New Mexico Public Education Commission

2019 New Charter School Application Kit
Part C. Application & Rubric

School Information:
Name of Proposed Charter School: Polaris Charter School
School Address (if known): Click here to enter text.
School Location (City/Town): Los Alamos
School District within which the proposed school will be located: Los Alamos
Grades to be served: 6-8
Requested Enrollment Cap: 225

Contact Information:
Primary Contact Person: Elizabeth Martineau
Address: 1063 Pinon Loop
City: Los Alamos State: NM Zip: 87544
Daytime Tel: 505-670-5069 Fax: Click here to enter text.
Alternate Tel: Click here to enter text. E-Mail: liz4_always@yahoo.com

Secondary Contact Person: Bill Hargraves
Address: PO Box 584
City: Velarde State: NM Zip: 87582
Daytime Tel: 505-695-0001 Fax: Click here to enter text.
Alternate Tel: Click here to enter text. E-Mail: velarde.vines@gmail.com

Founder (if different from above): Scott B. Johnson
Address: PO Box 720
City: Tesuque State: New Mexico Zip: 87574
Daytime Tel: 505-490-1132 Fax: Click here to enter text.
Alternate Tel: Click here to enter text. E-Mail: scobyjoh@aol.com

Founder (if different from above): Branden Willman-Kozimor
Address: 851 45th Street
City: Los Alamos State: NM Zip: 87544
Daytime Tel: 505-414-7615 Fax: Click here to enter text.
Alternate Tel: Click here to enter text. E-Mail: bewk@me.com

Founder (if different from above): Amy Bartlett-Gaunt
Address: 2451 North Rd
City: Los Alamos State: NM Zip: 87544
Daytime Tel: 505-500-0271 Fax: Click here to enter text.
Alternate Tel: Click here to enter text. E-Mail: amyrbartlett@gmail.com

Founder (if different from above): Click here to enter text.
Address: Click here to enter text.
City: Los Alamos State: NM Zip: 87544
Daytime Tel: Click here to enter text. Fax: Click here to enter text.
Alternate Tel: Click here to enter text. E-Mail: Click here to enter text.

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Directions: Please answer each and every prompt, if applicable (e.g., if you are an elementary school, you will not answer questions about graduation), where indicated. **Use the rubrics following <u>each</u> of the prompts to guide your responses.**

Please note: The Public Education Commission (PEC) has determined which questions are of greater importance than others. Therefore, certain scores are increased as indicated in the scoring rubrics as set forth below.

Scoring: Along with each prompt, the application identifies the elements that must be present for a response to be evaluated as "Meets the Criteria." The rubrics on this page govern **<u>general scoring practices</u>**. ***Please be sure that each response completely addresses the bulleted points in the rubrics for each individual prompt as well.***

Meets the Criteria **100% of total points**	• All required elements present • Sufficient detail present, enabling the proposal to be implemented without requiring further proposal development • The proposal is reasonable and realistic • Fully consistent with other sections, including budget and mission • Fully consistent with all requirements of law • Coherent and easily understood
Approaches the Criteria **50% of total points**	• Does not clearly meet all criteria identified above to be rated "Meets the Criteria" • The majority of required elements are present, but not all • Insufficient detail; further proposal development will be required before the applicant can begin to implement the concept • Minor inconsistencies with other sections • May raise questions about legal compliance, but does not demonstrate non-compliance • May raise questions about reasonableness or viability of the proposal

Falls Far Below the Criteria
 	
0 points
	• None or less than a majority of the required elements are present
	• Contradicts other sections, or substantially inconsistent with other sections
	• Insufficient detail to understand the proposal, which includes:
	  o Copying responses from a prior applicant's application
	  o Copying statutory, regulatory, or policy/guidance language
	  o Plagiarizing information from other publicly available material
	• Includes statements that violate or conflict with the requirements of law
	• Incoherent or cannot be understood
	• The proposal is patently unreasonable or unrealistic
	• Does not clearly meet criteria identified above to be rated "Approaches the Criteria"

Minimum Scoring Expectations:

- No response is evaluated as "Falls Far Below the Criteria";
- No more than three responses may be evaluated as "Approaches the Criteria" in any one section of the application; and
- The applicant must earn at least 80 percent (80%) of the available points in order for a positive recommendation by independent reviewers.

I. Academic Framework

A. Mission.

Note: The proposed school shall report each year on implementation of its mission as set forth in the Performance Framework.

A. (1) State the mission, or the driving force, that guides this school proposal. The mission should answer questions such as: 1) what student outcomes does the proposed school seek to accomplish; 2) how will it accomplish that; and 3) what is innovative and unique about the proposed school? The best mission statements are clear, cohesive, comprehensive, reasonable, and innovative, and have a focus on outcomes rather than inputs.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Polaris Charter School's mission is to engage students in the community, environment, history and culture of Northern New Mexico through personalized hands-on learning experiences that strengthen and support student well-being and intellectual growth.

We believe that the complex challenges facing our world require active citizens who are competent critical thinkers, innovators, collaborators and communicators. Polaris will prepare young people for success by personalizing learning and engaging students in real world experiences that require deep learning and application of skills. Students will be empowered with the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and confidence vital to successfully navigate through the future and shape our local, regional, and global communities.

We believe that each person plays an essential role in shaping our society. Our targeted student population is a group of students who do not have "buy-in" to their own education and often fail to see the relevance in the day-to-day learning of traditional schooling, and we believe that a place-based learning experience will help students be more academically proficient than they might have been otherwise.

Polaris School seeks to accomplish the following outcomes:

1. **Academic Outcomes:**
   Students will demonstrate measurable academic growth that meets or exceeds annual yearly progress goals in Math and English Language Arts as measured by state assessment tools.
2) **Social Emotional Learning Outcomes:**
   Students will become agents of their own learning, engaged and prepared with the skills and knowledge to become confident learners prepared for future challenges.
3) **Active Citizenship Outcomes:**
   Students will develop skills to engage and innovate and become prepared with tools to realize that they are an essential part of their own community and to realize the impact they can have as a global citizen.

How Polaris will achieve these outcomes:

Our stated academic, social-emotional and active citizenship outcomes will be realized through a place-

based learning model that leverages the local community and landscape as a framework for learning. This place-based model uses projects, student mastery, personalized learning, and habits of success/social emotional learning to focus school decisions regarding school climate and culture, curriculum and instruction, teacher capacity, assessment, organization, and school leadership in order to achieve our three outcomes.

Place-based Education Principles (Place Network, 2019)

Mastery: Polaris Charter School puts the learner at the center of our program. A competency-based system ensures that students move through the program only by demonstrating mastery of learning targets for a performance indicator at a particular grade level. Performance indicators are linked to New Mexico and national academic standards. Competency-based learning enables students, teachers and families to clearly understand the needs of each student and allows them to tailor learning to achieve academic growth. Since every student will be individually monitored, educators will be able to identify students who are struggling and adjust learning strategies throughout the year to keep students moving forward. This will ensure that Polaris achieves high academic outcomes.

Habits of Success and Social-Emotional Learning: Students need opportunities to develop positive study habits and social-emotional skills to succeed professionally and personally. Polaris will teach and support development and practice of these skills through advisory time and restorative practices that are integrated into the school day. Students will learn how to set and achieve their own goals, practice self-awareness, develop positive relationships, and work collaboratively.

“Children who are better able to self-regulate have better relationships with teachers and peers and are seen by teachers as more academically and socially competent (Blair & Diamond, 2008). These factors are associated with greater engagement in school (Farrington et al., 2012; Murray et al., 2015; Zelazo, 2015). Self-regulation-related skills and attributes are associated with greater likelihood of graduating

from college, and better health and wealth in adulthood." (Osher, Cantor, Berg, Steyer, Rose, 2017)

"Research also shows that students are more motivated when they experience support and belonging" (Osher, Cantor, Berg, Steyer, Rose, 2017, p.18) "Studies have shown that when students perceive their classrooms as encouraging personal autonomy, their engagement increases." (Armstrong, 2016, p.40)

Projects: Authentic interdisciplinary learning experiences and projects provide opportunities for students to practice 21st century skills in their local community. Projects provide opportunities for students to practice active citizenship through collaboration, complex problem solving, leadership, and perseverance. Students will use Design Thinking as an iterative process and framework to solve problems.

"Unfortunately, middle schools and high schools often are organized in a way that does not fit the developmental needs of youth in this age group (Eccles & Roeser, 2009; Juvonen, Le, Kaganoff, Augustine, & Constant, 2004; Lee & Smith, 1997). Although adolescents need more autonomy and connectedness, they often experience a loss of autonomy, as rules become harsher and connections to adults—who now must work with more students—become more difficult to maintain. Providing enriching opportunities in homes, schools, and communities helps adolescents fulfill their potential and experience increasing independence. In addition, investing in adolescence means investing in the next generation of parents and other adults who will be contributing to the positive development of young children. All adolescents need positive and sustained relationships with competent and caring adults who can provide exposure to life-skill-building activities; opportunities to actively participate and take leadership in family, school, and community activities; and provide clear standards for behavior and norms (Bond, 1999; Geisz & Nakashian, 2016; Lerner, 2004).

In addition, studies of young adults suggest that mindfulness training may promote increases in neural integration. These studies have found that mindfulness training is correlated with increased interconnectivity of the connectome, and growth of the corpus callosum, the hippocampus, and the prefrontal region. (Cole, 2014) (Osher, Cantor, Berg, Steyer, Rose, 2017, p. 55)

Personalized: Learning is personalized to ensure that all students demonstrate mastery of competencies in a variety of ways at a variable pace. Along with these personalized pathways related to skill mastery, voice and choice will be a key component to achieving student-centered learning. With instructor guidance, students will grow the capacity to begin driving project direction that helps make them agents of their own learning. A report by the RAND corporation and commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation "found that students in schools using personalized learning strategies made greater academic progress, over the course of two years, than a comparison group of students with similar academic performance and from schools with similar demographic profiles." (Pane, Steiner, Baird, Hamilton, 2015)

<u>1: Academic Achievement Outcomes</u>

Every part of our Place-based model is designed to ensure that each student meets academic achievement outcomes and demonstrates measurable academic growth that meets or exceeds annual yearly progress goals in Math and English Language Arts as measured by nationally normed assessment tools.

First, students and teachers will know what skills each student has mastered and what needs to be

achieved. Competency-based learning ensures that students demonstrate achievement before moving onto a new skill. This allows teachers to personalize learning. Advisory time supports academic outcomes by providing time for teachers to work with small groups to help students set individual learning goals, provide guidance to students, and hold students accountable for their own learning.

Our place-based framework includes design thinking cycles of continuous improvement to support growth and achievement. Students and teachers will be emotionally supported as they explore new horizons, make mistakes, and persevere through challenges.

Finally, authentic interdisciplinary learning experiences, project-based learning and social emotional support foster engagement. Students who are engaged in their learning. "Interpersonal relationships between and among students and their teachers, in particular students' perceptions of teacher empathy and trust, also play an important role in student engagement and capacity to persist through challenging academic tasks." (Osher, Cantor, Berg, Steyer, Rose, 2017, p.19)

2: Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Outcomes

Social emotional learning (SEL) outcomes will be achieved by creating a strong student-centered culture that expects students to participate in shaping their educational experience. The faculty will guide students by meeting regularly with small multi-grade groups of students during advisory time to build community, support student progress and plan for the future. Through the implementation of schoolwide participatory practices, including restorative practices, personalized learning, and community projects, students will develop their voice and agency. They will develop self-awareness, positive social-emotional habits, and be prepared to contribute to their communities and shape the world.

We believe that a strong SEL program will also lead to student achievement. "One meta-study of 213 school-based SEL programs from kindergarten through high school revealed that they overall improved students' social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance."(Armstrong, 2016, p.116)

Students will complete a nationally normed Social Emotional Learning Survey through Panorama twice per year. We expect students to score an average of 4 or higher (out of 5) on this survey. One benefit of the Panorama surveys is that the results are available as soon as students complete them. This will allow teachers and administrators to make data informed decisions and improvements in "real-time."

3: Active Citizenship Outcomes

We will achieve the outcome of active citizenship through interdisciplinary learning connected to the real world. Students will tackle purposeful projects that positively impact their community and promote a broader understanding of the world. They will use technology to communicate and create and thereby expand the classroom and become true global citizens. Gregory A. Smith writes *"At the heart of place-based education is the belief that children of any age are capable of making significant contributions to the lives of others, and that as they do so, their desire to learn and belief in their own capacity to be change agents increase."* (Smith, 2017)

This student engagement will be measured through Panorama and a community impact project. Panorama will also be used to measure student engagement. We expect students to score 4 or higher (out of 5). In addition to the nationally normed survey, each student will also annually complete a

community impact project that is perceived as positive by students and community members as measured through a school survey.

What is unique and innovative about Polaris:

A unique part of our approach is the use of a place-based learning model to focus decision-making. Six specific unique innovations are imbedded in our model that we feel our school community needs to achieve our mission and outcomes: Advisory Time, Restorative Practices, Place-based learning, Studio electives, Competency based learning, and Project-based Learning.

Competency Based Instruction and Assessment

We will use competency-based instruction and formative assessment as tools to develop a growth mindset and master academic concepts. While most middle schools, including the ones in our surrounding communities, use grades to measure assessment, Polaris will use mastery. Students will assume responsibility for demonstrating mastery of knowledge and skills. Teachers and students will collect and evaluate qualitative and quantitative data, and then use the information to make decisions that support students' social emotional and academic growth. Together, students and teachers will continually evaluate student learning and use the data to make informed decisions to improve curriculum, instruction and learning.

Advisory Time

Polaris prioritizes social emotional learning, community and organizational skills by incorporating advisory time into the school schedule daily. It occurs first, even before the essential academic subjects of math and language. This is a unique model, but we believe that advisory time is essential for developing a positive school climate and culture dedicated to personal growth. During advisory time teachers and other school staff meet with small groups of students to build positive trusting relationships that foster a sense of belonging, build community, and support social-emotional learning. Advisory time provides opportunities to practice effective listening, conflict resolution, problem solving, goal setting, personal reflection, and ethical decision making. Students and teachers develop a sense of belonging through an inclusive learning culture based on mutual respect, dialogue, interdependence, and compassion. Advisory groups remain constant for multiple years in order to provide a stable personal support system and build a sense of community and trust that encourages educational participation, risk-taking, and working to overcome challenges. We believe that developing skills in a preventive measure will not only reduce problems, but also empower students with the skills to solve problems when they arise. This is supported by research. "One meta-study of 213 school-based SEL programs from kindergarten through high school revealed that they overall improved students' social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance."(Armstrong, 2016, p.116)

Restorative Practices

Restorative practices, an approach to justice that involves the victim, offender, and community members, provides a real-time opportunity to implement the skills developed during advisory time to solve problems. The goal is for the victim to have input and closure, the offender to be held accountable and take a role in repairing the harm, and for the community to help create a safe and healthy environment. The aim is to empower students to work together to decide what needs to be done to repair the harm. This innovative form of discipline is not currently used in Los Alamos Schools. Most

schools use a punishment-based system that includes office referrals, loss of privileges, detention, and suspension. Restorative practices proactively build a sense of empathy and social connection. They address and discuss the needs of the school community, build healthy relationships between educators and students, reduce, prevent and improve harmful behavior, repair harm, resolve conflict and hold individuals and groups accountable. Research shows that outcomes include significant reductions in misbehavior and punitive discipline. Restorative practices aren't just for discipline; high quality teaching and learning happens when there is a sense of community and students feel connected and responsible for each other's learning, and empowered to develop their own learning activities.

Authentic Place-based Experiences and Projects

Academic learning will be grounded in curriculum and instruction that uses authentic place-based experiences and design thinking projects to actively engage each student in learning that is connected to the community. Students in the middle grades are forming personal identities and developing life stories shaped by their culture and experiences. Polaris School plans to provide each student with personal connections to places, problems, and issues in our community and develop pathways for students to become empowered citizens. Students will be challenged by complex problems that require critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and they will apply and practice 21st Century skills to understand issues, solve problems, participate in place-making, and provide new information to the world. Unlike the local schools that break information into traditional subjects, Polaris will integrate subjects and link them to locally relevant topics.

Our Place-Based framework was chosen to help improve the academic proficiency of our students who are particularly motivated by real world experience. This framework has been shown to help foster a sense of belonging in the community. Studies have found that integrating the local environment as a context for learning improves student achievement in core subjects. According to *"Closing the Achievement Gap"* by Lieberman and Hoody, students, teachers and administrators report significant positive effects on problem solving skills, critical thinking and decision making. They also report an "increased enthusiasm and engagement in learning and gains in summative measures of educational achievement such as standardized test scores and grade point average." (Lieberman and Hoody, 1998)

Project-based Learning Project-based learning is an instructional method that has students work for an extended period of time to deeply investigate a complex problem or question. Projects require students to manage time, develop project plans, adjust to setbacks, seek out answers to questions, give and adjust to feedback from others, in order to produce a quality product that is useful to others. Projects often tackle authentic real-world problems.

Studio Electives Around Student Passions

We believe that student choice empowers learning. At Polaris students will have opportunities to take studio electives developed around their interests and passions. These electives will allow flexible time for students to work on projects, take special classes, pursue a passion, or go on field excursions with teachers. Studio electives provide opportunities for students to practice setting goals, managing time, applying academic skills, making positive choices, and working collaboratively. While the local middle schools offer electives, they are limited to specific course offerings. Our studio electives will be flexible and can be directed toward student interests because teachers will act as advisors to the students in order to focus on individual student choice. This student choice enables ownership over learning. "Studies have shown that when students perceive their classrooms as encouraging personal autonomy,

their engagement increases." (Armstrong, 2016, p.40)

Polaris's Innovations are based on current research that supports adolescent learners.

Recently, there has been significant research into understanding the developmental needs and function of the adolescent brain. Polaris's innovations, curriculum, instructional strategies, and schedule are supported by the brain-friendly practices recommended by Thomas Armstrong (2016) and supported by brain-based learning (Jensen, 2008).

Polaris Innovations Follow Recommended Practices for Adolescents

Recommended Practice (Armstrong, 2016)	**Rationale for Practice** (Armstrong, 2016)	**Polaris Innovation**
Opportunities to Choose	Helps adolescents make less risky and more sensible decisions in life.	Studio Electives around Student Passions Student Voice and Choice is valued through project selection. Restorative Practice
Self-awareness activities	Assists adolescents in defining their sense of identity.	Advisory Time includes setting personal Goals Competency-based learning provides the information students need to make informed decisions about their own learning. Place-based learning helps students define their place in this world. It connects content to their personal lives. Restorative Practice
Peer Learning Connections	Capitalizes on adolescents' preference for spending time with peers.	Advisory Time helps students develop strong positive social connections with peers. Project-based learning focuses on collaborative projects that allow students to interact in constructive ways.
Affective Learning	Integrates the emotional brain (limbic system) with the rational areas of the	Advisory Time- Time devoted to Social Emotional Learning.

	brain (prefrontal cortex).	Our Project-Based Learning uses a Design Thinking framework that begins with understanding others and the problems they face. Restorative Practice
Learning through the body	Capitalizes on the highly plastic cerebellum by providing physical learning that teaches higher order skills.	Place-based learning physically takes students out into the community to participate in learning projects. Hands-on experiences provided through projects.
Metacognitive Strategies	Takes advantage of the adolescent's emerging capacity for formal operational thinking.	Advisory Time includes goal setting, journaling, and time for students to think about their own social and emotional actions.
Expressive Arts Activities	Channels burgeoning adolescent emotional energies into thoughtful and socially appropriate artistic products and processes.	Creativity, innovation, and personal talent are encouraged through student choice, student writing, projects and design thinking. Studio Electives may be art-based.
Real-world Experiences	Gives adolescents and opportunity to practice executive functions in	Place-based learning projects allow students to investigate and develop projects that serve the wider community. Authentic Assessment

References

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Total Points Available	Expectations
16	A complete response must • Identify the student outcomes the proposed school seeks to accomplish; • Described how it will achieve the identified student outcomes (inputs/program); and • Identify the proposed outcomes and how they will be achieved is innovative and unique.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

B. Goal(s) Related to the Proposed School's Mission.

The Amended Charter School Act **requires schools to identify at least two mission-specific goals in the application** that set targets for the implementation of the proposed school mission. Mission-specific goals MUST BE provided within the application. If the application is approved, these goals will be used as the initial draft during the negotiations with the Authorizer.

For the purposes of this application, the goals will show the capacity of the applicant to identify appropriate goals aligned with the mission of the proposed school. During the later contracting process after approval, the goals may be negotiated and put into the Performance Framework to allow an approved school to demonstrate its achievements related to an approved mission. The Performance Framework is assessed on an annual basis.

Mission-specific goals put into the application should

(1) Demonstrate the proposed school's ability to implement the proposed school's mission;
(2) Be in the format set forth below, which is a SMART goal format (specific, measurable, attainable, rigorous, and time-bound); and finally,
(3) Include metrics and measures using the following criteria: "Exceeds standards," "Meets standards," "Does not meet standards," and "Falls far below standards."

For instance, if a school's mission focuses on language acquisition, then a school may choose a mission-specific goal that measures student progress and performance in this special area.

Again, please note that **these goals are subject to change through the negotiation process as an approved school works with their Authorizer in the contract negotiation process during the planning/implementation year**.

Please note: The criteria for the SMART format is as follows:

- **Specific**. A well-defined goal must be specific, clearly and concisely stated, and easily understood. Educational goals should be tied to learning standards or outcomes that specify what students should know and be able to do, for each subject or content area and for each grade, age, or other grouping level.
- **Measurable**. A goal should be tied to measurable results to be achieved. Measurement is then simply an assessment of success or failure in achieving the goal.
- **Attainable.** A goal should be attainable and realistic. The applicant should identify why the goal is attainable.
- **Rigorous**. A goal should present the challenge of rigor. The applicant should identify why the goal is rigorous.
- **Time-Bound with Target Dates**. A well-conceived goal should specify a timeframe or target date for achievement.

Identify and provide at least one mission-specific goal in the following section. Include the following key elements:

- First, ensure that the annual goal provided shows the implementation of the proposed school's mission.
- Second, for each goal provided, use the SMART format (specific, measurable, attainable, rigorous, and time-bound—see glossary). Your goal should include all of these key SMART elements, be clear, comprehensive, and cohesive.
- Third, include measures and metrics in your mission-specific goal. Specifically, determine what percentage constitutes "exceeds standards," what constitutes "meets standards," what falls under "does not meet standards," and what it means to "fall far below standards." NOTE: **Please see examples in the glossary or in Part A of this application**.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Goal related to School's Mission:

Polaris Charter School's mission is to engage students in the community, environment, history and culture of Northern New Mexico through personalized hands-on learning experiences that strengthen and support student well-being and intellectual growth.

The success of our mission depends upon our ability to effectively implement strategic programs. We have chosen three rigorous, yet attainable, goals that are strategically aligned to our mission and reliable indicators to annually measure our performance. Mission specific goals and indicators are critical in providing clear goals for students, a direction for programs, and aligning instruction, to meet our accountability obligations for all stakeholders (students, parents, governing board, state).

Mission specific Indicator/Goal:

Mission Specific Indicator/Goal	**SMART Measure**	**Rating category**
Academic Achievement Outcome: Polaris students will demonstrate measurable academic growth that meets or exceeds annual yearly progress goals in math and English language arts as measured by a nationally normed assessment tool.	Polaris will use the nationally normed NWEA-MAPS test to measure student growth at the beginning and end of the year. Students are expected to meet or exceed growth targets annually.	**Exceeds Standard:** More than 85% of Polaris students will meet their beginning to end of year growth targets in language arts and math as measured by the NWEA -MAPS test (see chart below)

			Meets Standard: 70-85% of Polaris students will meet their beginning to end of year growth targets in language arts and math as measured by the NWEA -MAPS test (see chart below) **Falls Below Standard:** 60-69% of Polaris students will meet their beginning to end of year growth targets" in language arts and math as measured by the NWEA -MAPS test (see chart below) **Falls Far Below Standard:** Less than 60% of Polaris students will meet their beginning to end of year growth targets" in language arts and math as measured by the NWEA -MAPS test (see chart below)
	<u>Social Emotional Learning Outcome:</u> Polaris students, staff, and parents will rate the climate/culture and their own social-emotional learning with an average of 4 or higher (out of 5) on a nationally normed survey.	Climate and social-emotional learning surveys will be completed twice per year on both culture/climate as well as Social-Emotional Learning using a national normed instrument, Panorama.	**Exceeds Standards:** 85% or higher of Polaris students score an average of 4 or higher on a nationally normed survey.

			Meets Standards if 70-85% of Polaris students score an average of 4 or higher on a nationally normed survey. **Falls Below Standards** if 60-70% of Polaris students score an average of 4 or higher on a nationally normed survey. **Falls Far Below Standards** if: 0-60%of Polaris students score an average of 4 or higher on a nationally normed survey.
	<u>Active Citizenship Outcome:</u> Each Polaris student will complete at least 2 community impact projects per year that are perceived as positive by our community partners.	Once per year the Academic Leader will report on the number of community projects completed by students and community perception around each of those projects.	**Exceeds Standard:** During one academic year, 85% or more of Polaris students will complete 2 or more community impact projects that are perceived as positive by community members. **Meets Standard:** During one academic year, 70-85% of Polaris students will complete 2 or more community impact

			projects that are perceived as positive by community members. **Does Not Meet Standard:** During one academic year, 60-69% of Polaris students complete 2 community impact projects that are perceived as positive by community members. **Falls Far Below Standards** if: During one academic year, less than 60% of Polaris students complete 2 community impact projects that are perceived as positive by community members.

Academic Achievement Outcome: Polaris students will demonstrate measurable academic growth that meets or exceeds annual yearly progress goals in math and English language arts as measured by a nationally normed assessment tool.

Specific
Our mission specific indicator is clear and concise, tied to nationally normed learning growth outcomes. The academic growth that each student is expected to achieve is specifically based on their score at the beginning of the school year. The chart below (Figures 4 and 5.) clearly indicates the mean growth score that each student is expected to achieve based on their starting score.

Measurable
We are measuring growth based on a reliable nationally normed assessment, NWEA-MAPS. Each student's rate of growth is dependent upon their starting

score.

Attainable

We believe that this amount of growth is an appropriate and attainable benchmark expectation because it is based on a nationally normed mean or average. (68% of all student scores fall within the normal range.)

Rigorous

The goal is meant to focus all stakeholders on our mission of academic growth and improvement, but it is not out of reach.

Testing is rigorous and reliable. The test dynamically adjusts based on each student's responses, creating a personalized assessment that is able to accurately measure student growth. "NWEA uses anonymous assessment data from over 10.2 million students to create national norms." (Thum & Hauser, 2015) Measuring student growth goes beyond a proficiency score to determine whether each student is progressing, learning, and growing.

Timebound

Measuring growth requires comparing a score from the beginning of the year with a score at the end of the year. We will use this assessment twice each year to measure student growth.

NWEA Student Growth Norms

2015 READING Student Growth Norms

	Begin-to-Mid Year		Mid-to-End Year		Begin-to-End Year	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
K	10.3	6.01	6.81	5.46	17.1	8.11
1	10.8	6.00	5.99	5.46	16.8	8.09
2	9.5	6.05	4.52	5.49	14.0	8.20
3	7.3	5.79	3.02	5.33	10.3	7.59
4	5.4	5.56	2.33	5.19	7.8	7.05
5	4.2	5.60	1.97	5.21	6.1	7.15
6	3.2	5.62	1.54	5.22	4.8	7.19
7	2.5	5.58	1.25	5.20	3.7	7.11
8	1.9	6.05	0.99	5.49	2.8	8.19
9	1.1	6.35	0.60	5.68	1.7	8.87
10	0.6	6.72	0.17	5.91	0.7	9.66

2015 MATHEMATICS Student Growth Norms

	Begin-to-Mid Year		Mid-to-End Year		Begin-to-End Year	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
K	11.4	5.56	7.67	5.03	19.1	7.59
1	11.4	5.50	6.97	4.99	18.4	7.45
2	9.5	5.35	5.72	4.90	15.2	7.11
3	7.8	5.08	5.19	4.73	13.0	6.47
4	6.8	5.05	4.78	4.72	11.6	6.41
5	5.8	5.22	4.13	4.82	9.9	6.80
6	4.4	5.20	3.26	4.80	7.7	6.75
7	3.5	5.11	2.47	4.75	6.0	6.55
8	2.9	5.59	1.78	5.05	4.6	7.66
9	2.0	5.81	1.17	5.19	3.1	8.15
10	1.5	6.18	0.85	5.42	2.3	8.92

2015 LANGUAGE USAGE Student Growth Norms

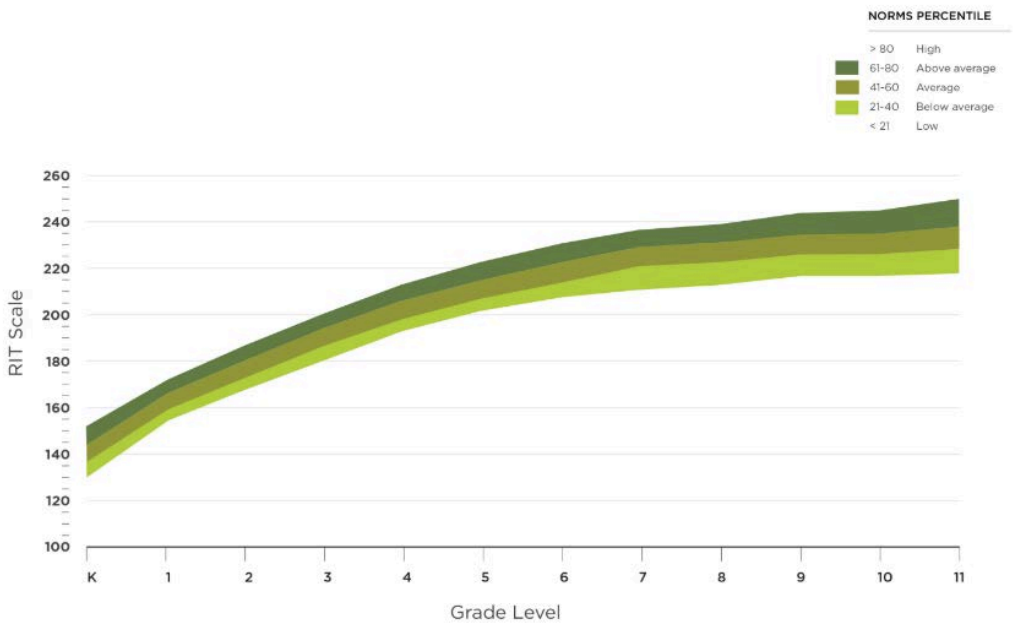
	Begin-to-Mid Year		Mid-to-End Year		Begin-to-End Year	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
2	10.4	6.61	4.74	5.70	15.2	9.83
3	7.4	5.61	3.14	5.06	10.6	7.69
4	5.6	5.26	2.28	4.84	7.9	6.90
5	4.1	5.21	1.76	4.81	5.8	6.78
6	3.2	5.23	1.32	4.83	4.5	6.84
7	2.5	5.14	1.10	4.77	3.6	6.61
8	1.9	5.40	0.96	4.93	2.9	7.22
9	1.4	5.65	0.65	5.08	2.0	7.79
10	0.8	6.03	0.42	5.32	1.2	8.61

2015 GENERAL SCIENCE Student Growth Norms

	Begin-to-Mid Year		Mid-to-End Year		Begin-to-End Year	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
3	5.1	6.28	2.88	5.85	8.0	8.02
4	4.2	5.94	2.27	5.64	6.4	7.19
5	3.5	5.92	2.04	5.63	5.5	7.13
6	2.8	5.92	1.59	5.63	4.3	7.14
7	2.3	5.91	1.39	5.62	3.7	7.10
8	2.0	6.09	1.24	5.73	3.2	7.56

Thum Y. M., & Hauser, C. H. (2015)

NWEA Percentile Norms



Thum Y. M., & Hauser, C. H. (2015)
https://www.nwea.org/normative-data-rit-scores/

Social Emotional Learning Outcome: Polaris students, staff, and parents will rate the climate/culture and their own social-emotional learning with an average of 4 or higher (out of 5) on a nationally normed survey.

Specific
Our mission specific indicator is clear, **an average of 4 or higher (out of 5). ,** and tied to a nationally normed survey from Panorama Education.

Measurable
We will measure SEL through a Panorama survey. It is considered a valid and reliable instrument developed by researchers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the University of California Santa Barbara and used by over 6,500 schools in 35 states. It allows Polaris to compare our students to a national standard.

Attainable
We believe that this score is an attainable benchmark because it is high, 4 out of 5, but does not require a perfect score, and appropriate for most students (70-85%).

Rigorous
The goal is meant to focus all stakeholders on the SEL part of our mission, which we believe is as important as academic achievement. Panorama Education has developed a survey that allows us to measure SEL student competencies (grit,

growth mindset, self-management, social awareness, self-efficacy). We believe that adding this rigorous goal will keep our school focused on social emotional learning.

Timebound
We will measure SEL annually. (Our school has the option of using this survey more often, so our goal is to use the first measurement as a formative baseline, to guide programs and instruction.

Active Citizenship Outcome: Each Polaris student will complete at least 2 community impact projects per year that are perceived as positive by community partners.

Specific
The number of projects required each year is specific, at least 2 community impact projects. We do not believe that simply counting any project is acceptable, so we will survey community partners for feedback regarding the project. We expect to only count projects that our partners consider positive, or receiving at least a 4 out of 5 on a rating scale.

Measurable
The indicators require a count of projects each year and a survey that will measure the perception of our community partners. We believe that a survey, developed by Polaris, can use a 1-5 rating scale to measure the quality of student projects.

Attainable
We believe that completing two community projects each year is a high goal. We know that quality projects require time, but we are confident that most students (70-85%) can complete one project in the fall and another in the spring.

Rigorous
We believe that completing two community projects each year will require significant work with community partners. Because we value the perception of our community partners, we decided to include them in helping to measure this goal.

Timebound
We will measure community perception at the culmination of each project and then count the number of acceptable projects each student completes at the end of each year.

References

Panorama Education (n.d.) User guide: Panorama social-emotional learning survey. Accessed December 2018. https://go.panoramaed.com/thanks/guide-measuring-social-emotional-learning?submissionGuid=1db25aad-b5df-4555-9f9d-789286ec3327

	Thum Y. M., & Hauser, C. H. (2015). NWEA 2015 MAP Norms for Student and School Achievement Status and Growth. NWEA Research Report. Portland, OR: NWEA
	Other Mission-Specific Goals, if appropriate

Total Points Available	**Expectations**
12	A complete response must • Include one mission-specific goal; • Align to the student outcomes identified in the mission response (A.1.); • Include all elements of the SMART format: o Specific o Measurable o Attainable o Rigorous o Time bound; • Include the following rating categories—Exceeds Standards, Meets Standards, Does Not Meet Standards, and Falls Far Below Standards; • Include measures and metrics, including percentages for each rating category; • Explain why the established goals are rigorous; and • Explain why the established goals are attainable.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

C. Bilingual Multicultural Indian Education and Hispanic Education

C. (1) Provide a description of the proposed school's curriculum will ensure equal education opportunities for students in New Mexico through cognitive and affective development of the students by:

(a) using the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in a bilingual multicultural education program;

(b) providing students with opportunities to expand their conceptual and linguistic abilities and potentials in a successful and positive manner; and

(c) teaching students to appreciate the value and beauty of different languages and cultures.

Provide and describe a detailed, clear, comprehensive, and reasonable timeline and plan for the development of the entire proposed curriculum, including identification of responsible staff, action steps, and deadlines that will ensure alignment with CCSS, NM Content Standards, and the proposed school's mission.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Polaris Charter School's mission is to engage students in the community, environment, history and culture of Northern New Mexico through personalized hands-on learning experiences that strengthen and support student well-being and intellectual growth.

This mission is derived from a philosophy that values the local community and rich culture of our student population. We believe that diversity is a strength that allows people to understand and appreciate each other and the wider-world. Our goal is to use a place-based framework for our curriculum that engages students in the local community, history, science, and culture of Northern New Mexico through authentic learning experiences that strengthen and support student well-being and academic growth. All students will have equal educational opportunities for cognitive and affective development through this place-based framework, affective programming, and student choice.

Cultivate Relationships, Cultural Appreciation, and Responsiveness
Through Social Emotional Learning, Advisory Time, Design Thinking, and Family Council

Teaching students to appreciate the value and beauty of different languages and cultures begins with a school staff that builds relationships, demonstrates an appreciation for student cultures and responds to individual student needs. Polaris has made social emotional learning and building relationships a priority by including it in:

- **Polaris Mission**- engage students in the community, environment, history and culture of Northern New Mexico through personalized hands-on learning experiences that strengthen and support student well-being and intellectual growth.
- **Mission Specific Goal** - Social Emotional Learning Outcome
- **Curriculum and Instruction**- SEL competencies identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning are included in our curriculum. A Language curriculum that includes a unit on *"Reading for Empathy and Advocacy* " to prepare students to advocate for themselves and others, and honoring student choice and voice in projects.
- **School Schedule**- Each day begins with Advisory Time that allows time for social emotional learning, setting learning goals, personal reflection, and preparing for the day.

Processes and Procedures- Restorative Practices, an approach to justice that involves the victim, offender, and community members, and provides real-time opportunities to solve problems by proactively building a sense of empathy and social connection. Mastery-based learning holds students accountable for individual growth and progress.

Middle school students are in the process of forming personal identities as part of their social emotional development. They are searching to find out who they are and what their place is in the world. We believe that a school environment that understands, appreciates, and supports students from all backgrounds is essential in preparing students to take the emotional and intellectual risks necessary for growth.

Polaris holds high expectations focused on student growth for all students. Our competency-based learning system helps teachers individualize instruction and holds students accountable for learning. We pinpoint specific skills and standards that students need to master, and then we share that information with students, parents, and teachers, so that everyone understands what students need to learn and how they are progressing.

Families create a culturally rich extended learning environment and are an important part of Polaris. All Families will be encouraged to participate in Family Advisory Council, an organization that provides support and advice to school leadership. In order to encourage all families to participate, this organization is free. In addition to Family Advisory Council monthly meetings, families will be invited to regular Polaris Meet-up outings to explore the community with students (hikes, museum visits, planetarium shows, etc.), and meet with teachers individually at least twice each year to participate in Family Conferences.

Place-based Framework Builds Upon the Cultural and Linguistic Background of Students

We view the community as part of an expanded educational ecosystem and believe that it is essential for our schools to engage students beyond the walls of the classroom. Interacting with local experts and places can bring relevance and meaning to student work. New Mexico Common Core Standards require students to interpret text from primary and secondary sources, identify textual evidence, interpret charts and graphs, understand point of view, and develop domain specific vocabulary. Place based learning provides an opportunity for students to practice these skills in authentic applications and projects. Instead of finding answers in classroom textbooks, students collect and evaluate real information from outside of the classroom. They are expected to engage with local and regional experts and think critically about information. They become thinkers who search out and evaluate information, skills that will prepare them for college and careers in the 21st Century and achieve our mission to inspire local and global citizenship.

As part of our place-based learning philosophy, Polaris will actively seek out opportunities (educational resources, programs, events, grants, partnerships, family meetups on weekends) for engagement with local cultural and historic resources. There is a wealth of local information available to schools, and the table below lists some of them.

Local Cultural Resources

Resource	Contact Information

Bandelier National Monument	(505) 672-3851 Field Trips, Star Parties https://www.nps.gov/band/index.htm
Chimayó Museum	13 Plaza De Cerro Chimayó, NM 87522 (505) 351-0945 http://www.chimayomuseum.com/about.html
El Rancho de la Golondrinas	Spanish Colonial Days in October and April for grade 6. Individual guided tours all grades. Family events on the weekends. 334 Los Pinos Rd Santa Fe, NM 87507 (505) 471-2261, ext. 101 https://golondrinas.org/
Misión Convento in The Plaza de Española	Museum 706 Bond St Española, NM 87532 (505) 500-7126
Museum of Spanish Colonial Art	Free educational outreach program, "Art Connections" for schools in northern New Mexico. These classes are in the traditional Spanish colonial arts and are taught by experienced Market artists. Classes are taught in retablos, straw appliqué, tinwork, colcha embroidery, pottery and weaving. 750 Camino Lejo Santa Fe, NM 87502 (505) 982-2226 http://spanishcolonial.org/
Museum of Indian Arts and Culture	Stories Tour, Weaving Tour, Field Trips contact: Dina Velarde by email at MIAC.Education@state.nm.us or telephone at 505/476-1272. Also, online tours: Touched by Fire Showcases the life and work of Maria Martinez, the legendary San Ildefonso potter who forever changed the world of Indian art. **http://www.miaclab.org/** 710-708 Camino Lejo, Santa Fe, NM 87502
Museum of International Folk Art	http://www.internationalfolkart.org/ 706 Camino Lejo, Santa Fe, NM 87502 Folk Art To Go! Program, Folk Art Outreach Trunks, Teacher In-Service Training patricia.sigala@state.nm.us 505-476-1212
Pecos National Historical Park	(505) 757-7210 https://www.nps.gov/peco/index.htm

Piedra Lumbre Visitors Center, Ghost Ranch	Field Trips- Anthropology and Paleontology Museum. Learn about local cultures by participating in activities such as traditional tinwork, sand painting, straw inlay work, and visiting archaeological sites. https://www.ghostranch.org/explore/museums/ (505) 685-1000, ext. 4118 (505) 685-4333
Puyé Cliffs, Santa Clara Pueblo	Tours http://www.puyecliffdwellings.com/ (505) 917-6650
Los Alamos History Museum	hour-long outreach lessons that address common core standards for grade 7, field trips, National History Day Projects https://www.losalamoshistory.org/childrens_programs_educators.html Museum Educator Aimee Slaughter, educator@losalamoshistory.org or (505) 695-5251
Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area (NRGNHA)	https://riograndenha.org/index.html 848 State Road 68 Alcalde, NM 87511 (505) 852-0030
Espanola Valley Fiber Arts Center (EVFAC)	https://www.evfac.org/ Youth Education Coordinator - youtheducation@evfac.org (505) 747-3577 Traveling Fiber Trunk program - hands-on and multidisciplinary experience of traditional fiber arts.
Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project	https://www.mesaprietapetroglyphs.org/ (505) 852-1351 The 4th - 7th Grade Curriculum "Discovering Mesa Prieta" is an award-winning interactive STEM-based (science, technology, engineering, math) curriculum that has been used in some 20 Pueblo and community schools since 2003. Teacher Training Program in the Fall
New Mexico Humanities Council	4115 Silver Avenue SE Albuquerque, NM 87108 505.633.7370 info@nmhumanities.org www.nmhumanities.org

Jemez State Monument	Education Programs, Tours 575-829-3530 Jemez Springs, NM http://nmhistoricsites.org/jemez

Authentic Projects and Student Choice Provide Opportunities to Expand Conceptual and Linguistic Abilities and Potentials in a Successful and Positive Manner

Polaris uses authentic projects to inspire local and global citizenship. Students are supported as they discover their voice and use it to create projects that require students to communicate effectively through the spoken and written word, art, and mathematics in productive ways. We believe that bilingual students are in a unique position to help communicate with others around the world, a skill that is critical to cultivating global citizens.

