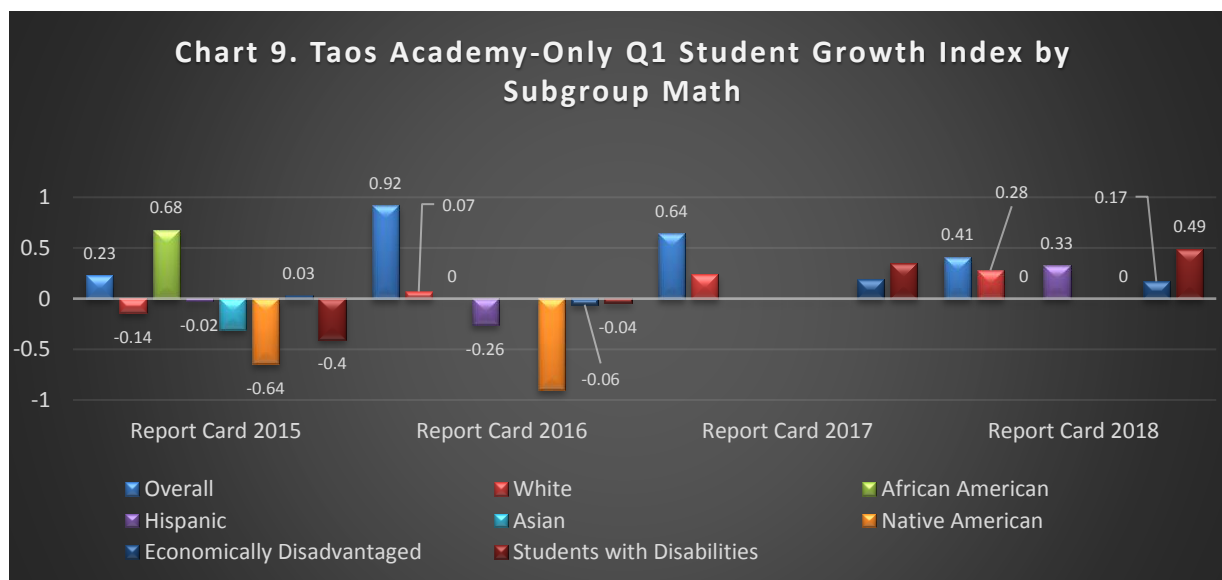
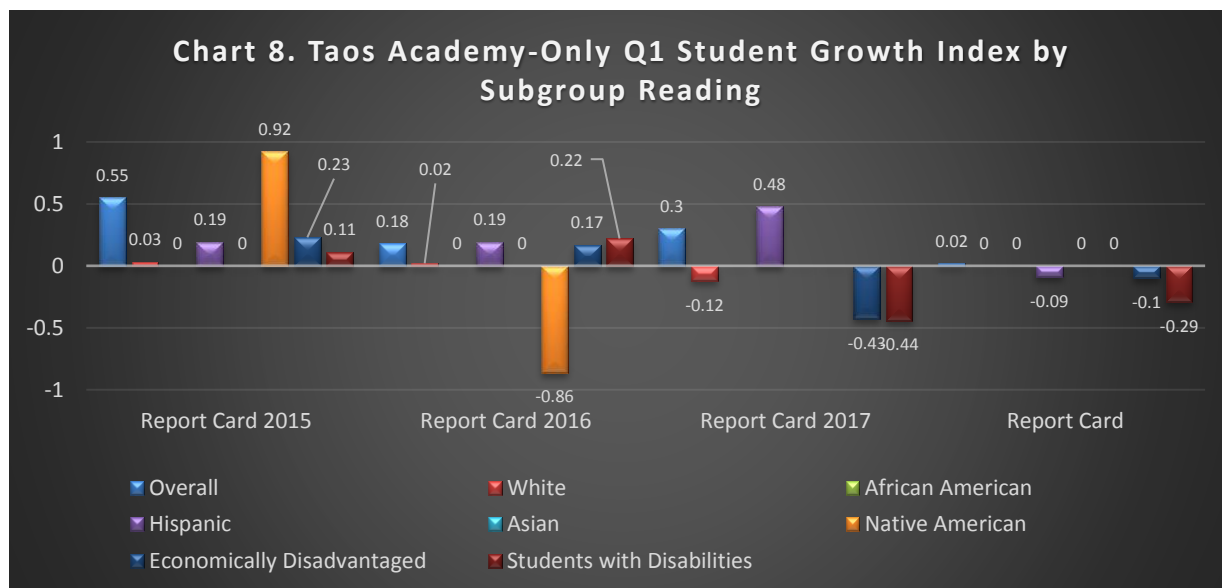
Figure 1. Points earned in School Improvement section (10 total points possible).

	Points Earned in Reading	Points Earned in Math	TOTAL <small>*Possible 10 points</small>
2015	3.75	4.03	7.77
2016	3.12	4.54	7.66
2017	3.66	3.26	6.92
2018	3.94	3.78	7.72

Subgroups within Higher-Performing Students (Q3). In Q3 student growth, the indicator evaluates changes in comparative performance for the school's higher-performing students (top 75%). Most subgroups (excluding masked data) in at least 1 of 4 years of the contract term met expected growth in reading with overall student growth being met in 4 of 4 years. In math, all subgroups in at least 1 of 4 years of the contract met expected growth with overall student growth being met in 4 of 4 years.