One way that Polaris supports diversity is by allowing student choice. Polaris supports students with opportunities to choose projects, reading material, and elective classes, demonstrating that we value student ideas and needs. It also helps teachers differentiate programs to meet the needs of individual students and create the most appropriate learning environment for each student. Allowing student choice and voice is critical to helping students, especially adolescent students, learn to make appropriate choices. We are asking for a waiver that will allow us to purchase community and culturally relevant resources to enhance student learning.

Multicultural and Multilingual Texts

Our place-based philosophy includes a local to global focus. Based on this focus, we have two goals for choosing student projects and texts:

1) Choose texts and projects that reflect the identities, cultures, and environment of our students, so that they can connect to local content and characters.

2) Choose texts and projects that build empathy by exploring diverse cultures, environments, and global issues.

We believe that in order to develop lifelong readers outside of the classroom, students in middle school must develop the skills to choose books that are appropriate for them. Teachers will use their expertise in reading instruction, knowledge of local authors, cultures, and place/project content, passion for reading, expert recommendations (such as the *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project*, Los Alamos History Museum, and Colorín Colorado), and student recommendations to thoughtfully build a library of high-quality novels and non-fiction works, including novel sets and anthologies of classic short stories, poems, and speeches.

Potential middle school titles recommended by First Nations Development Institute, National Hispanic Cultural Center, and/or Colorín Colorado, are included below. We will also listen to and respond to students, parents, and local organizations regarding culturally relevant reading materials that interest our students and meet high literacy standards.

- Tortilla Sun by Jennifer Cervantes
- Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel by Xavier Garza
- Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan

- Confetti Girl by Diana Lopez
- The Color of My Words by Lynn Joseph
- Trickster: Native American Tales, A Graphic Collection by Matt Dembicki (Editor)
- The Color of My Words by Lynn Joseph
- The Dreamer by Pam Munoz Ryan
- Secret of the Andes by Ann Nolan Clark
- Becoming Naomi Leon by Pam Munoz Ryan
- Moccasin Thunder: American Indian Stories for Today A collection of stories by Native writers edited by Lori Marie Carlson
- Native American History for Kids by Karen Bush Gibson
- Rio Grande Stories by Caroline Meyer
- Super Indian Volume One by Arigon Starr
- Under the Cottonwood Tree / El susto de la curandera: a New Mexican Fairy Tale graphic novel by Paul and Carlos Meyer
- Native Realities: Graphic Novels featuring First Nations freedom fighters, Aboriginal astronauts, and Native American superheroes, Tales of the Mighty Codetalkers Vol. 1

The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) Curriculum Units and Strategies Fit Our Mission and Framework

The *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project* (TCRWP) curriculum that we will be using includes reading units for middle school students with topics that fit our mission and allows choice in the levels and texts that are used in each unit. This will allow Polaris to add culturally relevant texts that cover similar topics. One unit, *Tapping the Power of Nonfiction,* is essential for developing independent learners in all subject areas. Another unit, *Reading for Empathy and Advocacy,* will help us meet the social emotional needs of students and prepare them to advocate for themselves and others.

TCRWP Curriculum is Research Based

TCRWP is based on a significant amount of research on reading and writing and program evaluation. The TCRWP 2017 Preliminary Data Report "looked at testing data in TCRWP NYC schools in a variety of ways, including tracing growth over time, investigating the performance of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners, and comparing TCRWP schools with non TCRWP schools overall. It includes city data and state data." They found that "Students in all TCRWP schools outperform students in non TCRWP schools overall across the city and the state by approximately 10%. Students in Core TCRWP schools overall outperform peers in non TCRWP schools by approximately 25%. The benefits for schools of TCRWP staff development include:

- Improved English Language Arts (ELA) performance for the student population at large
- Improved performance across all groups of learners, including English Language Learners (ELL)/English as a Second Language (ESL) students and Students with Disabilities
- Increased English Language Arts (ELA) proficiency for each year spent in a TCRWP school"

(accessed online: http://readingandwritingproject.org/about/our-data and https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B404rJALRaGwNnZncVVWRDA3NzQ/view)

Examples of a Culturally Relevant Place-Based Curriculum

One example of a place-based integrated learning lesson would be for students to create a heritage project. This could include original scholarly research that answers an important specific question, such

as about Los Alamos's role during the Cold War. Students would work with the local Historical Society to collect, analyze and interpret information from the local community (including grandparents and local elders) and then create a product that is worthy of being placed in the local archives.

Another example would be for students to examine how the geography of Los Alamos impacted indigenous people, homesteaders, and led to the creation of Los Alamos National Laboratory. This would be extended to understanding the impact that the local landscape (volcanology) and water have on some of our current local issues and cultures, including importance of bridge infrastructure to the town, understanding earthquake risk, designing buildings on Volcanic Tuff, commuting to work, and even the economic and cultural impact of being landlocked (housing issues and economic development), etc. Students could meet local experts, design experiments, and test ideas to propose solutions to some of the problems related to our landscape. As active citizens, students are expected to share their ideas with the community. These ideas are complex and projects require an understanding of science, social studies, math, and language.

Curriculum Using a Place-Based Project Framework
Aligns with mission, CCSS, and NM Content Standards

Our goal is to use a place-based framework for our curriculum that engages students in the community, history, science, and culture of Northern New Mexico through authentic learning experiences that strengthen and support student well-being and academic growth. We view the community as part of an expanded educational ecosystem and believe that it is essential for our schools to engage students beyond the walls of the classroom. Interacting with local experts and places can bring relevance and meaning to student work. New Mexico Common Core Standards require students to interpret text from primary and secondary sources, identify textual evidence, interpret charts and graphs, understand point of view, and develop domain specific vocabulary. Place based learning provides an opportunity for students to practice these skills in authentic applications and projects. Instead of finding answers in classroom textbooks, students collect and evaluate real information from outside of the classroom. They are expected to engage with experts and think critically about information. They become thinkers who search out and evaluate information, skills that will prepare them for college and careers in the 21st Century and achieve our mission to inspire global citizenship.

Place-based learning allows us to meet the social-emotional needs of students and achieve our mission of global citizenship. Middle school students are in the process of forming personal identities as part of their social emotional development. They are searching to find out who they are and what their place is in the world. The local to global context of our social studies and science curriculum provides a context for students to understand regional and global challenges and help students personally connect with the world around them. This focus aligns with our mission to engage students in the community, environment, history, and culture of Northern New Mexico through personalized hands-on learning experiences that strengthen and support student well-being and intellectual growth.

A Place-Based Curriculum is Research Based
Our Place-Based framework was chosen to help improve the academic proficiency of our students who are particularly motivated by real world experience. This framework has been shown to help foster a sense of belonging in the community. Studies have found that integrating the local environment as a context for learning improves student achievement in core subjects. According to *"Closing the Achievement Gap"* by Lieberman and Hoody, students, teachers and administrators report significant positive effects on problem solving skills, critical thinking and decision making. They also report an

"increased enthusiasm and engagement in learning and gains in summative measures of educational achievement such as standardized test scores and grade point average." (Lieberman and Hoody, 1998)

Other studies have corroborated the impact of integrating the local environment as a context for learning. Research conducted by the Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative (PEEC) concluded that place-based education increases student engagement while decreasing the achievement gap. (Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative, 2010). An evaluation of the Place-based Education Collaborative also suggests that participating in programs makes "significant and positive contributions to teacher practice, use of local places for teaching, student engagement in learning, student civic engagement, student time spent outdoors, student stewardship behavior, and community civic engagement," (Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative, 2010).

A Place-Based Curriculum is Reasonable:

Los Alamos is a small rural town with a strong sense of place, so using our local resources to implement a place-based curriculum is reasonable. We have a significant history that includes indigenous people, Hispanic homesteaders, a ranch school, and an international scientific laboratory. Our community borders Bandelier National Monument, The Valles Caldera National Monument, Santa Clara Pueblo, and San Ildefonso Pueblo. The community initiated Polaris and we have continued to develop strong community relationships. School success depends on using community resources wisely. Our place-based framework not only uses the community, but also integrates it into the curriculum. Here are some of the community and local organizations that we will use to inform and enrich our curriculum.

Community Resources

Community Organization	Contact Information	Resources
Pajarito Environmental Education Center	Katie Bruell, director (505) 662-0460 director@losalamosnature.org 2600 Canyon Rd, Los Alamos, NM	nature center; public programs such as talks, hikes, outings, and classes; school lessons and field trips; and state-of-the-art planetarium programs.
Bradbury Science Museum	(505) 667-4444 ldeck@lanl.gov 1350 Central Ave, Los Alamos, NM Linda Deck, director	Science museum, public programs, school field trips, Physics, chemistry, current science, Volunteers.

Los Alamos History Museum	Aimee Slaughter, educator & publications educator@losalamoshistory.org (505) 662-6272 1050 Bathtub Row, Los Alamos, NM	Public programs, school field trips, traveling trunks, historic buildings, artifacts, documents, photographs, audio and video recordings of personal stories, and interactive visitor experiences, National History Day Projects
Fuller Lodge Art Center	Ken Nebel, director (505) 662-1635 2132 Central Ave. Los Alamos, NM director@fullerlodgeartcenter.org	Local art exhibits, children's classes, contacts with local artists
Mesa Public Library	Eileen Sullivan, director 505.663.1755 eileen.sullivan@lacnm.us 2400 Central Ave, Los Alamos, NM	Book clubs, volunteers, check out groups of books for book clubs, individual book check out
Bandelier National Monument	(505) 672-3851 https://www.nps.gov/band/index.htm	Field Trips, Star Parties
Chimayó Museum	13 Plaza De Cerro Chimayó, NM 87522 (505) 351-0945 http://www.chimayomuseum.com/about.html	
El Rancho de la Golondrinas	334 Los Pinos Rd Santa Fe, NM 87507 (505) 471-2261, ext. 101 https://golondrinas.org/	Spanish Colonial Days in October and April for grade 6. Individual guided tours all grades. Family events on the weekends.

Museum of Spanish Colonial Art	750 Camino Lejo Santa Fe, NM 87502 (505) 982-2226 http://spanishcolonial.org/	Free educational outreach program, "Art Connections" for schools in northern New Mexico. These classes are in the traditional Spanish colonial arts and are taught by experienced Market artists. Classes are taught in retablos, straw appliqué, tinwork, colcha embroidery, pottery and weaving.
Museum of Indian Arts and Culture	Field Trips contact: Dina Velarde by email at MIAC.Education@state.nm.us or telephone at 505/476-1272. **http://www.miaclab.org/** 710-708 Camino Lejo, Santa Fe, NM 87502	Stories Tour, Weaving Tour, Also, online tours: Touched by Fire Showcases the life and work of Maria Martinez, the legendary San Ildefonso potter who forever changed the world of Indian art.
Museum of International Folk Art	http://www.internationalfolkart.org/ 706 Camino Lejo Santa Fe, NM 87502 patricia.sigala@state.nm.us 505-476-1212	Folk Art To Go! Program, Folk Art Outreach Trunks, Teacher In-Service Training
Pecos National Historical Park	(505) 757-7210 https://www.nps.gov/peco/index.htm	Field Trips- visiting archaeological sites.
Piedra Lumbre Visitors Center, Ghost Ranch	https://www.ghostranch.org/explore/museums/ (505) 685-1000, ext. 4118 (505) 685-4333	Field Trips- Anthropology and Paleontology Museum. Learn about local cultures by participating in activities such as traditional tinwork, sand painting, straw inlay work, and visiting archaeological sites.
Puyé Cliffs, Santa Clara Pueblo	http://www.puyecliffdwellings.com/ (505) 917-6650	Field Trips- visiting archaeological sites.
Northern Rio Grande National	https://riograndenha.org/index.html 848 State Road 68 Alcalde, NM 87511 (505) 852-0030	Information and resources about Northern New Mexico

Heritage Area (NRGNHA)		
Espanola Valley Fiber Arts Center (EVFAC)	https://www.evfac.org/ Youth Education Coordinator: youtheducation@evfac.org (505) 747-3577	Traveling Fiber Trunk program - hands-on and multidisciplinary experience of traditional fiber arts.
Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project	https://www.mesaprietapetroglyphs.org/ (505) 852-1351	The 4th - 7th Grade Curriculum "Discovering Mesa Prieta" is an award-winning interactive STEM-based (science, technology, engineering, math) curriculum that has been used in some 20 Pueblo and community schools since 2003. Teacher Training Program in the Fall
New Mexico Humanities Council	4115 Silver Avenue SE Albuquerque, NM 87108 505.633.7370 info@nmhumanities.org www.nmhumanities.org	Family Programs, History Day Competition, Speakers

Polaris believes that any curriculum that we purchase will need to be aligned with our mission. This requires a comprehensive look at standards, scope and sequence, resources, and assessment. While we understand that this process is complex, we believe that adequate planning will ensure that our education plan is meeting the diverse needs of local students.

Standards Alignment Process During the Planning Year

Resource	Action Steps	Responsible Staff	Timeframe/Deadline
Curriculum Map	Align curriculum with CCSS, NM content, school mission Examine National and State Standards- focus on big-picture to create a curriculum map that sequences standards in a developmentally appropriate manner that aligns with school	Academic Leader, Director of Operations, Place Network	Oct.-Feb. 2019-2020

	mission		
Scope and Sequence	Identify the Scope (depth and breadth of content) to be taught at each grade level (beginning with 6th and 7th for our first year). Develop the Sequence (order in which the content should be taught) for best adolescent learning	Academic Leader, School Director of Operations, Place Network	March- April 2020 Due to PED June 1 **Curriculum will be fully completed before June 1st of the planning year—the deadline for having the commencement of operations approved.**
Unit and Course assessment	Examine exemplars for how standards will be assessed- backwards planning. Find resources and align standards with courses in the online competency-based tracker	Academic Leader, School Director of Operations, Place Network	March- April 2020
Unit Themes Plans -first semester Adapt curriculum to the needs of the local community and the State of New Mexico	work with the Place Network Develop unit plans, activities, models, resources, materials, connect to real-world and local place-based and cultural resources. 1) Determine student and curriculum needs (The first year we will make assumptions using local data. The following years, we will use parent surveys, student academic data, language usage parent surveys (EL), IEP needs/accommodations) 2) Identify local resources (Community Partners, Bilingual, texts, Local or Regional Connections to Content	Academic Leader, School Director of Operations, Place Network, Grade-Level Lead, Grade level teams, Instructional Specialist	April- May 15, 2020 **Curriculum will be fully completed before June 1st of the planning year—the deadline for having the commencement of operations approved.**

	Standards) 3) Match local resources to unit plans to develop a cohesive plan for the year. 4) Contact local organizations to plan field trips, PD for teachers, or order supplies. (July-ongoing)		
Daily Lesson Plans	After teachers are hired, this will be part of the training and preparation during Orientation.	Grade-Level Lead, Grade level teams, Instructional Specialist	July 2020 Due August 1, 2020
Project Plans and Rubrics	After teachers are hired, this will be part of the training and preparation during Orientation.	Grade-Level Lead, Grade level teams, Instructional Specialist	July 2020 Due August 1, 2020

References

Colorín Colorado: bilingual, research-based information, activities, and advice for educators and families of English language learners (ELLs). Colorín Colorado is an educational service of WETA http://www.colorincolorado.org/

New Mexico Centennial Recommended Reading List
http://literacynewmexico.org/uploads/downloads/nm-centennial-reading-list-9efb344706.pdf
In commemoration of the New Mexico Centennial, the New Mexico Public Education Department has compiled a recommended reading list for children in grades PreK-12. These books cover the rich history and culture of New Mexico.

First Nations Development Institute. (2019). Native American Children's Literature Recommended Reading List. https://www.firstnations.org/knowledge-center/books/

Super Indian Volume One by Arigon Starr (Kickapoo) (Wacky Productions, 2012)
First Nations Development Institute

National Hispanic Cultural Center. (2019).
http://www.nhccnm.org/

Total Points Available	Expectations
12	A complete response must • Describe the proposed school's curriculum; • Identify information that demonstrates the curriculum is research-based; • Describe a curriculum that is reasonable, based on the professional judgment of experienced educators; • Identify information that demonstrates how the curriculum will align with the New Mexico Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and New Mexico Content Standards; • Identify information that demonstrates how the curriculum will align with the proposed school's mission; and • Include a reasonable (as based on the professional judgment of experienced educators) timeline and plan for the development of the entire proposed curriculum—including scope and sequence, unit plans, daily lesson plans, project plans and rubrics, and unit and course assessments. o The timeline must identify the following: ▪ responsible staff ▪ action steps ▪ deadlines o The timeline must include specific action steps that will ensure alignment with the CCSS, NM Content Standards, and the proposed school's mission. o The timeline must demonstrate that the scope and sequence and unit plans for one semester's curriculum will be fully completed before June 1st of the planning year—the deadline for having the commencement of operations approved. o If the applicant is proposing to adopt a fully developed or standardized curriculum, the timeline must include specific action steps to adapt the curriculum to the needs of the local community and the State of New Mexico.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

D. Curriculum, Educational Program, Student Performance Standards.

D. (1) Provide a description of the proposed school's curriculum. The proposed curriculum must be research-based, reasonable, and clearly align with the New Mexico Common Core State Standards and the proposed school's mission.

Provide and describe a detailed, clear, comprehensive, and reasonable timeline and plan for the development of the entire proposed curriculum, including identification of responsible staff, action steps, and deadlines that will ensure alignment with CCSS, NM Content Standards, and the proposed school's mission. If approved, the PEC requires one semester's curriculum to be fully completed by the charter school during the planning year before commencement of operations is approved.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Philosophical Basis

Polaris Charter School's mission is to engage students in the community, environment, history and culture of Northern New Mexico through personalized hands-on learning experiences that strengthen and support student well-being and intellectual growth. Our entire curriculum was chosen in order to achieve our three mission objectives: academic growth, social-emotional learning strength and active citizenship.

We believe that mastering core academic subjects is essential to achieving high academic standards. Building a strong academic foundation requires a rigorous learner centered curriculum, individual accountability through competency-based assessment, and active engagement. We have chosen a rigorous curriculum that supports our mission to strengthen and support student well-being and intellectual growth by providing 1) Advisory Time to develop habits of success and student social emotional learning, 2) Rigorous Core Curriculum for language and math instruction 3) Integrated Learning Time for place-based and design thinking projects that engage learners in the community 4) Individual Accountability through Competency-based Assessment.

Our curriculum is designed to meet the specific academic and social emotional needs of middle school learners. We believe that students need to be taught and have time to practice social emotional and executive functioning strategies and skills required for students to become self-directed agents who are accountable for their own learning. Students begin each day with Advisory Time, which includes time for students to examine their progress, reflect on their work, understand personal strengths and weaknesses, develop achievement goals and create learning targets for the day. Students understand what standards they are working toward and have a personal plan for mastering those standards. A culture of continuous improvement requires individual work and progress, regardless of one's level of academic achievement.

The rigorous core curriculum dedicates significant blocks of time, 90 minutes each day, to each of the core subjects: math and language. During this time students will work with teachers who specialize in these content areas to develop a deep understanding of math and language. The core curriculum includes strategies for mastery learning, including small group instruction, individual assignments, and modeling to meet individual needs.

Integrated Learning Time includes Science and Social Studies project-based learning that requires students to apply skills learned in the core subjects to content areas.

Finally, we believe in customized learning paths and competency-based assessment. In order for a curriculum to be effective, it can not stand alone. An effective curriculum must advance student learning and increase achievement. Each student at Polaris is held to a high standard of accountability and an expectation of continuous improvement. Competency-based assessment provides real-time information

that teachers and students need to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction, set realistic individual student targets, choose appropriate teaching strategies, and adapt to challenges in order to maximize student achievement.

Advisory Curriculum Aligned to Mission:
Developing Habits of Success and Social Emotional Skills

Success in 21st Century learning requires students who have the ability to set and achieve their own goals, work well with others, and have developed strategies to solve problems. For this reason, student well-being is part of our school mission, and social emotional learning is an important part of our focus and culture. We believe it is important to have regularly dedicated time to teach specific social emotional and habits of success that build a sense of community, support student progress and help students plan for the future.

Our advisory curriculum has two parts: Social Emotional Learning and Organizational/Executive Functioning Skills. We believe supporting students in metacognitive, social-emotional and executive function (EF) skills will help students develop the habits and skills to become agents of their own learning and improve academic skills. We know that "EF processes are the underpinning for most academic work from the fourth grade on, when the curriculum increasingly emphasizes performance on tasks that require coordination, integration, and synthesis of the many processes and sub-skills needed for effective performance. "(Meltzer, 2018, p. 132) Recent studies suggest that effective ways to support and promote executive functioning processes are "to support social, emotional, and physical development. "(Meltzer, 2018, p. 116) The term social emotional learning (SEL) is broad, including many different "skills, attitudes, and behaviors that can affect a student's success in school and life. Critical thinking, managing emotions, working through conflicts, decision making, and team work—all of these are the kind of skills that are not necessarily measured by tests but which round out a student's education and impact his/her academic success, employability, self-esteem, relationships, as well as civic and community engagement." (CASEL, 2018) Advisory time is a specific time of the day each morning dedicated to learning and practicing the social emotional and organizational/executive functioning skills that are necessary to become independent learners and, together, will help us achieve our mission and goals of improved social emotional learning and academic achievement.

Our advisory curriculum is based on the five SEL competencies identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (See figure below) CASEL was established in 1994 and works to provide evidence and research-based information to advance education practices and policies related to social emotional learning. The five SEL competencies identified by CASEL form the backbone of our advisory curriculum, "self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making." (CASEL, 2018)

CASEL Social Emotional Learning

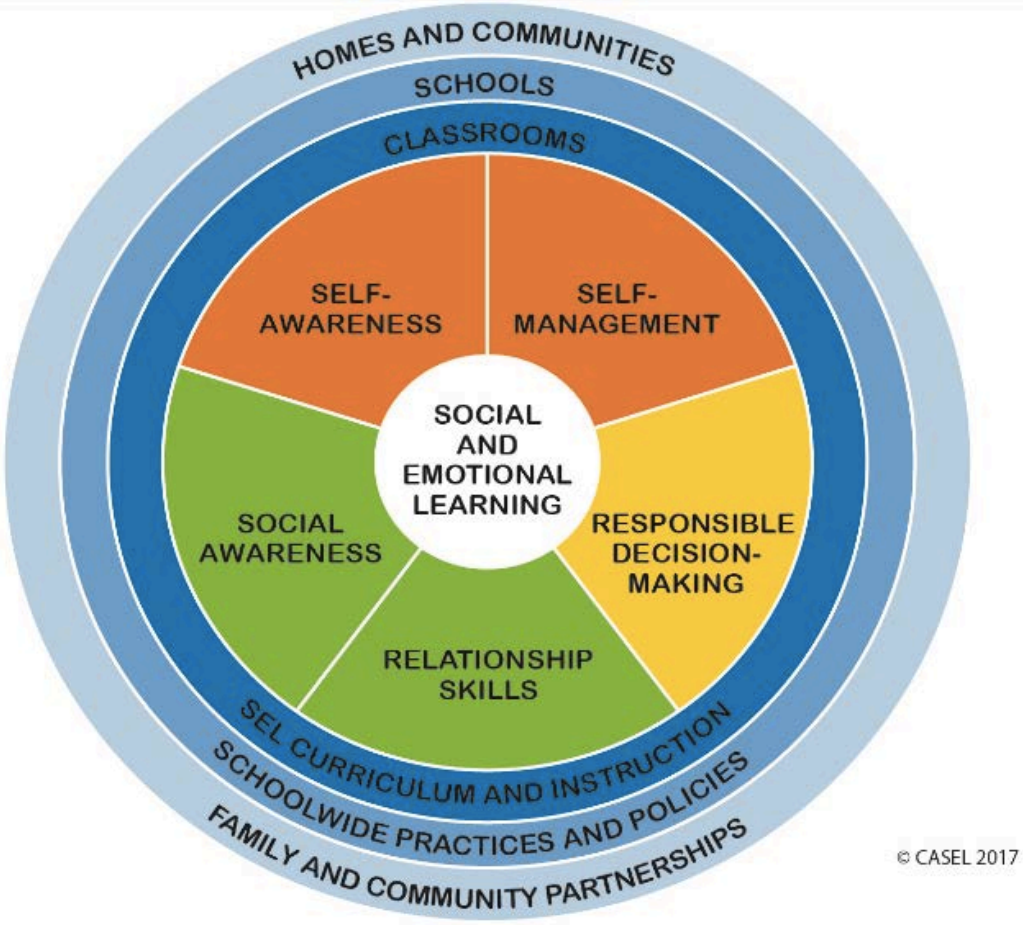


Image From: https://casel.org/wp-content/.../03/K-12-Learning-Goals-for-SEL-Feb-2018-V2.pd
CASEL Social and Emotional Learning Competencies

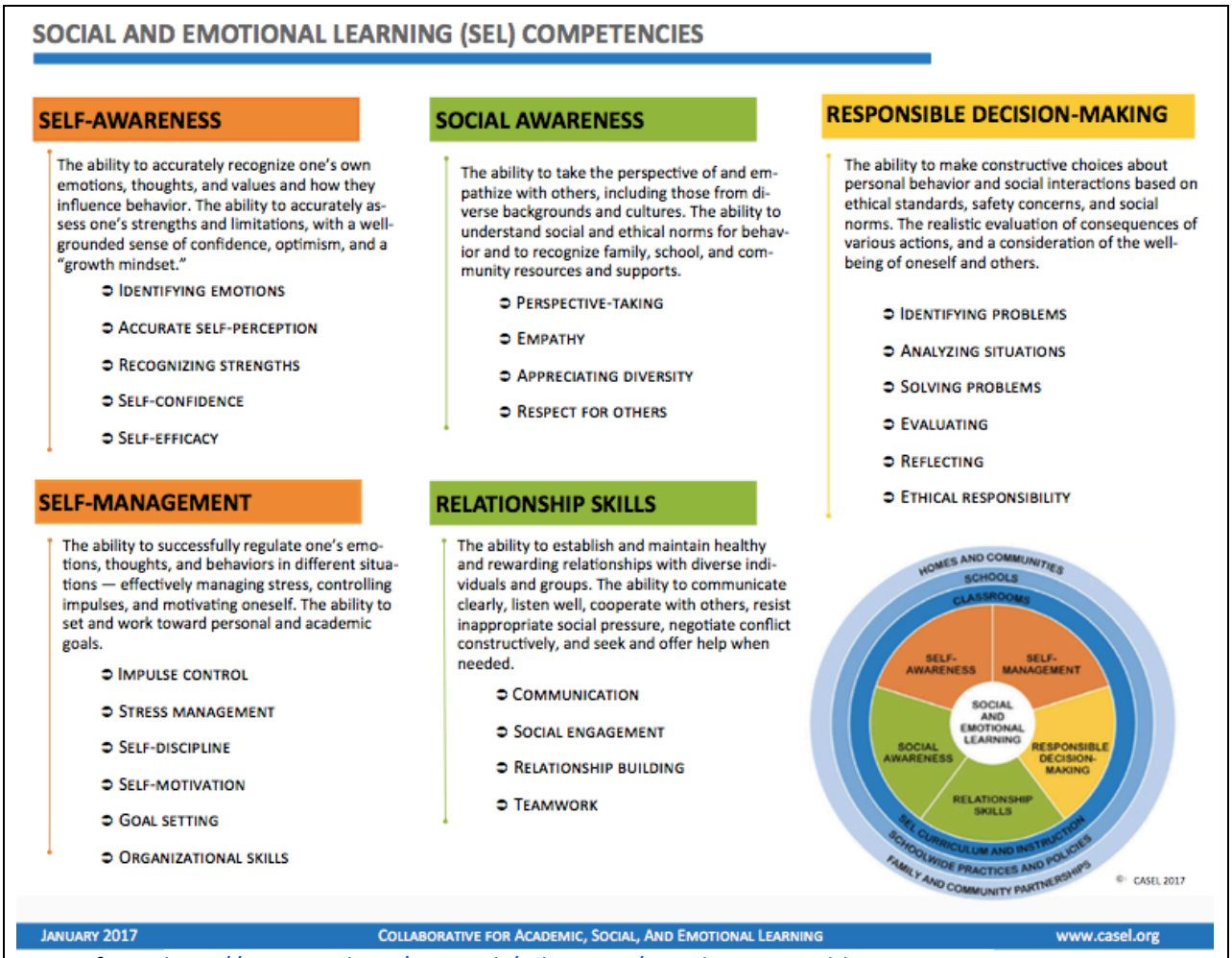


Image from: http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/social-emotional-learning.aspx

We have chosen Panorama as the platform for collecting social emotional learning (SEL) data and providing a collection of activities that support SEL. Panorama provides research-backed surveys and assessments that collect data about students' self-management, social awareness, grit, growth mindset, and self efficacy. The platform helps students, teachers, and schools understand individual student, subgroups and school data by comparing scores to national benchmarks and looking at changes over time.

It also supports teachers by providing professional development, training, support, and a library of strategies, interventions, and activities for teachers to use. Teachers can assess students' SEL and then choose the appropriate learning tool.

Novare is the platform that we will be using to set and share learning goals and monitor growth over time. While this is not a curriculum, it is an important part of the system that we have in place to hold students accountable to high academic standards. Novare is customized with our state and school standards, so learners can see what concepts they have mastered and what goals they are currently working toward. Teachers also have access to a project library that allows us to use and share projects that fit specific standards. Advisors, students, and parents will have access to Novare and use it to check-in, monitor progress, help students set goals, prioritize work, and develop strategies for success.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Organization/Executive Function Skills are reasonable and research-based

Social Emotional Learning programs have demonstrated success in schools. A meta-analysis of 213 school-based, universal social and emotional learning (SEL) programs involving 270,034 kindergarten through high school students showed that " SEL participants demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance that reflected an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement." (Durlak, et al., 2011). While we believe that academic knowledge is important, we know that instruction that focuses on strategies "is essential for the academic progress of students with learning differences and is beneficial for all students." (Meltzer, 2018, p. 133) These skills help students develop a positive growth mindset and the skills to solve problems and tackle academic challenges.

The benefits of social emotional skills go beyond academic achievement and will prepare students for success in the world. A "2015 study published in the American Journal of Public Health found significant associations between social-emotional skills in kindergarten and young adult outcomes across education, employment, criminal activity, and mental health."(CASEL, 2018).

Social Emotional Learning is so important that the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) expects states to collect data about SEL in schools. In New Mexico, SEL indicators on school surveys include school climate and student engagement. New Mexico does not currently have specific SEL expectations or goals for individual students. Some question whether SEL is a responsibility of schools or families, but Polaris believes that these skills are necessary for independent and cooperative learning.

Studies also show that schools do not need specialized personnel to teach SEL; regular teaching staff "successfully conducted SEL programs," (Durlak, et al., 2011). We are confident in the ability of the teaching staff to assess and teach SEL skills. Panorama will provide the tools and support that teachers need to be successful.

Panorama provides a reasonable way for teachers to measure individual social emotional learning and school culture. The survey only takes 10-15 minutes, is used by thousands of school districts across the country and is recommended by our partners in the Place Network. Studies show that Panorama's Social Emotional Learning measures are reliable and valid. SEL measures have been positively correlated with several variables, including student GPA, absences, and behavior.

Panorama Education (2016) PRELIMINARY REPORT Reliability and Validity of Panorama's Social-Emotional Learning Measures.

Organizational/Executive Functioning Skills

Polaris requires students to be agents of their learning, but this requires the ability to make decisions and manage learning, also called executive functioning skills. Advisory time will include strategic teaching of executive function skills including setting goals, organizing, prioritizing, thinking flexibly, remembering, and self-monitoring progress. These skills help students understand themselves and develop strategies for successful independent learning.

We have chosen the Strategies, Motivation, Awareness, Resilience, Talents, and Success (SMARTS) program to teach strategies and skills for executive functioning. It is specifically designed for grades 6-12

and is linked to Common Core Language Arts Standards. Integrating executive function with academic content ensures that students are practicing the skills in real classroom situations.

SMARTS Program Tied to Common Core (one example)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
WRITING
GRADES 6-12

Common Core Skill	Coinciding SMARTS lesson(s)	Specific Strategies
Text Types and Purposes	4A.1, 4A.5, 4B1, 4B.2, 4B.5, 3.1, 3.2, 2.1, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3	4 C's, BOTEC, PPCQ, CANDO goals, Top 3 Hits
Production and Distribution of Writing	4B1, 4B.2, 4B.5, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.5	Top 3 Hits, BOTEC, PPCQ
Research to Build and Present Knowledge	2.1, 3.2	CANDO goals
Range of Writing	N/A	

https://smarts-ef.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/SMARTS-and-Common-Core-Standards.pdf

Executive Function Curriculum- Research-based and Reasonable
"Longitudinal studies have shown that measures of EF and closely related constructs, such as self-control, predict important outcomes, including Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores in adolescence (Mischel, Shoda, and Peake 1988); the likelihood of graduating from college by age 25 (McClelland et al. 2013); and physical health, substance dependence, socioeconomic status (SES), and the lifetime likelihood of a criminal conviction by age 32 (Moffit et al. 2011). EF predicts these outcomes even after controlling for SES and IQ. " (Zelazo, Blair., & Willoughby, 2016, p.19). Direct instruction can improve executive function. "High-quality educational experiences as well as direct and indirect training of EF can positively influence brain development and the development of EF." (Zelazo, Blair., & Willoughby, 2016, p. 18)

The SMARTS program was named the 2018 Innovative Program of the Year by **CHADD**, a national advocacy organization for Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

Figure 12. Sample Advisory Time Block

Time	***Activity***	***Curriculum/Resources***
2 minutes	Mindfulness minute- Focus	

15 minutes	Class meeting or Activity (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making)	Panorama, Restorative Practices, SMARTS/Executive Function
13 minutes	Goal Setting- Focus for the day	Novare

Core Curriculum Aligned to Mission of Academic Achievement: Mathematics

Polaris is a member of the Place Network, a collaborative network of innovative rural schools, and as such is committed to implement a learning model consistent with the following components: (1) personalized pathways to build strong capacity in literacy, mathematics, and technology skills, (2) Habits of Success where leadership and self-awareness competencies play an equivalent role to other knowledge and skills competencies - the whole child matters, (3) project-based learning as the core integrating methodology to support community impact, and (4) mastery as a competency-based assessment system where advancement is based on demonstration of mastery rather than time period.

One of the expectations of rigor in the Common Core standards is mathematics application. Procedural skills are still important but should only be part of a routine that also highlights conceptual understanding, fluency and application. Mathematical thinking and collaborating, as well as sense-making of problems, has become more important in the 21st century than simply getting "right answers". Furthermore, having a confident mindset that encourages risk taking, perseverance and collaboration skills is more sought after in the modern professional world than having strong computational skills without creativity or social aptitude.

Because the major focus of 6th-8th grade standards are investigative by nature and include ratios, proportional relationships and linear algebra, the standards will go hand and hand with investigating and describing patterns found in our local community. In every student-driven place-based project, instructors will seek out ways to encourage mathematical modeling so that real-world application of mathematics is ever-present. By including mathematics learning in community projects, students will internalize the fact that mathematics is not all about speedy performance in a classroom but something accessible and actually applicable outside of the classroom. These projects will build confidence, relationship and communication skills when it comes to mathematics. Also, these projects will help students appreciate how mathematics education is used in the real world and how it can be empowering for making change.

In addition to the application expectations of the Common Core standards, Polaris is also committed to the other two aspects of rigor: conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. Research has also shown that continual practice of visualizing, illustrating and writing about mathematics thinking increases engagement and achievement. In our daily 90 minute math block, students will have a wide variety of ways to develop conceptual understanding, procedural fluency and some small-scale application of the math content while also being required to routinely practice illustrating and writing about their own mathematics thinking.

Polaris believes that all students have the ability to thrive academically in mathematics when social-emotional needs are met and when the environment is learner centered. We will use a personalized learning approach that presents students with multiple options each day on how to achieve their own specific learning targets. This system includes options for independent and group work; options for attending a small direct-instruction group session by specific grade-level standard; and, an option for the student to design and demonstrate competency in a variety of self-chosen ways. The demonstration of competency will be presented one on one with a teacher so that the teacher can ask probing questions if necessary to ensure mastery. Students will be allowed to have multiple attempts at showing mastery, if it proves necessary.

This daily choice contributes to the students' self-agency in learning while simultaneously allowing for individualized pacing. The student's daily goal is written during advisory time and goes hand in hand with promoting the development of self-awareness and self-management that should be embedded in our curriculum as a social-emotional learning component. This daily goal allows for the student to reflect on where they are in their own learning journey and it gives them the power of knowing where they are headed. It will help develop time management skills, confidence and responsibility.

To achieve a social-emotional learning outcome in mathematics, students will begin each math block with 20 minutes of large group math discussions. These large group times will be intended to explore differences in visualizing mathematics to develop fluency, encouraging growth mindset in math or simply "playing" with mathematical puzzles to promote reasoning and arguing skills. These tasks will be pulled from various resources including Number Talks resources, YouCubed created tasks, "Math Circle" tasks and "Which One Doesn't Belong" puzzles. These activities are each created to inspire mathematical fluency and confidence building and are built on the premise that mathematics education is much more effective when we help children develop growth mindsets with mathematics. A key point shared by Jo Boaler, the author of "Mathematical Mindsets" and an author of the YouCubed activities, is that working memory shuts down with anxiety. At Polaris, students will have the opportunity to develop an understanding about how they each learn, how the brain develops and each will have the opportunity to choose how they establish and show mastery of the standards they are tasked with learning, thus, decreasing or even eliminating the anxiety that all too often accompanies children in their learning of mathematics.

At Polaris we will achieve high academic success in Common Core mathematics standards by using a combination of Eureka Math and Illustrative Mathematics programs. These curricula and lesson plans have been vetted nationwide and achieve the highest scores in EdReports for 6-8 curriculum criteria for Focus and Coherence, Rigor and Mathematical Practices, and Usability.

An example weekly schedule chosen by a 6th grade student is presented in the table below.

Sample Week for a 6th grade student during the 90 minute math block:

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
25 minute large group	Number Talks	Number Talks	Math Circle	YouCubed lesson	Which One Doesn't Belong?
5 minute break	5 minute break	5 minute break	5 minute break	5 minute break	5 minute break
60 minutes 5 minute stretch break, if needed, after 30 minutes	25 minutes Small Group Direct Instruction	25 minutes Independent Practice	35 minutes Independent Practice	25 minutes Independent Practice	40 minutes Independent Practice

	35 minutes Independent Practice	35 minutes Independent Practice	25 minutes Small Group Direct Instruction	35 minutes Independent Practice	20 minutes Competency Based Assessment

In the sample week above, "Independent Practice" refers to time the student can use to choose from a menu of selected items per content standard from an online grid. The selection options will include, but not be limited to, true independent work such as procedural practice, self-guided and self-paced lessons from the adopted curriculum, writing and illustrating about concepts but also include some small group tasks requiring peer collaboration. The focus of these activities will center on the eight CCSS Mathematical Practices in addition to the grade level content standards. Specific attention will be paid toward ensuring that students are not only practicing procedural skills without context or visualization but learning how to illustrate and describe their thinking in a variety of ways, using models, graphs, tables, pictures, words and symbols as appropriate. This independent time is also used for students to self-assess their own learning continuum, reflect, dive "deeper" and prepare their own assessment presentation or choose from a pre-made selection of assessments to show the teacher mastery in a one on one setting.

"Small Group Direct instruction" refers to pre-determined and scheduled content specific direct instruction. For example, a student might choose to attend an instructional group on the 6th grade standard: *Make tables of equivalent ratios relating quantities with whole-number measurements, find missing values in the tables, and plot the pairs of values on the coordinate plane. Use tables to compare ratios.* This particular standard might be taught directly on a specific set of days and times and will be adjusted as needed in order to keep the group small enough for productive group facilitation and collaboration.

"Competency Based Assessment" refers to a time scheduled with the teacher to show mastery of a standard. There will be an allotment of time for these assessments to be scheduled a few times per week. Instructors will have pre-made assessment options available with rubrics but over time, will encourage students to develop their own individualized plans for showing mastery of a standard. In either case, if mastery is not shown, the teacher will provide immediate feedback so that the student can reassess the practice done and the practice that might still be needed. Multiple attempts will be allowed so that the assessment becomes a piece of the learning process.

Core Curriculum Aligned to Mission of Academic Achievement:
English Language Arts/Literacy

We believe that in order to achieve our mission, to engage students in the community, environment, history and culture of Northern New Mexico through personalized hands-on learning experiences that strengthen and support student well-being and intellectual growth, students must be proficient and confident readers, writers, thinkers, and communicators. Our Language Arts/ Literacy curriculum uses access to high-quality novels and non-fiction works, time to read and write, direct instruction of skills and strategies, and a chance to communicate about reading and writing. While the students develop basic skills during the Language Arts/ Literacy core subject time in the morning, many of the skills are applied during afternoon projects.

Access to High Quality Written Materials

We believe that in order to develop lifelong readers outside of the classroom, students in middle school must develop the skills to choose books that are appropriate for them. Teachers will use their expertise in reading instruction, knowledge of local authors, cultures, and place/project content, passion for reading, expert recommendations (such as TCRWP, Los Alamos History Museum, and Colorín Colorado), and student recommendations to thoughtfully build a library of high-quality novels and non-fiction works, including novel sets and anthologies of classic short stories, poems, and speeches. We will also use online resources, such as Newsela, to access current informational texts that make learning relevant to current events.

As part of our Place-based philosophy, we expect Polaris students to be familiar and comfortable accessing all community resources, including the public library. The Los Alamos Public Library is not only a great source of reading material, but they also have a special "Teen Zone" and encourage teens to participate in activities and an advisory group. Students will be able to access the library catalog online, request books, and even download books electronically.

The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP)

The *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project* (TCRWP) provides resources including curriculum, professional development, and classroom library recommendations. TCRWP functions both as a think tank and a community of practice. One focus of the TCRWP is to provide students with authentic experiences that emulate published authors (http://readingandwritingproject.org/about/research-base), a process that is necessary for Polaris students who are completing authentic community projects that require reading, writing, and presentations (readingandwritingproject.org). We agree with the TCRWP, "We want our middle grade students to become flexible, resilient readers who read for pleasure as well as for multiple academic purposes," (Calkins, et. al., n.d.) and we believe that TCRWP can help us achieve this goal.