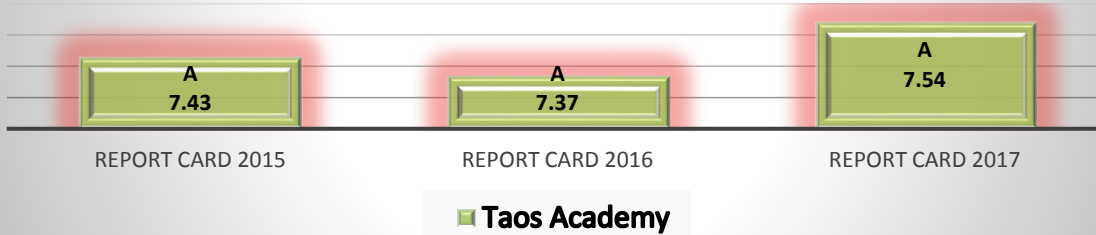
Subgroups within Lowest-Performing Students (Q1). In Q1 student growth, the indicator evaluates changes in comparative performance for the school's lowest-performing students (lowest 25%). All subgroups (excluding masked data) in at least 1 of 4 years of the contract term met expected growth in reading with overall student growth being met in 4 of 4 years. In math, all subgroups in most years met expected growth with overall student growth being met in 4 of 4 years.



Opportunity to Learn (OTL). Opportunity to learn represents the learning environment schools provide⁴. This indicator is based on attendance and a classroom surveys administered to students (or parents in grades K-2). High schools can earn 8 total points (3 for attendance, 5 for the survey). The target for attendance is 95%. Taos Academy has performed well since 2015 exceeding the statewide benchmark in each of the past 3 years (excluding 2018) earning the majority of points as well as earning a letter grade of “A” for the indicator through 2017 (see chart 10). In 2018, the school had a high attendance rate of 97% but the category indicated an “N/A” rating which is currently being examined for accuracy. Consequently, results for the 2018 school year (points and letter grade) were not included.

⁴ The “New Mexico School Grading Technical Guide: Calculation and Business Rules for Schools and Districts” document by the New Mexico Public Education Department may be obtained at:
<https://aae.ped.state.nm.us/SchoolGradingLinks/1617/Technical%20Assistance%20for%20Educators/Technical%20Guide%202017.pdf>

**Chart 10. Taos Academy
Opportunity to Learn (OTL) Points**
(Statewide Benchmark = 6.0 Points)



High School Graduation. This indicator is calculated based on 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year rates and the annual increase in the 4-year graduation rate and is based on three years of data (Ibid). Calculation of 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year cohort graduation rates uses the Shared Accountability method. Schools are proportionally accountable for student graduation for all students in a graduation cohort who were enrolled in their school for any amount of time. The model includes 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year rates, which produce a maximum of 8, 3, 2, and 4 points respectively. The extended-year rates include only members of the prior 4-year cohort and do not allow new entrants in subsequent years. The school's graduation cohort of 2014 surpassed the statewide goal of 90%. Taos Academy had a 96.7% rate that year. However, during the next 2 years the school did not meet the statewide target, but did exceed the statewide averages for cohorts of 2015 (79%) and 2016 (71%). Specifically, the school had an 84.15% rate for cohort of 2015 68.6% and a 79% rate for cohort 2016 but increased the rate to 94.3% for cohort 2017 increasing its points earned and receiving an "A" in the category. The school also surpassed the district average in all 4 years.

**Chart 11. Taos Academy
Graduation Points**
(Statewide Benchmark = 12.8 Points)

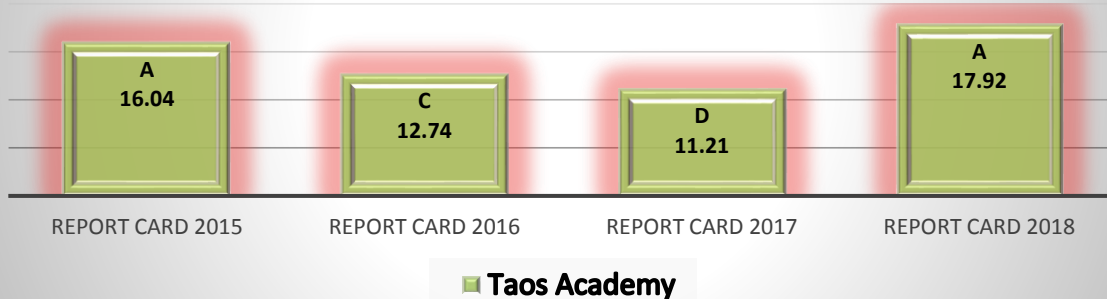
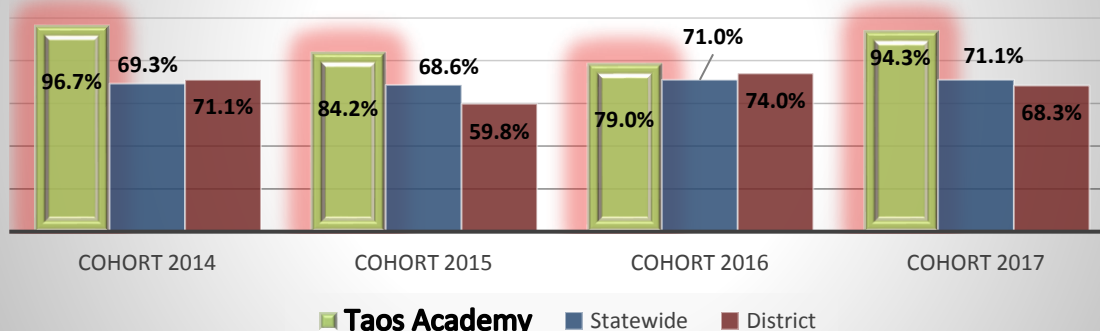


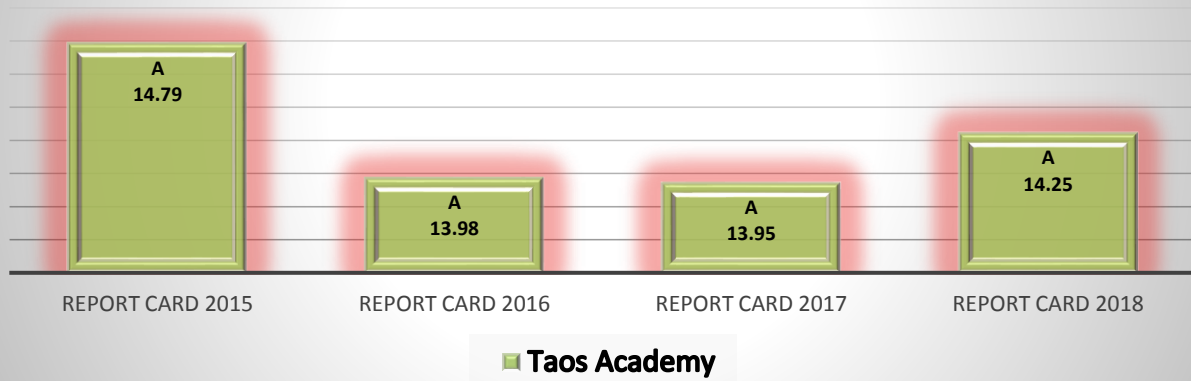
Chart 12. Taos Academy 4-Year Graduation Rate (Multi-Year)



College & Career Readiness (CCR). This indicator evaluates the percent of cohort members (high school students' 4th year) who show evidence of college or career preparation, along with the proportion of those students meeting a success benchmark⁵. Schools receive credit when students participate in college entrance exams and coursework leading to dual credit and vocational certification. The school receives additional credit when students meet success goals. College and Career Readiness is composed of *Participation* (5 points) and *Success* (10 points) yielding a total 15 points in the high school's overall grade. The statewide benchmark for points earned is 9.

Chart 14 illustrates the total *College and Career Readiness* (CCR) points earned during the past four (4) years. Taos Academy did well, surpassing the statewide benchmark in all years earning a letter grade of "A" in the category since 2015. In 2018, the school report card data indicated that 85% of students at the school participated in *College and Career Readiness* opportunities (such as PSAT, dual credit, PLAN, which resulted in the school earning 4.25 points out of 5 for this portion of the category. Out of the 85% of Taos Academy students who participated in *College and Career Readiness* opportunities in 2018, ≥90% were successful resulting in an additional 10.0 points earned (10 possible) for this portion of the category. This was the highest number of points earned by the school since 2015.

Chart 13. Taos Academy
College & Career Readiness Points
(Statewide Benchmark = 9.0 Points)



1b. Specific Charter Goals

This section includes analysis of Taos Academy's progress towards meeting its Specific Charter Goals (mission-specific and optional academic performance indicators) through 2017-2018. The school met or exceeded all goals except for Indicator 2.c in 2017 when evidence to support findings were not presented.

Charter Specific Goals

"PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 2.a: PROFICIENCY IN READING. Students in grades 5-12 at Taos Academy will achieve and maintain a level of academic success in Reading as demonstrated by showing grade level proficiency or one year's growth in one of the following measures: proficiency on annual state standardized testing, proficiency or typical yearly growth on short-cycle assessment administered three times a year

Short Cycle Assessment data (NWEA) will be used to measure academic growth or proficiency in Reading for Full Academic Year (FAY) students in grades 5-12 at Taos Academy.

Growth. In order to show growth (the first phrase in each of the standards set forth below), FAY students will demonstrate academic growth in Reading as measured by three short cycle assessments using NWEA MAPS grade level assessment. The growth will be determined using NWEA MAPS results for each student as set by the fall test. Students may show the growth on either of the winter or spring assessments. ("One year's growth" will be defined as the growth identified on the fall test on the Achievement Status and Growth Projection Report as the "projected RIT" score. If the student matches or exceeds the "projected RIT" score in either the winter or the spring, then that student will have shown "one year's growth.")

Grade Level Proficiency. In order to show "grade level proficiency" (the second phrase in each of the standards set forth below), a student must test at "average", "high average" or "high" as identified on winter or spring tests as shown on the NWEA MAPS Grade or Class report OR score proficient on the annual state standardized testing."

"PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 2.b: PROFICIENCY IN MATH. Students in grades 5-12 at Taos Academy will achieve and maintain a level of academic success in Math as demonstrated by showing grade level proficiency or one year's growth in one of the following measures: proficiency on annual state standardized testing, proficiency or typical yearly growth on short-cycle assessment administered three times a year

Short Cycle Assessment data (NWEA) will be used to measure academic growth or proficiency in Math for Full Academic Year (FAY) students in grades 5-12 at Taos Academy.