TCRWP Curriculum Units and Strategies Fit Our Mission

The TCRWP reading units for middle school students include topics that fit our mission. *Tapping the Power of Nonfiction* is essential for developing independent learners in all subject areas. *Reading for Empathy and Advocacy* will help us meet the social emotional needs of students and prepare them to advocate for themselves and others. *Dystopian Book Clubs* includes popular titles that we feel will engage middle school students.

TCRWP Curriculum is Research Based

TCRWP is based on a significant amount of research on reading and writing and program evaluation. The TCRWP 2017 Preliminary Data Report "looked at testing data in TCRWP NYC schools in a variety of ways, including tracing growth over time, investigating the performance of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners, and comparing TCRWP schools with not TCRWP schools overall. It includes city data and state data." They found that "Students in all TCRWP schools outperform students in non TCRWP schools overall across the city and the state by approximately 10%. Students in Core TCRWP schools overall outperform peers in non TCRWP schools by approximately 25%. The benefits for schools of TCRWP staff development include:

- Improved ELA performance for the student population at large
- Improved performance across all groups of learners, including ELL/ESL students and Students with Disabilities
- Increased ELA proficiency for each year spent in a TCRWP school"

(accessed online: http://readingandwritingproject.org/about/our-data and https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B404rJALRaGwNnZncVVWRDA3NzQ/view)

TCRWP Curriculum is Reasonable

The TCRWP has been in existence for 30 years and 170,000 teachers have attended their week-long institutes (http://readingandwritingproject.org/about). They have a long tradition of continually updating their resources, most currently working to integrate CCSS and web-based assessment tools.

The TCRWP also supports teachers through a community of support that includes discussion groups, videos, and other resources that provide specific strategies to teach reading to middle school students and implement the CCSS. Professional development resources are available online, training at your school, or through professional books, including, "The Pathways to the Common Core" by Lucy Calkins, Mary Ehrenworth, and Christopher Lehman (2012), "A Quick Guide to Teaching Reading Through Fantasy Novels: Grades 5-8" and "A Quick Guide to Reviving Disengaged Writers: Grades 5-8."

TCRWP Suggested Sequence of Units accessed from https://readingandwritingproject.org/

TCRWP Suggested Sequence of Units
2017-2018

(Recommended for schools implementing Units of Study without on-site TCRWP staff development)

Sixth Grade		
	Reading	**Writing**
September		Personal Narrative: Crafting Powerful Life Stories (UoS Book)
October	A Deep Study of Character (UoS Book)	
November		Research –Based Information Writing (UoS Book)
December	Tap the Power of Nonfiction (UoS Book)	
January	Social Issues Book Clubs (UoS Book: expected publication Fall 2017)	
February		Literary Essay (UoS Book)
March	Test Prep or a Unit of Your Choice	Test Prep or a Unit of Your Choice
April	Fantasy Book Clubs (curricular calendar)	
May		Fantasy Writing (If…Then…Writing UoS)
June		Poetry: Immersion and Innovation (If…Then…Writing UoS)

Seventh Grade		
	Reading	**Writing**
September		Writing Realistic Fiction: Symbolism, Syntax and Truth (UoS Book)
October	A Deep Study of Character (UoS Book)	
November		The Art of Argument (UoS Book)
December	Tap the Power of Nonfiction (UoS Book)	
January	Social Issues Book Clubs OR Dystopian Book Clubs (UoS Books: expected publication Fall 2017)	
February		Writing about Reading: From Reader's Notebooks to Companion Books (UoS Book)
March	Test Prep or a Unit of Your Choice	Test Prep or a Unit of Your Choice
April	How to Eat a Poem: Analyzing Craft and Structure OR Historical Fiction and Nonfiction Book Clubs (curricular calendars)	
May		Poetry: Immersion and Innovation (If...Then...Writing UoS)
June		Historical Fiction Writing (If...Then...Writing UoS)

Time to Read and Write

It is imperative that students have a dedicated time to practice reading and writing. There is research evidence that suggests that volume of reading is linked to attaining higher-order literacy proficiencies (Allington, 2012; Brozo et al, 2008, Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992). Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) researched the relationship between the amount of reading done and reading achievement. They found that the amount of time reading was the best predictor of reading achievement, including a child's growth as a reader from the second to the fifth grade. More recently, in her article, Independent Reading and School Achievement, Cullinan (2000) reviewed the research on the effects of independent reading for the purpose of informing policy makers, curriculum developers, parents, teachers, and librarians about the importance of independent reading. The review concludes that independent reading, defined as the reading students choose to do, supports learning and school achievement. Providing students with protected reading time is necessary in order to support their growth in reading.

We feel that reading and writing are so essential that we are designating a specific time in the schedule (30 minutes each day) for independent reading and writing. During this time students will practice agency and independence in their choice of reading and writing material. Teachers will provide coaching and mentorship.

Direct Instruction

Reading and writing workshops are designed to allow each reader and writer to participate in instruction at his or her own personalized level. Teachers provide direct instruction through mini-lessons (often with small groups of students who are working on a specific skill) that explicitly teach the skills and strategies needed to become proficient readers and writers. During mini-lessons teachers focus on

identifying, demonstrating, and modeling one specific skill. The curriculum that we have chosen for direct instruction during writing workshops is Step Up to Writing.

Step Up to Writing Curriculum

The Step Up to Writing program provides specific strategies and practice building skills in the areas of writing, vocabulary, language, reading, and speaking & listening. Polaris chose the Step Up to Writing program for its language arts curriculum because it's structure aligns with our mission to personalize education, it is closely tied to Common Core Standards, backed up by research, and is reasonable.

First, the Step Up to Writing model of "baseline assessment, responsive teaching, and summative evaluation" fits with the Polaris mission of mastery learning and personalization. The program is designed with baseline and summative assessments for each grade level and each type of writing to help teachers pinpoint specific skills that need practice and those that have been mastered. Teachers use student data to inform instruction, so that it is personalized to the needs of students. The program is organized by skills and includes specific strategies and options for differentiation, including technology for blended learning, so that teachers can choose the skills and teaching methods that best meet the needs of students.

Then, the program is tied to the Common Core Standards. Teachers can easily identify the Common Core standard and then find specific strategies and page numbers to activities that address that specific standard. It specifically includes strategies for writing the types of texts that are included in the Common Core standards, informative/explanatory, argument, and narrative writing. It even includes skills related to college and career readiness. Below is a sample of the program's correlation to Common Core.

Step Up to Writing Correlated to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (CCSS) Accessed from https://www.voyagersopris.com/literacy/step-up-to-writing/correlations-and-alignments

***Step Up to Writing*® (Grades 6-8) Correlated to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (CCSS)**

Grade 6 CCSS	Strategy (and Page Number) in *Step Up to Writing*® Where Standard is Addressed
Reading - Literature	
1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. RL.6.1	**Section 1:** S1-1 (6-7), S1-2 (7-8), S1-3 (9-10), S1-5 (11-12), S1-7 (14-16), S1-8 (16-17), S1-9 (17-19), S1-10 (19-20), S1-11 (21-22), S1-12 (22-24), S1-13 (24-25), S1-14 (26-27), S1-15 (27-29), S1-16 (29-30), S1-17 (31-33), S1-18 (34-35), S1-19 (35-36), S1-20 (37-38), S1-21 (38-39), S1-22 (40-41), S1-25 (47-48), S1-26 (49-50), S1-28 (53-54), S1-29 (55-57), S1-30 (58-59), S1-31 (60-61), S1-32 (62-63), S1-35 (70-72), S1-36 (72-73), S1-37 (74-75), S1-39 (78-79) **Section 5:** S5-1 (415-416), S5-11 (442-444), S5-14 (450-451), S5-17 (456-459), S5-19 (461-463), S5-39 (509-511), S5-41 (517-520) **Section 6:** S6-1 (527-529), S6-2 (529-531), S6-3 (531-533), S6-22 (571-573), S6-23 (573-575), S6-25 (577-579) **Section 8:** S8-6 (693-694), S8-7 (696-697), S8-8 (697-699), S8-9 (700-702), S8-10 (702-704), S8-11 (704-707), S8-12 (707-709), S8-13 (709-712), S8-14 (714-715), S8-15 (715-717) **Section 9:** S9-3 (751-754), S9-7 (764-767), S9-9 (770-772)
2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. RL.6.2	**Section 1:** S1-1 (6-7), S1-8 (16-17), S1-9 (17-19), S1-10 (19-20), S1-13 (24-25), S1-17 (31-33), S1-19 (35-36), S1-23 (42-44), S1-24 (44-47), S1-26 (49-50), S1-27 (51-53), S1-28 (53-54), S1-30 (58-59), S1-32 (62-63), S1-35 (70-72), S1-36 (72-73), S1-39 (78-79) **Section 6:** S6-3 (531-533), S6-4 (533-534), S6-9 (543-544), S6-10 (545-546), S6-11 (546-547), S6-12 (547-549), S6-14 (552-553), S6-15 (554-556), S6-16 (556-558), S6-17 (560-561), S6-18 (562-564), S6-19 (564-566), S6-20 (566-568), S6-21 (569-571), S6-23 (573-575), S6-24 (575-577), S6-26 (579-580), S6-27 (581-582), S6-28 (584-585), S6-29 (585-588), S6-30 (588-589), S6-31 (590-591), S6-32 (592-594), S6-33 (596-598), S6-34 (598-599), S6-35 (600-602), S6-36 (603-604), S6-37 (605-607)

This program is backed by research studies specific to our targeted middle school grade level. These studies show statistically significant growth in student writing for 6th graders (Smith, 2008), 8th graders (Cihak & Castle, 2011), and an entire middle school of 6th-8th graders (Sopris West Educational Services, 2009).

Finally, the Step Up to Writing Program has a long track record of working in schools across the country. According to literacy program research for diverse 6th grade students, "All students showed significant growth in expository reading comprehension and writing, which was of comparable magnitude for both native English speakers and English language learners." (Smith, 2008, from Voyager Sooris Learning).

Communication

The English Language Arts/ Literacy Curriculum includes time to develop a community of readers and writers who support each other. Students participate in conferencing sessions with peers and teachers to share information, evaluate work, and develop goals for improvement. Conferencing supports a growth mindset by teaching students to critique respectfully, listen to the ideas and opinions of others, and use critiques to improve learning.

Students put English Language Arts/ Literacy skills into practice through authentic interdisciplinary place-based projects. Projects culminate with sharing work with a wider audience. Culminating projects can take many forms, including, but not limited to, presentations to local organizations, displays inside the school or out in the community, talks on the radio, online publications, and community work.

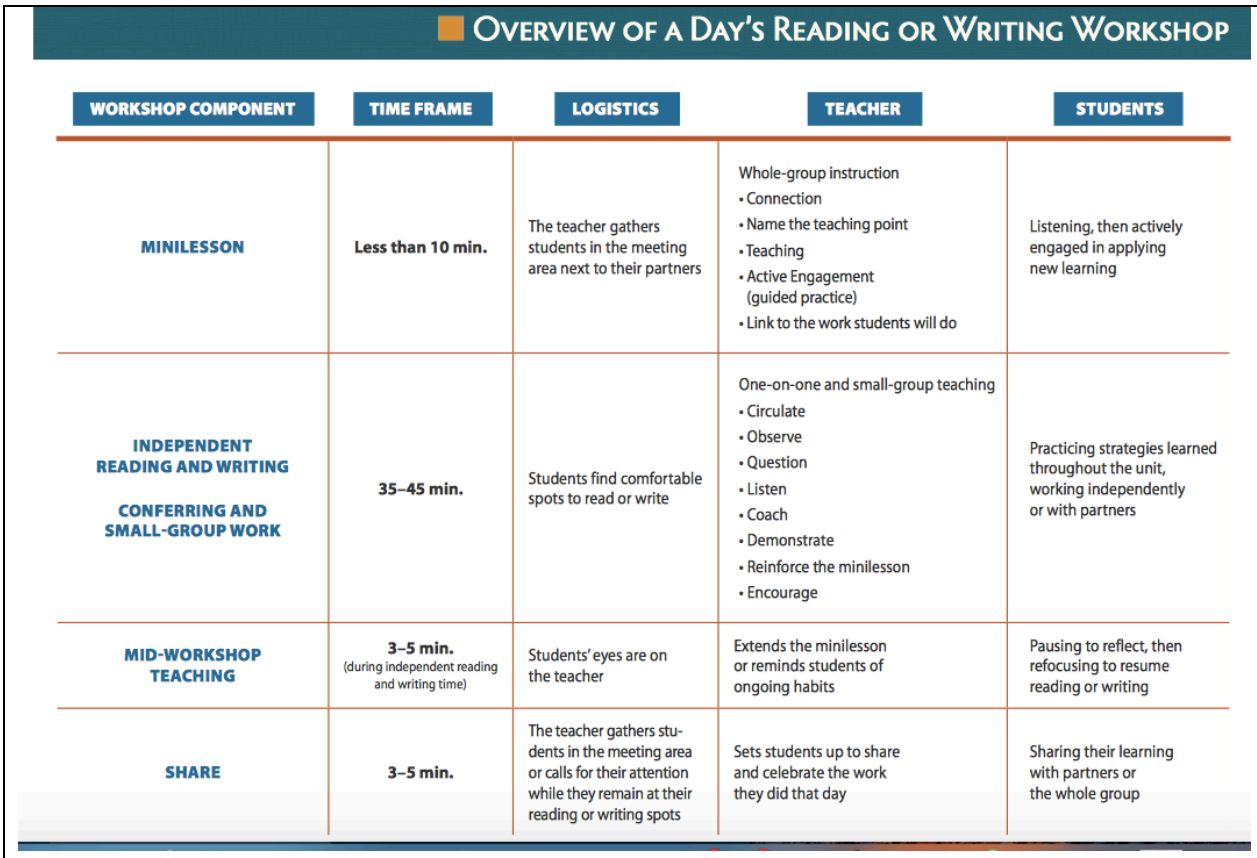
Figure 16. ***Sample English Language Arts/Literacy Block (Writing Day)***

Time	Instructional Method	Curriculum/Resources
10 min.	Mini lesson - direct teaching	Step Up to Writing The Columbia Teachers' Reading and Writing Project
5 min.	Independent Goal Setting	
30 min.	Independent Writing Workshop	The Columbia Teachers' Reading and Writing Project
15 min.	Conferencing/Feedback Small groups	Step Up to Writing The Columbia Teachers' Reading and Writing Project
30 min.	Independent Reading	Classroom Library, Los Alamos Public Library, The Columbia Teachers' Reading and Writing Project booklist, local/regional authors/topics

Figure 17. ***Sample English Language Arts/Literacy Block (Reading Day)***

Time	Instructional Method	Curriculum/Resources
10 min.	Mini lesson - direct teaching	The Columbia Teachers' Reading and Writing Project
15 min.	Close Reading/Skills Independent	
30 min.	Book Club - Group Work	Classroom Library, Los Alamos Public Library, The Columbia Teachers' Reading and Writing Project booklist, local/regional authors/topics
25 min.	Independent Reading	Classroom Library, Los Alamos Public Library, The Columbia Teachers' Reading and Writing Project booklist, local/regional authors/topics
10 min.	Share and Reflect	

Our schedule is based on the recommendation from TCRWP accessed from https://readingandwritingproject.org/ (see below)



Overview of a Day's Reading or Writing Workshop

Workshop Component	Time Frame	Logistics	Teacher	Students
Minilesson	**Less than 10 min.**	The teacher gathers students in the meeting area next to their partners	Whole-group instruction • Connection • Name the teaching point • Teaching • Active Engagement (guided practice) • Link to the work students will do	Listening, then actively engaged in applying new learning
Independent Reading and Writing **Conferring and Small-Group Work**	**35–45 min.**	Students find comfortable spots to read or write	One-on-one and small-group teaching • Circulate • Observe • Question • Listen • Coach • Demonstrate • Reinforce the minilesson • Encourage	Practicing strategies learned throughout the unit, working independently or with partners
Mid-Workshop Teaching	**3–5 min.** (during independent reading and writing time)	Students' eyes are on the teacher	Extends the minilesson or reminds students of ongoing habits	Pausing to reflect, then refocusing to resume reading or writing
Share	**3–5 min.**	The teacher gathers students in the meeting area or calls for their attention while they remain at their reading or writing spots	Sets students up to share and celebrate the work they did that day	Sharing their learning with partners or the whole group

Integrated Curriculum: Social Studies and Science

NM Social Studies Content Standards and Next Generation Science Standards Interdisciplinary Approach

We will use an interdisciplinary approach and a place-based framework to teach the NM Content Standards and Common Core Standards in Social Studies and Science. This approach integrates content from traditional subjects (science, social studies, language, math) into project-based learning challenges. Although the subject matter and content follow the NM Content Standards, integration helps students to understand the complexity, connectedness, and importance of all subjects. Authentic learning experiences mirror the way people learn in the real world and students are held accountable and expected to demonstrate learning and active citizenship. Place-based learning is not an addition to the curriculum, but instead provides a research-based and reasonable framework for the curriculum.

Research Demonstrates Benefits of Integration as a Curriculum Model

In 2014 the Michigan Department of Education examined multiple research studies and found the following benefits of an integrated curriculum:

- Coherent Concept Development
- Deeper Learning and Improved Problem-Solving
- Increased Individualized Learning Opportunities
- Increased Student Involvement/Participation
- Enhanced Motivation for Academic Learning
- Enhanced Sense of Community

- Brain Development
- Overall Achievement Effects- “meta-analysis of 30 studies meeting high-level criteria reveals an overall effect size of +0.4761 for increasing achievement” (Michigan Department of Education, 2014).

According to their study, “Integration can be utilized as a venue to develop both complex-cognitive and career-related soft skills, preparing students of today to become college- and career-ready for tomorrow.” (Michigan Department of Education, 2014). The benefits outlined in their study fit with the needs of our community and the outcomes that we are aiming to achieve. Place-based learning is one example of an integrated learning curriculum.

Curriculum Using a Place-Based Project Framework
Aligns with mission, CCSS, and NM Content Standards

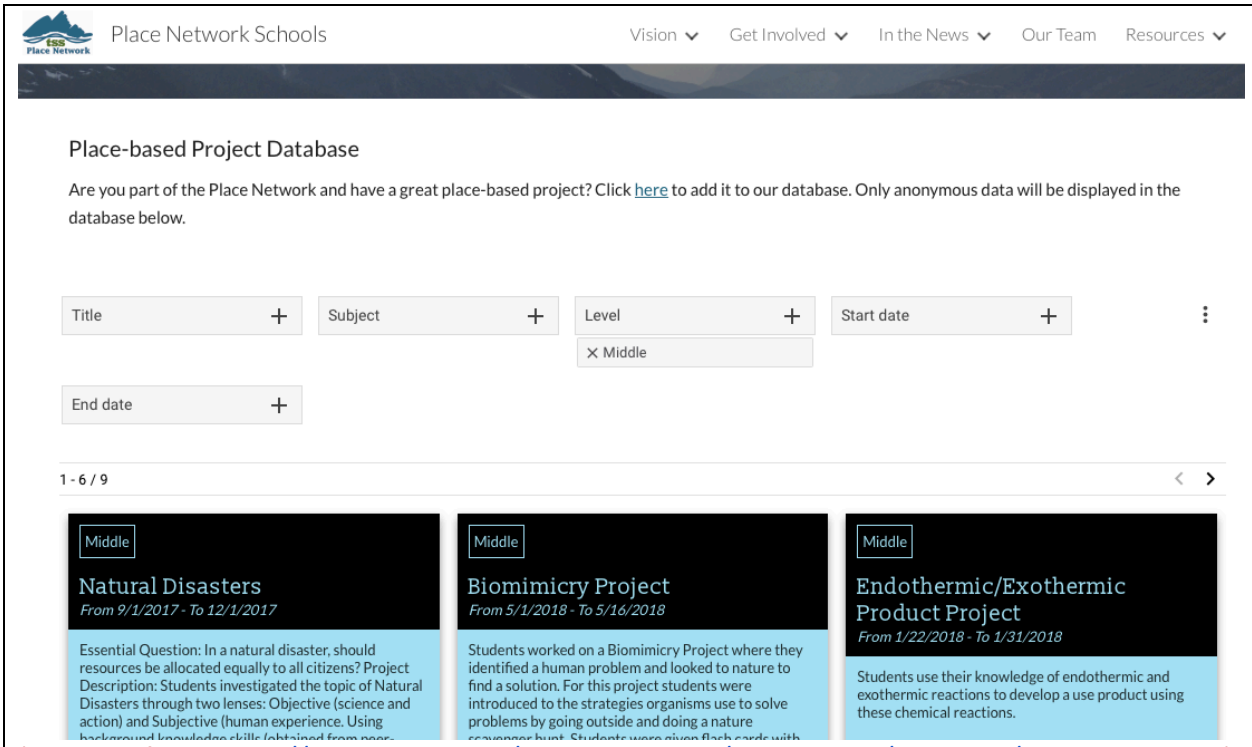
Our goal is to use a place-based framework for our curriculum that engages students in the community, history, science, and culture of Northern New Mexico through authentic learning experiences that strengthen and support student well-being and academic growth. We view the community as part of an expanded educational ecosystem and believe that it is essential for our schools to engage students beyond the walls of the classroom. Interacting with local experts and places can bring relevance and meaning to student work. New Mexico Common Core Standards require students to interpret text from primary and secondary sources, identify textual evidence, interpret charts and graphs, understand point of view, and develop domain specific vocabulary. Place based learning provides an opportunity for students to practice these skills in real-world applications and projects. Instead of finding answers in classroom textbooks, students collect and evaluate real information from outside of the classroom. They are expected to engage with experts and think critically about information. They become thinkers who search out and evaluate information, skills that will prepare them for college and careers in the 21st Century and achieve our mission to inspire global citizenship.

Place-based learning allows us to meet the social-emotional needs of students and achieve our mission of global citizenship. Middle school students are in the process of forming personal identities as part of their social emotional development. They are searching to find out who they are and what their place is in the world. The local to global context of our social studies and science curriculum provides a context for students to understand regional and global challenges and help students personally connect with the world around them. This focus aligns with our mission to engage students in the community, history, science, and culture of Northern New Mexico through authentic learning experiences that strengthen and support student well-being and academic growth.

https://www.oercommons.org/

Examples of Place-Based Curriculum
As a member of the Place Network, Polaris has access to an extensive project database and shared resources to supplement our curriculum. A snapshot of the Place Network database is below.

Place Network Online Database



(Accessed from: https://sites.google.com/tetonscience.org/placeschools/resources/project-database)

One example of a place-based integrated learning lesson is for students to create a heritage project. This may include original scholarly research that answers an important question about Los Alamos' role during the Cold War. Students will work with the local Historical Society to collect, analyze and interpret information and then create a product that is worthy of being placed in the local archives.

Another example is for students to examine how the geography of Los Alamos impacted indigenous people, homesteaders, and led to the creation of Los Alamos National Laboratory. This may be extended to understanding the impact that the local landscape (volcanology) and water have on some of our current local issues, including the economic impact of being landlocked (affordable housing and economic development), importance of bridge infrastructure to the town, understanding earthquake risk and designing buildings on Volcanic Tuff, etc. Students will meet local experts, design experiments, and test ideas to propose solutions to some of the problems related to our landscape. As active citizens, students will share their ideas with the community. These ideas and project are complex and require an understanding of science, social studies, math, and language.

A Place-Based Curriculum is Research Based

Our Place-Based framework was chosen to help improve the academic proficiency of our students who are particularly motivated by real world experience. This framework has been shown to help foster a sense of belonging in the community. Studies have found that integrating the local environment as a context for learning improves student achievement in core subjects. According to *"Closing the Achievement Gap"* by Lieberman and Hoody, students, teachers and administrators report significant positive effects on problem solving skills, critical thinking and decision making. They also report an "increased enthusiasm and engagement in learning and gains in summative measures of educational achievement such as standardized test scores and grade point average." (Lieberman and Hoody, 1998)

Other studies have corroborated the impact of integrating the local environment as a context for

learning. Research conducted by the Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative (PEEC) concluded that place-based education increases student engagement while decreasing the achievement gap. (Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative, 2010). An evaluation of the Place-based Education Collaborative also suggests that participating in programs makes "significant and positive contributions to teacher practice, use of local places for teaching, student engagement in learning, student civic engagement, student time spent outdoors, student stewardship behavior, and community civic engagement," (Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative, 2010).

A Place-Based Curriculum is Reasonable:

Los Alamos is a small rural town with a strong sense of place, so using our local resources to implement a place-based curriculum is reasonable. We have a significant history that includes indigenous people, Hispanic homesteaders, a ranch school, and a scientific laboratory. Our community borders Bandelier National Monument, The Valles Caldera National Monument, Santa Clara Pueblo, and San Ildefonso Pueblo. Polaris was initiated by the community, and we have continued to develop strong community relationships. School success depends on using community resources wisely. Our place-based framework not only uses community resources, but also integrates them into the curriculum. Here are some of the community organizations and resources that we will use to inform and enrich our curriculum.

Community Resources

Community Organization	Contact Information	Resources
Pajarito Environmental Education Center	Katie Bruell, director (505) 662-0460 director@losalamosnature.org 2600 Canyon Rd, Los Alamos, NM	Nature center; public programs such as talks, hikes, outings, and classes; school lessons and field trips; and state-of-the-art planetarium programs.
Bradbury Science Museum	(505) 667-4444 ldeck@lanl.gov 1350 Central Ave, Los Alamos, NM Linda Deck, director	Science museum, public programs, school field trips, Physics, chemistry, current science, volunteers
Los Alamos History Museum	Aimee Slaughter, educator & publications educator@losalamoshistory.org (505) 662-6272 1050 Bathtub Row, Los Alamos, NM	Public programs, school field trips, traveling trunks, historic buildings, artifacts, documents, photographs, audio and video recordings of personal stories, and interactive visitor experiences, National History Day Projects

Fuller Lodge Art Center	Ken Nebel, director (505) 662-1635 2132 Central Ave. Los Alamos, NM director@fullerlodgeartcenter.org	Local art exhibits, children's classes, contacts with local artists
Mesa Public Library	Eileen Sullivan, director 505.663.1755 eileen.sullivan@lacnm.us 2400 Central Ave, Los Alamos, NM	Book clubs, volunteers, check out groups of books for book clubs, individual book check out
Bandelier National Monument	(505) 672-3851 https://www.nps.gov/band/index.htm	Field Trips, Star Parties
Chimayó Museum	13 Plaza De Cerro Chimayó, NM 87522 (505) 351-0945 http://www.chimayomuseum.com/about.html	Weaving
El Rancho de la Golondrinas	334 Los Pinos Rd Santa Fe, NM 87507 (505) 471-2261, ext. 101 https://golondrinas.org/	Spanish Colonial Days in October and April for grade 6. Individual guided tours all grades. Family events on the weekends.
Museum of Spanish Colonial Art	750 Camino Lejo Santa Fe, NM 87502 (505) 982-2226 http://spanishcolonial.org/	Free educational outreach program, "Art Connections" for schools in northern New Mexico. These classes are in the traditional Spanish colonial arts and are taught by experienced Market artists. Classes are taught in retablos, straw appliqué, tinwork, colcha embroidery, pottery and weaving.
Museum of Indian Arts and Culture	Field Trips contact: Dina Velarde by email at MIAC.Education@state.nm.us or telephone at 505/476-1272. **http://www.miaclab.org/** 710-708 Camino Lejo, Santa Fe, NM 87502	Stories Tour, Weaving Tour, Also, online tours: Touched by Fire Showcases the life and work of Maria Martinez, the legendary San Ildefonso potter who forever changed the world of Indian art.

Museum of International Folk Art	http://www.internationalfolkart.org/ 706 Camino Lejo Santa Fe, NM 87502 patricia.sigala@state.nm.us 505-476-1212	Folk Art To Go! Program, Folk Art Outreach Trunks, Teacher In-Service Training
Pecos National Historical Park	(505) 757-7210 https://www.nps.gov/peco/index.htm	Field Trips- visiting archaeological sites.
Piedra Lumbre Visitors Center, Ghost Ranch	https://www.ghostranch.org/explore/museums/ (505) 685-1000, ext. 4118 (505) 685-4333	Field Trips- Anthropology and Paleontology Museum. Learn about local cultures by participating in activities such as traditional tinwork, sand painting, straw inlay work, and visiting archaeological sites.
Puyé Cliffs, Santa Clara Pueblo	http://www.puyecliffdwellings.com/ (505) 917-6650	Field Trips- visiting archaeological sites.
Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area (NRGNHA)	https://riograndenha.org/index.html 848 State Road 68 Alcalde, NM 87511 (505)852-0030	Information and resources about Northern New Mexico
Espanola Valley Fiber Arts Center (EVFAC)	https://www.evfac.org/ Youth Education Coordinator: youtheducation@evfac.org (505)747-3577	Traveling Fiber Trunk program - hands-on and multidisciplinary experience of traditional fiber arts.
Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project	https://www.mesaprietapetroglyphs.org/ (505)852-1351	The 4th - 7th Grade Curriculum "Discovering Mesa Prieta" is an award-winning interactive STEM-based (science, technology, engineering, math) curriculum that has been used in some 20 Pueblo and community schools since 2003. Teacher Training Program in the Fall

New Mexico Humanities Council	4115 Silver Avenue SE Albuquerque, NM 87108 505.633.7370 info@nmhumanities.org www.nmhumanities.org	Family Programs, History Day Competition, Speakers
Valles Caldera	https://www.nps.gov/vall/learn/index.htm (575) 829-4100 x3	Education Programs Field Trips
Champions of Youth Ambitions (C 'YA)	Bernadette Lauritzen cya.org@att.net	hands-on science education, teaching leadership for middle school students and community celebrations

Polaris School is part of the Place Network, which will provide the support necessary for successful implementation. Place Network and Teton Science School (TSS) have been in existence since 2006 and provide teacher training, curriculum support and research. They have been a valuable resource in providing information and advice that has helped us create our school model, and we plan to continue to be part of this network of support as we plan and develop detailed curriculum plans and units of study.

Another group dedicated to providing place-based information, advice, technical resources, and research (and often work together) are the Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative (PEEC) (http://www.peecworks.org) made up of 9 partners and the Center for Place-based Learning and Community Engagement (http://www.promiseofplace.org), which includes the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, the National Park Service Conservation Study Institute, and Shelburne Farms. Their research also assures us that a place-based model is reasonable and research-based.

Fine Arts Funding

Polaris is dedicated to supporting students as they practice skills and find their voices to become creators who actively participate in and shape our community and world. Knowledge is interdisciplinary and art is one of the essential modes that people use to communicate. Polaris students will have opportunities to experience, create, perform, and exhibit artwork. Art is an integral part of the curriculum that will help Polaris synthesize information and achieve its goals of academic achievement, social emotional learning, and community engagement.

Polaris will support an arts program through a dedicated Art/Maker Space and curriculum aligned with National Art and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards. We plan to apply for public education funds through the Fine Arts Education Act (22–15D NMSA 1978) to support our 6th grade Arts program (since this is a K-6 program).

Curriculum Planning & Standards Alignment Process:

Teachers have the expertise to adapt programs and design the curriculum to meet the needs of

students. All resources will be aligned/consistent with the New Mexico Content Standards and the Common Core State Standards and will prepare students for the state assessment. Content competencies and performance indicators are informed by Common Core Language Arts, Common Core Math, C3 Framework, NGSS, ISTE, NAS, ACTFL, and EPIC Essential Skills and Dispositions. (Figure 21) Competencies are general areas of competence while within each competence are specific performance indicators with learning targets for each milestone level. Curriculum planning and alignment will occur during the planning year (see Figures below).

Links to Standards Used During Curriculum Alignment and Planning Process

Standards	Subject	Website
Common Core	language arts	http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/
C3 Framework	social studies	http://www.socialstudies.org/c3
NGSS	science	http://www.nextgenscience.org/next-generation-science-standards
ISTE	technology	http://www.iste.org/standards/iste-standards
NAS	arts	http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/
New Mexico Core Arts Standards	arts	https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/New-Mexico-Core-Arts-Standards.pdf
ACTFL	World language	http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.pdf
Common Core	math	http://www.corestandards.org/Math/
CDC	Health and wellness	https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/sher/standards/index.htm
EPIC	Leadership and self-awareness	https://www.inflexion.org/essential-skills-and-dispositions-development-frameworks/
d.school	Design Thinking	http://www.davidleeedtech.org/design-thinking-standards
WIDA	English Language Development (ELD) Standards	https://wida.wisc.edu/

Curriculum Planning
Standards Alignment Process During the Planning Year

Resource	Action Steps	Responsible Staff	Timeframe/Deadline

Curriculum map	**Align curriculum with CCSS, NM content, school mission** Examine National and State Standards- focus on big-picture to create a curriculum map that sequences standards in a developmentally appropriate manner that aligns with school mission	Academic Leader, Director of Operations, Place Network	Oct.-Feb. 2019-2020
Scope and Sequence	Identify the Scope (depth and breadth of content) to be taught at each grade level (beginning with 6th and 7th for our first year). Develop the Sequence (order in which the content should be taught) for best adolescent learning	Academic Leader, School Director of Operations, Place Network	March- April 2020 Due to PED June 1. **Curriculum will be fully completed before June 1st of the planning year—the deadline for having the commencement of operations approved.**
Unit and Course assessment	Examine exemplars for how standards will be assessed- backwards planning. Find resources and align standards with courses in the online competency-based tracker	Academic Leader, School Director of Operations, Place Network	March- April 2020
Unit Themes Plans -first semester Adapt the curriculum to the needs of the local community and the State of New Mexico	work with the Place Network Develop unit plans activities, models, resources, materials, connection to real-world 1) Determine student and curriculum needs (Initially, we will use assumptions based on the needs from surrounding districts. After the initial year, use specific school data (parent surveys, student academic data, language usage parent surveys (EL), IEP needs/accommodations). 2) Identify appropriate local resources. (Community Partners, Bilingual, texts, Local or Regional Connections to Content Standards) 3) Match local resources to unit	Academic Leader, School Director of Operations, Place Network, Grade-Level Lead, Grade level teams, Instructional Specialist	April- May 15 Due June 1, 2020 **Curriculum will be fully completed before June 1st of the planning year—the deadline for having the commencement of operations approved.**

	plans to develop a cohesive plan for the year. 4) Contact local organizations to plan field trips, PD for teachers, or order supplies. (July-ongoing)		
Daily Lesson Plans	After teachers are hired, this will be part of the training and preparation during Orientation.	Grade-Level Lead, Grade level teams, Instructional Specialist	July 2020 Due August 1, 2020
Project Plans and Rubrics	After teachers are hired, this will be part of the training and preparation during Orientation.	Grade-Level Lead, Grade level teams, Instructional Specialist	July 2020 Due August 1, 2020

Polaris Curriculum is based on current research and recommendations for adolescent learners.
There has been significant research into understanding the developmental needs and function of the adolescent brain. Polaris's curriculum is supported by the brain-friendly practices recommended by Thomas Armstrong (2016) and supported by brain-based learning (Jensen, 2008). Figure 23.

Figure 23. Polaris Curriculum Innovations Follow Recommended Practices for Adolescents

Recommended Practice (Armstrong, 2016)	**Rationale for Practice** (Armstrong, 2016)	**Polaris Curriculum**
Opportunities to Choose	Helps adolescents make less risky and more sensible decisions in life.	Studio Electives around Student Passions Student Voice and Choice is valued through project selection. Restorative Practice
Self-awareness activities	Assists adolescents in defining their sense of identity.	Advisory Time includes setting personal Goals Competency-based learning provides the information students need to make informed decisions about their own learning. Place-based learning helps students

		define their place in this world. It connects content to their personal lives. Restorative Practice
Peer Learning Connections	Capitalizes on adolescents' preference for socializing with peers.	Advisory Time helps students develop strong positive social connections with peers. Project-based learning focuses on collaborative projects that allow students to interact in constructive ways.
Affective Learning	Integrates the emotional brain (limbic system) with the rational areas of the brain (prefrontal cortex).	Advisory Time- Time devoted to Social Emotional Learning. Our Project-Based Learning uses a Design Thinking framework that begins with understanding others and the problems they face. Restorative Practice
Learning through the body	Capitalizes on the highly plastic cerebellum by providing physical learning that teaches higher order skills.	Place-based learning physically takes students out into the community to participate in learning projects. Hands-on experiences provided through projects.
Metacognitive Strategies	Takes advantage of the adolescent's emerging capacity for formal operational thinking.	Advisory Time includes goal setting, journaling, and time for students to think about their own social and emotional actions.
Expressive Arts Activities	Channels burgeoning adolescent emotional energies into thoughtful and socially appropriate artistic products and processes.	Creativity, innovation, and personal talent are encouraged through student choice, student writing, projects and design thinking. Studio Electives may be art-based.
Real-world Experiences	Gives adolescents and opportunity to practice executive functions in	Place-based learning projects allow students to investigate and develop projects that serve the wider community.

		Authentic Assessment

References

Armstrong, T. (2016). The power of the adolescent brain: strategies for teaching middle and high school students. Alexandria, Virginia: ASCD.

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Total Points Available	Expectations
12	A complete response must • Describe the proposed school's curriculum; • Identify information that demonstrates the curriculum is research-based; • Describe a curriculum that is reasonable, based on the professional judgment of experienced educators; • Identify information that demonstrates how the curriculum will align with the New Mexico Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and New Mexico Content Standards; • Identify information that demonstrates how the curriculum will align with the proposed school's mission; and • Include a reasonable (as based on the professional judgment of experienced educators) timeline and plan for the development of the entire proposed curriculum—including scope and sequence, unit plans, daily lesson plans, project plans and rubrics, and unit and course assessments. o The timeline must identify the following: ▪ responsible staff ▪ action steps ▪ deadlines o The timeline must include specific action steps that will ensure alignment with the CCSS, NM Content Standards, and the proposed school's mission. o The timeline must demonstrate that the scope and sequence and unit plans for one semester's curriculum will be fully completed before June 1st of the planning year—the deadline for having the commencement of operations approved. o If the applicant is proposing to adopt a fully developed or standardized curriculum, the timeline must include specific action steps to adapt the curriculum to the needs of the local community and the State of New Mexico.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

E. Graduation Requirements.

E. (1) Identify the proposed school's proposed requirements for graduation, if applicable, and explain any changes or additional requirements that vary from state minimum requirements. Provide high school graduation requirements that clearly articulate and meet state requirements. If you provide additional requirements that vary from state minimum

requirements, ensure they are clearly explained. If you are seeking any change from mandated minimum graduation requirements, identify the change and explain why you are seeking it. Clearly explain how the change supports the mission and ensures student readiness for college or other post-secondary opportunities.
APPLICANT RESPONSE: Polaris School serves middle school students in grades 6-8. Although we are not graduating students, we know that our actions will impact a student's ability to complete graduation requirements at the next level. We believe that our mission to provide an enriching and emotionally grounded learning environment that inspires global citizenship in an interdependent world through local, place-based resources and experiences will give students the academic skills, socio-emotional skills, and confidence to succeed at the high school level and beyond.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Identify all of the proposed school's graduation requirements; • Provide proposed Alternative Demonstration of Competency policies, if any • Align to state graduation requirements OR explicitly identify all requirements that vary from state minimum requirements; and • If there are variances from state minimum requirements explain the following: o why the proposed school believes the change is important o how the change supports the mission o how the change ensures student readiness for college, career, or other post-secondary opportunities.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

F. Instruction.

F. (1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** overview of the educational philosophy and instructional methods to be implemented that **clearly** supports and aligns with the proposed school's mission, and curriculum.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Educational Philosophy and Instructional Methods Support and Align to Mission:

Polaris believes in a learner-centered model supported by a high impact, high-accountability competency-based learning continuum. All components of our learning model (curriculum, instruction, and innovations) were chosen to specifically meet the social-emotional needs of students, increase engagement, and ensure academic achievement.

We believe every student is capable of academic growth and achievement, and that students who are supported and engaged in their learning are more likely to experience success.

We believe that high academic achievement requires students to have the social and emotional skills to engage in the education process. Nurturing social and emotional growth has been shown to lead to increased engagement and further academic success of all students.

The importance of self-confidence and how it impacts the capacity to learn cannot be overemphasized. In Los Alamos, many students feel like underachievers compared to their peers and on the Youth Risks and Resilience Survey, a greater number of students have admitted to thoughts of suicide than in the rest of the state. We believe that our instructional methods will help students "own" their learning and that their effort can lead to improvements in the community and our world.

There is an abundance of research that indicates a strong correlation between self-efficacy and academic achievement. According to Dale H. Schunk and Frank Pajares in their paper *Development of Academic Self-Efficacy* "Students' involvement and participation in school depend in part on how much the school environment contributes to their perceptions of autonomy and relatedness, which in turn influence self-efficacy and academic achievement." Our design is created to help raise academic achievement by paying close attention to the students' sense of belonging, self-worth and relevance of education to the real world. Our premise is that by creating an educational setting where this sense of self-worth is nourished, students will be able to envision themselves as academic performers and, in turn, be successful.

Polaris School will invest time and resources to ensure that teachers understand the school's mission, philosophy, curriculum, and instruction methods. We are currently partnering with the Teton Science School and the Place Network, a collaborative network of rural K-12 schools that connect learning and communities to increase student engagement, academic outcomes, and community impact, who will facilitate and support teacher professional development on-site, through virtual/remote platforms, and at their Teton location. Through the network, we will co-construct and have access to learning tools and resources including program guide templates, project planning templates, and resources linked to Place-based Education Framework.

We believe that teachers are responsible for developing the environment (curriculum and instructional strategies) that nurtures student progress. The teacher helps students achieve Mastery Learning by co-creating learning targets and choosing the appropriate instructional methods to meet the needs of

students.

<u>Meeting Social Emotional Needs:</u> Advisory Time Instruction

We believe that social emotional learning is important for academic achievement and student success in the world.

Polaris is a learner centered environment, with student ownership, choice, voice, and leadership central to the culture and school model. Students begin each day with Advisory Time to develop habits of success. Advisory time serves to provide opportunities for students to develop leadership, self-awareness, metacognition, social-emotional, and executive function skills to succeed in the personal and professional world. Students learn the essential "soft skills" that improve communication and interaction with peers and adults. Students set goals and learning targets related to competencies to help them measure the progress of their own learning. Increasing mastery of these habits provides students with increased independence, academic tenacity, and resiliency. We consider these skills essential to empowering students with the strategies to take control of their life and learning, so we have set aside advisory time daily to teach these skills.

Advisory classes will be multiage with a consistent advisor/teacher who stays with students for all three years at Polaris. This provides an opportunity for students to mentor younger students. It also allows time for students and teachers to develop positive relationships and connections that grow over time.