Growth. In order to show growth (the first phrase in each of the standards set forth below), FAY students will demonstrate academic growth in Reading as measured by three short cycle assessments using NWEA MAPS grade level assessment. The growth will be determined using NWEA MAPS results for each student as set by the fall test. Students may show the growth on either of the winter or spring assessments. ("One year's growth" will be defined as the growth identified on the fall test on the Achievement Status and Growth Projection Report as the "projected RIT" score. If the student matches or exceeds the "projected RIT" score in either the winter or the spring, then that student will have shown "one year's growth.")

Grade Level Proficiency. In order to show "grade level proficiency" (the second phrase in each of the standards set forth below), a student must test at "average", "high average" or "high" as identified on winter or spring tests as shown on the NWEA MAPS Grade or Class report OR score proficient on the annual state standardized testing."

"PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 2.c: Students in grades 5-12 at Taos Academy who attend the school for two consecutive semesters will develop and successfully complete an individualized post-secondary career pathway plan. Implementation of the plan will be demonstrated by the successful completion of at least 1 credit in Career and Technology Education courses each year while attending Taos Academy. The Next Step Plan will document credit earned for both academic and career readiness biannually."

Figure 2. Progress towards Charter Specific Goals.⁶

Goal	Description	2015				2016				2017			
		Exceeds	Met	Did Not Meet	Falls Far Below	Exceeds	Met	Did Not Meet	Falls Far Below	Exceeds	Met	Did Not Meet	Falls Far Below
2.a	NWEA reading	-	-	-	-	X				X			
2.b	NWEA math	-	-	-	-	X				X			
2.c	Post-secondary career pathway plan	X				X							X ⁷

Goal	Description	2018			
		Exceeds	Met	Did Not Meet	Falls Far Below
2.a	NWEA reading	X			
2.b	NWEA math		X		
2.c	Post-secondary career pathway plan	X			

Student Attendance and Enrollment

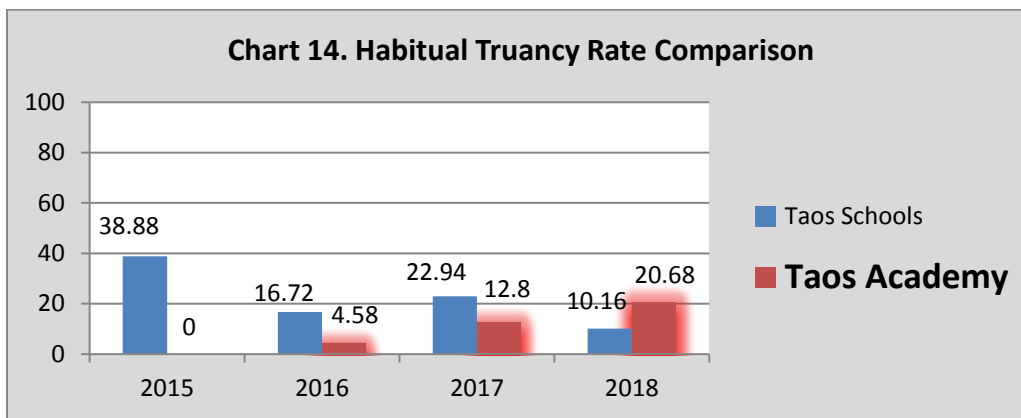
The following information provides a picture of the school's attendance and truancy, current student membership (enrollment), and enrollment trends over the term of the contract.

Habitual Truancy

The chart (next page) shows the school's habitual truancy rate compared to the local district, Taos Municipal Schools. Taos Academy's habitual truancy rate was lower than the local school district for three years, but surpassed it in 2017-2018. The information was pulled from STARS (Student and Teacher Accountability Reporting System) and the data is provided and entered by the school. However, please use caution when interpreting this data due to potential errors; please see the school's response that addresses attendance data and habitual truancy.

⁶ Charter Specific Goals are referred to as "Mission-Specific Indicators" or "Performance Indicators" in the school's contract and performance framework.

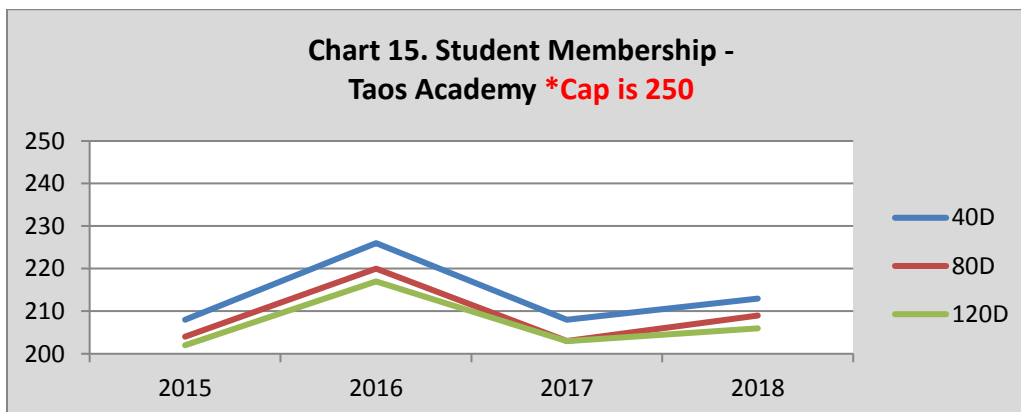
⁷ The web-EPSS report for 2016-2017 indicated that for "Performance Indicator 2c was rated 'Falls Far Below Standard' because no verifiable evidence was provided [e.g., career pathway plans, STARS reports, etc., to support the Excel spreadsheet submitted by the school purporting progress with the indicator..."



Source: STARS → District and Location Reports → Mobility and Truancy → Habitual Truant Student Totals by District and School

Student Membership (Enrollment)

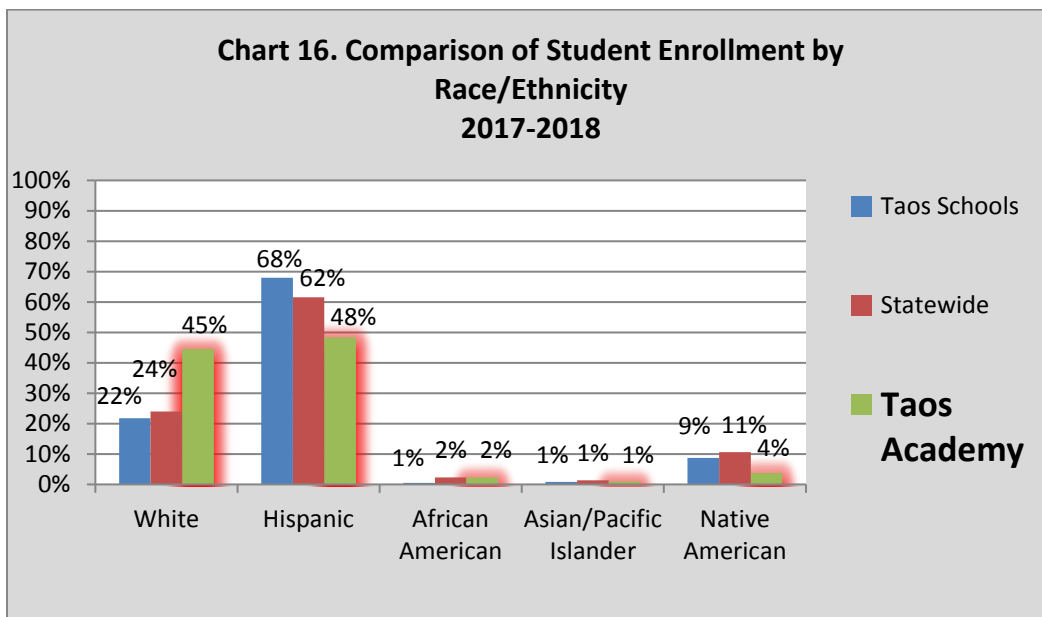
The chart shows the school's student membership for each of the years in operation during the current contract term. All reporting periods have maintained similar enrollment over the four years. Enrollment increased in 2016-2017 and dropped the following year. The school decreased in students between 40D and 80D and 80D to 120D at a similar rate each year.



Source: STARS → District and Location Reports → Membership Reports → Membership – District Detail Report

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity.

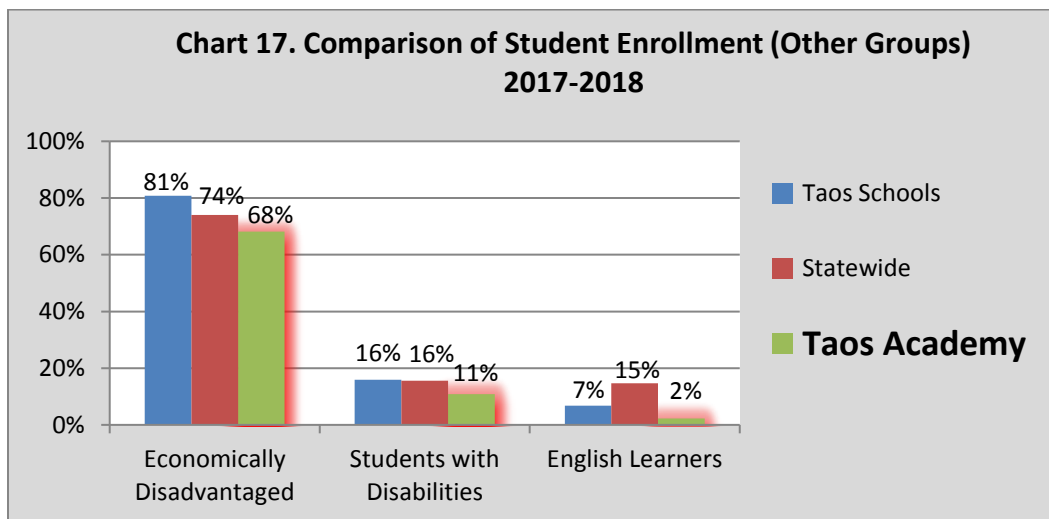
The school's student demographic data (next page) shows that it serves a *higher* White population and a *lower* Hispanic population when compared to the surrounding district and the state.



Source: STARS → District and Location Reports → General Reports → School Demographics with Charts

Enrollment by Other Subgroups

The school has a *lower* population of economically disadvantaged students than both the local district and the state. The school serves a lower percentage of students with disabilities and lower percentage of English Learners compared to Taos Municipal Schools and the state.