Instruction Methods during Advisory Time Are Research Based

Research on implementing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) from The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) suggests that "the most effective strategies include four elements represented by the acronym SAFE: (1) *Sequenced*—connected and coordinated activities to foster skills development; (2) *Active*—active forms of learning to help students master new skills; (3) *Focused*—containing a component that emphasizes developing personal and social skills; and (4) *Explicit*—targeting specific social and emotional skills (Durlak et al., 2010, 2011)."CASEL (2015) Our instruction methods are based on CASEL's recommendations.
Sequenced, Focused, Explicit Direct Instruction Method

Direct Instruction: Students are directly taught specific SEL skills and executive function strategies for habits of success, including: persistence, empathy, conflict resolution, organizing their work, and keeping track of deadlines. Direct instruction strategies include modeling, class discussions, and coaching.

Active Learning Instruction Methods

Class meetings- Students meet as a group for discussions, problem solving, decision making, and reflection. These are typically student led-discussions for student-centered engagement and cooperative group work.

Partners/Pair-share- Students work with a partner to share thoughts, ideas, concerns, strategies, and goals. Partnering ensures that everyone has a chance to share with a peer.

Independent Metacognition and Reflection- Students are given time to think about their own learning through journal writing, goal setting, and tracking progress.

Small groups- Students work in small groups or teams to complete projects, practice cooperation, solve problems, play team games, and build social connections.

Social Emotional Learning Schoolwide Instructional Practices
Advisory time provides the school with a common language and practices, but social emotional learning does not end after advisory time. Social emotional skills are practiced throughout the school day. Curriculum and instruction, school operations, and culture take into account the specific social emotional needs of middle school students. Students work collaboratively with peers and community partners to practice social emotional skills in authentic experiences throughout the day. Schoolwide practices, including restorative practices, increase the impact of social emotional learning.

Restorative Practices
Restorative Practice is a peer-led approach to discipline that has been shown to "reduce schoolwide suspensions, decrease office referrals, and support racial equity" (Armstrong, 2016, p.75). But using Restorative Practices is not just to respond to conflict, it is an integrated school practice that is meant to empower students and support empathy toward others. Restorative Practices range from affective statements to circles (class meetings) to restorative conferences. Using affective statements throughout the day sets the tone for a peaceable school community. Having circles as a regular activity gives the students voice and teaches them skills in conflict resolution and empathy. Students learn and use these skills on their own soon after they are introduced. Restorative practices align with our mission to support student well being because they ensure that the victims have a voice and that any harms are repaired.

Ensure Academic Achievement: Core Subject Instruction Personalized, Competency-Based (Math and Language Arts)

We believe that each student is unique and has an unlimited capacity to learn and that students should be agents of their own learning, so at Polaris instruction in core subjects is based on personalized pathways, student responsibility, and feedback focused on growth to achieve individual mastery of core competencies. Each student at Polaris is held to a high standard of accountability and an expectation of continuous improvement. Competency-based assessment provides the real-time information that teachers and students need to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction, set realistic individual student targets, choose appropriate teaching strategies, and adapt to challenges in order to maximize student achievement. Developing core competencies and skills are essential in order for students to successfully complete the interdisciplinary community impact projects.

Core subjects (Language Arts and Math) will focus on student progress toward learning goals, not simply on completion of activities. Each student will have a personalized pathway through a technology platform, Novare, to focus learning on achieving mastery and growth. All students will have learner profiles that contain internal and external short assessments, learning goals, completed impact projects, and a student portfolio. In order to meet individual needs, Core Subject Instruction will use a variety of instruction techniques or blended learning instruction. Blended learning instruction allows teachers and students the flexibility to choose instructional methods that best meet the needs of individuals.

Polaris School teachers are both instructional experts, focused on one or more of the core skill areas and learning coaches, responsible for the overall growth of the learner, advising, and meeting with students

and parents. Teachers will evaluate and monitor student academic progress and determine the best instructional methods and pace for students to master competencies. Teachers, as coaches, will provide students and parents with feedback that is clear, specific, and focused on competencies and improvement. Neuroscience research confirms that this kind of effective feedback is essential to learning new skills and knowledge (Deans for Impact, 2015).

Novare
We will implement Novare, an online platform, to help students and teachers customize learning and track progress toward mastery of core competencies. This platform allows us to personalize instruction for each student because teachers and students are able to develop and monitor individual goals, learning objectives, and choose the instructional methods that work best for each student. Teachers will use a blended-learning method of instruction that matches the curriculum with the individual needs of the student.

Blended Learning Instruction

Blended Learning Instruction during Core Subject time will use direct and indirect instruction that focuses on specific cognitive instruction and skill practice to master competencies.

Blended learning allows teachers to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students. "Differentiated instruction involves matching instruction to a particular child's needs or level of understanding. It may also include modifying the process of instruction or other aspects of the learning environment." (Zelazo, Blair., & Willoughby, 2016, p.38). "Students who receive differentiated instruction show greater rates of academic improvement." (Zelazo, Blair., & Willoughby, 2016, p.38).

Blended learning may include: direct teaching, modeling, computer video practice, independent and/or group work, mini-lessons, conferences, paper-pencil skill practice, or performance tasks in order to meet individual student needs.

Direct Instruction
Direct teaching may occur in whole group instruction, with small groups, or individually. Direct instruction is an active approach to instruction that breaks learning into specific steps and scaffolds learning. The teacher specifically shares information through a lecture or presentation to enhance understanding of a concept, skill, or competency. It may also be used to engage students or create meaning by providing background information. Direct instruction is effective for all students, but has been shown to be "extremely beneficial to students with exceptionalities". Rosenshine, B. (2008).

Modeling
Modeling is a kind of direct instruction when teachers or students directly show or demonstrate a concept or skill. This often involves verbalizing and visualizing the specific steps to solve a problem or complete a task.

Mini-lessons: Teachers may target small groups of students for specific direct intervention, instruction, or support to master a specific concept or competency.

Computer/Video: In this indirect method of instruction, the teacher facilitates the use of a computer or video to teach or practice a skill.

Conferences
Conferences are times when students and teachers meet to reflect on student progress toward competencies during a specific time period. We encourage student led conferences to ensure student responsibility, accountability, and engagement. Conferences allow time for students to share learning through artifacts and portfolios. Teachers use conferences to gather information from students, answer questions, or gather feedback.

Skill Practice/Paper-pencil
Students practice problem solving and students and/or teachers check for understanding.

***Increase Engagement:* Integrated Project-based Learning Instruction (Social Studies/Science)**

We believe that students learn best when they are engaged in projects that require them to apply knowledge in real situations. Integrated Learning Time uses core subjects and project-based instruction to teach Social Studies and Science concepts. This project-based instruction aligns with our learner-centered and place-based mission. The projects are interdisciplinary in nature, integrating the competencies from the Common Core Social Studies and Next Generation Science Standards. Core Subjects (Math and Language) are also integrated to help students understand data, apply skills in real-world situations, and create successful projects that serve to impact local and regional places. Instructional methods are selected based on the project objectives and student engagement.

Personalized Mastery Learning ensures that students understand their personal goals and where they are in the learning process. Teachers are facilitators and coaches who support the student on their journey. Where and when appropriate, students can make choices about how to show mastery on competencies.

During integrated projects, students follow a specific process and document their work through Project Notebooks. Students add notes, record assignments, and write goals in these notebooks. Teachers monitor student work through conferences and the Project Notebooks.

Polaris will use a STE(A)M approach to inform interdisciplinary projects with a focus on science as a process, technology as a tool, engineering as a design process, art as a creative communication tool, and math as a language to understand big data and model the authentic learning. STE(A)M projects begin with a guiding question and are divided into learning stages: engage, learn, think, act, reflect.

We will adapt these STE(A)M stages which were developed by the Teton Science School and the Place Network, to Polaris students and projects:

Stage 0: Engage - What challenge is worth solving? Students discover potential challenges by completing background knowledge, interviewing constituents, and making observations.

Stage 1: Learn - What do I need to learn to succeed at this project? Students will become familiar with a topic through teacher-guided and self-guided online learning. The goal of this first stage is to learn the requisite knowledge to understand the essential or driving question.

Stage 2: Think - What do I need to be able to do to succeed at this project? After generating a foundational understanding of the topic, students will spend time researching and exploring in depth to

understand the essential/driving question. This may be in the form of interviews, primary-source research, experience, and discussions.

Stage 3: Act - What will I produce that will answer the driving question? Define, plan, create, and evaluate a solution (design thinking). Students will propose an Opportunity Statement (or driving question) based on Stages 1 and 2. Students will design prototypes and test these with users. The final product will be the results of this design process. Outcomes will be meaningful, applicable to a real-world challenge, shared with adults and peers, and demonstrate a full understanding of the competencies.

Stage 4: Reflect - How did I do on this project? What did I learn? Each project ends with a reflective process and portfolio building.
Each project is designed to create an increasing level of student agency and ownership during the learning experience. The level of student voice/choice is determined by the teacher. During initial implementation, teachers may drive more of the project direction, while at later stages of implementation students may drive the project direction. This gradual release of responsibility must be thoughtfully implemented to ensure student success.

Instructional Methods
Instructional methods used for interdisciplinary projects include: inquiry, design thinking, independent student projects, service learning, group projects, case studies, labs or studios, discussions, and public reviews.

Design Thinking

Polaris will use the design thinking process as one of the primary instructional strategies to help students through project learning. It provides a systematic structured, but creative process for understanding and solving a problem. The process includes empathy, define, ideate, prototype, test, and reflect. This instructional method provides a roadmap that will help students and teachers implement the three dimensions of the Common Core Science Standards: scientific and engineering practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas. It will provide a process for completing group projects and civic engagement.

The process begins with empathy, or an understanding the people involved and impacted by a problem, including their needs, resources, and culture. Empathy is important to social emotional learning and is integral to our school culture, including advisory time and restorative practices. Design thinking provides an opportunity to include empathy in academic instruction as well.

The next steps in the design thinking process build a growth mindset for continuous improvement. Students define the problem by gathering information and identifying the problem, and then ideate, or brainstorm to generate potential innovative solutions. Instead of looking for one “correct” idea, students are encouraged to consider many ideas. Ideas are then refined and tested by developing models (or prototypes), carrying out investigations, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data, and using mathematics and computational thinking. The design thinking process is iterative, students must continually test, evaluate, and revise ideas. This process builds a growth mindset that strengthens creative confidence, self-efficacy, and encourages innovation.

Other Instructional Methods that may be used include independent student projects, service learning,

collaborative projects, case studies, labs or studios, discussions, public reviews, curations, and public exhibitions.

- **Independent/Capstone Projects**: In this indirect teaching method students independently explore an area of interest, seek advice or mentorship from experts, and complete a research, creative, or design project.
- **Service Learning**: Teachers guide students as they participate in a real-world learning experience that provides a service to the community.
- **Collaborative Projects**: Students work with others to tackle complex problems. Working as a group provides an opportunity to practice communication and conflict resolution skills, leadership, problem solving, and division of workload.
- **Case Studies**: Students apply knowledge, analyze information, and practice complex problem solving by studying real world events, problems, or actions. Teachers often supply cases relevant to the competencies or project on which students are working, and then may moderate discussions or guide students as they think through the cases.
- **Science Labs, Studios, MakerLabs**: Students actively experiment, design, create, or make projects. The teacher may initiate the challenge, focus students through the process, and provide feedback.
- **Discussions**:Teachers use this instructional method to help students practice communication skills: organizing ideas, verbalizing thoughts, evaluating positions, discerning fact and opinion, defending a position, or providing feedback.
- **Public Reviews**: Students practice self-reflection and giving (and receiving) constructive feedback.
- **Curations and Exhibitions**: Students create a visual display of work. Students must consider their audience, the context, determine the main idea (thesis) of a show, creating or choosing work that supports the thesis, solving logistical issues, space, and writing exhibit statements. Teachers instruct and or guide students in the process.

Project-based Learning (PBL) is Research-based

Project-based learning is an effective instructional process that is based on a significant amount of research. In "A Review of Research on Project-Based Learning" by John W. Thomas, Ph. D. several studies related to project-based learning were examined. The review states several benefits of PBL, including:

- "increased attendance, self-reliance, and improved attitudes towards learning on the part of students.
- PBL seems to be equivalent or slightly better than other models of instruction for producing gains in general academic achievement and for developing lower-level cognitive skills in traditional subject matter areas.
- There is some evidence that PBL, in comparison to other instructional methods, has value for enhancing the quality of students' learning in subject matter areas, leading to the tentative claim that learning higher-level cognitive skills via PBL is associated with increased capability on the part of students for applying those learnings in novel, problem-solving contexts.
- There is ample evidence that PBL is an effective method for teaching students" complex processes and procedures such as planning, communicating, problem solving, and decision making, although the studies that demonstrate these findings do not include comparison groups taught by competing methods. (Thomas, 2000)

Another research review, *MDRC/Lucas Education Research,* in 2016 found that "schools that follow PBL approaches have pointed to positive effects on students' engagement, motivation, and beliefs in their own efficacy, although the specific PBL model and the intensity of its use have varied across these schools" (Condliffe et al., 2016).

A large meta-analysis that spanned research over 40 years compared PBL to traditional learning and found that "PBL was superior when it comes to long-term retention, skill development and satisfaction of students and teachers" (Strobel & van Barneveld, 2009).

Project-based Learning is Reasonable

We believe that the fact that PBL has been used for many years, demonstrates that schools and teachers find the instructional method reasonable. A significant amount of support and resources are available and accessible to students and teachers. Extensive professional development, for example, is available online at PBL Global *(https://pblglobal.com/*). Polaris has also joined the place-based network of schools, which will provide advice, and shared resources that will help us successfully implement project-based learning.

Polaris's Curriculum, Instructional Strategies, and Calendar are based on current research and recommendations to support adolescent learners.

There has been significant research into understanding the developmental needs and function of the adolescent brain. Polaris's curriculum, instructional strategies are supported by the brain-friendly practices recommended by Thomas Armstrong (2016) and supported by brain-based learning (Jensen, 2008).

Figure 24. Polaris's Innovations, Curriculum and Instructional Strategies Follow Recommended Practices for Adolescents

Recommended Practice (Armstrong, 2016)	**Rationale for Practice** (Armstrong, 2016)	**Polaris Innovation**
Opportunities to Choose	Helps adolescents make less risky and more sensible decisions in life.	Studio Electives around Student Passions Student Voice and Choice is valued through project selection. Restorative Practice
Self-awareness activities	Assists adolescents in defining their sense of identity.	Advisory Time includes setting personal Goals Competency-based learning provides the information students need to make informed decisions about their own learning.

		Place-based learning helps students define their place in this world. It connects content to their personal lives. Restorative Practice
Peer Learning Connections	Capitalizes on adolescents' preference for hanging out with peers.	Advisory Time helps students develop strong positive social connections with peers. Project-based learning focuses on collaborative projects that allow students to interact in constructive ways.
Affective Learning	Integrates the emotional brain (limbic system) with the rational areas of the brain (prefrontal cortex).	Advisory Time- Time devoted to Social Emotional Learning. Our Project-Based Learning uses a Design Thinking framework that begins with empathy- understanding others and the problems they face. Restorative Practice
Learning through the body	Capitalizes on the highly plastic cerebellum by providing physical learning that teaches higher order skills.	Place-based learning physically takes students out into the community to participate in learning projects. Hands-on experiences provided through projects.
Metacognitive Strategies	Takes advantage of the adolescent's emerging capacity for formal operational thinking.	Advisory Time includes goal setting, journaling, and time for students to think about their own social and emotional actions.
Expressive Arts Activities	Channels burgeoning adolescent emotional energies into thoughtful and socially appropriate artistic products and processes.	Creativity, innovation, and personal talent are encouraged through student choice, student writing, projects and design thinking. Studio Electives may be art-based.
Real-world Experiences	Gives adolescents and opportunity to practice executive functions in	Place-based learning projects allow students to investigate and develop projects that serve the wider community.

		Authentic Assessment

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Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Describe the educational philosophy of the proposed school; • Identify primary instructional methods to be implemented that align to the educational philosophy; • Identify information that demonstrates the instructional methods are research-based; and • Describe how the educational philosophy and instructional methods support and align to the mission and curriculum.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

F.(2) Provide a yearly calendar and daily schedule (length of school day, instructional blocks, and breaks) that **completely comply** with **all** state requirements and ensure **effective, successful** implementation of the academic program/curriculum. Describe in detail how this schedule supports the proposed school's educational program and how the calendar is optimal for achieving high outcomes for your anticipated student population.

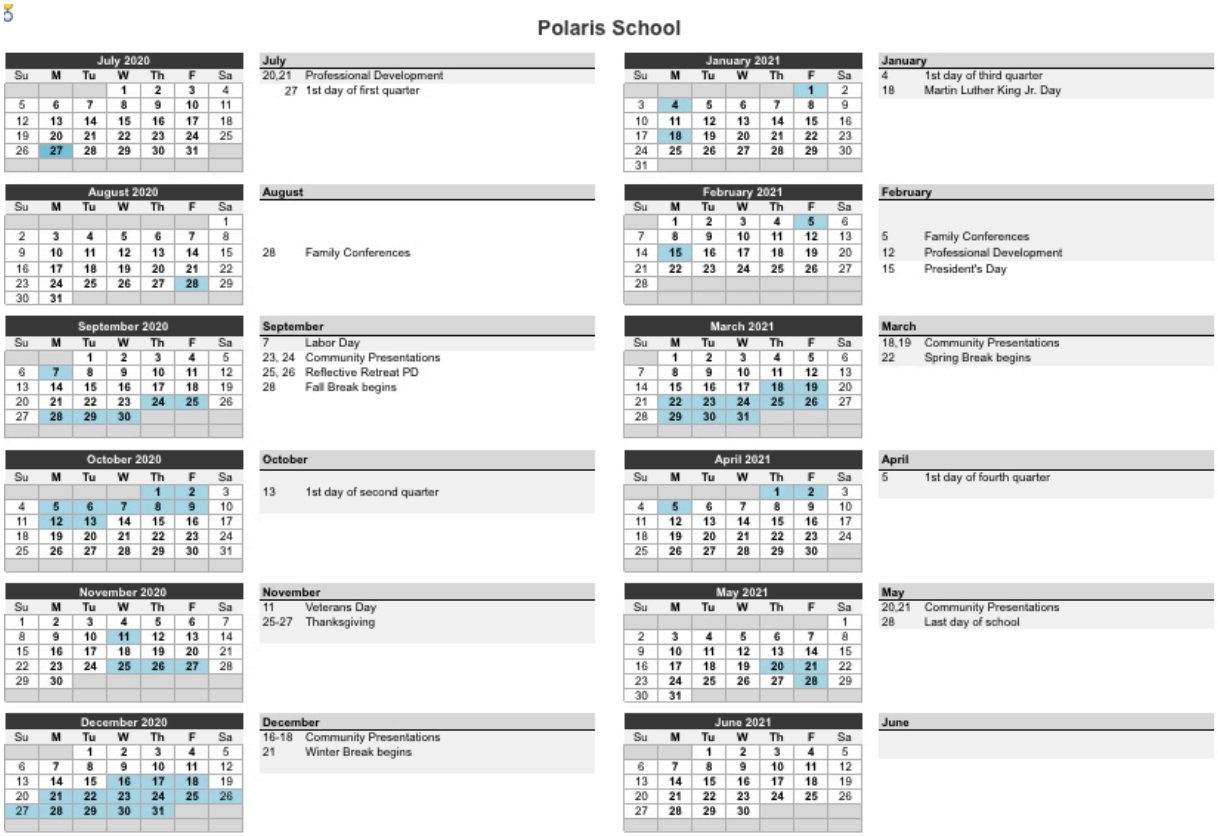
APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Yearly calendar

Our school believes that it is important to consider the local district school calendar in order to best serve the families that may have other students in surrounding schools, so we have aligned some of our days off with theirs.

Students start school on July 27, 2020 and end on May 28, 2021. Teachers have five Professional Development days; they are July 20, 21, September 25, 26 and February 12. Teacher parent conferences are August 28, 2020 and February 5, 2021. Schoolwide assessments will follow the New Mexico PED testing windows.

Not shown on this calendar are the Meet-up opportunities for families that will be scheduled monthly on a weekend. Dates will vary based on when, but will include community events like Earth Day and ScienceFest, as well as hikes and museum visits.



Polaris School

July 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

July		
20,21	Professional Development	
27	1st day of first quarter	

August 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August		
28	Family Conferences	

September 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

September		
7	Labor Day	
23, 24	Community Presentations	
25, 26	Reflective Retreat PD	
28	Fall Break begins	

October 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

October		
13	1st day of second quarter	

November 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

November		
11	Veterans Day	
25-27	Thanksgiving	

December 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

December		
16-18	Community Presentations	
21	Winter Break begins	

January 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

January		
4	1st day of third quarter	
18	Martin Luther King Jr. Day	

February 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

February		
5	Family Conferences	
12	Professional Development	
15	President's Day	

March 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

March		
18,19	Community Presentations	
22	Spring Break begins	

April 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

April		
5	1st day of fourth quarter	

May 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

May		
20,21	Community Presentations	
28	Last day of school	

June 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

June		

Daily Schedule

7:45-8:45 Teacher Meetings (once a week)
8:45 - 9:15 Advisory time
9:20 - 10:50 Math Skills
10:50 - 11:00 Brain Break/Snack
11:00- 12:30 Language Arts Skills
12:30 - 1:00 Lunch
1:00 - 2:30 Integrated Learning/Group work (SS/Sci)/Collaborative Teaching
2:35 - 3:35 Studio Elective- Visual and Performing Arts Art/Music/Student Choice
3:35 - 4:30 After School- Open Studio/Maker Space

Sample Advisory Time Block

Time	***Activity***	***Curriculum/Resources***
2 minutes	Mindfulness minute- Focus	
15 minutes	Class meeting or Activity (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making)	Panorama, Restorative Practices
13 minutes	Goal Setting - Focus for the week and specific strategies for achieving that goal.	Novare

Sample Mathematics Block

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
25 minute large group	Number Talks	Number Talks	Math Circle	YouCubed lesson	Which One Doesn't Belong?
5 minute break	5 minute break	5 minute break	5 minute break	5 minute break	5 minute break
60 minutes 5 minute stretch break, if needed, after 30 minutes	25 minutes Small Group Direct Instruction	25 minutes Independent Practice	35 minutes Independent Practice	25 minutes Independent Practice	40 minutes Independent Practice
	35 minutes Independent Practice	35 minutes Independent Practice	25 minutes Small Group Direct Instruction	35 minutes Independent Practice	20 minutes Competency Based Assessment

Sample English Language Arts/Literacy Block (Writing Day)

Time	Instructional Method	Curriculum/Resources
10 min.	Mini lesson - direct teaching	Step Up to Writing The Columbia Teachers' Reading and Writing Project
5 min.	Independent Goal Setting for the day	
30 min.	Independent Writing Workshop	The Columbia Teachers' Reading and Writing Project
15 min.	Conferencing/Feedback Small groups	Step Up to Writing The Columbia Teachers' Reading and Writing Project
30 min.	Independent Reading	Classroom Library, Los Alamos Public Library, The Columbia Teachers' Reading and Writing Project booklist, local/regional authors/topics

Sample English Language Arts/Literacy Block (Reading Day)

Time	Instructional Method	Curriculum/Resources
10 min.	Mini lesson - direct teaching	The Columbia Teachers' Reading and Writing Project
15 min.	Close Reading/Skills Independent	
30 min.	Book Club - Group Work	Classroom Library, Los Alamos Public Library, The Columbia Teachers' Reading and Writing Project booklist, local/regional authors/topics
25 min.	Independent Reading	Classroom Library, Los Alamos Public Library, The Columbia Teachers' Reading and Writing Project booklist, local/regional authors/topics
10 min.	Share and Reflect	

These calendars and schedules support the Education program.

The Polaris daily schedule creates an environment that is optimal for implementing the innovations, curriculum, and instruction methods needed to achieve the high outcomes of engagement and academic achievement. It uses a later start time, block schedule, advisory time, academic core skills instruction every day, and large blocks of time in the afternoon for project-based integrated learning through independent learning projects and community impact projects.

Later Start Time
Polaris is dedicated to a school calendar and schedule that supports the latest research regarding what is best for our middle school population. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (2014), "A substantial body of research has now demonstrated that delaying school start times is an effective countermeasure to chronic sleep loss and has a wide range of potential benefits to students with regard to physical and mental health, safety, and academic achievement." We specifically chose 8:45 based on their recommendation. "The evidence strongly implicates earlier school start times (i.e., before 8:30 am) as a key modifiable contributor to insufficient sleep." (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2014)

Academic Core Skills Every Day
Polaris School has time blocks dedicated to building individual academic core skills in mathematics and literacy every morning. This consistency will support the academic needs of at-risk students in essential subject areas that are necessary for success in other subject areas. During these 90-minute blocks of time students will focus on achieving academic competencies and goals. The purpose of the development of these core skills is to provide the skills and content to then implement during integrated learning time projects in the afternoon. This block of time will include individual work, group coaching, individual instruction, computer practice, and peer conferencing. Teachers can use this time to implement differentiated instruction and data-based targeted interventions for at-risk students.

Integrated Learning Time
Integrated learning time is a class period to promote deep learning and creative problem solving. This provides time for students to complete authentic place-based projects, such as community impact projects. These complex interdisciplinary projects require students to collaborate with community partners, explore and experiment in authentic settings, and integrate reading, writing, math, science, and social studies skills. Longer blocks of integrated learning time will provide an opportunity for students to work on campus or at off-site learning locations. They also provide time for complex projects, designing solutions, and creating products that require more time to complete.

Block schedules are currently being used by other successful place-based schools, including the Teton Science Schools, and are recommended by the Place-Based Education Evaluation Collaborative (PEEC), so we believe that it is a reasonable schedule for achieving our mission. Decreasing the number of class periods per day reduces cognitive overload, and allows students to focus on deeper learning of content. Decreasing the number of classes per day reduces the

number of interruptions and transitions between subject areas. In addition to reducing the amount of academic time lost due to transitions, it also helps us emphasize the relationships and integration of subjects.

An Example of an Authentic Learning Project

One example of a program that uses authentic project based integrated learning is the National History Day program. This project-based program requires students to do authentic historical research, interpret information, and creatively express and present their findings. The National History Day program has grown from a small competition in 1974 to over half a million students participating in 2018. This popularity demonstrates that many teachers find this kind of project-based learning reasonable. However, even though this program has stood the test of time, the real question is does it work? Research from the National Program Evaluation Summary in 2011 shows that middle and high school students from Colorado, New Jersey, South Carolina and Texas, who participate in the National History Day Program not only outperform their peers on state standardized social studies tests, but also reading, science and math. "In the Colorado middle school, more NHD students than comparison-group students consistently received Advanced performance on CSAP in writing; 57 percent vs. 42 percent (2007), 46 percent vs. 21 percent (2008); 60 percent vs. 57 percent (2009); and 53 percent vs. 32 percent (2010)." (Sloan and Rockman, 2011). This data indicates that knowledge and skills developed in this kind of project-based program are transferable to other disciplines. Our integrated learning time will provide time for students to successfully participate in this kind of authentic project that leads to higher academic achievement.

Teachers have five Professional Development days; they are July 20, 21, September 25, 26 and February 12.

Extended Learning Time

Polaris has extended learning time to support student learning and improve academic success that includes advisory time, extended day learning, and optional opportunities. Each day begins with advisory time to support academic achievement by focusing on social emotional skills, organization/executive functioning skills, metacognition, and developing positive relationships with peers and also between students and staff. Extended learning days occur every Tuesday, this extra hour each week adds up to six extra days each year. On this day, we plan to offer individual study opportunities and help sessions for at-risk students, as well as an open art studio/makerspace time for students to work on projects.

Finally, we understand that important learning occurs outside of the classroom, so Polaris has a unique calendar and schedule that can provide optional intersession classes and family meet-up opportunities. Our calendar currently includes two long (two-week) breaks, one in the fall and the other in the spring. We plan to use at least one week during each break (10 days each year) to offer intersession classes, additional learning opportunities, or extra help for students needing assistance. Family meet-up opportunities occur at least once a month (usually on the weekends). These meetups will be family "field-trip" opportunities, such as hikes, special programs, or community events.

Professional Development/Teacher Learning

Our calendar includes five professional development (PD) days for teachers, they are July 20,

21, September 25, 26 and February 12. The first PD days in July are before school begins. Restorative practices, Special populations, RtI process, and Novare (computer data management system) training will be part of this beginning of the year PD. This ensures that all staff understands processes and procedures, staff and student expectations, and special populations (at risk, EL, Special Education/Gifted).

The second PD dates are a Reflection Retreat. While retreats are often used as kick-off or end-of-year events, this retreat is scheduled after the first quarter so that the staff can reflect on the success of the first quarter of the school year in a place-based setting. The staff will use this time to dive into data, re-evaluate programs, and make data driven decisions. We believe that responding to data and making adjustments early in the school year will improve teaching and learning.

The final PD day, February 12, will be devoted to needs identified by the staff and Academic Leader. This may include curriculum, instruction, technology,

This schedule is optimal for achieving high outcomes for our middle school population.

Polaris is designed to serve the needs of adolescent students in grades 6-8. There has recently been significant research into understanding the developmental needs and function of the adolescent brain. Polaris's curriculum, instructional strategies and a schedule are supported by the brain-friendly practices recommended by American Academy of Pediatrics (2014), Thomas Armstrong (2016) and supported by brain-based learning (Jensen, 2008). Our school schedule ensures that there is time to implement these brain-based practices.

Polaris Calendar and Schedule Include Times to Implement Recommended Practices for Adolescents

Recommended Practice	**Rationale for Practice**	**Polaris Design**
Later start time	Helps adolescents combat chronic sleep loss, which can lead to benefits to physical and mental health, safety, and academic achievement. (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2014)	8:45 start time
Opportunities to Choose (Armstrong, 2016)	Helps adolescents make less risky and more sensible decisions in life.(Armstrong, 2016)	Studio Electives Student Voice and Choice is valued through alternative assessments, reading choice, and project selection.

		Passion Projects/Genius Hour Restorative Practice
Self-awareness activities (Armstrong, 2016)	Assists adolescents in defining their sense of identity.(Armstrong, 2016)	Advisory Time Daily Journaling Weekly Goal Setting Literature Curriculum explores adolescent themes. Place-based learning helps students define their place in this world. It connects content to their personal lives. Restorative Practice
Peer Learning Connections (Armstrong, 2016)	Capitalizes on adolescents' preference for hanging out with peers.(Armstrong, 2016)	Advisory Time daily helps students develop strong positive social connections with peers. Project-based learning focuses on collaborative projects that allow students to interact in constructive ways. Restorative Practices- Peer-led approach to discipline.
Affective Learning (Armstrong, 2016)	Integrates the emotional brain (limbic system) with the rational areas of the brain (prefrontal cortex).(Armstrong, 2016)	Advisory Time- Time devoted to Social Emotional Learning. Design Thinking begins with understanding others and the problems they face. Restorative Practice
Learning through the	Capitalizes on the highly plastic cerebellum by providing physical learning	Place-based learning physically takes students out

body (Armstrong, 2016)	that teaches higher order skills.(Armstrong, 2016)	into the community to participate in learning projects. Get Active! Time engages students in building lifelong skills to stay physically active. Hands-on experiences provided through projects.
Metacognitive Strategies (Armstrong, 2016)	Takes advantage of the adolescent's emerging capacity for formal operational thinking.(Armstrong, 2016)	Advisory Time Metacognitive Strategies
Expressive Arts Activities (Armstrong, 2016)	Channels burgeoning adolescent emotional energies into thoughtful and socially appropriate artistic products and processes.(Armstrong, 2016)	Creativity, innovation, and personal talent are encouraged through student choice, student writing, projects and design thinking. The "Create" studio is open after school hours. Studio Electives may be art-based.
Real-world Experiences (Armstrong, 2016)	Gives adolescents and opportunity to practice executive functions in (Armstrong, 2016)	Place-based learning projects allow students to investigate and develop projects that serve the wider community. Authentic Assessment

Advisory Time-

Polaris is a learner-centered environment, with student ownership, choice, voice, and leadership central to the culture and school model. Students begin each day with Advisory Time to develop habits of success. Advisory time serves to provide opportunities for students to develop leadership, self-awareness, metacognition, social-emotional, and executive function skills to succeed in the personal and professional world. Students learn the essential "soft skills" that improve communication and interaction with peers and adults. Students set goals and learning targets related to competencies to help them measure the progress of their own learning. Increasing mastery of these habits provides students with increased independence,

academic tenacity, and resiliency. We consider these skills essential to empowering students with the strategies to take control of their life and learning, so we have set aside advisory time daily to teach these skills.

"Studies have shown that when students perceive their classrooms as encouraging personal autonomy, their engagement increases." (Armstrong, 2016, p.40)

The first 15 minutes of Advisory time will be teaching and practicing social emotional skills. Students work in small groups or teams to complete projects, practice cooperation, solve problems, play team games, and build social connections. This connection with peers is important for our adolescent students. Adolescents are "primed for social learning and not for listening to teacher lectures" (Armstrong, 2016, p.66). When students relationships with peers are positive, student engagement increases (Armstrong, 2016), so we believe that devoting time to help students create strong positive peer relationships is important.

The next 15 minutes of Advisory Time will be spent on different topics each day. This framework begins each week with goal setting and ends with reflection, so that students and teachers have a routine that reinforces responsibility learning. It also allows students and teachers to revisit and reinforce concepts throughout the year.

Advisory Time Topics

Day	**Method/Strategy**	**What specifically happens during this time?**
Monday	Independent Metacognition	Students are given time to think about their own learning through journal writing, goal setting, and tracking progress. Teachers will support executive functioning skills by helping students develop habits of success that help students keep track of deadlines, organize work, and prepare for the week.
Tuesday	Class Meeting	Students meet as a group for discussions, problem solving, conflict resolution, decision making, and reflection. These are typically student led-discussions for student-centered engagement and cooperative group work.
Wednesday	Place Network Committee Meeting	Students will share learning and plan events, such as exhibitions or community networking. Sometimes, the Place network has student leaders attend virtual conferences.
Thursday	Mindfulness Growth Mindset	Students will participate in activities to help manage stress and focus attention, such as mindfulness and

		growth mindset.
Friday	Independent Metacognition	Students will think about their own learning through journal writing, reviewing their weekly goal, and tracking progress. Students can evaluate their progress toward their weekly goals and upload work to their online portfolio through Novare.

The calendar and schedules are supported by the financial framework

The Polaris calendar and schedules are supported by the financial framework in several ways. Our five-year budget has line items for professional development because the success of our mission is dependent upon the staff being fully trained in several areas. The area that may have the biggest impact on student achievement and well-being is Advisory Time. Advisory Time happens every day so it is essential that all of the staff get the same training. Our budget includes $5250 in Year 0 for the kind of training that will support our Mission. (Polaris Budget, Line 24146, 1000, 53330) Our budget includes professional development funding again in Year 3 to ensure continued support of our scheduled use of Advisory Time. We have identified Title I and II funds to use for future professional development.

References

Jensen, E. (2008). Brain-based learning: the new paradigm of teaching. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Include a yearly calendar that identifies the following: o Annual start date and end date o Teacher professional development days and times o Schoolwide assessment periods o School days, holidays, and partial days o Teacher parent conferences; • Include a daily schedule that identifies the following: o Instructional times o Break times o Start and end times o Differences in the daily schedule for full and partial days; • Meet all minimum hour (total instructional time) requirements laid out in

	NMSA 22-2-8.1; • Describe how the calendar and schedule support the proposed school's educational program; • Describe how the calendar and schedule are optimal for achieving high outcomes for the anticipated student population; • Describe specifically identified services to improve the academic success of at-risk students; • Describe the extended learning time programs to improve academic success of students and professional learning of teachers; • If this is an elementary school, describe the K-5 plus program; and • Be supported by the proposed budget found in the Financial Framework section of the application.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

F. (3) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** explanation of how the educational philosophy, instructional methods, and yearly calendar and daily schedule will be effective with the anticipated student population.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:
Anticipated Student Population

Demographic information based on the local community population
Our targeted geographical area includes Los Alamos county and the surrounding communities of Jemez, Espanola, and Pojoaque. The school anticipates drawing a number of students from Los Alamos county, where the school plans to be located. Los Alamos has a population of about 18,000. In addition, about 3,600 employees commute from surrounding communities to work at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Demographic information from Los Alamos and surrounding counties is taken from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts

Los Alamos
- 72% White
- 18% Hispanic
- 6% Asian

Espanola
- 9% White
- 86% Hispanic
- 2% American Indian

Pojoaque, NM is considered part of Santa Fe, NM
- 40% White
- 55% Hispanic
- 2% American Indian

Currently, 17-18 % of LAPS students are from outside of the district, including Pojoaque, Espanola, Jemez, and San Ildefonso. Due to "out-of-district" students, demographic data from the local school district varies from the town.

Demographic data obtained from recent school report cards (http://webed.ped.state.nm.us/sites/conference/2016% 20District%20Report%20Cards/ Forms/AllItems.aspx) provide a guideline for the population that our school plans to serve.

Most of the student population will be from Los Alamos Public Schools (LAPS). Data for LAPS for the school year 2015-16 recorded the ethnicity of the population as 32.8% Hispanic, 2.3% American Indian, 5.4% Asian and 58% Caucasian.

Special populations for LAPS also include 12.6% economically disadvantaged, 2.8% English Language Learners, and 18.4% Students with Disabilities.

Educational proficiency based upon enrollment at the school

Education background of Los Alamos and surrounding communities.

Los Alamos

98% of Los Alamos residents have graduated from high school.

66% have a Bachelor's degree or higher

Espanola

80% residents have graduated from high school.

16% have a Bachelor's degree or higher

Pojoaque- Santa Fe, NM

88% residents have graduated from high school.

42% have a Bachelor's degree or higher

Los Alamos Middle School Academic Proficiency

The most recent Los Alamos Middle School report card details academic performance for special populations in Reading Proficiency: White 69%, African American 58%, Hispanic 50%, Asian 84%, Native American 38%, Economically Disadvantaged 39%, Students with Disabilities 24%, and ELL 39%. Math Proficiency for special populations details are also provided: White 59%, African American 53%, Hispanic 30%, Asian 80%, American Indian 28%, Economically Disadvantaged 25%, Students with Disabilities 14%, and ELL 19%. (http://webed.ped.state.nm.us/ sites/conference/2016% 20District%20Report%20Cards/ Forms/AllItems.aspx)

According to the NM PED School Grading map (http://aae.ped.state.nm.us/), the middle schools in our area have recently received Ds and Fs: Los Alamos Middle School received a D in 2017, but a B in 2018; Carlos F. Vigil Middle School in Espanola received an F in 2015, 2016, 2017, and a D in 2018; Sixth Grade Academy in Pojoaque received an F in 2014, 2015, 2016, and a D in 2017 and 2018; Pojoaque Middle School has received Ds in 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2018, and an F in 2017; Jemez Valley Middle School received a D in 2016, 2017 and 2018. Parents wanting to exercise the option to transfer to a better school need another option, and our school can meet that need.

Many students in Los Alamos come from families highly educated in STEM fields that hold high academic performance expectations, particularly in sciences and math. This sets up an experience of inadequacy for students who are intelligent but hold different interests and talents. A mental health survey in November of 2015 completed by 1,300 local students indicated 753 reported concerns of stress/anxiety; 610 depression; 335 self-harm behavior; 310 feeling suicidal.

For the past two years, members of the community and Los Alamos Public Schools have been in open dialogue about new educational options for its students. In 2015 a diverse team embarked on a nine-month journey to reimagine our high school and win a $10 million grant

from the XQ Foundation. As one of the top applications a film was made about the project (https://www.usatoday.com/pages/interactives/sponsor-story/xq/). A key to the team's success was its ability to engage the community, students, and staff in conversations about reimagining high school. The team hosted over two dozen events including broad community forums, school site discussions, multiple showings of the film "Most Likely to Succeed", an alumni forum, and teen input sessions. It is estimated that a thousand people attended at least one event over the nine-month period. The community continues to be informed of research-based innovations in education through a Facebook page with over 300 followers, a weekly coffee conversation and blog with an email list of over 200 people.

An outgrowth of the XQ project was the formation of this team to establish a charter school based on similar beliefs about reimagining education. The Polaris Charter School team has presented to local groups including the Family Strengths Network, Informal Educators, and the Los Alamos Public Schools Foundation. A public launch event on December 1st 2017 attracted approximately 120 participants. Of those who completed a survey, 69% said that it is important for students in Los Alamos to have another middle school option, 24 % were undecided, and 7% said no. The number one reason that would cause a family to choose a different educational option for their child was "more engaging methods of instructions" at 64%. The message from our community is clear. They want another option for their children.

Our educational philosophy and framework is designed to meet students' needs

We are creating Polaris Charter School to help improve what is generally accepted as an already successful school district. All components of our model and innovations were chosen with care to specifically promote the social-emotional needs of students. Nurturing social and emotional growth has been shown to lead to increased engagement and further academic success of all students.

Our Place-Based framework was chosen to help improve the academic proficiency of our students who are particularly motivated by real world experience. This framework has been shown to help foster a sense of belonging in the community. Studies have found that integrating the local environment as a context for learning improves student achievement in core subjects. According to *"Closing the Achievement Gap"* by Lieberman and Hoody, students, teachers and administrators report significant positive effects on problem solving skills, critical thinking and decision making. They also report an "increased enthusiasm and engagement in learning and gains in summative measures of educational achievement such as standardized test scores and grade point average." (Lieberman and Hoody, 1998)

The importance of self-confidence and how it impacts the capacity to learn cannot be overemphasized. In Los Alamos, many students feel like underachievers compared to their peers and on the Youth Risks and Resilience Survey, a greater number of students have admitted to thoughts of suicide than in the rest of the state. We believe that our model will help students "own" their learning and that their effort can lead to improvements in the community and our world.

There is an abundance of research that indicates a strong correlation between self-efficacy and academic achievement. According to Dale H. Schunk and Frank Pajares in their paper *Development of Academic Self-Efficacy* "Students' involvement and participation in school depend in part on how much the school environment contributes to their perceptions of autonomy and relatedness, which in turn influence self-efficacy and academic achievement." Our design is created to help raise academic achievement by paying close attention to the students' sense of belonging, self-worth and relevance of education to the real world. Our premise is that by creating an educational setting where this sense of self-worth is nourished, students will be able to envision themselves as academic performers and, in turn, be academic performers.

Instructional methods have been designed to meet students' needs and specifically how they will meet the needs of at-risk students.

Social Emotional Learning programs have demonstrated success in schools. A meta-analysis of 213 school-based, universal social and emotional learning (SEL) programs involving 270,034 kindergarten through high school students showed that " SEL participants demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior and academic performance that reflected an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement." (Durlak, et al., 2011). While we believe that academic knowledge is important, we know that instruction that focuses on strategies "is essential for the academic progress of students with learning differences and is beneficial for all students." (Meltzer, 2018, p. 133) These skills help students develop a positive growth mindset and the skills to solve problems and tackle academic challenges.