Source: STARS → District and Location Reports → General Reports → School Demographics with Charts

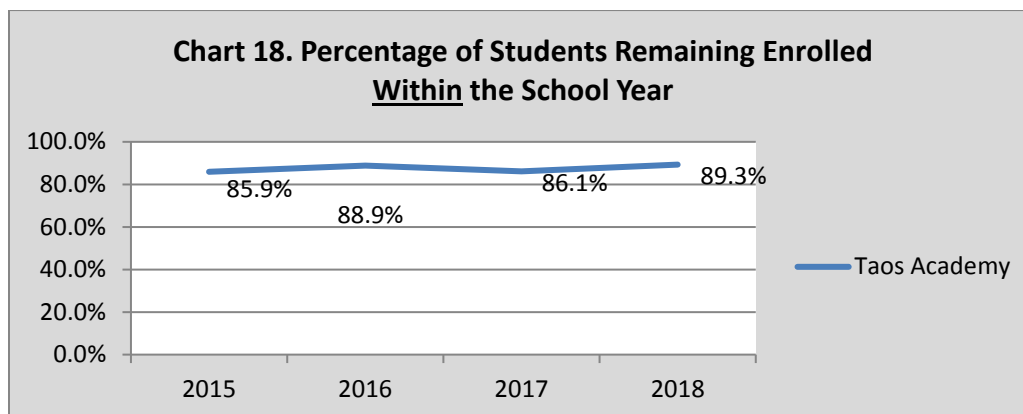
Retention and Recurring Enrollment

In the school's Performance Framework, the PEC has established student retention expectations. For this school, the PEC established a target of 85% recurrent enrollment between years.

Below, the PED has calculated within-year retention rates to evaluate the percentage of students who remain enrolled in the school from the time they enroll until the end of the school year. This data is calculated by identifying all students who enroll in the school at any time during the year and then

evaluating if the students remain enrolled until the end of the school year. Students whose withdrawal codes indicate circumstances beyond their control are removed from the data set.

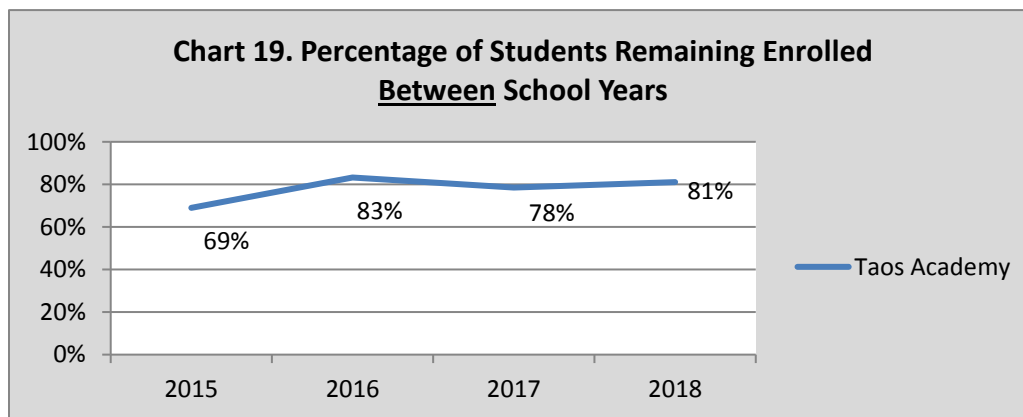
The student enrollment data in the chart below demonstrates that over 85% of students enrolled during the school year remain enrolled through the end of the school year, with over 89% in 2017-2018.



Source: STARS → District and Location Reports → Options for Parents → Charter School Enrollment Report

To evaluate recurrent enrollment as required by the PEC, the PED has calculated this measure by identifying the students enrolled at the end of each year who are eligible to reenroll (not graduated), and then identifying the students who reenroll on or before the 10th day of the subsequent year. Students whose withdrawal codes indicate circumstances beyond their control are removed from the data set.

Chart 20 below illustrates recurrent enrollment at the school. Student enrollment data indicates that 69% of the students that completed the school year in 2014-2015 returned to the school in 2015-2016. Eighty-one percent of the students that completed the 2016-2017 school year returned to Taos Academy in 2017-2018. The school has not met the goal of 85% recurrent enrollment in the last four years.

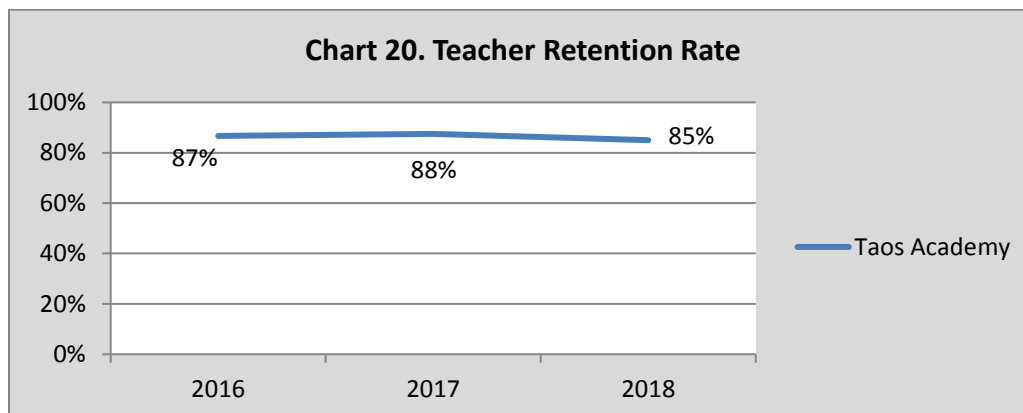


Source: STARS → District and Location Reports → Options for Parents → Charter School Enrollment Report