The benefits of social emotional skills go beyond academic achievement and will prepare students for success in the world. A "2015 study published in the American Journal of Public Health found significant associations between social-emotional skills in kindergarten and young adult outcomes across education, employment, criminal activity, and mental health."(CASEL, 2018).

Blended learning allows teachers to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students. "Differentiated instruction involves matching instruction to a particular child's needs or level of understanding. It may also include modifying the process of instruction or other aspects of the learning environment."(Zelazo, Blair., & Willoughby, 2016, p.38). "Students who receive differentiated instruction show greater rates of academic improvement." (Zelazo, Blair, & Willoughby, 2016, p.38).

Blended learning may include: direct teaching, modeling, computer video practice, independent and/or group work, mini-lessons, conferences, paper-pencil skill practice, or performance tasks in order to meet individual student needs.

Polaris's Innovations, Curriculum and Instructional Strategies Follow Recommended Practices for Adolescents

Recommended Practice (Armstrong, 2016)	**Rationale for Practice** (Armstrong, 2016)	**Polaris Innovation**
Opportunities to Choose	Helps adolescents make less risky and more sensible decisions in life.	Studio Electives around Student Passions Student Voice and Choice is valued through project selection. Restorative Practice
Self-awareness activities	Assists adolescents in defining their sense of identity.	Advisory Time includes setting personal Goals Competency-based learning provides the information students need to make informed decisions about their own learning. Place-based learning helps students define their place in this world. It connects content to their personal lives. Restorative Practice
Peer Learning Connections	Capitalizes on adolescents' preference for hanging out with peers.	Advisory Time helps students develop strong positive social connections with peers. Project-based learning focuses on collaborative projects that allow students to interact in constructive ways.
Affective Learning	Integrates the emotional brain (limbic system) with the rational areas of the brain (prefrontal cortex).	Advisory Time- Time devoted to Social Emotional Learning. Our Project-Based Learning uses a Design Thinking framework that begins with empathy- understanding others and the problems they face. Restorative Practice
Learning through the body	Capitalizes on the highly plastic cerebellum by providing physical learning that teaches higher order skills.	Place-based learning physically takes students out into the community to participate in learning projects. Hands-on experiences provided through projects.
Metacognitive Strategies	Takes advantage of the adolescent's emerging capacity for formal operational thinking.	Advisory Time includes goal setting, journaling, and time for students to think about their own social and emotional actions.

Expressive Arts Activities	Channels burgeoning adolescent emotional energies into thoughtful and socially appropriate artistic products and processes.	Creativity, innovation, and personal talent are encouraged through student choice, student writing, projects and design thinking. Studio Electives may be art-based.
Real-world Experiences	Gives adolescents and opportunity to practice executive functions in	Place-based learning projects allow students to investigate and develop projects that serve the wider community. Authentic Assessment

T*he yearly calendar and daily schedule have been designed to meet students' needs.*

Academic Core Skills Every Morning
Polaris School has time blocks dedicated to building individual academic core skills in mathematics and literacy every morning. During these 90-minute blocks of time students will focus on achieving academic competencies and goals. The purpose of the development of these core skills is to provide the skills and content to implement during integrated learning time projects in the afternoon. This block of time will include individual work, group coaching, individual instruction, computer practice, and peer conferencing. Teachers can use this time to implement differentiated instruction, and data-based targeted interventions for at-risk students.

Integrated Learning Time with Block Schedule in the Afternoons
Integrated learning time is a longer class period to promote deep learning and creative problem solving. This provides time for students to complete authentic place-based projects, such as community impact projects. These complex interdisciplinary projects require students to collaborate with community partners, explore and experiment in authentic settings, and integrate reading, writing, math, science, and social studies skills. Longer blocks of integrated learning time will provide an opportunity for students to work on campus or at off-site learning locations. They also provide time for complex projects, designing solutions, and creating products that require more time to complete.

Block schedules are currently being used by other successful place-based schools, including the Teton school, and are recommended by the Place-Based Education Evaluation Collaborative (PEEC), so we believe that it is a reasonable schedule for achieving our mission. Decreasing the number of class periods per day reduces cognitive overload, and allows students to focus on deeper learning of content. Decreasing the number of classes per day reduces the number of interruptions and transitions between subject areas. In addition to reducing the amount of academic time lost due to transitions, it also helps us emphasize the relationships and integration of subjects.

Research:
Armstrong, T. (2016). The power of the adolescent brain: strategies for teaching middle and

high school students. Alexandria, Virginia: ASCD.

Jensen, E. (2008). Brain-based learning: the new paradigm of teaching. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Sloan, K. & Rockman, S. (2010). National History Day Works: Findings From the National Program Evaluation Summary. Accessed through: https://www.nhd.org/sites/default/files/whynhdmatters/NHDReport_Final3.pdf

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2014) www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2014-1697 doi:10.1542/peds.2014-1697 accessed online March 2, 2019 from https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/134/3/642.full.pdf

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Identify the anticipated student population, including: o Demographic information based on the local community population o Educational proficiency based upon enrollment at the school o Attendance and truancy trends o English language proficiency o Other special educational needs; • Explain any special factors influencing the makeup of the anticipated student population; • Explain how the educational philosophy has been designed to meet students' needs; • Explain how the instructional methods have been designed to meet students' needs and specifically how they will meet the needs of at-risk students; and • Explain how the yearly calendar and daily schedule have been designed to meet students' needs.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

G. Special Populations.

This includes those with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) English Language Learners (ELLs), Native American Students, Hispanic Students, and Bilingual and Multicultural educational needs to improve student outcomes.

G. (1) Special Education.

G. (1) (a) Provide a **clear, cohesive, and comprehensive** description of how the proposed school will provide required instructional services/supports to students with IEPs. Ensure you address both students with disabilities and students classified as gifted.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Polaris believes that all young people can become independent, passionate learners who will achieve academic success, regardless of their exceptionality. The curriculum, instruction, and assessment for all students at Polaris are designed around creating an environment where all students are inspired, challenged, engaged, and supported in their learning journey. The combination of our school design, procedures, and trained staff create a cohesive and comprehensive approach to identifying students who are not performing at grade level and supporting them with instruction or interventions designed to meet the needs of special populations and move them toward grade level expectations. Polaris's continuum of special education services and mastery-based learning model will support a spectrum of individual student needs.

In accordance with federal law, a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) will be made available to all children with disabilities. A well-trained staff will implement procedures for the identification and support of students with learning disabilities, giftedness and English learning needs that will be in compliance with all federal and state laws and statutes including: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title II Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family Educational and Privacy Rights Act, and New Mexico's State Statute and Administrative Code (NMAC 6.31.2). Our processes and procedures follow the RtI process, including appropriate screening, interventions, and specialized instruction and support.

Based on 2017-2018 statistics from surrounding districts, we anticipate that 10-18% of our population will qualify as students with disabilities. (Percent of Students with Disabilities in Los Alamos 18.4%, Pojoaque 11.9%, and Espanola 15.1%) We are dedicated to providing these students with the services that they need to grow academically and socially.

Free and Appropriate Education for All Students, Including Those with Disabilities
One reason the founding team chose to open a Charter School instead of opening a Private School is because we believe in free and appropriate public education for all students. We have taken the following steps to ensure that this occurs.

1. Our initial application process will not ask for any information about a student's

individual needs or disabilities and students will be chosen randomly. This will ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, will have equal access to enrollment and acceptance into the Polaris system.

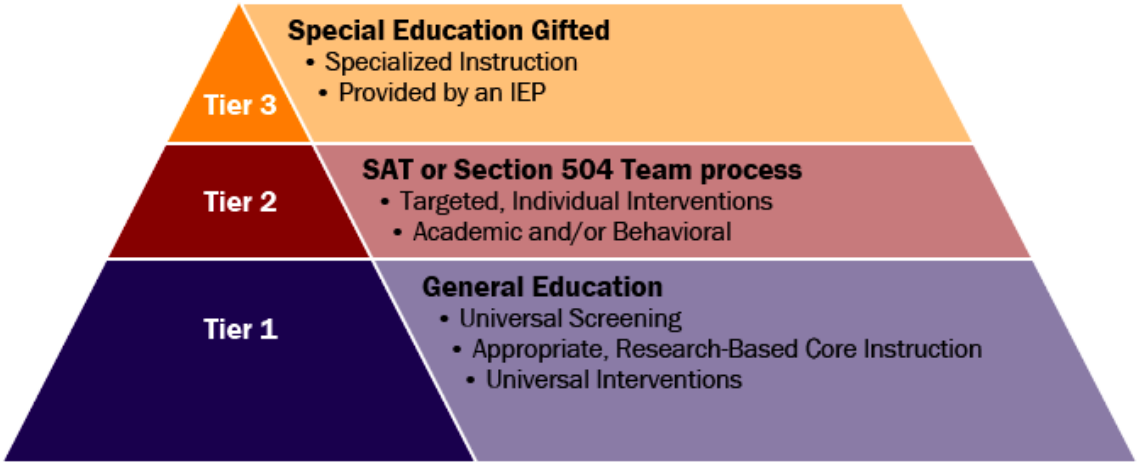
2. Only after a student is chosen will Polaris ask for additional information regarding individual student needs, such as Gifted, ELL, or disabilities, in order to develop an appropriate education plan.
3. As a free public school, Polaris will not require enrollment fees or any fee to attend. We will also not require fees for families to join the family council (similar to a PTA), so that there is no barrier to family participation.
4. We have created a 501c3 organization to support school activities, including additional monetary support for field trips or additional supplies, to take the burden off of individual students or families.

Identification of New Students with a Reported IEP

After parent(s)/guardian(s) have accepted a Polaris offer letter to enroll, the school will start the formal registration process. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive an enrollment packet, which will include a parent consent form to release the student's prior school records, which the staff will process without delay. Like all students at Polaris, new students will complete a Learner Profile. Learner profiles are co-created by educators and learners and comprised of rich, current information regarding each learner. The Learner Profile will typically include at least four dimensions: Demographic data, academic status, learner-related skill set, and potential learning drivers. In the meantime, a student or his parent(s)/guardian(s) who has self-identified as having been served in a special education program in the previous district may be placed on an interim IEP in a special education program which appears to meet the student's reported needs. Final placement in special education is contingent upon the receipt and acceptance of previous diagnostic data and the determination of need by the IEP team. If the records are not received within 30 days or do not verify the student's eligibility, the student may be referred for further evaluation by the school's contracted diagnosticians.

Response to Intervention (RtI)

Polaris will use a schoolwide general education framework known as Response to Intervention (RtI). In New Mexico, this framework, called the Three-Tier Model of Student Intervention, is a system of assessment and increasingly intensive interventions and instruction to maximize student achievement. The staff will be guided by the most current edition of the NMPED *Response to Intervention Framework 2014*, a comprehensive guide for implementing student intervention and *New Mexico Technical Evaluation and Assessment Manual*. We will also use the resources provided by the Center on Response to Intervention, including current research articles, presentations, tools, rubrics, briefs, and current information specific to successful Middle School implementation of RtI.



Graphic from NMPED, Model of Student Intervention, accessed from https://webtest.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/safe-healthy-schools/response-to-intervention-rti/model-of-student-intervention/

Tier 1: All Students

Universal Screening, Appropriate Core Instruction with Differentiation and Interventions

An effective RTI model begins with quality core instruction, frequent monitoring of student progress and data-based decision making that informs instructional methods. Polaris teachers will measure and monitor the progress of all students. Teachers will monitor grade level mastery and rates of improvement as a universal screening to identify students who are struggling or may need additional supports. Universal screening will guide our teachers as they develop differentiated instruction and data-based targeted interventions to ensure learning for all students.

Universal Screening

We expect most of our middle school students to arrive with existing academic and performance records. While we believe that these historical records are valuable, we also feel that it is important to continue formal screening assessments for all students, so that we can identify students who need assistance before they fail. Adolescence is a time of change for students, and we want to be sure to catch any problems that may arise during this time as early as possible, universal screening will help us in this process. We will use data collected from several screening tools: published national and state normed assessments (Measures of Academic Progress [MAP]), Criterion-based assessments designed to predict student performance (New Mexico Standards-Based Assessment [NMSBA]) and Competency-based measures of mastery. A formal screening test (MAP) will be administered at the beginning of the year to provide a baseline performance level and determine individual student needs for intervention. This test will provide data to drive decisions about instructional methods. Competency-based measures of mastery will be collected regularly and evaluated midyear to determine if classes are making expected gains, individual student response to and effectiveness of current intervention strategies, and identify students who may begin to struggle during these formative years. The state assessment (formerly PARCC) will be given in

the Spring and help Polaris evaluate the effectiveness of current educational programs.

Appropriate Core Instruction with Differentiation and Interventions
All students in Polaris will be taught using methods that are research-based and have been shown to be effective in advancing students towards mastery of standards. According to the state of New Mexico all students in Tier 1 are held accountable to standard behavioral expectations and receive core instruction based on the New Mexico content standards and positive behavioral supports in the regular education classroom. This includes the following: culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, instruction in a language other than English (bilingual multicultural instruction), as appropriate, differentiated instruction, research-based strategies and programs, high-impact instruction.

Our chosen curriculums, Step-up to Writing, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), Strategies, Motivation, Awareness, Resilience, Talents, and Success (SMARTS) program, and Panorama Social and Emotional Learning Activities also incorporate strategies that will support students with a variety of needs, including oral language development, academic vocabulary, metacognition, and organizing information. The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) 2017 Preliminary Data Report found "Improved performance across all groups of learners, including ELL/ESL students and Students with Disabilities."

At Tier 1, Polaris's mastery-based learning for all students is a differentiated approach that gives the learner more agency and accountability. There are three elements that will be core to mastery-based learning at Polaris. First, using a learner profile, Polaris teachers will have a record of each student's strengths, needs, motivations, progress, and goals upon which to build a deeper understanding of each child. Second, Polaris students will often have a choice in their learning and multiple options to complete a task. Together with their teachers they will develop personalized learning pathways, which will hold all students to high expectations, but be adapted to fit the student. Third, rather than measuring progress by grade level, progress will be measured by competency-based progressions and continual progress monitoring, Competency-based assessments will allow Polaris students to move on when they've mastered a skill or content. Therefore, we will obtain valid and reliable student data often so that instructional adjustments can be made in a timely fashion, which will ensure the success of both our RTI program and mastery-based learning approach. Mastery-based learning will also include habits of success that provide students the opportunity to build self-advocacy skills. The staff will encourage students to speak up about what interests them and become equal partners in their learning experience. Since mastery-based learning practices will be applied universally, students with disabilities will feel less of the stigma associated with special education.

Mastery-based learning will not only adapt instruction to meet the needs of students who struggle with learning, but it will also adapt to the needs of Polaris's gifted students. Our gifted students will use the same mastery-based learning processes to identify passions, take ownership over their projects, set goals, develop pathways for achieving them, and communicate where they are in their learning.

The teams supporting this tier include professional learning communities (PLCs), data teams, grade level teams, and other teams aimed at improving core instruction. Teachers at Polaris will use research based instructional strategies with high-impact. Examples include goal setting, advanced organizers, guiding questions, cooperative learning, reciprocal teaching, authentic learning, targeted feedback, and reflection. We expect that the majority of students will respond to the high-impact instructional practices and differentiation strategies implemented by our teachers.

Tier 2: Referred Students

Student Assistance Team Process

The focus of Tier 2 is to provide strategic and individualized support for at-risk students (struggling or significantly advanced) for whom Tier 1 instruction and universal interventions prove insufficient.

Step 1- Referral

The student will be referred to the building Student Assistance Team (SAT). The SAT is a diverse team of administrators, teachers, special education teachers, and other personnel as needed. The student may be referred to the SAT by the school staff, a parent, or through self-referral.

Step 2- Data Collection

The teacher and SAT team will collect quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive picture of the student in a SAT packet. This may include assessment scores, grades, attendance, health information, behavior reports, interventions implemented by classroom teachers, student responses to the interventions, work samples/portfolio, and any other materials that may be considered pertinent to understanding a student's present levels of performance and individual needs.

Step 3- SAT Meeting

The SAT reviews the SAT packet, recommends regular education intervention strategies and support, and then designs an individualized SAT intervention plan and/or behavioral intervention plan (BIP), as necessary. The SAT develops a timeline for reviewing the success or failure of these interventions.

Step 4-Implementation and Monitoring

Students receiving Tier 2 services continue to receive Tier 1 instruction, but with the benefit of more targeted, intensive interventions prescribed by the SAT intervention plan or BIP. These interventions will be provided by the classroom teacher or in combination with other appropriate staff in the school to address academic skill or behavioral needs. Tier 2 supports may increase intensity, duration, or frequence of supports as well as reduce group size smaller class sizes, homogenous classes of students with similar instructional needs, or use specialists for interventions. Tier 2 interventions include changes in classroom practices and additional research-based, multisensory tools and materials, including changes in methodology and delivery of instruction. Both Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions will be documented by the classroom teacher and shared with the SAT Team.

Step 5 Review

After 8 weeks of Tier 2 interventions, the SAT team will have a meeting to review the response to interventions.

a. Student improves, intervention no longer needed, return to RtI Tier 1 level
b. Student improves, continue interventions for a specific time period
c. Student shows no improvement, create a new SAT plan
d. Student shows no improvement, refer a student for a 504 plan
e. Student shows no improvement, refer student for multidisciplinary evaluation to determine if RtI Tier 3 level is appropriate

During the review, the SAT may decide that there is sufficient information to substantiate the need for a multidisciplinary evaluation. The team will meet with the parents and request written parent consent to proceed with the multidisciplinary evaluation by a qualified professional, contracted as needed. Following the evaluation, the group will meet to determine if the student qualifies for special education services. The team may determine

a. Not eligible for special education/gifted, but has a need for support services. Student remains in a Tier 2 status for RtI interventions and support within the general education classroom.
b. Eligible for special education/gifted, but shows no need for services. Student returns to Tier 1 general education program.
c. Eligible for special education/gifted and shows a need for services. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) team will develop and implement an IEP.

Competencies and learning expectations will be consistent and universal among all Polaris students including those with IEPs. However, teachers will have flexibility in how they teach and students will be given some choice in how they demonstrate learning. Through Polaris's competency-based assessments the staff will monitor progress of its students with IEPs and provide interventions to help them meet their goals. If a Polaris student with an IEP fails to demonstrate that they have mastered a competency, they will be given more support and instruction from teachers, more time to learn and progress, and more opportunities to demonstrate progress. Students with executive functioning issues may struggle with tasks that require planning, organization or reflection on performance. If this is the case, Polaris staff will provide the supports they need so the student can thrive in a mastery-based learning environment. These may include giving the student an outline of the lesson, checking in frequently to make sure the student understands the work, highlighting keywords on student activity sheets, breaking down complex assignments into smaller chunks with deadlines, using checklists, organizers and mind-mapping software.

Polaris will use Novare (http://novareedu.com/), which is a competency-based assessment platform that provides teachers, administrators, parent(s)/guardian(s) and students a holistic view of learning. The platform offers a variety of perspectives to view student performance – projects, narratives, portfolios, and learning goals. Assessments will become truly authentic to each student. Therefore, Polaris students with exceptionalities will be able to show what they know in different ways and curate it in their online portfolio. Also, the Novare tool enables collaboration and communication across classrooms, between teachers, administrators, and

parents. The Novare platform will allow the Polaris staff to effectively share information, collaborate, and support a student with an IEP. Parents will be able to see their student's actual demonstrations of knowledge and progress through the parent(s)/guardian(s) portal.

Polaris's flexible learning environments will be critical to all student success. With flexible learning environments we will be better able to respond to our students' diverse needs throughout the school day by altering staffing plans, space, and time so that students can achieve their goals. Teachers may provide small group instruction, tutoring, or online study as part of a flexible learning environment.

Tier 3: Identified Students

Special Education Students and Gifted Students and Intensive Supports
In New Mexico, Tier 3 is special education and related services for students with identified disabilities under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and special education services in accordance with the state criteria for students identified as gifted. Students receiving Tier 3 supports and services should also have access to appropriate supports at Tiers 1 and 2.

All staff will receive training on SAT, RtI, and IEP accommodations prior to the opening of school. This training will also include how to manage additional referrals by parents, agency representatives, medical personnel, and other qualified professionals.

Polaris's mastery-based learning is a personalized learning system. The National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) defines personalized learning as, "Students' learning experiences – what they learn, and how, when, and where they learn it – are tailored to their individual needs, skills, and interests, and enable them to take ownership of their learning. Although where, when, and how they learn might vary according to their needs, students also develop deep connections to each other, their teachers and other adults." Furthermore, the NCLD states, "personalized learning has the potential to create a paradigm shift in affecting [student] outcomes. Strategies associated with personalized learning can support clearer, higher expectations for all students; empower student agency and self-determination skills that can positively impact postsecondary outcomes; and direct opportunities and supports to both address student needs and build on their interests."

A student's personalized learning pathway is different than their IEP. A learning pathway simply articulates the learning experiences that lead to the students mastering of competencies. Whereas, an IEP outlines the specialized instruction and services needed to help a student with a disability access and progress in the general education setting. Both a student's learning pathway and IEP serve unique purposes and are required for the student's success at Polaris

Our mastery-based learning approach will balance the deficit emphasis of IEPs by focusing on Polaris students' strengths and interests. Together, IEPs and mastery-based learning will give students the supports to work on weaknesses and a customized path that will engage their

interests and helps them “own” their learning. Likewise mastery-based learning and gifted student's IEP will enable Polaris’s gifted students to remain in their Zone of Proximal Development - to be constantly and appropriately challenged at the level most appropriate for their learning.

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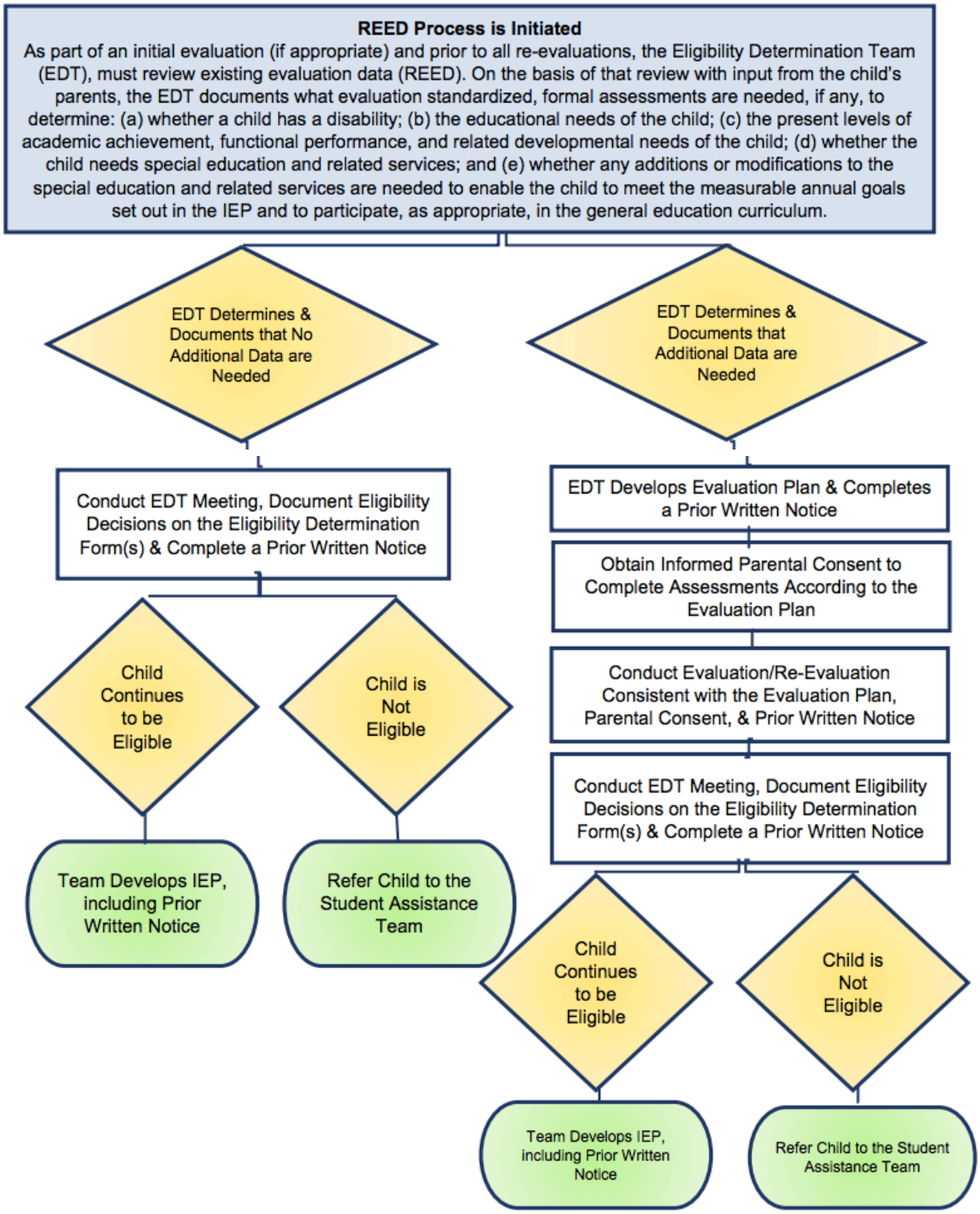

NM Technical Evaluation and Assessment Manual, p. 47

Individualized Education Programs

Multidisciplinary Evaluation

When RtI interventions are not effective after the designated amount of time for Tier II interventions (8 weeks), Polaris will provide the parent(s)/guardian(s) written notice that their student has not made adequate or expected progress despite additional, documented supports that have been put into place to assist their student. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will then be asked for their consent so that a comprehensive, educational diagnostic evaluation may be conducted. Once written consent is provided, the school's Eligibility/Evaluation Disciplinary Team (EDT) members will conduct a comprehensive, educational evaluation of the student within 60 days from the date that parent(s)/guardian(s) consent was given, in accordance with IDEA and NMAC regulations. The SAT team will provide the Eligibility/Evaluation Disciplinary Team with all requisite screenings, academic, health and behavioral information, as well as data from all Tier I and Tier II interventions and outcomes.

Eligibility/Evaluation Disciplinary Team (EDT)

The Eligibility/Evaluation Disciplinary Team (EDT), which will be chaired by the special education contact person, will help to facilitate the management of a student's educational evaluation. Other required members of the EDT, as mandated by IDEA(2004), include parent(s)/guardian(s) with educational rights, a general education teacher, and an individual who has the ability to interpret the evaluation results, and others who may have specific knowledge of the student, such as Educational Diagnostician, Speech Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, School Psychologist, and Social Worker. Members of the EDT will actively listen to information from all team members, be thoughtful about problem solving and keep the student's best interest at heart.

When a student is referred for a multidisciplinary evaluation, it is provided at no cost to the parent(s)/guardian(s). The evaluation is conducted by a certified educational diagnostician who Polaris will contract with, and will include, at a minimum, cognitive, language and academic diagnostic measures, other assessments that may provide more specific information about the student, and input from the student's teachers and parents. Students receiving special education services are re-evaluated every three years. IEP teams that include parent(s)/guardian(s) are involved in the re-evaluation process.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team

If the student is found eligible for special education and related services, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team meeting will follow the eligibility determination team's decision. This meeting will take place within 30 days of the determination eligibility. At this initial IEP Team meeting and subsequent meetings to follow, it will be incumbent upon the Polaris staff present to make the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) feel welcome, comfortable and acknowledged as partners during the process and help to develop a meaningful IEP tailored with the student in mind.

A child with a disability, like all children, has the right to a free and appropriate public education. This right to public education is guaranteed through state and federal law. The following guidelines will be used by the Polaris staff in designing special education programs for

children with disabilities:

- Identifying students with disabilities who require specialized instruction, related services, and/or accommodations to receive educational benefit.
- Individualizing educational programs for each student.
- Educating students with disabilities with regular education students as much as possible.
- Providing a continuum of special education and related services based on individual needs.
- Emphasizing the importance of parent involvement.

The Polaris IEP Team will consist of the special education contact person, the general education teachers who work directly with the student, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the student (required at 14 years of age and above), and clinicians or service providers relevant to the student's identified exceptionality. Polaris believes that its middle students will benefit from participating on the IEP Team. Students need to know what accommodations are possible, and then, based on knowledge of their personal strengths and limitations, they contribute to the decision-making process. This lays the groundwork for the independence and self-advocacy skills. It becomes critical as students advance through the grades and go onto college, where the student will have to ask for accommodations before they will be provided.

The IEP document will include the student's present level of performance, goals, services and accommodations. Measurable, quantifiable goals and objectives will be written according to curriculum standards and content. Decisions about the hours of service and the setting for the instruction supports will be made in regards to the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Accommodations will be written that increase student's full access to the academic content standards, promote student independence, and enable the student to demonstrate what s/he knows. The accommodations set forth in the IEP will be changes in the way a student accesses learning, without changing the actual standards a student is working toward. They are typically categorized into four categories.

1. Presentation Accommodations allow students to access instructional materials in ways that do not require them to visually decode standard print. These students may require alternate visual, tactile, or auditory formats.
2. Response Accommodations allow students to record their work in alternate ways or to solve or organize their work using some type of material or device.
3. Timing/Scheduling Accommodations change the allowable length of time for assignments, projects, and tests, and may also change the way the time is organized.
4. Setting Accommodations change the location in which instruction is given or the conditions of the setting.

Our special education services will be provided in the multiple settings depending on the needs of the students and as documented in the IEP. These include but are not limited to:

- In an inclusive setting with a regular education teacher and extra support provided by paraeducators, special education teachers, and service specialist
- In a segregated setting with either a special education teacher, service specialist, general educated teacher or paraeducators, providing small group lessons that provide targeted supports

- In the inclusive setting with the special education case manager consulting with the student's teachers and monitoring of student progress
- In a combination of segregated and inclusive settings that matches the student's needs
- In a temporary test setting as documented in the student's IEP testing accommodations

Each student's unique set of accommodations will be communicated, understood and supported by all school personnel involved with a student, including general and special education teachers, paraeducators, and support staff such as speech clinicians, school psychologists, and therapists. Meetings and the Novare platform will facilitate this process. At Polaris, the student's special education or gifted education case manager will oversee the implementation of supports, monitor the student's progress, and manage the documentation of services. The special education contact person will ensure that all state and federally mandated documents are correctly completed and meet established submission deadlines.

Accommodation decisions will be reviewed at least annually. Parent(s)/guardian(s) have the right to request a review at any time. Accommodations are expected to change. For example, students may successfully work to decrease their accommodations, or increase the variety of accommodation needed across multiple settings. They may also increase their use of computerized tools and rely on less use of human readers, note takers, or audio tapes.

Student with 504 Plans

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires public schools to provide accommodations to students with disabilities even if they do not qualify for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The definition of a disability under Section 504 is much broader than the definition under the IDEA. All IDEA students are also covered by Section 504, but not all Section 504 students are eligible for services under IDEA. Circumstances that may lead to a 504 plan may include students with communicable diseases, temporary disabilities due to an accident, students who are homebound, and students with attention difficulties. Our 504 students will also be provided with the services, accommodations, and protections under the IEP process. Teachers with special education certifications will oversee the implementation of the student's IEP and their progress towards their goals.

Gifted Education

In New Mexico, gifted programs are provided through special education and funded through the special education funding formula. For this reason, the federal and state regulations written primarily for students with disabilities also apply to students who fall under the gifted exceptionality. Specific eligibility criteria are mandated by state legislation. Students identified as gifted are those whose measured intelligence quotient is at least two standard deviations above the mean on an intelligence test and who meet at least one of the following criteria: superior performance on the total battery score of a standardized achievement test, outstanding creativity or divergent thinking, and/or outstanding critical thinking or problem-solving ability on a test. Our gifted students will also be provided with the services, accommodations, and protections under the IEP process. Polaris will follow the New Mexico Public Education Department guidelines provided in the *Gifted Education in New Mexico*

Technical Assistance Manual for identifying and supporting gifted students. Teachers with gifted education endorsements will oversee the implementation of the student's IEP and their progress toward individual goals.

Los Alamos has a large gifted population (about 20%), so we know that a significant number of our students could also qualify as gifted as well. We believe that gifted students will thrive in the environment at Polaris because we have incorporated many strategies that are also best practices for gifted students based on the recommendations of VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2006): student choice and voice in projects, mastery-based learning (which helps teachers to compact curriculum), and authentic experiences through place-based learning. Advisory time will also provide support that is critical to underachieving gifted students.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

There has been a disproportionate amount of culturally and linguistically diverse students represented in special education programs across the country and New Mexico is no exception to this issue. Polaris believes that teachers, parents, and community members have a key role in decreasing the disproportionality of culturally and linguistically diverse students being misidentified and referred for special education services. The Polaris staff will always refer to the most recent edition of the New Mexico Technical Evaluation and Assessment Manual (T.E.A.M.), as a guide for determining whether there has been any bias during the assessment and evaluation process for a student. This process includes using English Language Learner WIDA scores as a cross-reference for other assessments to ensure that all students are receiving appropriate and meaningful support. Teachers with TESOL endorsements will oversee the implementation of the student's plan. Polaris services for culturally and linguistically diverse students will be based on TESOL's The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners.

1. Know your learners
2. Create conditions for language learning
3. Design high -quality lessons for language development
4. Adapt lesson delivery as needed
5. Monitor and assess student language development
6. Engage and collaborate within a community of practice

We specifically address our approach to English Language Learner, including identification, supports, and monitoring processes, in Sections F 2a and F 2b.

Responsibilities and Professional Development

The founding team at Polaris understands that teacher training and support are critical in the success of its' students, especially those students who are diverse with special needs. In order for the Polaris staff to meet the needs of their special education learners, gifted learners, and culturally and linguistically diverse learners, all staff members at Polaris are expected to work together collaboratively to meet the academic and social emotional needs of students. This requires creating a culture of learning and collaboration, understanding diverse learners, processes and procedures, and understanding current research through professional development.

Each year the Academic Leader will create a strategic plan for professional development. The Academic Leader will collect data and use teacher observations to evaluate and determine the effectiveness of professional development programs annually. The leader will use student data, information from teacher observations and reflections, evaluations from parents, the board, and staff, and the PLCs' progress toward goals, to create a strategic plan for professional development. The plan will outline the content for the All Staff Orientation, All Staff Retreat, and PLCs. This will ensure that Professional development targets the areas that need additional training or support.

Before school begins, all staff will attend an all staff retreat to develop a solid understanding of the current educational research about adolescent learners and the philosophical basis behind Polaris's Place-Based Learning Model. This includes a clear understanding of the vision, mission, goals, culture and innovations of Polaris. Staff will apply their learning to create behavior norms, language norms and routines that support a culture of learning for all students.

Staff will then participate in orientation before school begins. This professional time is dedicated to three main topics: Using Data and Mastery-based Learning, School Systems and Procedures, Operations, and Serving Diverse Learners. Orientation will ensure that all teachers understand their legal responsibilities and school processes and procedures. Specific details about serving diverse learners that will be covered include:

- RtI process (Interventions for Tier 1, 2, and 3 students)
- Student Assistance Team (SAT) process
- Referral process for Special Education (and GATE)
- English Language Learners (ELL)
- IEP process and implementation
- Behavior Plans- FBA's/BIP's, Behavior Management, Programming For Emotional Disturbance, Avoiding Power Struggles
- Autism
- 504 Plans
- Emotional Needs of Students

All Polaris teachers will use competency based assessments and expect all students to take as much responsibility for their learning as possible. Students and teachers will use Novare to set individual goals and allow student choice and voice in assigning projects. All teachers will participate in teaching advisory time that focuses on social emotional skills and executive functioning skills to focus and support all students in successful learning strategies. Teachers will support special education students by providing all of the modifications and accommodations described in each student's IEP.

Special education teachers will be the case managers for special education students, responsible for communicating with regular teachers, communicating with parents, providing push-in services, co-teaching, small group targeted instruction, and monitoring student progress.

Projected Student Population and Special Education Staffing
Our projected special education staffing is based on our enrollment assumptions and our potential special education population, which was calculated based on the averages for Los Alamos district. All staffing needs will be re-evaluated as we review and abide by the IEP Team decisions regarding student needs and services. Polaris will hire highly qualified teachers, as defined in IDEA and ESSA, to meet the needs of all students. Due to our small school size, Polaris may hire teachers with dual licensure, part-time teachers, or contract certain services.

Quality Differentiated Professional Development
Polaris has a comprehensive plan for quality differentiated professional development. This includes annual professional development for each teacher, Summer Shared Reading, personal reflection, and New Mexico PED trainings.

Annual Outside Professional Development
Each year teachers will participate in outside professional development opportunities that strengthen their professional skills. The Academic Leader will work with teachers to determine appropriate training. These may include taking classes for additional certification, webinars and digital badging, visiting other high-performing programs, participating in conferences, and in-person training presented by EL experts. If needed, we will seek funding through the Polaris Charter School Foundation to help cover the cost for teacher endorsements.

Summer Shared Reading
Each summer, the staff (together) will select one research-based book related to our school goals to read independently. During the summer retreat teachers will discuss and reflect on the research and how it can inform learning for teaching diverse learners and special populations. This will help build a reflective thoughtful culture around a shared language and research base.

Polaris Charter School's staff will take advantage of the wealth of trainings provided by the NM PED (which includes professional learning modules, lessons, focus bulletins, and videos) and WIDA (which provides access to high quality standards, assessments, research, and professional learning for educators). Additional training is outlined in New Mexico Rising, the New Mexico's State Plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act plan. According to the plan the state is contracted with Excellence in Special Education (TAESE) to hold trainings and provide assistance to ensure that LEAs are in compliance with special education statutory and regulatory requirements. Polaris staff will attend, as needed, the TAESE trainings, the Directors Academy for new and veteran special education directors, monthly webinars for special education staff, and the Early Warning System (EWS) Summer Training for students at risk of dropping out. Also, Polaris School will tap into the Bilingual Multicultural Education Program's (BMEB) onsite professional development to help the staff differentiate instructional strategies that strengthen academic and language learning support provided to EL students.

The Technical Assistance Program (TAP) was developed by the New Mexico Public School Insurance Authority (NMPSIA) in collaboration with CES to decrease Special Education Litigation in the state. TAP provides consultation, training and technical assistance on various Special

Education topics to New Mexico schools. Polaris will use TAP services to stay current with information, develop quality IEPs and improve Special Education services.

According to the TAP website, their services include:

- Complimentary email and phone consultation services
- School site visits, file reviews, classroom and student observations
- Full or half-day workshops on requested Special Education topics
- Complimentary workshops provided at CES office (in Albuquerque) throughout the school year
- Complimentary "Special Education Hot Topics" webinars currently available at www.ces.org

Sample of TAP Topics Available:

- Writing a Compliant IEP
- Special Education Legal Compliance
- Writing Legally Compliant IEP Goals
- Discipline, MDR, 10 Day Rule, In-school suspension
- Autism: Researched-Based Methods for Instruction: Basic and Beyond, Visual Strategies (Make and Take), Social Skill Support, Challenging Behaviors Toolkit
- Transition Planning for Student Success, Indicator 13, Transition Needs of Seniors
- Behavior: FBA's/BIP's, Behavior Management, Programming For Emotional Disturbance, Avoiding Power Struggles
- Student Assistance Team (SAT) and Review Existing Evaluation Data (REED) for Teachers
- Guidance in Developing a 504 Plan
- Dyslexia and Multi-sensory Reading Instruction
- Emotionally Disturbed vs. Socially Maladjusted

Contracted Services

A student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) will drive the kind of support required from each one of our faculty members at Polaris Charter School. Students with IEPs that mandate intensive services will have skilled special educators and capable paraeducators working as a team to provide them with the intensive support they need. Polaris Charter School will also contract with an external service provider to provide our students with speech and language therapy services, occupational therapy services, physical therapy services, counseling services, and vision and hearing services to address and meet their IEP goals for related services.

Certified Educational Diagnosticians will also be hired through a verified and experienced service provider to determine initial eligibility and to conduct mandated three-year reevaluations as required by IDEA, unless an early reevaluation is deemed necessary by the parent and IEP team (34 CFR Sec. 300.303-300.311).

Leadership

The Polaris Academic Leader plays an essential role in implementing the RtI process, participating in the SAT process, and evaluating programs and processes. The leader is

responsible for providing the staff with professional development time to understand their processes and responsibilities. We expect the leader to encourage teachers to be creative, flexible, and data-driven collaborators who participate in decision-making, implement new ideas, take risks, and continually improve strategies and programs. The school leader is responsible for providing teachers and students with the support and resources to create a learning environment where all students, including those with special needs, succeed.

The Operations Director will manage the contracts for outside evaluators and any additional services that are required.

Evaluation

We believe that the needs of students and communities change over time, so it is important to continually evaluate programs and plan for continuous improvement. The Academic Leader will review student data for all students and subgroups of students to determine the effectiveness of the core curriculum, interventions, and screening process. We expect most students (80-90%) will be successful (progressing toward grade level) at the Tier 1 level. The leader will use The Response to Intervention (RTI) Fidelity Rubric to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the schoolwide RtI program. This rubric is designed by the Center on Response to Intervention at American Institutes for Research and aligned with the components that are considered essential for successful implementation. The Academic Leader will Report Special Education Units to the state through STARS (According to NMSA 22-8-13 and 22-2-21) and ensure compliance with NMAC 6.31.2.13. They will share evaluation results with the staff and, together, will develop a continuous improvement plan.

Families

Because we believe that families are our most important partners, we also believe that parent outreach and participation in all elements of the RtI and SAT processes is imperative. Including parents as equal partners in all phases of these intervention practices leads to a robust educational triage plan for the targeted student. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Section 9101(32), also expects schools to engage parents “in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring” that parents are included, as appropriate in decision making “to assist in the education of their child.”

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VanTassel-Baska, J. & Stambaugh, T. (2006). *Comprehensive curriculum for gifted learners* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Describe how the proposed school will identify and provide instructional supports and services to students with disabilities, who have IEPs or are eligible for an IEP; • Describe how the proposed school will ensure that students who are ELs are not over-identified as students with disabilities; • Describe how the proposed school will identify and provide instructional supports and services to gifted students who have IEPs or are eligible for an IEP; • Describe how the school will address the spectrum of needs that students with IEPs may present; • Describe the steps to ensure that students with disabilities have access to a free and appropriate public education; • Identify specific responsibilities for school staff, classroom teachers, and special education staff; and

	• Identify specific training and support that will be provided to teachers and school staff to ensure they are able to fulfill their responsibilities.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

G. (1) (b) Provide a **clear, cohesive, and comprehensive** description of how the proposed school will regularly evaluate and monitor the progress and success of special education students to ensure attainment of IEP goals.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Monitoring the progress toward special education students' attainment of IEP goals

Our belief that each student is unique, has an unlimited capacity to learn, and should be an agent of their own learning. This philosophy provides a framework for all students, including our special needs population. Our place-based model includes student mastery, personalized learning, and habits of success, which guides our approach to creating individual education plans, monitoring student progress, reporting progress, and evaluating programs of special education students. The family is an essential part of each student's educational plan.