Teacher Retention Rate

The table below demonstrates teacher retention over time. This data is calculated by comparing the license numbers for teachers from one year to the next. For example, all teacher license numbers reported for the 2014-15 school year were compared to teacher license numbers the following year for the same reporting period. The percentage of duplicate license numbers were compared in the second year and the retention rate was calculated based on the percentage of teachers who returned the following year.

The PEC established a goal of 80% teacher retention (lower than 20% turnover) as stated in the performance framework #4d. The chart below demonstrates the school's teacher retention rate over the last three school years. The school's teacher turnover rate was 13.3% for the 2015-2016 school year, 12.5% for the 2016-2017 school year and 15% for the 2017-2018 school year. The school met the 80% retention goal each year.



Source: STARS → State Reports → Staff Reports → Turnover Rates for Assignment Category (Teachers)

SECTION 2. FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE

2a. Audit

Figure 3. Fiscal compliance over term of contract.

Audit Year	# of Findings	# of Repeat Findings	# of Material/Significant Findings
FY17	3	0	1
FY16	2	0	0
FY15	3	0	0

Summary of Fiscal Reports

In **FY17**, the Foundation for Taos Academy received **1 significant deficiency**.

- 2017-001 Segregation of Duties for the Foundation Significant Deficiency**
Condition. The Foundation has one individual who is responsible for depositing receipts, handling cash, and maintaining the support for the revenues. This individual also has the ability to write checks, enter transactions into the accounting system and has online banking access.

In **FY17**, the school received **2 other non-compliance findings** on issues related to (1) timely deposits and (2) travel and per diem policy.

- 2017-001 Timely Deposits Other Non-compliance**
Condition: During our review of eleven deposits, three deposits totaling \$2,550 did not have the dated receipts to support the date funds were received. As such, compliance with the twenty-four hour deposit requirement could not be determined.
- 2017-002 Travel and Training Policy Other Non-compliance**

Condition: During our review of travel and per diem expenditures, one of five disbursements reviewed included a reimbursement for alcohol. The total disbursement was for \$137 and the portion related to alcohol was approximately \$7.

In **FY16**, the school received **2 non-compliance** finding on issues related (1) excess expenditures over budget and (2) disposition of computers.

- **2016-001 Excess of Expenditures over Budget Non-compliance**

Condition: The School has expenditure functions where actual expenditures exceeded budgetary authority:

- Title XIX - Medicaid Support Services \$3,411.
- Private Direct Grants - Instruction \$1,655.

- **2016-002 Disposition of Computers Non-compliance**

Condition: During fiscal year 2016, the School disposed of various computers that had become obsolete. A letter was not sent to the New Mexico Office of the State Auditor to inform them of the intent to dispose of the computers.

In **FY15**, the school received **3 finding of non-compliance** related to (1) procurement code, (2) timely deposits, and (3) payroll.

- **2014-001 Procurement Code Non-compliance)**

Condition: The School did not follow proper procurement procedures when obtaining vendors' to install a basketball court and artificial turf for the School. The total estimated cost was \$25,613 for the basketball court and \$34,833 for the artificial turf. The School obtained quotes by making phone calls rather than sending written requests containing the specifications for the procurement.

Auditor's Note: This finding was reported in the 2014 audit and the School started taking corrective measures once it was reported to them in May 2015.

- **2015-001 Timely Deposits Non-compliance**

Condition: During testwork over cash receipts, we noted one deposit totaling \$410 collected on January 13, 2015. These funds were not deposited in the bank until January 15, 2015.

- **2015-002 Payroll Non-compliance**

Condition: During our review of over 25 payroll transactions, we found eight instances where the School was improperly calculating employee and employer FICA taxes for certain insurance deductions. These employee deductions should have been treated as pre-FICA tax deductions; however, the School treated them as post-FICA tax deductions.

2b. Board of Finance

The governing council of Taos Academy's Board of Finance has never been suspended during the term of its contract.

SECTION 3. CONTRACTUAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

3a. Charter Material Terms

The School's mission statement is as follows:

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

The contract identifies the following educational program as a material term of the charter:

Educational Program of the School.