Polaris will follow all legal requirements in NMAC 6.31.2.13, which outlines the rights of parents of children with a disability and the responsibilities of organizations to establish, implement and maintain procedures that ensure parent notification and participation in identification, evaluation, placement, and development of Individualized Education Program (IEPs).

IEP Plans and Goals

Initial IEP

All students receiving special education services at Polaris will have an individualized education program developed by a team that includes the parent/s or guardians, regular teacher, special education teacher, evaluator (when appropriate) and student (when appropriate). A student's present level of academic performance, functional achievement, diagnostic evaluation, background, and social emotional learning provide the basis for understanding student needs and developing individual annual IEP goals that will help a student progress toward grade-level standards. The IEP team will develop specific measurable academic and/or functional goals for each student and recommend programming to achieve those goals. Academic standards will be based on competencies and written in a SMART format (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) A resource support provider/teacher will work with students, parents, and teachers to communicate individual goals and implement an appropriate program modifications and accommodations to help students achieve those goals. The resource support provider/teacher will also ensure that appropriate competency-based goals are recorded into Novare system.

Annual Review

An IEP is considered a living document that may be reviewed as often as the IEP team considers necessary, but at a minimum will be reviewed annually according to state and federal education laws. The annual review will include an evaluation of a student's progress toward or mastery of each IEP goal. The team may revise or rewrite the IEP goal to ensure positive progress toward grade level competencies. A student's progress toward mastery of IEP goals will be reported each grading period.

Reevaluation Every Three Years
Every three years, students will be reevaluated to determine eligibility for special education services. The IEP team, consisting of the parents, regular teacher, special education teacher, evaluator (when appropriate) and student (when appropriate) will meet to discuss the results of the reevaluation, student progress, and special services that may be needed.

Communicating Goals
A collaborative effort involving the student, parents, teachers, and school leader is necessary in order to create an educational environment with the appropriate goals, resources and accommodations each student needs to thrive. Polaris values family input and respects the rights of all students to participate in an appropriate education program. Our focus is on helping families understand special and general education laws and evidence-based practices and to actively participate in planning and decision-making about supports and services for early intervention, education, and developing strategies for intentional family engagement when implementing RtI.

At the beginning of each academic year the resource support provider/Special Education teacher will review all identified special education students' IEP goals and modifications and provide regular teachers with summaries describing specific needs, modifications, accommodations and strategies for success. The school leader will dedicate planning time during School Orientation at the beginning of the school year for teachers to develop a schedule and plan that works for each student. Classroom teachers are responsible for implementing the modifications and accommodations.

The resource support provider/teacher maintains lines of communication and communicates regularly with parents via email, phone, or Novare and ensures that parents receive appropriate notification of meetings throughout the IEP process. Parents participate in the annual IEP meeting to develop goals, and then the resource support provider/teacher will communicate current goals with parents in person and in writing.

Monitoring Progress
Least Restrictive Environment and Collaboration
Students with IEPs will participate, to the extent possible according to the least restrictive environment, in regular formative and summative assessments. They may also participate in specific assessments related to their IEP goals when necessary. A comprehensive program requires regular communication between student, general education teachers, special education teachers, and parents. The regular classroom teacher will analyze classroom assessments and share information with the resource support provider/teacher. The Novare online monitoring system should facilitate timely and accurate student grades, portfolio of work, and mastery of concepts from all subject areas.

Regular Weekly Monitoring
The resource support provider/teacher will regularly monitor student progress by reviewing student data and assessments in their area of need weekly. They will maintain accurate records,

use benchmark assessments and performance indicators, track academic growth and progress toward proficiency of grade level standards, and use Novare to assess a student's progress toward goals. If appropriate, the IEP team may require additional monitoring, such as class quizzes.

IEP Progress Reports- Each Marking Period
The resource support teacher provides progress reports to parent(s) or guardian(s) each marking period. These reports specifically indicate a student's progress toward IEP goals and mastery of competencies. If a student fails to maintain progress or make progress toward an IEP goal for two consecutive reporting periods, the IEP team will meet to examine the lack of progress and re-evaluate the goals, instruction methods, interventions, supports, and services that are being provided.

IEP Annual Review
The IEP team, consisting of parents, special education teacher, general education teacher/s, and others providing student supports, will review individual student progress and goals annually. If necessary, they will revise goals to best meet the student's current needs. Every three years students will be re-assessed to determine continued eligibility. Students who exit the program will be monitored to ensure continued progress and success in the general education program.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Academic Leader
- Collect and Analyze Program/School Data
- Evaluate Special Education Program
- Provide Necessary Resources
- Support Training and Professional Development
- Share School newsletter with parents
- Update School calendar
- Report Special Education Units to the state through STARS (According to NMSA 22-8-13 and 22-2-21)
- Ensure compliance with NMAC 6.31.2.13

Operations Director
- Manage the contracts for necessary evaluation services
- Manage the contracts for special services

Special Education/ Resource Teachers
- Report progress to parents toward goals for each reporting period
- IEP Team Participant
- Analyze student data
- Collaborate to write appropriate goals and IEP
- Help students set goals and strategies for achieving them
- Regular weekly monitoring (Novare)

Attend Parent Conferences
Provide parent resources about the RtI and SAT processes
Provide student services, which may include push-in services, co-teaching, small group targeted instruction,

Regular Education Teachers
Implement IEP modifications in the general education setting
Analyze classroom assessments
Share information and data with the resource teacher (Novare)
Schedule and attend family conferences

Engaging Students and Families

Based on the research that shows "Programs to improve achievement are more likely to have positive results if they engage families," (Henderson and Mapp, 2002) and "a key difference between high- and low-achieving children is how they spend their time outside school" (Henderson and Mapp, 2002), Polaris aims to have a strong program of student, family and community engagement. We know that education continues outside of our classrooms, and we believe that providing avenues for two-way communication and strategies for families to engage with the school is essential to student success.

To the extent possible, we expect all Polaris students to become active agents responsible for their own learning. This includes setting personal goals, prioritizing work, and developing strategies for success. The resource support provider/teacher and advisory teachers will work with students to help them set appropriate learning goals (based on their IEP), and practice making decisions about what and how to study to improve learning. Students, teachers, and parents will have access to Novare, an online platform that Polaris will use to personalize learning and monitor progress toward competencies.

Engaging and Supporting Families
In order for parents to become effective partners in education, we must have a shared vocabulary and two-way communication. It is essential that Polaris provide families with accurate and timely data to support their understanding of student progress, mastery of concepts, and achievement, so that we can all effectively support students. Polaris has developed a comprehensive communication plan that includes strategies to engage families at many different levels: family conferences, annual IEP meetings, newsletters, social media, Novare, a school calendar, meetups, coffee conversations, Family Council, and student exhibitions. (Details about each strategy may be found in Section II G 3.) We will use these opportunities to strengthen the connection between the family and the school.

Individual family conferences and IEP meetings will specifically:

- Explain the RtI and SAT processes
- Solicit the voice of parents in describing students' strengths, challenges, and interests
- Involve parents in SAT decisions, including creating IEP goals
- Share assessment results, intervention strategies, and student progress toward goals.

- Provide information about home conditions to support learning
- Assign homework that requires students to interact with family
- Provide information about community resources and learning opportunities

We will share the following resources to help parents to become positive advocates for their special education student.

- *Parent Guide to Response to Intervention, National Center on Learning Disabilities: http://www.ncld.org*
- *Center for School, Family & Community Partnerships: www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000*
- *SEDL National Center for Family & Community Connections: www.sedl.org/connections*
- *Harvard Family Research Project: www.hrfp.org*
- *OSEP Parent Center Network: www.parentcenternetwork.org*
- *National Center on RTI: : www.rti4success.org*
- *The ABCs of RTI Essential Components of Elementary and Middle School RTI : A Guide for Parents.* National Center on RTI (coming soon).

Active Parent Participation
As active participants on the IEP team, parents will participate in the process of developing IEP goals. Parents will have access to the online platform, Novare, through the parent/guardian portal where they can view student progress and mastery of competencies. Parents receive regular progress reports each grading period, are invited to attend family conferences, and are invited to annual student presentations.

Evaluating Effectiveness of Special Education Program and Services

Polaris will use multiple metrics to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of its special education program each year. The Academic Leader and special education teacher will review student data, including:

· Annual Parent Survey
· Academic achievement data
· Percentage of students receiving special education and gifted services
· Number of SAT referrals
· Success of Interventions
· Percentage of students meeting IEP Goals
· Quarterly trends in number of students receiving Interventions
· Number exited from special education programming
· Social Emotional data from Panorama
· (Grit, Growth Mindset, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Self-Efficacy)

The Academic Leader and special education teacher evaluate students' overall progress and their progress toward IEP goals. If fewer than 80% of students are on track to meet IEP goals, the school will create an action plan to review and revise the special education program. This

may include additional teacher training, support materials, or technology support to ensure that all of our students are making meaningful progress.

The Academic Leader and special education teacher will review all student IEPs to ensure that they are being implemented with fidelity and meet legal requirements.

References

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Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Describe how the proposed school will monitor the progress toward special education students' attainment of IEP goals; • Identify specific responsibilities for school staff, classroom teachers, and special education staff; • Identify the regular intervals at which progress will be monitored and success will be evaluated; • Identify specific actions/reporting that will engage students and or families; and • Describe how the school will evaluate the effectiveness of its special education program and services.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

G. (2) English Language Learner (ELLs).

G.(2)(a) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** description of how the proposed school will provide required curriculum, and instructional services/supports to students identified as ELs.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Monitoring the progress of ELs toward English language proficiency, both annually and within the school year;

Part of our mission is to prepare students to become global citizens. We believe that the cultural and linguistic diversity of our students and community provide the basic structure for weaving a rich tapestry of learning about our place in the world and developing the social emotional skills to positively interact with others. We are excited about the diversity that all learners, including English Language Learners and multilingual students, will bring to our school. Polaris's place-based framework aims to use the assets of our students and community to create a place where all students are engaged and supported in a rigorous curriculum that supports academic achievement. Polaris has developed processes, procedures, a schedule, and curriculum that creates a welcoming environment and culture of success focused on meeting individual student needs.

Describe how the proposed school will identify English learners (ELs) and provide the required curriculum and instructional services/supports to students identified as ELs;

Polaris anticipates a student population that includes between 2.4% (Los Alamos district average) and 17% (Pojoaque Public School District average) English Learners (EL). (Espanola's EL average is 15%.) (NM-PED School District Report Cards, https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/accountability/ district-report-cards/) In order to achieve our academic achievement and social emotional goals, Polaris staff must be prepared to accurately identify and provide instructional support for EL students. We will strictly follow the guidelines provided by the New Mexico Public Education Department's (PED) Bilingual Multicultural Education Bureau for English Learners and comply with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and requirements, including equitable access and opportunity for services, equitable delivery of services, appropriate accommodations, compliance with native language requirements, appropriate exit from services, and monitoring of exited students. New Mexico PED has created a thorough document to help schools through the process of Identifying and serving the EL population, "Tools for Identifying Potential English Learners Guidance" Handbook Https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ADA-NMLUS_Guidance_Handbook_Revised_4.10.2018.pdf

Identification Process

Based on demographic data, we anticipate that about 10% of our population will be identified as ELs.

Polaris staff will follow EL identification procedures in accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Title III, Section 3111(b)(2)(A) and New Mexico Administrative Code

(6.29.5.11 "Identification of English Learners").

- A department-approved Language Usage Survey (LUS) shall be completed for all new students initially enrolling in a public school.
    - Students who have not previously attended a New Mexico public school will complete a language usage survey
    - The language usage survey will be completed and signed in-person either at the lottery following enrollment acceptance or at family orientation.
    - The language usage survey will be available to families in English, Spanish, or Navajo

- For students who have previously attended a New Mexico public school, Polaris will do intentional due diligence to acquire the student's formerly completed language usage survey from their previous New Mexico public school.
    - Polaris will make three requests (electronically and in-person as necessary) to the former school.
    - If at that point the document has still not been received, the student's family will need to complete a new language usage survey.

See Attachment A for the New Mexico Language Usage Survey, available in English, Spanish, and Navajo. https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/LUS_FORM_Eng_Spa_Nav.pdf

- Polaris Administration will review the surveys and determine whether or not a student may be an EL.
    - If a parent/guardian answers "yes" to any of the questions 1-6 and/or 7 on the language usage survey form, the student may be considered for additional screening.

- Based on guidance from the NM PED Bilingual Multicultural Education Bureau, students for whom the language usage survey indicates a language other than English shall be assessed with the WIDA Screener Online.
    - The student will be given the English language proficiency screener test within 30 days of registration or within two weeks of entry into the school.
    - This test will be administered by Polaris staff trained by WIDA (Administrator).
- Students will receive an EL determination (identified as English Learners or non-English Learners) based on Department-approved cut scores for the WIDA Screener Online,
- If the student tests less than proficient on the English language proficiency test, then a notification letter will be sent home to the student's parent/guardian regarding their EL status and program/services.
    - The parent/guardian will be given the opportunity to waive, or opt out of, the services, if desired.
        - If the parent/guardian chooses to opt out, they will be required to annually sign an opt-out form, which will be included in the student's cumulative file.
        - A student who is opted out of services will still take the annual ACCESS

test.

- If the parent/guardian consents to placement in the EL program of high-quality language instruction, including:
    - Formative assessments of phonological processing, letter knowledge, and word and text reading.
    - Focused, intensive small-group reading interventions for at-risk students that include phonological awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
    - High-quality vocabulary instruction throughout the school day with essential content words taught in-depth.

- Identified EL students will be assessed annually for English Language Proficiency using the ACCESS for ELLS 2.0 assessment.
    - Will take place during the spring of each school year.
    - Students with a composite score of 4.9 or below will continue to be eligible to receive EL services for the following year
    - Students who receive a composite score of 5.0 or higher, will be exited from EL status and reclassified as "reclassified fluent English proficient" (RFEP) who will continue to be monitored for two years for regular progress.

Spectrum of Needs

Polaris understands that our ELL population is not homogeneous. Students arrive at our door from many different situations and have unique personalities, attitudes, support systems, and are at different developmental levels. Surrounding schools have a wide range of students identified as ELL. Based on data from NM PED School district report cards from 2017-2018, the percent of ELL students in surrounding districts were: Espanola 15%, Pojoaque 17%, Los Alamos 2.8%. The Los Alamos school district is very diverse, with 22 languages represented. While we can anticipate a number of EL students, we also know that the number tells us little about individual students. We know that we will have a wide range of learners with individual needs, and the first step is for Polaris to learn about the unique background and circumstances of each student through the enrollment process.

Teachers will use the parent language usage survey, personal face-to-face parent conferences, student advisory time, and testing data to learn about student and family linguistic and cultural backgrounds, aspirations, concerns, and obstacles. Teachers will use this information to form a foundation for developing appropriate programs and services. Before creating learning units, teachers use parent surveys, student academic data, WIDA ACCESS scores, language usage parent surveys (EL), IEP needs/accommodations, to identify student assets and needs. They will use these data points to develop appropriate units that help all students progress in language and academic achievement. WIDA ELD standards provide a framework and support suggestions for ELs, but individual teachers will design an appropriate program for each student.

Our competency-based learning will help target individual student needs and our block schedule is designed to provide time for teachers to provide individual supports for small groups of learners. While this is important for all learners, we know that it will help us ensure that EL students receive the support that they need.

Polaris values student voice and choice and encourages students to become agents of their own learning. We believe that this will serve the EL student well by allowing them to choose appropriate reading materials and demonstrate mastery of concepts in a variety of ways. Students, parents, and teachers will know the concepts that students need to master and have access to student work and current class assessments through the online platform, Novare.

Our chosen curriculums, Step-up to Writing, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), Strategies, Motivation, Awareness, Resilience, Talents, and Success (SMARTS) program, and Panorama Social and Emotional Learning Activities also incorporate strategies that will support students with many different needs, including oral language development, academic vocabulary, metacognition, and organizing information. The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) 2017 Preliminary Data Report found "Improved performance across all groups of learners, including ELL/ESL students and Students with Disabilities." http://readingandwritingproject.org/about/our-data

English Language Development Standards and Grade Level Content for ELs
Federal Law through the Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act requires that all English Learners have equal access to a high-quality education and the opportunity to achieve their full academic potential. Polaris seeks to provide an English Learner program that provides access to our rigorous, high-quality curriculum and instruction with supports that enable all of our EL students to grow academically and attain English proficiency, as demonstrated on the ACCESS for ELLS 2.0 assessment.

All students, including ELs, will be held to high academic standards and follow the competency-based criteria to achieve mastery. Polaris will use an immersion structure that embeds English Language supports in the regular education classes.

WIDA ELD standards are designed to work with content standards to ensure that EL students learn content while also improving their social, instructional, and academic language skills. WIDA provides resources that help teachers collaborate to plan instruction and assessments that support ELs as they develop language skills, including Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.

Polaris will use the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards and resources to support EL and multilingual learners, parents, and teachers. The WIDA ELD standards are comprehensive, research-based, and used by 41 states, including New Mexico. We also believe that WIDAs values of innovation, service, can do philosophy, collaboration, and social justice align with those of Polaris.

Instruction and Support for ELs-- Identify how the school will provide ELs with instruction and

support to develop English language proficiency;

Polaris has a strong emphasis on daily language and math instruction for all students, with 90 minute blocks in each subject every morning dedicated to support learners with different learning needs. English Language Learners will participate in an immersion program with their non-EL peers. Competency-based learning will analyze data to determine mastery, inform and evaluate instructional practices, and determine appropriate interventions. Longer blocks of time for language learning for all students will provide opportunities for:

- Small group instruction (allows students additional time to practice language skills)
- Homogeneously leveled groups based on mastery of concepts through assessment
- One-on-one help when needed
- Individual practice
- Opportunities for partner work and collaboration through book clubs and projects
- Leveled practice
- Student choice in reading materials (which may include native languages or cultural connections)

Additional support will be provided during advisory time. Social emotional activities with a small group of peers will provide additional opportunities for students to engage in group discussions and social situations with their peers. Students will also use this time to set personal goals and monitor their own progress through an online platform, Novare. Advisors will be able to monitor student work from all classes, so that they can identify potential concerns or issues early. Advisory teachers remain consistent for the entire time a student attends Polaris, so that they are able to develop long term relationships that support students and families.

We believe that EL students will benefit from Polaris's place-based philosophy that provides an authentic and relevant context for learning. ELs will strengthen language skills and social studies and science content through integrated learning projects that help students connect with the content. Teachers will provide opportunities for students to engage and interact with rich language content through different kinds of media, such as real objects, models, manipulatives, diagrams, newspapers, magazines, museum displays, local guest speakers, and videos. We will support EL learning through the use of classroom structures, graphic organizers, (timelines, charts, and graphs), and small group/collaborative work. While these experiences follow WIDA's suggestion that "language development should be integrated within content instruction and assessment through meaningful and authentic contexts." (WIDA, 2012, p.15), we also believe that many of these rich experiences and supports will benefit many students, not just ELs.

Finally, Polaris will offer family meetups in informal community settings that provide opportunities to connect with family members (parents, siblings, grandparents, students) and build relationships through common activities and experiences.

Staff Responsibilities Identify specific responsibilities for school staff and classroom teachers

Academic Leader

Collect and Analyze Program/School Data
Review the parent new student surveys and determine which students should be given EL screening.
May Administer WIDA Screener Online
Evaluate EL Program
Provide Necessary Resources
Support Training and Professional Development
Share School newsletter with parents
Update School calendar
Report Special Education Units to the state through STARS (According to NMSA 22-8-13 and 22-2-21)
Ensure compliance with Federal Law Title VI and NMAC 6.29.5

Operations Director
Manage the contracts for necessary evaluation services, if needed
Manage the contracts for special services, if needed

English Language/ Resource Teacher
Report progress to parents toward goals for each reporting period
Analyze student data
Collaborate to write appropriate goals
Help students set goals and strategies for achieving them
Regular weekly monitoring (Novare)
Attend Parent Conferences
Provide parent resources EL services
Provide student services, which may include push-in services, co-teaching, small group targeted instruction,
Administer ACCESS for ELLS 2.0 assessment each spring
Monitor "reclassified fluent English proficient" (RFEP) students for two years
May Administer WIDA Screener Online

Regular Education Teachers
Implement IEP modifications in the general education setting
Analyze classroom assessments
Share information and data with the resource teacher (Novare)
Schedule and attend family conferences

Staff Training and Support (Professional Development)

The founding team at Polaris understands that teacher training and support are critical in the success of its' students, especially those students who are diverse with special needs. In order for the Polaris staff to meet the needs of their special education learners, gifted learners, and culturally and linguistically diverse learners, all staff members at Polaris are expected to work together collaboratively to meet the academic and social emotional needs of students. This

requires creating a culture of learning and collaboration, understanding diverse learners, processes and procedures, and understanding current research through professional development.

Annually, all staff will attend a reflective retreat to develop a solid understanding of the current educational research about adolescent learners and the philosophical basis behind Polaris's Place-Based Learning Model. This includes a clear understanding of the vision, mission, goals, culture and innovations of Polaris. Staff will apply their learning to create and reflect on the success of behavior norms, language norms and routines, resources, and opportunities for engagement that support a culture of learning for all students, including EL learners.

Polaris will utilize the resources provided by the NM PED Language and Culture Bureau (which includes professional learning modules, lessons, focus bulletins, and videos) and WIDA (which provides access to high quality standards, assessments, research, and professional learning for educators).

We will prioritize hiring teachers who have TESOL endorsements or are willing to complete the coursework necessary to obtain the endorsement. Polaris has dedicated money for individual professional development opportunities that may be used to help cover the cost of certification.

All staff will participate in orientation before school begins. This professional time is dedicated to three main topics: Using Data and Mastery-based Learning, School Systems and Procedures, Operations, and Serving Diverse Learners. ELL is one of the sub-topics that is covered during the diverse learners section. Training topics will include EL processes, Language acquisition, accommodations, high expectations, growth mindset, goal setting, English Development Standards, evaluation of data, and communication.

ELL/ELP Resources

State Agency: New Mexico Public Education Department
Bilingual Multicultural Education Programs (BMEPS)--NMPED Language and Culture Bureau
https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/languageandculture/bilingual-multicultural-education-programs-bmeps/

ELL Website: Bilingual and Multicultural Education NCLB Title III
https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/languageandculture/bilingual-multicultural-education-programs-bmeps/

ELP Standards: WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards
https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards

ELP Assessment: WIDA-ACCESS for ELLs
https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/access

ELL Identification: New Mexico Resources for Screening and Assessing ELLs
https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/languageandculture/english-learners/assessing-english-learners/

NCLEA: Title III Information
New Mexico Department of Education
Bilingual/Multicultural Education Bureau
https://ncela.ed.gov/t3sis/NewMexico.php

WIDA: New Mexico Contact Information
https://wida.wisc.edu/memberships/consortium

ESSA: New Mexico ESSA State Plan
https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/FINAL-APPROVED-NM-State-ESSA-Plan.pdf

Colorín Colorado: bilingual, research-based information, activities, and advice for educators and families of English language learners (ELLs). Colorín Colorado is an educational service of WETA
http://www.colorincolorado.org/

NM TESOL- New Mexico Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
https://nmtesol.org/

TESOL- https://www.tesol.org/

References

NM PED ACCESS and WIDA Resources
https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/assessment/access-and-wida/access-teacher-resources/

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) 2017 Preliminary Data Report. Accessed from http://readingandwritingproject.org/about/our-data

WIDA Consortium. (2012). 2012 AMPLIFICATION OF The English Language Development Standards KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 12 https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/2012-ELD-Standards.pdf)

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Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Describe how the proposed school will identify English learners (ELs) and provide the required curriculum and instructional services/supports to students identified as ELs; • Identify how the school will implement the English Language Development Standards for ELs in its school; • Identify how the school will provide ELs with instruction and support to develop English language proficiency; • Identify how the school will provide ELs with access to grade-level content; • Describe how the school will address the spectrum of needs that ELs may present; • Identify specific responsibilities for school staff and classroom teachers; and • Identify specific training, professional development and support that will be provided to teachers and school staff to ensure they are able to fulfill their responsibilities.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

G. (2) (b) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** to regularly evaluate and monitor the progress of English learners.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Monitoring exited EL students (reclassified fluent English proficient students—RFEPs)
While our goal for EL students is adequate progress to exit the EL program, we understand that it takes time to learn another language and progress may not be linear. Even when students have exited the EL program, we will continue monitoring their progress as reclassified fluent English proficient students (RFEPs) for two years. Regular monitoring of EL students will include social skills and regular subject areas. Our goal is to ensure that students are confident learners who are making adequate progress academically, socially, and emotionally.

All teachers will be monitoring all students for academic progress. EL teachers will also check with teachers to monitor progress. They will specifically ask regular teachers about student comprehension and behavior to determine if a lack of understanding could be contributing to problems or impacting progress. If a student fails to maintain progress for two consecutive reporting periods, the EL teacher, regular teacher and parents will meet to examine the lack of progress and re-evaluate the goals, instruction methods, interventions, supports, and services that are being provided.

Regular weekly monitoring of class grades (Novare)
Administer ACCESS for ELLS 2.0 assessment annually
Panorama Survey- Social-Emotional Skills
EL teacher performs a Bi-annual check- in with regular teachers

If a student fails to maintain progress or make progress toward goals for two consecutive reporting periods, the EL teacher, regular teacher and parents will meet to examine the lack of progress and re-evaluate the goals, instruction methods, interventions, supports, and services that are being provided.

Communicating Goals
A collaborative effort involving the student, parents, teachers, and school leader is necessary in order to create an inclusive, welcoming educational environment with the appropriate resources and accommodations each student needs to thrive.

At the beginning of each academic year the resource support provider/teacher will provide regular teachers with specific modifications, accommodations and strategies. The school leader will dedicate planning time at the beginning of the school year for teachers to develop a schedule that works for each student. Teachers are responsible for implementing the language acquisition supports and accommodations, and monitoring student academic progress.

Parents are involved throughout the process. The parents will provide input, including completing a family usage survey. We will encourage parents to attend family conferences to personally review student progress. Parents will have access to student classroom assessments

and progress through our online platform and teachers are expected to communicate regularly with parents via email, by phone, or in person. Our focus is on helping families understand EL and general education laws and evidence-based practices and to actively participate in planning and decision-making about supports and services for each student.

Monitoring Progress

The resource support provider/teacher will regularly monitor student progress by reviewing student data and assessments in their area of need. They will maintain accurate records, use benchmark assessments and performance indicators, track academic growth and progress toward proficiency of grade level standards, and use Novare to record alternative assessments of progress toward goals mastery.

The resource support teacher provides progress reports to parent(s) or guardian(s) each marking period. These reports specifically indicate a student's progress toward goals and mastery of competencies. If a student fails to maintain progress or make progress toward goals for two consecutive reporting periods, the EL teacher, regular teacher and parents will meet to examine the lack of progress and re-evaluate the goals, instruction methods, interventions, supports, and services that are being provided.

The EL resource teacher participates in the parent-student conferences of each student on his/her caseload.

Engaging Students and Families

To the extent possible, we expect all Polaris students to become active agents responsible for their own learning. This includes setting personal goals, prioritizing work, and developing strategies for success. The resource support provider/teacher and advisory teachers will work with students to help them set appropriate learning goals, and practice making decisions about what and how to study to improve learning. Students, teachers, and parents will have access to Novare, an online platform that Polaris will use to personalize learning and monitor progress toward competencies.

Based on the research that shows "Programs to improve achievement are more likely to have positive results if they engage families," (Henderson and Mapp, 2002) and "a key difference between high- and low-achieving children is how they spend their time outside school" (Henderson and Mapp, 2002), Polaris aims to have a strong program of student, family and community engagement. We know that education continues outside of our classrooms, and we believe that providing avenues for two-way communication and strategies for families to engage with the school is essential to student success.

In order for parents to become effective partners in education, we must have a shared vocabulary and two-way communication. Polaris will listen first. We will solicit the voice of parents in describing student strengths, challenges, priorities, aspirations, obstacles, concerns, and interests. Communication strategies that Polaris will employ include family conferences, newsletters, social media, Novare, a school calendar, meetups and student performances. We

will use these opportunities to strengthen the connection between the family and the school.

Evaluating Effectiveness of EL Services

Polaris will use multiple metrics to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of its EL services each year. We want to ensure that Polaris is accessible to EL families and meeting the needs of students. The Academic Leader and teachers will review multiple data points, including:

- Number of EL families applying to Polaris
- Percent of EL students staying enrolled in Polaris
- Panorama scores (efficacy, school culture)
- WIDA access scores
- Student Progress (Achievement scores and mastery)
- Teacher observations (Are teachers using adaptations and accommodations?)
- Teacher reflections (Ensure that school structure aligns with good EL teaching practices.)

Evaluating the number of EL families applying to Polaris, the percent of EL students staying enrolled in Polaris, and student feelings about efficacy and school culture (Panorama scores) should remain consistent with the general population. This will indicate whether EL families and students feel comfortable with the structure and support that Polaris provides.

If fewer than 80% of EL students are making progress the school will create an action plan to review and revise EL services. This may include additional teacher training, support materials, or technology support to ensure that all of our students are making meaningful progress. The Academic Leader will ensure that EL testing and programs meet legal requirements.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Describe how the proposed school will monitor the progress of ELs toward English language proficiency, both annually and within the school year; • Identify specific responsibilities for school staff and classroom teachers; • Identify the regular intervals at which progress will be monitored; • Identify specific actions/reporting that will engage students and/or families; • Describe how the school will evaluate the effectiveness of its EL program and services; and • Describe how the school will monitor exited EL students (reclassified fluent English proficient students—RFEPs) for two years for academic progress.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

G. (3) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** to address the needs of Native American Students, Hispanic Students, and Bilingual and Multicultural educational plan to

improve educational outcomes

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Educational Framework

We have chosen a Place-based Framework that uses authentic place-based experiences and projects to actively engage each student in learning that is culturally relevant and connected to the local community. We believe that New Mexico and our local community has vast resources of local knowledge, cultures, and experiences that provide opportunities for all students and families, including Native American and Hispanic, to connect to new learning in a multicultural approach. Polaris plans to use our place (environment, cultures, history) to create experiences that are relevant to students. According to Geneva Gay "The use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to, and effective for, them. It teaches to and through the strengths of these students. It is culturally validating and affirming."

In addition to our Place-based Academic Framework, Polaris has integrated processes, procedures, and dedicated time to build a school culture that validates students, nurtures relationships, connects and builds bridges between peers, and also students and staff.

School Staff Responsibilities

The entire school staff is involved in developing a school where all students feel safe and respected. Developing a multicultural framework requires awareness, knowledge, and planning. Polaris leadership will first listen to advice and recommendations from Native American and Hispanic individuals from our local community and organizations, including The Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning (CCRTL). Then Polaris leadership will use best practices to provide professional development to staff during the annual Reflective Retreat. Teachers will use the information to align curriculum with culturally relevant and local resources, develop instructional strategies and classroom management strategies and protocols that respect cultural differences in learning.

Academic Leader

- Listen to advisors
- Gather information from local families, students, and organizations
- Develop a list of local cultural resources, including people, places, and information
- Plan Teacher Professional Development (Special Populations will be addressed during the first PD sessions before the school year begins.)
- Plan Place-based Professional Development that includes culturally responsive Instruction strategies
- Meet with Family Advisory Council (parents) to listen to (and address) concerns

Teachers

Use advisory time to monitor the academic and social-emotional progress and needs of individual students

- Continue/Add to local cultural resource list
- Purchase and provide supplemental resources that reflect the diversity of our student

population

Develop and implement place-based lessons using local and culturally relevant resources

Allow student choice during individual reading time

Use protocols and response strategies that provide opportunities for all students to participate in class discussions.

Help students develop projects and assessments that are appropriate to their individual learning style

Culturally Responsive Best Practices for teaching, mentoring, counseling and administration

Polaris has developed a school framework and model that encourages cultural responsiveness through place-based learning, design thinking, student choice, and competency-based instruction.

- Place-based learning used the local place and culture as a framework for learning. This framework prioritizes using local resources, including people and experiences to make learning personally relevant to students. Polaris will design instruction that builds on what students know and then stretches their learning to new situations.
- Design thinking is a process that begins with empathy. This provides students with a perspective that helps them understand the needs of others before developing a project.
- Use competency-based instruction to ensure high expectations for all students and provides a scaffold of support for individual student growth.
- Polaris values student choice and voice. We know that student response times and methods vary depending on culture and individual personality. We believe that students should be able to "show what they know" in a variety of ways that are appropriate for them.

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive School Policies

Polaris has schoolwide policies that encourage empathy, diversity, and student choice and voice.

We have listened to our community and have set up procedures to continue open discussions and ensure that our leadership is diverse. We have criteria in place to develop a Governing Board and Advisory Board that is composed of diverse members from our local and regional community.

- Restorative practices, an approach to justice that involves the victim, offender, and community members, provides a real-time opportunity to solve problems by proactively building a sense of empathy and social connection. The goal is for the victim to have input and closure, the offender to be held accountable and take a role in repairing the harm, and for the community to help create a safe and healthy environment. We are focused on changing behavior, not punishment.
- Every day at Polaris begins with advisory time. This time prioritizes social emotional learning, building a sense of community and individual organizational skills. During advisory time teachers meet with small groups of students as mentors to practice effective listening, conflict resolution, problem solving, goal setting, personal reflection, social emotional skills, and ethical decision making. Advisory time will provide opportunities for prevention and early intervention for social problems and help with implementing restorative practices.
- During advisory time students also serve on place-based committees (about once a week) that allow students to practice leadership skills and collaboration. They also connect virtually with other students in place-based schools across the country.

Curricula and Instructional Materials

New Mexico has a rich diverse culture that can provide unique and relevant experiences for students. Polaris has adopted a place-based framework to ensure that academic learning is grounded in curriculum and instruction that uses authentic place-based experiences and projects to actively engage each student in learning that is culturally relevant and connected to the local community. Students will work for an extended period of time to deeply investigate a complex problem, while learning to manage time, develop project plans, work with local experts, adjust to setbacks, seek out answers to questions, and give and adjust to feedback from others. This framework has been shown to help foster a sense of belonging in the community and improves student achievement in core subjects.

One way that Polaris supports diversity is by allowing student choice. Polaris supports students with opportunities to choose projects, reading material, and elective classes. Student choice also helps teachers differentiate programs to meet the needs of individual students and create the most appropriate learning environment for each student. Allowing student choice and voice is critical to helping students (especially adolescent students) learn to make appropriate choices. We are asking for a waiver that will allow us to purchase community and culturally relevant resources to enhance student learning and ensure that students will have access to a variety of high quality literature with topics and characters with which they can relate.

Multicultural and Multilingual Texts

Our place-based philosophy includes a local to global focus. Based on this focus, we have two goals for choosing student projects and texts:

1) Choose texts and projects that reflect the identities, cultures, and environment of our students, so that they can connect to local content and characters.

2) Choose texts and projects that build empathy by exploring diverse cultures, environments, and global issues.

We believe that in order to develop lifelong readers outside of the classroom, students in middle school must develop the skills to choose books that are appropriate for them. Teachers will use their expertise in reading instruction, knowledge of local authors, cultures, and place/project content, passion for reading, expert recommendations (such as the *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project*, Los Alamos History Museum, First Nations Development Institute, National Hispanic Cultural Center, and Colorín Colorado), and student recommendations to thoughtfully build a library of high-quality novels and non-fiction works, including novel sets and anthologies of classic short stories, poems, and speeches.

Monitoring progress and Engaging Families

To the extent possible, we expect all Polaris students to become active agents responsible for their own learning. This includes setting personal goals, prioritizing work, and developing strategies for success. The resource support provider/teacher and advisory teachers will work with students to help them set appropriate learning goals, and practice making decisions about what and how to study to improve learning. Students, teachers, and parents will have access to Novare, an online platform that Polaris will use to personalize learning and monitor progress toward competencies.

Based on the research that shows “Programs to improve achievement are more likely to have positive

results if they engage families," (Henderson and Mapp, 2002) and "a key difference between high- and low-achieving children is how they spend their time outside school" (Henderson and Mapp, 2002), Polaris aims to have a strong program of student, family and community engagement. We know that education continues outside of our classrooms, and we believe that providing avenues for two-way communication and strategies for families to engage with the school is essential to student success.

In order for parents to become effective partners in education, we must have a shared vocabulary and two-way communication. Polaris will listen first. We will solicit the voice of parents in describing students' strengths, challenges, priorities, aspirations, obstacles, concerns, and interests. Communication strategies that Polaris will employ include family conferences, newsletters, social media, Novare, a school calendar, meetups and student performances. We will use these opportunities to strengthen the connection between the family and the school.

We believe that the best way to create understanding and build bridges is through opportunities where people connect by talking and listening to each other. Our Family Advisory Council does not include fees to join or participate. We want to hear all voices. We also plan informal family "meetups" about once a month. These will be informal opportunities for families and teachers to learn and work together.

Evaluating Effectiveness

Polaris will use multiple metrics to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of its programs each year. We want to ensure that Polaris is accessible to all families and meeting the needs of students. The Academic Leader and teachers will review multiple data points, including:

- Number of students by ethnicity
- Panorama scores (efficacy, school culture)
- WIDA access scores
- Student Progress (Achievement scores and mastery) broken down by ethnicity
- Teacher observations (Are teachers using culturally appropriate protocols and curriculum)
- Teacher reflections (Ensure that school structure aligns with appropriate teaching practices.)
- Ensure that curriculum is using local culturally appropriate materials.

We expect all students to make adequate yearly progress. Teachers will monitor all students and inform parents (through Novare and family conferences) about student progress. Action plans will be created (with parents and students) to review and revise the student's program. This plan may include additional teacher training, support materials, tutors, small group work, or technology support to ensure that all of our students are making meaningful progress.

Total Points Available	Expectations

4	A complete response must • Describe how the proposed school will develop an educational framework to address the educational needs of Native American, Hispanic, and bilingual studies within a multicultural approach to learning; • Identify specific responsibilities for school staff and classroom teachers, including professional development for teachers; • Describe how the proposed school will ensure that the best practices are used in teaching, mentoring, counseling and administration are culturally and linguistically responsive to students; • Describe how school policies will be culturally and linguistically responsive; • Describe how rigorous and culturally meaningful curricula and instructional materials will be developed and implemented; • Identify the regular intervals at which progress will be monitored; • Identify specific actions/reporting that will engage students and/or families; and • Describe how the school will evaluate the effectiveness of its programs to improve educational outcomes.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

H. Assessment and Accountability.

A charter school application should include a clear plan for evaluating student performance across the curriculum. This plan should align with state performance standards, as well as with the proposed school's student performance goals, and should be presented, along with a clear timeline for achieving these standards/indicators/goals. A clear explanation of the types of assessments and frequency of administration should be included, reflecting thoughtfulness given to tracking student progress. A plan for the use of data gathered through assessments should include procedures for taking corrective action (both individually and collectively) if pupil performance falls below expected standards.

A quality assessment plan will include summative (end-of-year) assessments as well as formative (more frequent) assessments to track student skill and knowledge development and to inform instruction. The plan will include how this data will be used to guide professional development of teachers, as well as how this data will be used to guide refinement of the curriculum and instruction.

When developing the assessment plan, you should consider: 1) the appropriateness of assessments to the curriculum; 2) what will serve as baseline for student progress comparisons; 3) the inclusion of school, state, and other assessments to demonstrate appropriate student growth; 4) the ability of the assessment plan to provide for the early detection of students struggling with curriculum content; and 5) the ability of assessments to reflect the use of basic skills at grade-appropriate levels (e.g., reading, writing, problem-solving).

Note: Be aware that all New Mexico public schools, including charter schools, are subject to a variety of testing requirements, which are aligned with state and federal content standards.

For more information on NM assessment requirements, please see:
https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/assessment/

H.(1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive assessment plan** that identifies what measures will be used to indicate that students are making academic progress, the grade levels at which the assessments will be used, frequency of assessing, and how the assessments will be used to inform instruction. Please provide **clear** evidence that the applicant has considered the common core standards, all federally and state required assessments, and the proposed school's projected student population.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Assessment Philosophy

A thoughtfully planned and executed assessment system is integral to school success. The best of these systems aligns standards, assessments, curriculum, student interests, data analysis, and professional development so that all efforts of a school, district, and state are integrated toward a common goal of improving student learning. We are committed to valuing the professional knowledge of teachers and their ability to analyze and use the data from a variety of student assessments to drive continuous school improvement. We believe that the power of assessment lies not in the data, but in using the analysis of student performance to improving instructional strategies in the classroom.

To ensure stakeholders (students, parents/guardians, teachers, governing body, state-NM PED, Place Network) that students are progressing and meeting academic achievement goals, schools need multiple measures to monitor student progress. Teachers will use a variety of assessments (daily, weekly, interim, annual, formative and summative) to analyze student progress at regular intervals. Daily and weekly formative assessments in the form of observations, electronic portfolios, mastery-based rubrics and journals will provide real-time feedback to teachers and students regarding student progress, short-term lesson planning needs, and identify which students need additional support. Interim assessments such as student-led conferences, portfolio exhibitions, and short-cycle assessments will assist teachers in monitoring how students are growing, and which students are in need of more intensive interventions. Annual summative assessments such as State Assessments, SBAs, and EOCs will provide information on how teachers and students are performing on norm-referenced tests. Final capstone projects will allow teachers to assess how students use higher-order thinking skills of synthesis, problem-solving, collaboration, and critical thinking across subject areas.

Assessment Calendar and Schedule

As a public charter school, Polaris will administer all state-mandated assessments. These tests currently include State Assessment in ELA and Math for all grades, the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment for Science in 8th grade, and the New Mexico Alternative Performance Assessment for those students who have been identified to have significant cognitive or adaptive behavior difficulties in multiple school settings. We understand and support the state's move to re-evaluate the current system of assessment for schools and will follow any new mandates made by the NM PED. Polaris aims to bring state goals to the local level, by

using place-based resources to create a bridge between the needs of individual students and state goals.

To aid in adequately providing English support services students who may be English Language Learners (ELLs), incoming students may be given the WIDA Screener. If students are identified as ELLs, the ACCESS 2.0 assessments will be given annually to monitor student proficiency and progress in the acquisition and use of English. These test results will also be used to exit students from the ELL program. State-mandated assessments are listed below.

State-Mandated Assessment Calendar

Assess-ment	Polaris Grade Levels	Assess-ment Window/ Frequency	Data	Data Analysis: How Informs Instruction
State Assessment, K-12, ELA and Math, CBT	6,7,8	Annually, Spring of each year 4/16 - 5/11	whole grade level & individual breakdown student proficiency levels student growth	Analysis of effectiveness of CCSS-aligned curriculum and instruction by school director. Used to inform PD during the upcoming year and by teachers at the beginning of the year to determine year-long proficiency goals for students, develop curriculum units, and purchase supplies.
Science SBA, (4,7,11) CBT	8	Annually, Spring of each year 3/5 - 3/30	whole grade level & individual breakdown student proficiency in science standards	Analysis of school CCSS-aligned curriculum and instruction by school director. Used to inform PD during the upcoming year and by teachers at the beginning of the year to determine year-long proficiency goals for students.
EOCs Science Social Studies Physical	6,8 6,7,8	Once each year Spring	Summative evaluation for each course, aligned with NM State Standards.	Data will inform curriculum development and instruction.

Education	6,7,8			

State-Mandated Assessment Calendar by Grade

Grade	Polaris Grade Levels	Assessment Window/Frequency 2017-18
Grade 6	State Assessment (PARCC) ELA & Math	4/16 - 5/11
Grade 7	State Assessment (PARCC) ELA & Math	4/16 - 5/11
Grade 8	State Assessment (PARCC) ELA & Math	4/16 - 5/11
	Science SBA	3/5 - 3/30

Assessments Based on Eligibility

Assessment	Polaris Grade Levels	Assessment Window/Frequency 2017-18	Data Analysis: How Informs Instruction
WIDA Screener (grades 1-12) & parental notification of ELL status	Based on eligibility; Grades 6, 7, 8	Within first 30 calendar days of school year or first 2 weeks or enrollment	Score indicates if an ACCESS test is necessary.
ACCESS Placement Test	Based on eligibility; Grades 6, 7, 8	Within first 30 calendar days of school year or first 2 weeks or enrollment	Score determines eligibility for ELL services.
ACCESS for ELLs 2.0	Based on eligibility; Grades 6, 7, 8	Annually- spring 1/22 - 3/16	Inform interventions and ELL services Score determines when a student is ready to transition into a "monitoring" status.
NMAPA	Based on eligibility; Grades 6, 7, 8	Beginning of year: 9/25 - 10/13 End of year: 3/12 - 4/6	Determine strengths and areas of growth for students with cognitive disabilities.

Short Cycle Assessments – District Assessments
Assessment negotiated as part of the performance framework contract
(Include any assessments that may be negotiated as part of the performance framework and contract.)

Polaris is proposing the use of a norm-referenced assessment for short cycle-assessments - the NWEA MAP.

Assess-ment	Polaris Grade Levels	Assess-ment Window/ Frequency	Data	Data Analysis: How Informs Instruction
NWMEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Reading Math	6,7,8	Twice each year: Fall (September) Spring (April)	Summative Assessment Personalized, test adjusts to each student and measures performance.	Determines what students know and informs teachers about what students are ready to learn next. Shows student growth/progress over time. Compares students to local and national norms. Universal screening for RtI

Polaris Specific Formative Assessments

While state-mandated assessments are important for evaluating student progress, there are many other assessments Polaris will use (observations, critique, rubrics, portfolios, conferences, exhibitions, project notebooks and capstone projects) to monitor and track student progress during the school year. These assessments will provide teachers with feedback that is critical to setting short- and medium-term goals for students, dynamically grouping students who need additional support in mastering material, improving day-to-day lesson planning, providing relevant professional development, collaboratively evaluating student work, and developing student agency in learning.

Below is a list of assessments Polaris Charter School will use to support its commitment to social emotional learning, student agency, personalized learning, and data-driven governance.

Polaris Specific Assessments for All Grades (6,7,8)

Assessment Tool	Frequency	Description and Use of Data to Inform Instruction
Teacher Observations	Occurs daily, and will be recorded quarterly, at a minimum	Teachers will observe students and monitor progress toward student goals and state standards. Daily observations will help teachers determine individual student needs, reteaching, small group instruction, enrichment, and other RtI interventions.
Self and Peer Critique	Critique will occur regularly as part of the growth process.	Polaris will integrate self and peer critique into classroom projects in order to more fully engage students in a growth mindset through the assessment and advancement of their own learning. Students will use self and peer critique to improve assignments and projects. Teachers will use the critiques to determine instructional goals and strategies that target student needs.
Rubrics	Used for each large project.	Teachers will communicate expectations and define the assessment criteria for student projects through rubrics.
Portfolios	Quarterly	Students submit assignments that demonstrate mastery of concepts into an online portfolio (Novare). This portfolio stays with the learner throughout the Polaris experience. Teachers will use the portfolio to communicate with parents, evaluate student progress, and design programming and instruction for the next quarter.
Family Conferences	Twice a year	All conferences are student led where students guide parents and teachers through the progress on competencies during a specific time period. Prior to the conference, students reflect on progress and decided on artifacts to share with parents and teachers via portfolios. Conferences also conclude with time for just the parents and teachers.
Exhibitions	At least once a year, but may occur more	Periodically throughout the learning experience, the entire school will gather to

	often depending on community projects.	share personal growth and community impact. The school and community partners will work together to determine the type, number, and scope of these exhibitions.
Project Notebooks Self-Reflection	Weekly	All projects will be documented through project notebooks. Students add notes, record assignments, write goals in these notebooks. Self-reflection is a best practice instructional method that builds student agency and voice in their education and help students make informed decisions. Teachers will use the notebooks to monitor student needs and "pulse" for the week.
Capstone Projects	Annually	Capstone projects are completed during the end of each level of study and support students through an independent study chosen by the student. Capstone project provide an opportunity for students, parents, and teachers to celebrate student growth and progress over the year.
Panorama	At least twice each year: once in the Fall and once in the Spring. Additional measurements may be taken, if the staff determines that it is necessary or helpful.	Monitor Social Emotional Learning through student competencies (grit, growth mindset, self-management, social awareness, self-efficacy) Panorama provides interactive reports and actionable strategies to build SEL skills. Data will inform the topics that are covered during advisory time throughout the year. Measures school environment (school climate, teacher-student relationships, sense of belonging, school safety, student engagement). Data will be used by teachers and school leaders to determine schoolwide opportunities and celebrations.

Data Collection, Analysis, Reporting, Evaluation, and Usage to Inform Instruction

Different kinds of assessments each provide a data point about a student's progress. Alone, they are simply one data point, but when analyzed together, they can help create a more

complete picture of a student's and school's progress and needs. Analysis isn't just a collection of data, but a systematic view that looks for patterns or trends in data. When data is analyzed correctly, it has the power to provide students, teachers, parents, administrators, and the state with the information to make informed decisions. It is critical to understand the limits of each kind of assessment, give staff the time to analyze the results, set goals based on assessment results, and tie goals to changes in classroom instruction, curriculum, or programs.

We understand that data collection, analysis, reporting, evaluation, and usage are time-consuming and complex, so we have chosen the Novare assessment platform to help us in this endeavor.

Novare

Collect- The Novare platform will be used as a place to collect many kinds of assessment data. Teachers, students, and administrators will have the ability to upload projects, artifacts, narratives, rubrics, videos, test results, etc. Multiple teachers can add to each student's file, fostering collaboration across subject areas. Students can curate their own portfolios and reflect on learning.

Analyze-
The Novare platform allows teachers and administrators to analyze data in a variety of ways and view data in many different formats: circle graphs, bar graphs, written reports, etc. In addition to monitoring individual student mastery of state standards and growth, Polaris will categorize student performance outlined in statute NMSC 22-2C-5 by ethnicity, race, limited English proficiency, students with disabilities, and poverty. Specific categories outlined in New Mexico statutes 22-2C-11 include:

(a) Caucasian, non-Hispanic;
(b) Hispanic;
(c) African American;
(d) American Indian or Alaska Native;
(e) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander;
(f) Asian;
(g) Two or more races; and
(h) Other; provided that if the sample of students in any category enumerated in Subparagraphs (a) through (g) of this paragraph is so small that a student in the sample may be personally identifiable in violation of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the report may combine that sample into the "other" category;

Polaris will also use Novare to filter and organize assessments by grade level and subject areas.

Report- Effective reporting of assessments requires that those receiving the reports be provided with adequate information and interpretation. Information is entered into the Novare system once, and then staff can create reports as needed. Information and data may be shared with other teachers across the platform to promote collaboration and reflection. Teachers and administrators choose which assessments to include in written reports for

parents (quarterly report cards), Polaris board members (annually), and the Place Network (annually) and how those assessments are interpreted and displayed. Novare also allows parents/guardians and students to view assessments online and regular weekly monitoring.

Evaluate- Polaris will evaluate data from different perspectives and at different levels to provide a more complete view of student and school progress: an individual level, by special populations, by classes, and by the school as a whole. Individual data will be used to determine individual student needs, mastery of concepts, and progress. Looking at data for special populations will let us know if we are meeting the needs of students from the lower quartile, upper quartile, and for specific ethnic groups.

Class and school data trends will measure the growth of the student population as a whole. Polaris will evaluate the effects or impact of a specific kind of instruction and determine if we are meeting our schoolwide goals. Comparing the scores for students from year to year will help determine the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction.

Inform Instruction-Schoolwide analysis will be used to develop schoolwide strategies and inform the most efficient use of instructional time to meet our school goals. Group level analysis will show trends for group performance and help support mixed or ability grouping. Individual analysis will provide data for RtI support, differentiating instruction and providing enrichment for students.

Analytics will also provide information that allows teachers to collaborate on interdisciplinary projects and innovative teaching strategies.

Aligns to Mission and Meets the Needs of Students

Our assessments align to the three parts of our mission and goals: academic achievement, social emotional learning, and active student citizenship/agency, which were specifically chosen to meet the needs of our middle school population.

Academic Assessment

Our first mission specific indicator/goal is linked to an academic outcome: Polaris students will demonstrate measurable academic growth that meets or exceeds annual yearly progress goals in math and English language arts as measured by a nationally normed assessment tool.

Polaris will use the nationally normed NWEA-MAPS test, which is given at the beginning and end of the year to measure student growth. Each student is expected to meet or exceed the academic growth target scores specifically based on their starting score at the beginning of each school year. The chart below clearly indicates the mean growth score that each student is expected to achieve based on their starting score. Measuring student growth goes beyond a proficiency score to determine whether each student, no matter where they begin or what their individual needs are, is progressing, learning, and growing.

2015 READING Student Growth Norms

	Begin-to-Mid Year		Mid-to-End Year		Begin-to-End Year	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
K	10.3	6.01	6.81	5.46	17.1	8.11
1	10.8	6.00	5.99	5.46	16.8	8.09
2	9.5	6.05	4.52	5.49	14.0	8.20
3	7.3	5.79	3.02	5.33	10.3	7.59
4	5.4	5.56	2.33	5.19	7.8	7.05
5	4.2	5.60	1.97	5.21	6.1	7.15
6	3.2	5.62	1.54	5.22	4.8	7.19
7	2.5	5.58	1.25	5.20	3.7	7.11
8	1.9	6.05	0.99	5.49	2.8	8.19
9	1.1	6.35	0.60	5.68	1.7	8.87
10	0.6	6.72	0.17	5.91	0.7	9.66

2015 MATHEMATICS Student Growth Norms

	Begin-to-Mid Year		Mid-to-End Year		Begin-to-End Year	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
K	11.4	5.56	7.67	5.03	19.1	7.59
1	11.4	5.50	6.97	4.99	18.4	7.45
2	9.5	5.35	5.72	4.90	15.2	7.11
3	7.8	5.08	5.19	4.73	13.0	6.47
4	6.8	5.05	4.78	4.72	11.6	6.41
5	5.8	5.22	4.13	4.82	9.9	6.80
6	4.4	5.20	3.26	4.80	7.7	6.75
7	3.5	5.11	2.47	4.75	6.0	6.55
8	2.9	5.59	1.78	5.05	4.6	7.66
9	2.0	5.81	1.17	5.19	3.1	8.15
10	1.5	6.18	0.85	5.42	2.3	8.92

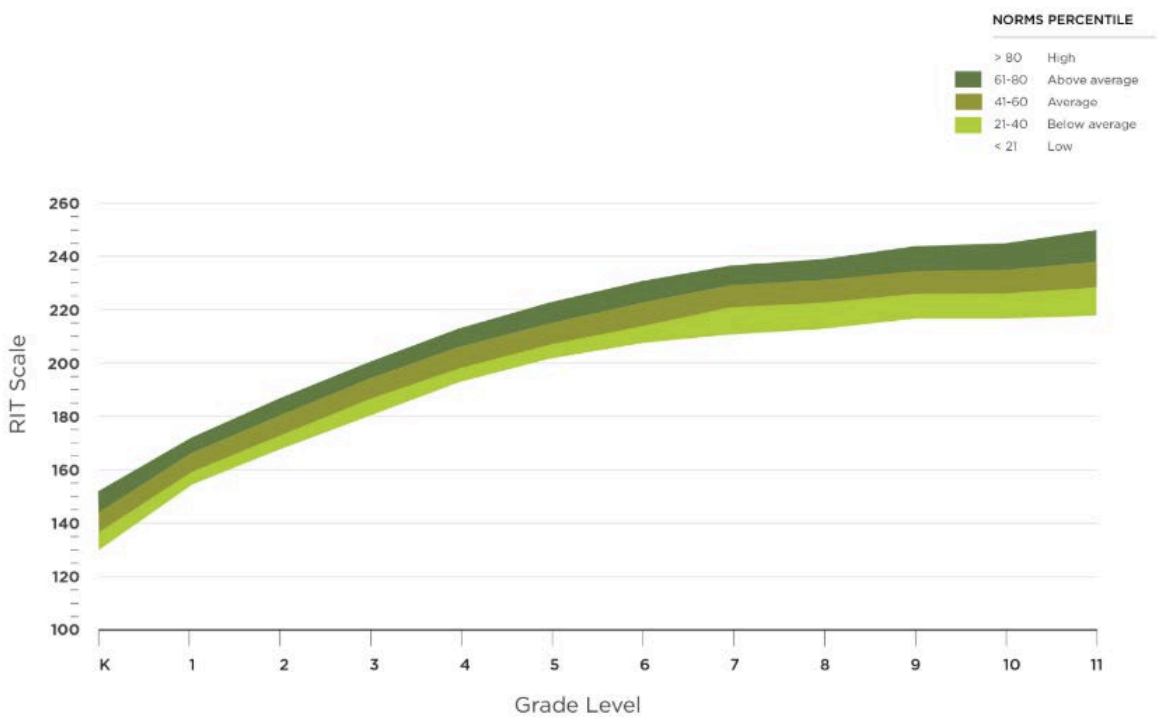
2015 LANGUAGE USAGE Student Growth Norms

	Begin-to-Mid Year		Mid-to-End Year		Begin-to-End Year	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
2	10.4	6.61	4.74	5.70	15.2	9.83
3	7.4	5.61	3.14	5.06	10.6	7.69
4	5.6	5.26	2.28	4.84	7.9	6.90
5	4.1	5.21	1.76	4.81	5.8	6.78
6	3.2	5.23	1.32	4.83	4.5	6.84
7	2.5	5.14	1.10	4.77	3.6	6.61
8	1.9	5.40	0.96	4.93	2.9	7.22
9	1.4	5.65	0.65	5.08	2.0	7.79
10	0.8	6.03	0.42	5.32	1.2	8.61

2015 GENERAL SCIENCE Student Growth Norms

	Begin-to-Mid Year		Mid-to-End Year		Begin-to-End Year	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
3	5.1	6.28	2.88	5.85	8.0	8.02
4	4.2	5.94	2.27	5.64	6.4	7.19
5	3.5	5.92	2.04	5.63	5.5	7.13
6	2.8	5.92	1.59	5.63	4.3	7.14
7	2.3	5.91	1.39	5.62	3.7	7.10
8	2.0	6.09	1.24	5.73	3.2	7.56

Thum Y. M., & Hauser, C. H. (2015)



Thum Y. M., & Hauser, C. H. (2015)
https://www.nwea.org/normative-data-rit-scores/

SEL Assessment

Social emotional learning (SEL) and incorporating student voice are two important parts of Polaris's mission. We are dedicated to strengthening relationships and building a positive climate and culture of learning. An important part of this process requires listening to our students and valuing their feedback. We have chosen the Panorama Student Survey to assess social emotional learning and school environment.

Panorama Education works with schools to design and implement surveys that measure SEL student competencies (grit, growth mindset, self-management, social awareness, self-efficacy) and school environment (school climate, teacher-student relationships, sense of belonging, school safety, student engagement). Their valid and reliable instrument is used by over 6,500 schools in 35 states and can compare our students to a national standard. We will use the survey that matches our middle school population (grades 6-12). We can also tailor the survey to measure items specific to our school, mission, or population. We plan to use Panorama's actionable data as a baseline to guide Polaris in creating goals, developing programs, and tracking student changes over time.

Below is an example of the questions used to measure "grit."

Grit — *Recommended*
How well students are able to persevere through setbacks to achieve important long-term goals.

Grades 6-12

Question	Response Options				
How often do you stay focused on the same goal for several months at a time?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
If you fail to reach an important goal, how likely are you to try again?	Not at all likely	Slightly likely	Somewhat likely	Quite likely	Extremely likely
When you are working on a project that matters a lot to you, how focused can you stay when there are lots of distractions?	Not at all focused	Slightly focused	Somewhat focused	Quite focused	Extremely focused
If you have a problem while working towards an important goal, how well can you keep working?	Not well at all	Slightly well	Somewhat well	Quite well	Extremely well
Some people pursue some of their goals for a long time, and others change their goals frequently. Over the next several years, how likely are you to continue to pursue one of your current goals?	Not at all likely	Slightly likely	Somewhat likely	Quite likely	Extremely likely

Panorama Education (n.d.) User guide: Panorama social-emotional learning survey. Accessed December 2018. https://go.panoramaed.com/thanks/guide-measuring-social-emotional-learning?submissionGuid=1db25aad-b5df-4555-9f9d-789286ec3327

Researchers at Committee for Children (CfC) recommend Panorama

"Panorama's social-emotional learning measures were developed in partnership with researchers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the University of California Santa Barbara and have shown a high degree of validity and reliability, including correlations with student's academic, attendance, and behavioral data."

Assessments for Active Participants/ Student Agency

Polaris will integrate self and peer critique into classroom projects in order to more fully engage students in the assessment and advancement of their own learning. Critique is a technique that people use regularly in the real world to evaluate and prepare for meetings, presentations, and publications. Since Polaris is engaging students in authentic experiences and working with community partners, it is essential that students learn to use self and peer critique as a method to assess and improve projects. This method of assessment is part of the design thinking process that includes creating prototypes, testing, and refining work. Critique allows students to exchange ideas, listen to the perspectives of others, identify problems, and propose solutions and improvements. Critique is a form of assessment that drives learning by making students active participants in improving their work. Critique provides students with personalized immediate feedback and time for students to implement changes, rather than simply measuring a student's academic level. It is the growth mindset in action. "Daily assessment inside schools is a social practice in which students can be active agents; critique is therefore a powerful resource for teachers who see young people as partners in the production of learning." (Soep, 2006, p. 757)

Critique differs from formative assessment, because students are participating in the judgment process. Teachers may, however, use what they notice during self and peer critiques to inform teaching.

References:

Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (1999). How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Darling-Hammond, L. and Pecheone, R. (2018). Developing an Internationally Comparable Balanced Assessment System That Supports High-Quality Learning. National Conference on Next Generation Assessment Systems.

Panorama Education (n.d.) User guide: Panorama social-emotional learning survey. Accessed December 2018. https://go.panoramaed.com/thanks/guide-measuring-social-emotional-learning?submissionGuid=1db25aad-b5df-4555-9f9d-789286ec3327

Soep, E. (2006) *Critique: Assessment and the Production of Learning.* Teachers College Record, Volume 108, number 4, April 2006, pp.748-777. Teachers College, Columbia University.

Stiggins, R. (2017). Assessment FOR learning.*The Perfect Assessment System.* ASCD: Alexandria, VA.

Panorama and Second Step (n.d.) Understanding and Developing Students' Social-Emotional Learning Skills with SEL Assessments Aligned to the Second Step Program. Accessed January 10, 2019 http://www.secondstep.org/portals/0/common-doc/panorama-second-step-alignment.pdf

Total Points Available	Expectations
6	A complete response must • Include an assessment calendar that identifies all state or district mandated assessment periods and dates related to teacher analysis/use of assessment data to inform instruction o Include assessments/progress monitoring for special populations; • Identify, for all state or district mandated assessment periods, the grade levels at which the assessments will be administered; • Describe, for all state or district mandated assessment periods, the specific data that will be collected, reported, analyzed, evaluated, and utilized to inform instruction;

	• Describe how the data identified will be used to inform instruction; • Align with all state assessment and data reporting requirements; • Describe how the assessment plan meets the specific needs of the proposed school's projected student population; • Describe how the assessment plan aligns to the proposed school's mission; and • Include any assessments that may be negotiated as part of the performance framework and contract.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

H.(2) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** description of the how assessment data will be analyzed and what corrective actions will be taken if the proposed school falls short of achieving student academic achievement, or growth expectations, or goals at the individual (remediation/at-risk student) **and** schoolwide levels. Provide a complete explanation of what would trigger such corrective actions, who would be responsible for implementing them, and how the proposed school will assess effectiveness.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Comprehensive and Strategic Approach

Assessment alone does not improve student achievement. We are surrounded, sometimes even overwhelmed by, data. Critical and thoughtful inquiry into data requires a strategic plan, time, and effort. In order to be useful, assessment must become an integral part of the education system, by providing data points to guide decision making at all levels: inform programming, identify student needs, determine the effectiveness of instruction and intervention strategies, measure growth, and meeting our accountability obligations. Demonstrating positive academic achievement provides an opportunity for Polaris to unequivocally demonstrate the effectiveness of our school.

We will follow the Data Wise Improvement Process, outlined in the Figure below, developed by Harvard Graduate School of Education in partnership with educators around the world, to prepare our staff and stakeholders to use a process of inquiry to analyze the data that drives continuous improvement.

Boudett, K.P., City, E.A., & Murnane, R.J. (Eds.). (2013). Data wise, revised and expanded edition: A step-by-step guide to using assessment results to improve teaching and learning. Cambridge, MA:Harvard Education Press, p.5

Action Step	Plan	Timeline	Responsible

			Party
Organize for Collaborative Work	**Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)** Three PLCs will ensure that we are strategically focused on our learning priorities. Each PLC meeting will have specific goals to ensure that discussions are focused with specific outcomes. PLCs will gather and assess student data, monitor progress, determine professional development needs, create action plans and work toward achieving school goals. All PLCs will focus on the continuous improvement of Polaris processes and procedures to improve student outcomes. PLCs: 1. Social-Emotional Learning 2. Place-based community networking and citizenship opportunities. 3. Academic Achievement and Personalized Mastery-based Learning.	Annual All Staff Retreat summer before school begins. July 2020	Academic Leader
Build Assessment Literacy	**Leader Training** Academic Leader will complete 8 hours of online training from Harvard through their Leadership Institute to learn how to launch the Data Wise Improvement Process and integrate it into practice.	Planning Year 2019-2020	Academic Leader
	Using Data and Mastery-based Learning Familiarize the staff with the Data Wise Improvement Process and Personalized Mastery-Based Learning to meet academic goals, including the Novare computer system and effective research-based classroom strategies for successful implementation.	All Staff Orientation, July 2020	Academic Leader and All Staff

	Professional Development Plan (PDP) As part of each teacher's annual PDP, they may choose (or be advised) to participate in an 8 hour online course offered by Harvard: *Annual Introduction to Data Wise: A Collaborative Process to Improve Learning & Teaching*	Anytime	Individual Educators
	Summer Shared Reading Each summer, the staff (together) will select one research-based book related to our school goals to read independently. During the summer retreat teachers will discuss and reflect on the research and how it can inform learning at Polaris. This will help build a reflective thoughtful culture around a shared language and research base. One book that the staff may choose is "Data Wise, Revised and Expanded Edition: A Step-by-Step Guide to Using Assessment Results to Improve Teaching and Learning" by Kathryn Parker Boudett, Elizabeth A. City, and Richard J. Murnane	Summers	All Staff
Create Data Overview	All Staff Orientation	July	Academic Leader and All Staff
Dig into Student Data	PLC-Academic Achievement will gather and assess student data, monitor progress, determine professional development needs, create action plans and work toward achieving school goals. PLC will focus on the continuous improvement of Polaris processes and procedures to improve student outcomes.	Meet Monthly	PLC-Academic Achievement
Examine Instruction	Weekly team meetings are designed for teachers to work together in a supportive and collaborative environment to design	Weekly Meetings	All Staff

	and implement effective data-driven curriculum and instruction. Teams work to design the most effective programs for student learning through immediate ("real time") design and assessment. Together they support each other and hold the team accountable to high standards. **Curriculum Design and Development** • Place-based learning • Team Planning • Lesson and Unit Plans • Curriculum Alignment • Personalized Mastery Learning **Effective instructional Strategies** • What is working well? What needs improvement? • Reflective practice- Thinking about your teaching • Evaluating student work • Blended learning		
Develop Action Plan	**Annual PD development** Each year the Academic Leader will use student data to create a strategic plan for professional development. They will use student data, information from teacher observations and reflections, evaluations from parents, the board, and staff, and the PLCs' progress toward goals, to create a strategic plan for professional development. The plan will outline the content for the All Staff Retreat, All Staff Orientation, and PLCs. This will ensure that Professional development targets the areas that need additional training or support.	Every Spring Due in May	Academic Leader with help from the Operations Director and Includes teacher input
	School Goals will be based on the schoolwide data and developed annually during the All Staff retreat.	July	Academic Leader and All Staff

Plan to Assess Progress	The assessment plan will be shared annually with all stakeholders. It will include all state and Polaris required assessments, dates, and grade levels.	August	Academic Leader
Act and Assess	The Academic Leader will work with the Operations Director, PLCs, and staff to ensure the testing schedule, action plans, and any responses to triggers are followed.	Throughout the year	Academic Leader

Who will analyze data?

Academic Leader and Operations Director
Each year the Academic Leader will use student data to create a strategic plan for professional development. Working with the Operations Director, the two leaders will use student data, information from teacher observations and reflections, evaluations from parents, the board, and staff, and the PLCs' progress toward goals, to create a strategic plan for professional development. The plan will outline the content for the All Staff Retreat, All Staff Orientation, and PLCs. This will ensure that Professional development targets the areas that need additional training or support.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
One PLC will be dedicated to Academic Achievement to ensure that we are strategically focused on our learning priorities. The PLC-Academic Achievement will gather and assess student data, monitor progress, determine professional development needs, create action plans and work toward achieving school goals. They will work with the Academic Leader to focus on the continuous improvement of Polaris processes and procedures to improve student outcomes.

Although the PLC-Academic Achievement is dedicated to this goal, all teachers will participate in Data Wise training and examine student data after each assessment. They will be specifically ensuring the growth of individual students.

How Data will be Analyzed
After the Fall assessment, the Leadership Team (Academic Leader, Operations Director, and Teacher Leaders from the PLC- Academic Achievement) will analyze the data at the school, grade, subgroup, and individual levels to determine class and individual student needs.

In addition to monitoring individual student mastery of state standards and academic growth, Polaris will categorize student performance outlined in statute NMSC 22-2C-5 by ethnicity, race, limited English proficiency, students with disabilities, and poverty. Specific categories outlined in New Mexico statutes 22-2C-11 include:

(a) Caucasian, non-Hispanic;
(b) Hispanic;
(c) African American;
(d) American Indian or Alaska Native;
(e) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander;
(f) Asian;
(g) Two or more races; and
(h) Other; provided that if the sample of students in any category enumerated in Subparagraphs (a) through (g) of this paragraph is so small that a student in the sample may be personally identifiable in violation of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the report may combine that sample into the "other" category;

Polaris will use the Novare platform to help teachers and administrators analyze data in a variety of ways and view data in many different formats: circle graphs, bar graphs, written reports, etc. They will use the data to develop instructional plans and targeted interventions to support the needs of individuals, classes, and teachers.

Individual Assessment Goals, NWEA MAP

Regular assessments, Mastery-based learning and informal classroom assessments will allow all teachers to frequently monitor Individual student progress to ensure that all students are demonstrating growth, including those with special needs, those identified as English Language Learners, and Gifted and Talented students. Teachers will adjust instruction and provide appropriate classroom support for individual students as needed. Advisory Time will be used to provide individual or small group support for students. We will use W-APT and ACCESS assessments to identify and support English Language Learners. We will follow the NM guidelines for identifying Special Education and Gifted Students and use individual data to develop appropriate IEP plans. Students who are not demonstrating growth or mastery through the regular classroom or IEPs will be referred to the SAT team for further screening. This team will take a comprehensive look at student performance and, according to the Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework, may provide extra Tier 1 supports in the classroom setting. Students who do not respond to Tier 1 interventions will follow the RtI process to the next appropriate level of support.

Polaris will use the nationally normed NWEA-MAPS test to measure student growth from the beginning to end of the year. Individual students are expected to meet or exceed growth targets annually in math and English language arts. Figure 20 clearly indicates the mean growth score that each student is expected to achieve based on their starting score.

Figure 20.

2015 READING Student Growth Norms

	Begin-to-Mid Year		Mid-to-End Year		Begin-to-End Year	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
K	10.3	6.01	6.81	5.46	17.1	8.11
1	10.8	6.00	5.99	5.46	16.8	8.09
2	9.5	6.05	4.52	5.49	14.0	8.20
3	7.3	5.79	3.02	5.33	10.3	7.59
4	5.4	5.56	2.33	5.19	7.8	7.05
5	4.2	5.60	1.97	5.21	6.1	7.15
6	3.2	5.62	1.54	5.22	4.8	7.19
7	2.5	5.58	1.25	5.20	3.7	7.11
8	1.9	6.05	0.99	5.49	2.8	8.19
9	1.1	6.35	0.60	5.68	1.7	8.87
10	0.6	6.72	0.17	5.91	0.7	9.66

2015 MATHEMATICS Student Growth Norms

	Begin-to-Mid Year		Mid-to-End Year		Begin-to-End Year	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
K	11.4	5.56	7.67	5.03	19.1	7.59
1	11.4	5.50	6.97	4.99	18.4	7.45
2	9.5	5.35	5.72	4.90	15.2	7.11
3	7.8	5.08	5.19	4.73	13.0	6.47
4	6.8	5.05	4.78	4.72	11.6	6.41
5	5.8	5.22	4.13	4.82	9.9	6.80
6	4.4	5.20	3.26	4.80	7.7	6.75
7	3.5	5.11	2.47	4.75	6.0	6.55
8	2.9	5.59	1.78	5.05	4.6	7.66
9	2.0	5.81	1.17	5.19	3.1	8.15
10	1.5	6.18	0.85	5.42	2.3	8.92

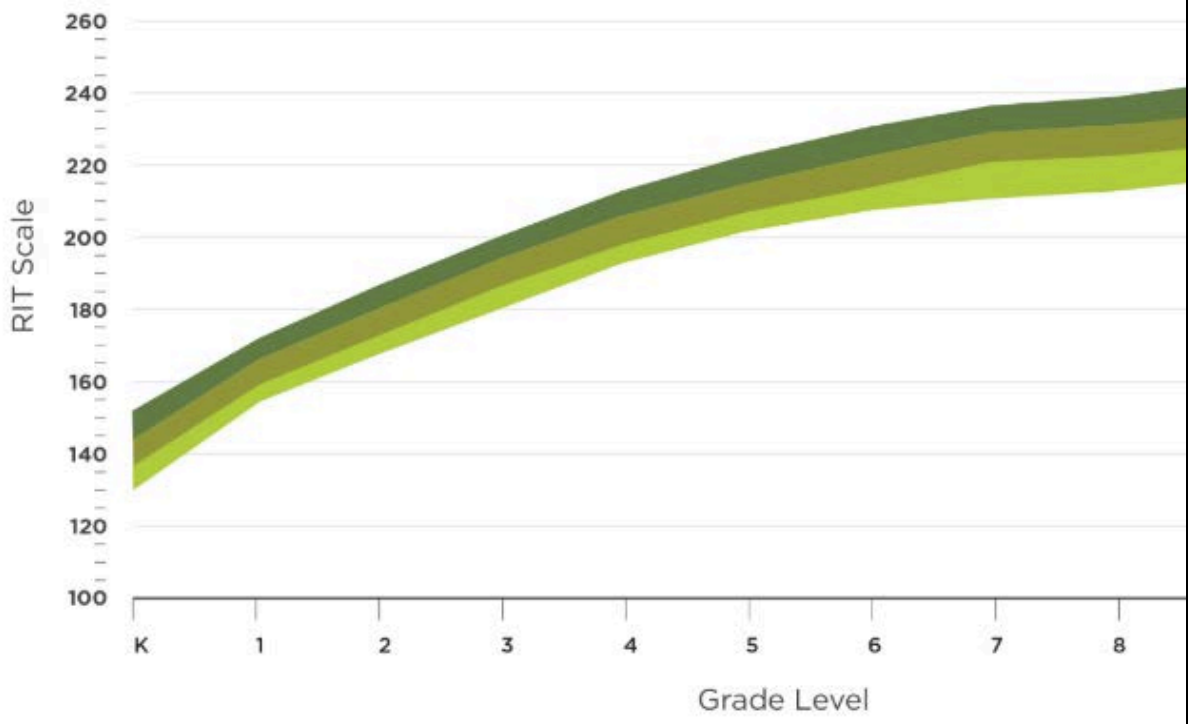
2015 LANGUAGE USAGE Student Growth Norms

	Begin-to-Mid Year		Mid-to-End Year		Begin-to-End Year	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
2	10.4	6.61	4.74	5.70	15.2	9.83
3	7.4	5.61	3.14	5.06	10.6	7.69
4	5.6	5.26	2.28	4.84	7.9	6.90
5	4.1	5.21	1.76	4.81	5.8	6.78
6	3.2	5.23	1.32	4.83	4.5	6.84
7	2.5	5.14	1.10	4.77	3.6	6.61
8	1.9	5.40	0.96	4.93	2.9	7.22
9	1.4	5.65	0.65	5.08	2.0	7.79
10	0.8	6.03	0.42	5.32	1.2	8.61

2015 GENERAL SCIENCE Student Growth Norms

	Begin-to-Mid Year		Mid-to-End Year		Begin-to-End Year	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
3	5.1	6.28	2.88	5.85	8.0	8.02
4	4.2	5.94	2.27	5.64	6.4	7.19
5	3.5	5.92	2.04	5.63	5.5	7.13
6	2.8	5.92	1.59	5.63	4.3	7.14
7	2.3	5.91	1.39	5.62	3.7	7.10
8	2.0	6.09	1.24	5.73	3.2	7.56

Thum Y. M., & Hauser, C. H. (2015)



Thum Y. M., & Hauser, C. H. (2015)
https://www.nwea.org/normative-data-rit-scores/

Trigger that would prompt corrective actions (Winter):
Individual student does not make the anticipated growth on the NWEA MAP. (Student anticipated growth is determined based on their Fall score.)

Corrective Action Steps:
Students who do not make the anticipated growth on the NWEA MAP will be referred to the SAT team. This team will take a comprehensive look at the student's level of Mastery, classroom assessments, and work portfolio to determine the need for an RtI or other classroom supports.

Schoolwide Assessment Goals, NWEA MAP
As a school, Polaris expects at least 70% of all students to meet annual growth targets as assessed on the nationally normed NWEA MAP test.

Rating	Measure
Exceeds Standard	More than 85% of Polaris students will meet their beginning to end of year growth targets in language arts and math as measured by the NWEA - MAPS test
Meets Standard	70-85% of Polaris students will meet their beginning to end of year growth targets in language arts and math as measured by the NWEA -MAPS test
Falls Below Standard	60-69% of Polaris students will meet their beginning to end of year growth targets" in language arts and math as measured by the NWEA -MAPS test
Falls Far Below Standard	Less than 60% of Polaris students will meet their beginning to end of year growth targets" in language arts and math as measured by the NWEA - MAPS test

Trigger that would prompt corrective actions (Winter):
Based on the Winter assessment, less than 70% of students are on track to meet growth targets on the Spring NWEA MAP assessment.

Corrective Action Steps:
The Academic Leader and the PLC-Academic Achievement Team will examine the data to determine specific needs and then work together to develop an action plan to specifically address those needs. These actions could include additional supports for a specific subject area or student group.

Trigger that would prompt corrective actions (Spring):
Based on the Spring assessment, less than 70% of students meet or exceed annual growth targets, which would fall below our standard.

Corrective Action Steps:
The Academic Leader and the PLC-Academic Achievement Team will thoroughly analyze the data to determine specific areas that need improvement, any steps that were taken after the Winter assessment, and the processes for identifying student needs. This data will be used to develop Professional Development for teachers, adapt school processes and procedures, and determine budgeting needs.

Trigger that would prompt corrective actions:
Polaris earns a school grade of D or F from PED

Corrective Action Steps:
We are confident that Polaris has developed a program that will support our mission and meet performance specific indicators. If Polaris earns a school grade of D or F on the School Grade Report Card from the Public Education Department, the Polaris governing board will revise the

school budget to allocate additional resources toward academic programming as outlined in NMSA 22-2E-4(E). The Academic Leader will thoroughly analyze the data from the Report Card (school growth, growth for students within the highest and lowest quartile, and any other low performing areas) to determine areas that need improvement. This data will be used to develop Professional Development for teachers, changes to school processes and procedures, and developing a revised budget to meet school needs.

References

Boudett, K.P., City, E.A., & Murnane, R.J. (Eds.). (2013). Data wise, revised and expanded edition: A step-by-step guide to using assessment results to improve teaching and learning. Cambridge, MA:Harvard Education Press, p.5

Panorama Education (n.d.) User guide: Panorama social-emotional learning survey. Accessed December 2018. https://go.panoramaed.com/thanks/guide-measuring-social-emotional-learning?submissionGuid=1db25aad-b5df-4555-9f9d-789286ec3327

Thum Y. M., & Hauser, C. H. (2015). NWEA 2015 MAP Norms for Student and School Achievement Status and Growth. NWEA Research Report. Portland, OR: NWEA

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Identify the processes the school will use, including specific action steps, triggers that would prompt action steps, responsible parties, timelines, and associated costs, to o monitor academic performance and o take appropriate corrective action if the school is not on track to or does not meet academic performance expectations; • Address specific responsibilities related to o meeting student academic achievement or growth expectations at the schoolwide level and o meeting student academic achievement goals at the individual student level (remediation/at-risk student); • Describe how the school will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of its academic program generally and the effectiveness of specific corrective actions or interventions; and • Describe how the proposed school's processes meet the requirements of NMSA 1978 § 22-2C-6(A) and (B) and 22-2E-4(E).
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

H. (3) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** plan that explains how student assessment and progress will be appropriately communicated to students, parents, the proposed school's Governing Body, the proposed school's Authorizer, and the broader community. Please consider your selected community, their accessibility and communication options when answering this question.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

H. (3) Assessment and Accountability, Communications

Polaris is dedicated to student academic and social emotional growth, and we know that success depends upon all stakeholders understanding and working toward the same goals. We believe in honest transparency and regular communication that holds Polaris accountable and builds trust with our stakeholders.

We believe that providing avenues for two-way communication and strategies for stakeholders to engage with the school is essential to student success. In order to become effective partners in education, we must have a shared vocabulary and two-way communication. Communication and engagement strategies that Polaris will employ include family conferences, annual IEP meetings, newsletters, social media, Novare, a school calendar, exhibitions, meet-up opportunities, and student performances. We will use these opportunities to strengthen the connection between the family and the school.

Students

To the extent possible, we expect all Polaris students to become active agents responsible for their own learning. This includes setting personal goals, prioritizing work, developing strategies for success, tracking progress, evaluating growth, and reflecting on progress. Advisory teachers will work with students to help students develop a learning log where students set appropriate learning goals, practice making decisions about what and how to study to improve learning, and evaluating and reflecting on work, including formative and summative assessments.

Students will keep Project Notebooks that document progress. Students will use these notebooks to record assignments, define goals, describe progress and reflect on learning. Each report card will also include a student reflection of their progress. Self-reflection is a best practice instructional method that builds student agency and voice in their education and help students make informed decisions. Teachers will use the notebooks to monitor student needs and "pulse" for the week.

Students will have access to Novare, an online platform that Polaris will use to personalize learning and monitor progress toward competencies. Students submit assignments that demonstrate mastery of concepts into an online portfolio (Novare). This portfolio stays with the learner throughout the Polaris experience. Teachers will use the portfolio to communicate with parents, evaluate student progress, and design programming and instruction for the next quarter.

Students will participate in family conferences to the extent possible. During Family Conferences student are expected to guide parents and teachers through their progress on

competencies during a specific time period. Prior to the conference, students reflect on progress and decided on artifacts to share with parents and teachers via portfolios.

Teachers and Administrators

The Academic Leader and Operations Director will be trained in and follow the Data Wise Improvement Process, developed by Harvard Graduate School of Education in partnership with educators around the world, to make sense of data, communicate with others, and drive continuous improvement. The staff and stakeholders will use a process of inquiry to analyze data.

We understand that data collection, analysis, reporting, evaluation, and usage are time-consuming and complex, so we have chosen the Novare assessment platform to help us in this endeavor. The Novare platform will be used to collect many kinds of assessment data from teachers, students, and administrators (projects, artifacts, narratives, rubrics, videos, test results, etc.) Multiple teachers can add or access each student's file, fostering communication and collaboration across subject areas. Teachers will also use Novare to communicate up-to-date information, including grades and short term assessments, to parents and students. The Novare platform allows teachers and administrators to analyze data in a variety of ways and choose the most effective way to show data (circle graphs, bar graphs, written reports, etc).

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will gather and assess student data, monitor progress, determine professional development needs, create action plans and work toward achieving school goals. They will work with the Academic Leader to focus on the continuous improvement of Polaris processes and procedures to improve student outcomes.

Families

We know that education continues outside of our classrooms, and we believe that providing avenues for two-way communication and strategies for families to engage with the school is essential to student success. It is essential that Polaris provide families with accurate and timely data to support their understanding of student progress, mastery of concepts, and achievement, so that we can all effectively support students.

Parents will have access to the online platform, Novare, through the parent/guardian portal, where they can view student progress and mastery of competencies at any time. Parents will receive regular progress reports at each quarterly reporting period, these will include academic progress, formative and summative assessments, and social emotional information.

Parents are invited to participate in family conferences twice a year. All families (parents and student) will have a scheduled time at school to review student assessment data and share their perspectives. The conference will begin with students guiding parents and teachers through their progress on competencies during a specific time period. Students, parents, and teachers will review individual student goals and, together, develop specific steps that students can take at school and at home to progress toward those goals. If needed, conferences may conclude with time for just the parents and teachers.