Educational Philosophy - Taos Academy expresses and practiced the belief that every learner deserves access to educational excellence regardless of his or her abilities. Taos Academy provides a hybrid learning environment that combines direct and digital instruction with experiential curriculum to create a holistic learning environment able to meet each student's academic and social/emotional needs. We believe that our focus on academic excellence, rooted in 21st-century learning skills and the development of strong leadership skills, prepare all Taos Academy students to become independent, lifelong learners who will be confident and successful in their future endeavors

Educational Approach - Taos Academy is dedicated to providing a high academic standard that meets or exceeds New Mexico state standards. Using proven educational practices, intentional instructional design, and meaningful assessments, the school provides students with the individualized instruction necessary to meet their learning goals. Taos Academy blends traditional classroom teaching methods with the latest technological advances, allowing students to benefit from both group and one-on-one approaches. After a thorough assessment, students are placed appropriately according to academic need. Placing students according to present performance levels ensures student success by building on their individual knowledge base rather than grade level. The school provides academic classes to students in a highly interactive digital format with the flexibility of anytime, anywhere learning. After students begin digital studies, their advisor will monitor all academic activities through the web-based program. The advisor has access to all daily academic activity, is able to track time spent on assignments, view scores of individual lessons and quizzes, and determine areas of weakness. Advisor and student are able to communicate using state-of-the-art web-based communications with the capability for audio, visual, and written communication, or live face-to-face communication in a traditional manner. Students are required to attend Math and Language Arts enrichment classes and have access to tutoring to further support academic excellence.

Taos Academy is devoted to developing a strong community of leaders throughout the organization, focusing our attention on 21st-century learning skills such as communication skills, teamwork, and research skills. Students are required to successfully complete one or more credits per year developing 21Century skills to ensure preparation of future endeavors. Classes offered

yearly include but are not limited to, leadership training, global studies, career and technical education development, and STEM institute. Leadership training programs include but are not be limited to, classes in emotional intelligence, advisory groups, outdoor education, and service learning projects. Global studies classes incorporate but are not limited to, global awareness, language study, cultural studies, and geography. Career and Technical Education classes are devoted to developing a college/career pathway plan and supports internships, dual credit classes, and online career classes. The STEM Institute classes offer students a variety of courses, aligned to STEM standards, to enrich the academic programming. Instructional methods include, but are not be limited to, direct instruction, guided teaching, and a constructivist approach (inquiry, analysis, synthesis, etc.). Students attend these classes on campus on a regular basis, depending on their individual plan.

Taos Academy is committed to parental and community involvement to further utilize resources needed to maximize student potential for success. Our parent cooperative model forms partnerships for parents to be actively involved in their child's educational growth through advisory roles, emotional intelligence training, volunteering, etc. Partnerships with community resources (individuals and businesses) support students in academic success, internships, tutoring, and workshops.

Student – Focused Term(s).

Taos Academy students are given choice and flexibility in deciding non-core educational programming. With the development of the individualized career pathway plan, students, parents and the school advisors design a schedule that promotes academic success along with targeting areas of interest with classes aligned to the student's career plan. Career and Technology Education courses such as (21st Century classes, dual credit, internship, STEM Institute classes, career prep, elective and/or honors classes) are offered each semester. Students must earn a minimum of 1 credit per year from the list above that aligns to the pathway plan.

Taos Academy begins instruction at the 5th-grade level to inhibit early academic failure.

- All students have an individualized learning program aligned to their personal goals to ensure success.*
- All students are required to meet the following rigorous academic requirements:*
- All students will participate in enrichment opportunities to further enhance their educational experience.*
- Mid-level students will successfully complete one academic or elective high school level class to enter ninth grade.*
- High school students will successfully complete and implement a College/Career Pathway plan.*

Students will have the opportunity to attend virtual summer school to further promote academic success.

Students are expected to develop yearly online portfolios of best work to demonstrate the ability to pose questions, marshal resources, and pursue learning with dedication, independence, imagination, and courage.

Teacher – Focused Term(s).

Staff training is dedicated to the development of blended models of education and the use of educational technology as well as the development of Emotional Intelligence. In the ever changing

technological world it is important for Taos Academy teachers to be trained in new technical educational tools as well as effective and efficient communication skill.

3b. Organizational Performance Framework

The school received zero (0) “Falls Far Below Standard” ratings in 2017-2018 and one (1) “Falls Far Below Standard” rating in 2016-2017.

Figure 4. 2017-2018 Organizational Framework Rating (17 indicators total).

Meets	Working to Meet	Falls Far Below
12	5	0

Figure 5. 2016-2017 Organizational Framework Rating (17 indicators total).

Meets	Working to Meet	Falls Far Below
13	3	1

Summary of “Falls Far Below” Ratings

- **Next Step Plans.** The school did not provide evidence or implementation of processes to ensure the school was having all eligible students complete Next Step Plans to include personal, career, and post-secondary goals [NMSA § 22-13-1.1].

3c. Governing Body Performance

According to the last reporting from this school, Taos Academy has five (5) members serving on their Governing Body. Based on the information provided to the PED, the following members are currently serving on Taos Academy’s Governing Board (specifically those who comprise the school’s Board of Finance):

Figure 6. Governing council composition (board of finance members).

Name	Role	Service Start Date*	Membership Status	FY18 Training Requirements
Bill MacDonald	President	N/A	Continuing	Complete
Dean Caldwell	Vice-President	N/A	Continuing	Complete
Simeon Herskovits	Secretary	N/A	Continuing	Complete
Matthew Currey	Treasurer	N/A	Continuing	Complete
Kristen Torres	Member	N/A	Continuing	Complete

*Service start dates were not provided by the school. As per online minutes, all members began serving prior to July 25, 2017.

According to PED records, the school has completed all training for FY18. The school had six members complete the required training in FY17. The school had five members complete the required training in FY16. The school had five members complete the required training in FY15.

Deanna Gomez is the current business manager for Taos Academy. The current CPO is Traci Filiss.