Family conferences are not limited to twice a year. Parents, students, and teachers are encouraged to proactively schedule meetings at any time to address student concerns. Teachers will notify parents when a student performs below the standard deviation on the NWEA MAP assessment or is not mastering competencies. They will set a family meeting to create action steps to support the student. The teacher will send regular updates to parents over the next six weeks to ensure that parents are aware of students who are struggling.

Polaris is focused on developing a strong community, so we have additional opportunities for families to engage with the students, staff, and community partners through community events and information.

Community

As a "Place-based" school, Polaris has a vested interest in the community and will work with community members to build a strong educational ecosystem of support for students. The Community Engagement Plan includes many different opportunities to engage families and the wider community, Figure 21.

Figure 21. Polaris Family and Community Communication and Engagement

Event	Time	Participants	Purpose
Coffee Conversations	Monthly	Hosted by Family Council. Includes parents, academic leader, teachers, and community members	Family Council will host a monthly conversation between parents and Polaris Leaders. Parents may suggest topics for discussion to Family Council Leaders. This is an opportunity for Polaris to share schoolwide data and celebrate student successes. It is also a chance for leaders to address parent concerns.
Exhibitions	At least once a year	Community, parents, students, teachers	Periodically throughout the learning experience, the entire school will gather to share personal growth and community impact. The school and community partners will work together to determine the type, number, and scope of these exhibitions. Collect survey data about the success from community partners.
Capstone Projects	Annually	Parents, students, teachers	Capstone projects are completed during the end of each level of study and support students through an independent study chosen by the student. Capstone project provide an opportunity for students, parents, and teachers to celebrate student

			growth and progress over the year.
Polaris Meetups	Monthly	Parents, students, teachers	Families will be invited to attend weekend events and learning opportunities each month. These are optional times for parents and students to meet outside of the school setting informally learning together. It might be a hike, visiting a museum, or enjoying a play.
Compass Email Updates	Monthly	Academic Leader, parents	The Compass is a weekly email update sent to parents that includes important school information about events happening that week.
Press Releases and/or Social Media	Weekly	Academic Leader, students, Families	Media will be used periodically to share stories, pictures (with permission), news, and school (not individual) data with the community.
Place Network	Quarterly	Academic leader and Place Network Community Coordinator	The Academic Leader will work with *Krista Hollis*, the Place Network Schools Community Coordinator, to build connections, share resources and new tools, and generally enhance the community experience.
Family Conferences	Twice a year, first and third quarter	Parents, students, teachers	Parents, students, and teachers share aspirations for students, analyze student work and assessments and set learning goals and strategies.
IEP Meetings	Annually	Parents of identified Special Education students, teachers	Parents of students qualified for special services (Gifted and those with other Special Needs) and teachers share aspirations for students, analyze student work and assessments, evaluate strategies and intervention supports for students, and set learning goals.
Social Media Facebook Page	Weekly	Community	Social Media will be used to share information with the community, such as upcoming engagement opportunities, exhibitions, Family Council meetings, school wide data, and school celebrations.

			Students and Family Council will help curate this site with photographs and events.
Novare	Weekly	Students, parents, teachers	This online platform is used to personalize learning and monitor progress toward competencies. Students submit assignments that demonstrate mastery of concepts into an online portfolio (Novare). Teachers will use the portfolio to communicate student progress in "real time" with parents.
Summer Shared Reading	Annually, summer	Teachers, parents, board members	Each summer, the staff will select one research-based book related to our school goals to read independently. Parents and board members will be invited to read the book too. During the summer retreat teachers will discuss and reflect on the research and how it can inform learning at Polaris. This will help build a reflective thoughtful culture around a shared language and research base.
Polaris Foundation	Meet monthly		501c3 dedicated to supporting Polaris through fundraising.
Family Advisory Council	Meet monthly	Organized by the Polaris Foundation with grade level parent and teacher representatives, all parents are members and encouraged to participate	Communicate the mission and goals of the school, shares schoolwide data and progress toward goals, provides an opportunity for family and community input and participation in supporting the goals and mission. Family council works closely with the Polaris Foundation.

The Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for providing oversight and accountability for Polaris and making informed decisions and recommendations governing school operations and policies. The Governing Board is responsible for adopting academic policies. These policies will meet all requirements outlined in NMSA 22-2C. The Academic Leader will report to the Board of

Directors on school level NWEA MAP and state assessments (divided into subgroups), enrollment, attendance, events, progress toward goals, and other organizational data that will help the board make informed decisions. Each Board meeting includes an agenda item that addresses progress toward Academic and Organizational goals. The Academic Leader is responsible for providing information and answering any questions from the Governing Board.

The Authorizer- NM PEC

As a public charter school, we will provide the state with all required updates according to the timelines and deadlines via the approved state system, currently the STARS reporting system. The Academic Leader is responsible for reporting student data after assessments in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. We will also provide the New Mexico Public Education Commission with reports, including the PEC monitoring plan, site visits, and the renewal application.

Polaris Student Achievement Communication Plan

Data Source	Communication To. .	Time	Kind of Communication
State Assessment (PARCC)	Parent/guardian	Annual	Parent/guardian written notification and online updates in Novare
Science SBA	Parent/guardian	Annual	Parent/guardian written notification and online updates in Novare
EOCs Science Social Studies Physical Education	Parent/guardian	Next reporting period	Parent/guardian written notification and online updates in Novare Data provided in written form at each reporting period following the assessment
WIDA Screener	Parent/guardian	First month of enrollment	Parent/guardian written notification of ELL status
ACCESS Placement Test	Parent/guardian		Parent/guardian written notification
ACCESS for ELLs 2.0	Parent/guardian		Parent/guardian written notification
NMAPA	Parent/guardian		Data provided in written form
NWMEA	Parent/guardian	Next	Data provided in written form at each

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)		reporting period	reporting period and online updates in Novare
Panorama SEL	Parent/guardian Students Governing Body	 Annual	Annual report to governing body at the end of each year that includes data, goals based on data analysis, and progress.
Polaris Formative Assessments (Self and peer critique, rubrics, portfolios)	Parent/guardian Students	Available online regularly, weekly	Portfolios curated on Novare (online platform) by students and teachers. Accessible to parents, teachers, and students.
Capstone Projects	Project Display Open to Community	Annually End of year	Capstone projects are completed during the end of each level of study and support students through an independent study chosen by the student. Capstone project provide an opportunity for students, parents, and teachers to celebrate student growth and progress over the year.
Exhibitions	Project Display and/or Presentation to Community	At the culmination of a community project	Periodically throughout the learning experience, the entire school will gather to share personal growth and community impact. The school and community partners will work together to determine the type, number, and scope of these exhibitions.

References

Boudett, K.P., City, E.A., & Murnane, R.J. (Eds.). (2013). Data wise, revised and expanded edition: A step-by-step guide to using assessment results to improve teaching and learning. Cambridge, MA:Harvard Education Press, p.5

Panorama Education (n.d.) User guide: Panorama social-emotional learning survey. Accessed December 2018. https://go.panoramaed.com/thanks/guide-measuring-social-emotional-learning?submissionGuid=1db25aad-b5df-4555-9f9d-789286ec3327

Thum Y. M., & Hauser, C. H. (2015). NWEA 2015 MAP Norms for Student and School Achievement Status and Growth. NWEA Research Report. Portland, OR: NWEA

Total Points Available	Expectations
6	A complete response must • Identify how student achievement and progress will be communicated to o Students o Parents o The governing body o The authorizer o The broader community; • Identify the communication plan for each of the specific sources of student achievement data identified in H.(1) and any other relevant sources of student achievement data; • Provide information that demonstrates the plan is effective in reaching the targeted population and the specific community in which the school plans to locate; and • For elementary level students, ensure to address how the school will meet the requirements of NMSA 1978 § 22-2C-6 (E)-(I).
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

II. Organizational Framework

A. Governing Body Creation/Capacity.

A.(1) Summarize and incorporate **all** key components of your governance structure, **specifically** outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Governing Body members (number of members, length of terms, offices to be created, committees, grounds for removal from office, and relationship with the proposed school's administration). Provide comprehensive "bylaws", attach bylaws as **Appendix A**.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Roles and Responsibilities

The Polaris School Board oversees the mission, goals, student well being, school culture, academic success, and financial health of the school. The Polaris School Board is responsible for the legal and ethical operation of the school. Selecting and evaluating the Academic Leader is the Board's responsibility.

Number of Board members

Polaris School Board will have a minimum of five and a maximum of eleven members. An odd number of members will be maintained for voting purposes.

Board Member Selection

The founding members will select board members, initially. They will be selected based on their philosophical agreement with Polaris School's mission, expertise in a desired area of expertise, and ability to commit time and energy. Initial areas of expertise are academic, finances, facility, financial audit, place based learning, and student well being. Initial members will have staggered terms so the board will have continuity as terms expire.

Future Board members will be identified and nominated by the Governance Committee based on the skill needed to fill the specific vacancy. The Governance Committee presents a slate of nominees to the Governing Board at the annual meeting to fill expired terms. When Board members leave before their term is served, the Governance Committee will offer nominees to the Governing Board to fill vacancies within 45 days.

Discipline

If a Governing Board member's actions merit discipline, the Board Chair will meet with the member to discuss the behavior, review expectations, and may propose action steps. If a resolution is not met, the member may be asked to resign from the Board or be formally removed from the Board.

Removal

Any Board member may be removed with a majority vote of the entire Governing Board at any

regular or special meeting of the council, provided that a statement of the reasons shall have been mailed by Registered Mail to the Officer or member proposed for removal at least thirty (30) days before any final action is taken. This statement shall be accompanied by a notice of the time when, and the place where, the Governing Board is to take action on the removal. The member shall be given an opportunity to be heard and the matter considered by the Governing Board at the time and place mentioned in the notice. Cause for removable includes, but is not limited to, violation of the Polaris Board's conflict of interest policy, code of ethics, attendance policy, or illegal activity.

Board terms of office

Board members serve two year terms and can be renewed twice (maximum six years).

Officer Structure

Officers of the Governing Board are Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Officers are elected at the annual meeting of the Governing Board. Terms of office begin on the date of the election and are for one year. Officers may serve no more that two consecutive terms in the same office.

Chair: The Chair is responsible for presiding over board meetings, working with the Academic Leader, other Board members, and committee chairs to develop meeting agendas, calling special meetings, and appointment of Board members to chair committees.

Vice Chair: The Vice Chair is responsible for duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence. The Vice Chair also supports activities of the Chair and assists by taking on responsibilities as necessary for setting meeting agendas and communicating with committee chairs.

Secretary: The Secretary provides direction for maintaining legal documents including minutes of all Board meetings and issues meeting notices in accordance with Open Meetings Act requirements.

Treasurer: The Treasurer provides direction for financial management and helps the Board meet its financial oversight responsibilities; is the Chair of the Finance Committee; ensures timely presentations of financial reports; and for development and submission of the annual budget.

Committees

The Polaris School Board will approve committee job descriptions and prioritize goals annually. The standing committees are Governance, Finance, Audit, and Academic.

Committee terms are one year. The Polaris Board Chair with the advice of other Board members shall make appointment of committee chairs and Governance Board members. Governance Board members and committee chairs must be members of the Polaris Board; other committee members may be community members.

Governance

The Polaris Governance Committee is primarily responsible for Board member recruitment, nomination, training of new Board members, evaluating the effectiveness of Polaris board meetings, planning the annual Board meeting and annual Strategic Plan development. The Governance Committee has between two and five members and is composed entirely of Governing Board members. (Full description in Bylaws Section 5.3)

Finance

The Polaris Finance Committee is primarily responsible for creating upcoming fiscal year budgets, presenting proposed budgets to the Polaris Board, monitoring and recommending revisions to the approved budget, and recommending policies for the care of assets of Polaris School. The Operations Director and the Governing Board Treasurer must be members of the Finance committee. Other committee members may be community members. (Full Description in Bylaws Section 5.4)

Audit

The Audit Committee is responsible for managing the annual financial audit, reporting audit results, and tracking progress to remedy audit findings. The Audit Committee consists of at least two Governing Board members with experience in financial matters whenever possible, one volunteer member who is a parent of a student attending Polaris School, and one volunteer member who has experience in accounting or financial matters. The Academic Leader and the Operations Director will serve as ex-officio members of the Audit Committee. More than two Board members can be appointed to the Audit Committee if the number of Board members exceeds five. (Full description in Bylaws Section 5.5)

Academic Excellence

The Academic Committee is a governance function (Governing Board role), not a management function (Academic Leader role). The primary responsibility is to assure academic excellence is defined and aligned with Polaris School Mission and that the Governing Board annually adopts a Strategic Plan to provide direction to the Academic Leader. Fidelity to Place Based education and the Social Emotional Learning components of Polaris are central to the Mission and are unique to the academic excellence of Polaris School. Members do not need an academic background. Best members would be very analytical, able to digest data and ask insightful questions. (Full description in Bylaws Section 5.6)

Facilities Committee

During the planning year and until a school building is found that is satisfactory to meeting the Polaris School Mission, a Facilities Committee will be formed. Membership is two Governing Board members and community members with expertise in real estate, finance, and construction. The Facilities Committee reports monthly to the Governing Board.

Total Points Available	Expectations
8	A complete response must • Include governing body bylaws in **Appendix A**; and • Summarize key governance components in the application response as follows: o Membership structure (number, roles, length of terms) o Officer structure (roles, election process, responsibilities, length of terms) o Committee structure that includes both legally required committees and school-specific committees (selection process, responsibilities, membership, length of service terms) o Member selection, discipline, and removal processes.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

A. (2) Enumerate the qualifications desired for governing body members that will ensure the proposed school's governance is competent to operate a public school. Provide a **list** of all proposed, initial Governing Body members along with their experience, skills, and qualifications. Ensure that the **membership reflects** the diverse experiences and skills necessary to oversee all aspects of the proposed school. In your list of proposed initial governing body members, describe the expertise represented in order to demonstrate their capacity to initiate the opening of the charter school (e.g., ensure student success, develop, implement, oversee the management of public funds, and oversee the proposed school's compliance with legal obligations).

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Governing Board

The Polaris School Founding Team understands a significant amount of work and expertise is required to open and operate Polaris School. We expect Governing Board members to contribute a considerable amount of time during the planning year and the first operating year to ensure the success of Polaris School. The Governing Board will have the primary responsibility for operating the school and be the Board of Finance. Governing Board members must have expertise in certain skills in addition to believing in the school's mission, having time to invest in board responsibilities and being ethical stewards of the public's money. Our Governing Board has the skills necessary to support the Founding Team in moving from an application to a fully operational school.

Governing Board Skills Necessary for Success

In order for Polaris School to be successful the school must operate within the financial boundaries set by the NM State Legislature and the PED; focus on Mission; implement innovative programs; operate effectively and efficiently as a Governing Board; perform the duties of a Board of Finance; provide organizational governance; and hire, evaluate, and provide strategic direction to the Academic Leader.

The skills identified below ensure the Governing Board can perform these duties:

- Finance - auditing, insurance, accounting, risk management or banking experience. These skills are necessary to ensure effective and efficient stewardship and management of public funds and responsible accounting practices.
- Governance - previous school board experience or non-profit organization leadership. These skills will ensure compliance with legal obligations.
- Human Resources - knowledge of personnel evaluations, benefits, grievances and compensation. These skills are necessary to fulfill the Board's ability to select and oversee a qualified and highly effective Academic Leader and to provide oversight of Polaris School's operating policy and practice.
- Academic, civic, or educational leadership - leadership of organizations that achieved academically or elected bodies. These skills will ensure that we are able to meet our mission and specific indicators for student success, including academic achievement,

social emotional learning, and active citizenship.

- Facilities - real estate, construction management or finance. We know that finding a facility will be a challenge, so we specifically need people who have the expertise to help us in this area.
- Public Relations - marketing or experience working with the media. These skills will help us engage the community and develop an educational ecosystem of support for students.
- Diversity by gender, socioeconomic background, race/ethnicity and other attributes. We believe that diversity brings new ideas and skills to the organization and will make the Board creative.
- Fundraising to support innovative programs: All fundraising activities will be managed by the non-profit Polaris Charter School Foundation**.**

List of Potential Governing Board Members

Name	Alignment with Skill Sets Required for Success	Experience/Expertise/Qualifications
Robert Gibson	Governance Finance Audit Leadership	Los Alamos County Council member; NM Legislature analyst; Juvenile Justice Advisory Board member; NM Municipal League Board member; Los Alamos County Republican Party Chair; Staff supervision; other Boards and organization leadership.
Jane Clements	Public Relations Educational Leadership Community Outreach Finance	Non-profit leadership with many organizations; Grant manager finance experience; Voter registration agent; Science Ambassador for LANL; UNM-LA Adult Learning Center; LANL Community Programs Office; Community Outreach.
Chris Bernstein	Academics; Educational Leadership	Educator with 22 years experience; Community leader.
Bill Hargraves	Governance School Board Human Resources Facilities	Los Alamos Public Schools Board member; Staff supervision; XQ Superschool application team member.

Ken Holmes	Administration; Educational Leadership;	High School educator; NM Administrator License; Non-profit organization experience; Adult reading instructor; XQ Superschool application team member.
Scott Johnson	Educational Leadership Restorative Justice Social Emotional Learning	22 years experience teaching K-3 grades; 2008 LAPS Teacher of the Year; 2019 Excellence in Student Achievement Award winner; Former Chair and member of the Supervisory Committee, Los Alamos Schools Credit Union; Facilitator for at risk students.

Advisory Council

Polaris School Governing Board will establish an Advisory Council composed of community leaders and others with specific expertise in areas that augment the talent on and support the Polaris School Governing Board. We have worked closely with the community for several years and we want to continue to offer opportunities for people to help the school at all different levels. Committing to the responsibilities of the Governing Board is a significant responsibility, which some people are not able to commit to doing. People on the Advisory Council chose to not serve on the Governing Board for a variety of reasons. However, these Advisory Council members have significant expertise in areas that are necessary for success, and they believe in the Mission of Polaris School. They are willing to provide expertise in this advisory capacity and as called on for specific questions or activities. Together, the Governing Board and Advisory Council form a strong team that enhances our potential for success of Polaris.

Initial Advisory Council Membership

Name	Alignment with Skill Sets Required for Success	Experience/Expertise/Qualifications
Elizabeth Allen	Governance SpEd Attorney Non-profit Leadership	Municipal Judge
Brian Haigh	Educational/Adolescent Leadership	Child Psychiatrist
Santina Shije	Educational Leadership Teen Emotional Support	Juvenile Justice Advisory Board Tribal Outreach
Kelly Meyer	Educational Leadership	Real Estate

	Facilities	Middle School Teaching Experience
Hugo Hinojosa	Finance Audit Facility Management Public Relations	Community leader; Facility manager; Contract manager; Finance planning.

All members of the Governing Board believe in the Mission of Polaris School and are committed to ensuring Polaris School is successful. Each member has extensive experience within Los Alamos and surrounding communities through work at Los Alamos National Laboratory, non-profit organizations, or educational programs.

The addition of an Advisory Council provides an expanded group of community leaders who feel unable to commit time to serve on the Governing Board but still believe in the Mission of Polaris School and want to work to make the school successful.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Identify all qualifications and skill sets that the governing body will require and ensure those are represented within its regular membership; • Explain why and how the identified qualifications and skills will ensure the governing body has the required capacity and enable the governing body to operate a successful, high-quality public school; • Include a list of all proposed initial governing body members, describe each proposed member's specific qualifications and skill sets through verifiable prior experience, and ensure the represented qualifications and skill sets align with the previously identified qualifications and skill sets that the governing body will require; and • Specifically address how the governing body will have the skills to o Ensure student success and academic achievement; o Oversee the stewardship and management of public funds and responsible government accounting; o Ensure compliance with legal obligations related to government organizations and public schools; o Select and oversee a qualified and highly effective school leader; and

	o Support the applicant team in moving from an application to a fully operational school.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

A.(3) Provide a **clear and appropriate process or plan** for selecting new Governing Body members that is focused on selecting **quality leaders** who have the identified skills necessary to govern the proposed school. Describe how governing body members will be recruited, evaluated, and selected as vacancies arise.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

The Polaris Governing Board will provide oversight and governance to ensure that Polaris uses financial, organizational, and personnel resources wisely to accomplish its academic outcomes and the success of students. In order to accomplish this mission Polaris Governing Board needs a board with strong expertise in finance, accounting, education, and law, as well as the time to fulfill their commitments. We are also committed to creating and maintaining a diverse governing board (age, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic background, gender, and skills) that is able to provide a spectrum of perspectives and opinions. In line with these mission and objectives, we have established the necessary skill set as shown above in A (2).

The Governing Board's Governance Committee is charged with recruitment and nomination of Governing Board members. The Governing Board elects members at the annual meeting or within 45 days of a vacancy at any other Governing Board meeting.

The table below describes the initial Governing Board selection process, the establishment of the Governance Committee, and the planning year recruitment process.

Governing Board Recruitment, Evaluation, and Selection Process: Planning Year

Action Steps	**Timeline**	**Responsible Parties**
Create Initial Governing Board	Immediately after PEC authorization.	Founding Team selects Board members from potential list in application; Members meet to adopt Bylaws and elect Officers
New Board Members complete required training	Immediately after initial Board member appointment	Governing Board members
Adopt Bylaws	September/October: Governing Board meeting.	Governing Board
Elect Officers	September/October: Governing Board meeting.	Governing Board
Create Governance	September/October: Governing Board	Governing Board

Committee	meeting.	
Establish Governing Board as a Board of Finance	September/October: Governing Board meeting.	Governing Board
Create Board Member Training Plan (See 2.B.(1))	First month after creation of Governance Committee, November	Governance Committee
Schedule Board Member Training	As soon as possible depending on availability of training course dates. We believe that the training will be offered online through PED.	Governance Committee establishes schedule; Governing Board members complete training
Create list of potential new Governing Board members	Before January 2020	Governance Committee
Outreach to potential new Governing Board members	After January 2020 and ongoing	Governance Committee
Choose Board member candidates to present to Governing Board at annual meeting	Before mid-April 2020	Governance Committee
Election of new Governing Board members	Annual Meeting held during 4th quarter of each fiscal year (April-June)	Governance Committee recruits and nominates member candidates; Governing Board elects new members
Evaluation of Board members/ Identify Training Needs	Annual Meeting held during 4th quarter of each fiscal year (April-June)	Governing Board
New Board members assume office	At the Governing Board meeting they were elected. No later than July 1 of each year.	Governing Board

The table below describes the Governing Board recruitment and selection process beginning in the first operating year.

Governing Board Recruitment, Evaluation, and Selection Process: Beginning July 2020 and Annually

Action Steps	Timeline	Responsible Parties
Update Board Member Training Plan	Annually before July Board Meeting	Governance Committee
Schedule and Complete Board Member Training	As soon as possible after member election depending on availability of training course dates.	Governance Committee establishes schedule; Governing Board members complete training
Review skills of the current Board to identify gaps or needs.	August (annually) and each time a Board member vacates a position.	Governance Committee
Update list of potential new Governing Board members	Annually/ Ongoing	Governance Committee
Outreach to potential new Governing Board members, this includes individual meetings to outline the obligations and time commitment that is required for members.	Annually/Ongoing	Governance Committee
Choose potential Board member candidates to attend a Polaris Board Meeting;	March	Governance Committee
Review and Evaluate Potential Board Members using rubric based on criteria and list of skills needed on the Governing Board	March- April-May	Governance Committee recruits and prepares list of member candidates
Election of new Governing Board members	Annual Meeting held during 4th quarter of each fiscal year (April-June)	Governance Committee recommends;

		Governing Board elects
New Board members assume office	At the Governing Board meeting they were elected. No later than July 1 each year.	Governing Board
Election of Officers	At the Governing Board meeting that new members are elected. No later than July 1 each year.	Governance Committee recommends; Governing Board elects
New Board member training	Initial training during July, August; Ongoing training throughout the year	Governing Board members; Governance Committee.
Governing Board member evaluation/Identify Training Needs	At the Governing Board meeting that new members are elected.	Governing Board

The Governance Committee will keep a record of the terms, skill set, and diversity of current Board Members in order to anticipate future board recruitment needs. Using the process and timeline presented above, a list of potential Governing Board members is always up-to-date. The list identifies the skill set of each potential member. Using this list, the Governance Committee can very quickly identify a set of candidates to offer to the Governing Board. The Governing Board Bylaws requires that member vacancies be filled within 45 days. Additionally, matching potential Board members with their skill ensures new member candidates bring the needed skills to the Governing Board. It is important for the Governing Committee to maintain the list of potential members and to educate the people on the list about the obligations and expectations of Board membership.

Active Recruitment as Represented in the Table Above

1. Before committing to Polaris School Governing Board, the Governing Board Chair or Governance Committee will meet with potential candidates individually to outline the responsibilities, obligations, and time commitment that are required.
2. Potential candidates will be invited to attend a Governing Board meeting, to see the Board in action and answer any questions regarding skill set, commitment, and alignment to the mission.
3. After this meeting, the Governance committee will meet to evaluate the candidate

based on a rubric with the criteria above in order to select the highest quality candidates that are able to contribute essential skills, knowledge, time, and diversity to the Board.

4. If a candidate meets the criteria and is able commit to the organization, they will be nominated for Governing Board membership approval.
5. Governing Board members will hold a formal vote during the annual board meeting. If the candidate is approved by a majority vote of the members present they will be invited to join the Polaris Governing Board.
6. New Board members will then begin the onboarding process.

The Governance Committee will use the rubric presented in the following table to relative rank potential Governing Board member candidates. During the planning year, this set of criteria will be used, evaluated, and improved by the Governance Committee.

Selection Rubric to Evaluate Governing Board Candidates

	0	1	2	3
Skills Accounting or finance, law, educational leadership, governance, human resources, facilities/ real estate, and public relations.	Skill set does not fit one of the categories	Skills fit one of the categories of identified needs of Polaris Governing Board	Skills fit one of the categories of identified needs and are a strong fit with a potential (but not current) need of the Board	Skills fit one of the categories of identified needs and are a strong fit with the needs of the current Board.
Mission Alignment	Candidate's values are not aligned with the mission.	Candidate's values are somewhat aligned with the mission.	Candidate's values are aligned with the mission.	Candidate's values are strongly aligned with the mission.
Commitment	Candidate is not able to make a commitment to the requirements and obligations of the Board	Candidate is able to make some commitment to the requirements and obligations	Candidate is able to make a good commitment to the requirements and obligations of the Board	Candidate is able to make a strong commitment to the requirements and obligations of the Board

		of the Board		
Diversity	Candidate does not bring diversity to the Board		Candidate brings diversity to the Board	Candidate brings diversity to the Board and fills a distinct need.
Demonstrated Success	No demonstrated success	Some success. May be new to the profession.	Demonstrated professional success	Demonstrated professional success and has experience serving on other boards.
Potential Conflicts of Interest	Yes	Maybe, a potential conflict		No

In our continuing commitment to build a strong foundation of community support for the school, we have created an Advisory Council that will support the Polaris Governing Board. Individuals who have important expertise, but who are unable to meet the criteria outlined above, specifically the time commitment, may choose to serve on the Advisory Council.

Total Points Available	Expectations
8	A complete response must • Identify a regular and on-going governing body recruitment process, including identification of action steps, timelines, and responsible parties; • Identify a formalized governing body potential member evaluation and selection process, including identification of action steps, timelines, and responsible parties; • Describe how the processes will ensure that all governing body vacancies are filled within 45 days; • Describe how the processes will ensure the regular governing body membership will have all of the required qualifications and skill sets identified in question A.(2); and • Describe how the processes will ensure that governing body members are vetted appropriately to ensure they are able to meet the obligations and fulfill the responsibilities of governing body service.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

B. Governing Body Training and Evaluation.

B.(1) Provide an **ongoing, clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** for annual Governing Body training that complies with state requirements, meets your governing body training needs, includes training on the Open Meetings Act, and is **completely supported** by the budget you propose.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Process for Governing Board Member Onboarding

Governing Board members are selected with skills and expertise necessary for specific roles on the Governing Board. The resulting diversity gives way to creative and mindful ideas. However and as a result, each Board member will lack some experience, or knowledge in specific areas, or skill to be able to effectively serve on the Board. To fill these gaps, training is available for Board members. During the planning year, the training listed below will be conducted for the newly formed Governing Board, which may contain some Founding Team members.

All new governing board members are required to complete 10 hours of governing body training. This includes 7 hours of training that is required before attending a governing body meeting and voting on any governing body business. Per NMAC 6.80.5.8, these seven hours of required training include:

- 2 hours on public official/charter school governing body ethics and responsibilities
- 2 hours of training on charter school fiscal requirements
- 1 hour of training on understanding and evaluating academic data
- 1 hour of training on open government requirements
- 1 hour of training on legal and organizational performance requirements.

The following training, offered through NM PED, meets all of the requirements for new governing board members.

> Governing Body Member Comprehensive Training: encompasses both the mandatory introductory training for all new governing board members pursuant to 6.80.5.8(B) NMAC, and the mandatory requirements for continuing governing board members pursuant to 6.80.5.9(A) NMAC. This eight-hour session provides two hours of Ethics and Responsibilities, three hours of Fiscal Requirements, two hours of Understanding Academic Data, one hour of Open Government, and two hours of Legal and Organizational Framework training. Administrators and other charter school leaders are also welcome. The course is free and no costs or fees will be charged for attendance. Please plan to bring a lunch as no lunch break will be provided.
>
> (https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Charter-School-Training-Descriptions-1.pdf)

Training Information: Charter Schools Division at 505-827-6909
https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/charter-schools/

**For our planning year, all Board Members will take the Governing Body Introductory Course Course #2017-00001 offered by PED. This training fulfills the seven hour training requirement pursuant to 6.80.5.8(B) NMAC and enables a new governing body member to vote.

In addition to PED required training, all new board members will complete 3 hours of internal training specific to Polaris. This will include our governance structure, board member responsibilities, open meetings act, financial responsibilities and status, history, Charter School Contract (which includes our mission, goals, mission specific indicators, place-based principles, innovations), strengths and challenges, and current academic and organizational status. They will also be asked to sign the Conflict of Interest Policy. The initial Governing Board will receive this internal training from Founding Members. After the first year, the Board President, Academic Leader, and member of the governance committee will be responsible for onboarding all new members and providing internal training.

Annual Governing Board Training

After a Board Member's first year of fiscal service, each governing body member continuing to serve will complete a governing body training course that consists of, at least, eight hours of governing body training. According to NMAC 6.80.5.9 annual training for continuing board members consists of

- 1 hour of training on public official/charter school governing body ethics and responsibilities
- 3 hours of training on charter school fiscal requirements pursuant to the Public School Finance Act, NMSA 1978 § 22-8-1 et seq.
- 2 hours of training on understanding and evaluating academic data
- 1 hour of training on open government and requirements regarding free public school education
- 1 hour of training on understanding and overseeing the organizational performance of a charter school

The following training, offered through NM PED, meets all of the requirements for continuing governing board members.

Governing Body Member Full Day Training: can be taken by both new and continuing board members. For continuing governing board members who have not taken the introductory training, this course is designed to fulfill the yearly hours mandated by 6.80.5.9(A) NMAC. Administrators and other charter school leaders are also welcome. For new board members, this course will allow board members to vote and will provide an extra hour of Ethics and Responsibility training that can be applied to the additional three hours required of new members pursuant to 6.80.5.8(D)(1) NMAC. Since there is a discrepancy between requirements for new board members and continuing members, an

additional hour of Ethics and Responsibility training. Please plan to bring a lunch as no lunch break will be provided.

(https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Charter-School-Training-Descriptions-1.pdf)

Training Information: Charter Schools Division at 505-827-6909

Donna Vanlandingham, Office, Manager/Member Services Coordinator at donna@nmccs.org ad (505) 842-8203 ext 103]

https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/charter-schools/

Annual Governing Board Retreat

Each year before school begins there will be a retreat for the Governing Board that coincides with the All Staff Retreat. During this time the Board may be engaged in some team building exercises, but they will also use this time to review and approve Governing Board Bylaws and Policies and address individual training needs beyond those identified by NMAC 6.80.5. We anticipate that one training needed will be understanding the Place-based principles upon which Polaris is founded. Another training need may be additional fiscal and financial training with our contractor, Ed Tech. Sources of additional training include:

- Ed Tech - Financial Processes and Procedures Training
- PED contact Charter Schools Division at 505-827-6909
- New Mexico Coalition of Charter Schools (NMCCS)
- Place Network, Nate McClennen

Governing Board Self-Evaluation

Each Spring/May the Governing Board will complete a self-evaluation which includes an evaluation of the board as a whole as well as individual board members. It will include an assessment of individual training needs and board goals. The Governing Board President, Academic Leader, and members of the governance committee will use data from this evaluation to help identify topics for the Board Annual Meeting.

Place Network Training

Annually at the Annual Board retreat or during the year as needed, the Place Network will conduct training for Governing Board members. The training will also be offered as Professional Development to all Polaris School staff. The Place Network training offered during the annual Governing board retreat would be instructor led online or onsite depending on specific needs and costs of the training. The length of the training is approximately two hours.

Governing Board Training Tracking, Monitoring, Reporting and Compliance

All Governing Board Training will be tracked and monitored by the Governing Board Governance Committee using the following action steps. This is to ensure compliance with PED regulations, but also for continuous improvement. All required training will be given by approved providers. Each year, before the August 1 deadline, Polaris Governing Board will

ensure that PED receives a record of training during the previous fiscal year. Records will include the name of each governing body member, the name of the school he or she serves (Polaris), and assigned PED course code.

Governing Body Training and Evaluation Simplified Chart

Timeline	Action Steps	Responsible Party
Before any meeting or vote	**New Member** **Governing Board Member Onboarding** 10 hours of governing body training. This includes 7 hours of in-person training that is required before attending a governing body meeting and voting on any governing body business. Per NMAC 6.80.5.8 Sign the Conflict of Interest Policy	Governing Board President helps new member sign up for training. Training provided by PED.
Within the first month	**New Member** **Internal Training** Topics specific to Polaris	Governing Board President, Academic Leader, and member of the governance committee
Annually	**Annual Governing Board Training** for continuing members, 8 hours, check PED offerings every spring and fall.	Governing Board President Training provided by PED.
Annual Governing Board Retreat	**Self-Evaluation**	Governing Board President
Annually-Before School Begins/July	**Annual Governing Board Retreat**	Governing Board
August 1	**Governing Board Training Reporting and Compliance Deadline**	Governing Board

Training Costs

The Founding Team and Polaris School Governing Board strive to maximize funds directed to Mission. Accordingly, care will be taken to minimize cost of training classes while maintaining

high quality content. Governing Board members will be reimbursed - if they request - for expenses incurred during training activities. To minimize cost, the following will be considered:

- Governing Board members taking PED online Governing Board member training instead of traveling to instructor led/onsite classes;
- Use of online classes or web enabled instructor led training for Place Network training;
- Use of Polaris School Foundation funding for offsite summer institute offerings at Place Network or other school locations.

Initial costs for Governing Board members are estimated to be: $500 for web enabled Place Network training. PED online training will incur no costs.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Identify a process for governing body member onboarding to ensure new members are properly trained and able to meet the meet the obligations and fulfill the responsibilities of governing body service, include action steps, timelines, and responsible parties; • Identify a plan for annual governing body training, including action steps, timelines, and responsible parties, include how it will be tracked and monitored. • Describe how the plan will identify governing body training needs, meet governing body training needs, and comply with state requirements, including any requirements that may change from year to year; • Identify any costs required to support the training plan or onboarding process and describe how those costs are supported in the budget; and • Ensure the onboarding process and training plan address training on the open meetings act and responsibilities.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

B. (2) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** for an annual self-evaluation of the Governing Body that reflects that body's effectiveness and focuses on continuous improvement.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Governing Board Self Evaluation Plan

Governing Board self-evaluation is critical to maintaining an effective, creative, and community informed Board that guides the Mission of Polaris School. Setting an annual schedule for self-evaluation allows this important function to remain as a focus and not get lost in the myriad of activities involved in Board work.

The process defined here guides the self-evaluation during the planning year. After being formed, the Governance Committee will assume responsibility for the Governing Board self-evaluation process and development of a policy.

Objectives

Objectives of the self-evaluation are recognition of good practices and identification of areas for improvement in the following:

- Effectiveness of Governing Board support of Polaris School Mission; evaluate success based on data related to mission specific indicators (academic achievement, social emotional learning, and community engagement) from the Academic Leader
- Fidelity to the Place Based education precepts;
- Strategic planning and effectiveness of the plan;
- Relations between the Governing Board and the two leaders: Academic Leader and Operations Leader;
- Conduct of Board meetings;
- Board Committee operations:
    - Audit committee- responsible government accounting;
    - Finance committee- overseeing the stewardship and management of public funds;
    - Governance committee- maintaining a board with the desired qualifications and skills;
    - Academic Excellence committee - student success and accomplishment related to Mission;
    - Facilities committee, and applicable Task Forces;
- Board policy;
- Dynamics between Governing Board members and the impact of Governing Board effectiveness and leadership;
- Relations between Governing Board and members of the community and Polaris School staff;
- Onboarding and annual training of Board members: effectiveness, content, ensurance that all Governing Board member are current on all training requirements;

- Ensuring compliance with legal obligations related to government organizations and public schools;
- Selecting and overseeing a qualified and highly effective school leader;
- Addressing grievances received from staff and parents and families.

Data Collection for Continuous Improvement

Polaris Governing Board will actively participate in a strategic approach to use inquiry to analyze data that drives continuous improvement. This inquiry approach will gather internal and external data from multiple perspectives to provide a more complete and accurate evaluation of the Governing Board. The Governing Board will annually review data from the Academic Leader (student success and academic achievement), Governance Committee (overseeing a qualified and highly effective school leader, maintaining qualified Board membership, and compliance with legal obligations), Audit Committee (stewardship and management of public funds and responsible government accounting), Finance Committee (stewardship and management of public funds and responsible government accounting), and Academic Excellence Committee (student success and academic achievement). The Governing Board will complete an annual board self-evaluation at the annual Board retreat. This evaluation will include identifying training needs. The Governing Board will also seek external feedback through questions that will be part of the annual Polaris Survey for staff and parents/Family Council. The Polaris survey will provide additional data about fulfilling the mission of Polaris and addressing grievances.

The data from all surveys will be analyzed and used to drive decision-making and continuous improvement. The Governing Board Chair will use the information to determine annual Board Training needs, some to be delivered at the annual Board Retreat in July. During the retreat, the entire Board will develop (and annually revise) a strategic plan. An annual report will be shared with the community.

Timeline

- January - February 2020: Governance Committee develops self-evaluation and questions for the annual Polaris survey for staff and parents.
- March 2020 - Governance Committee presents a survey, survey distribution, and evaluation methodology to Board to discuss and approve.
- March-May 2020 - Surveys are distributed, collected, and analyzed.
- July 2020 - At the annual Board retreat, self-evaluation results are presented, discussed, and changes identified. A report of the changes identified will be produced and distributed to the community.

Total Points Available	Expectations

8	A complete response must • Identify a plan for annual governing body self-evaluation, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and identified criteria or standards; • Include action steps to obtain feedback from, at a minimum, parents and families and all willing staff; • The plan must include action steps to evaluate the effectiveness of the governing body in the following: o Maintaining regular membership that has all of the required qualifications and skill sets identified in question A.(2) o Meeting all training requirements o Ensuring student success and academic achievement o Ensuring fulfillment to the school's mission o Overseeing the stewardship and management of public funds and responsible government accounting o Ensuring compliance with legal obligations related to government organizations and public schools o Selecting and overseeing a qualified and highly effective school leader o Addressing grievances received from staff and parents and families; and • Describe how the identified plan will focus on and support continuous improvement.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

C. Leadership and Management.

C.(1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** for how the governing body will monitor organizational, financial, and academic outcomes on an ongoing basis to ensure that the proposed school is successfully meeting its mission and providing a quality education.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

In addition to our focus on Mission to successfully implement innovative, personalized learning to students, Polaris School must demonstrate compliance with various statutory powers and duties, regulatory rules, and best practice instructional and operational procedures and methods.

Legal powers, duties and requirements are defined generally in NMSA Chapter 22- Public Schools and NMAC Title 6- Primary and Secondary Education. New Mexico Public Education Department promulgates rules and requirements for Public Schools in general and Charter schools specifically. The Public Education Commission measures outcomes using the activities and criteria described in "New Mexico Public Education Commission Charter Performance Review and Accountability System". Best practice procedures are found in many resources, specifically for Polaris School instruction with our membership in the Place Based Network and operationally in the resources found at the National Charter School Resource Center and at the New Mexico Public Education Department.

To monitor outcomes, the Governing Board will draw on Board Committees, the expertise of individual Board members, the Polaris School Academic Leader and Operations Director, the Polaris School Advisory Board, and our community partners. Data and surveys will be used to measure outcomes.

Governing Board Standing Committee responsibilities include those necessary to monitor outcomes within the scope of each committee. The Academic Leader and Operations Director will provide information and support to Standing Committees as needed, serve as adjunct members on some committees, and report to the Governing Board at regular meetings. The Polaris School Advisory Committee is a valuable community connection to keep the Governing Board grounded and focused on Mission from the community perspective. Place Network provides methods and rubrics to oversee fidelity to place-based learning. The Place Network evaluates every network school in the areas of student/teacher engagement, culture, academic outcomes, and community impact.

Polaris School Governing Board and Academic Leader will maintain clear delineation of roles. This can be difficult to practice and requires constant diligence. The Governing Board has governance roles which set policy, approve expenditure of funds, and monitor outcomes. The Academic Leader manages the school and implements policy and educational programs.

Organizational Outcomes

The Organizational Performance Framework found in PEC's Charter Performance Review and Accountability System (See Attachment B) is a comprehensive list of responsibilities and duties charter schools are required to meet under state and federal laws. This framework is used by PEC to evaluate compliance of charter schools with the authorizing charter contract. Therefore Polaris School Governing Board will use these criteria and measures to determine organizational outcomes.

Based on changes in law during the 2019 Legislative session, some changes to the PEC's Organizational Performance Framework can be expected. The Founding Team and Polaris Governing Board will monitor legislative and regulatory activity in order to adjust or replace organizational framework requirements.

This table lists the framework elements and entity responsible to monitor outcomes and compile demonstration of compliance for Polaris School. The version available in April 2019 is used.

Organizational Framework Indicator	**Responsible Entity**
Educational Program Requirements: Indicators 1.a through 1.f	Academic Committee monitors; Academic Leader provides data.
Financial Management and Oversight: Indicator 2.a	Finance Committee; Audit Committee; Academic Leader, Operations Director, and EdTec provide data.
Financial Management and Oversight: Indicator 2.b	Audit Committee
Financial Management and Oversight: Indicator 2.c	Audit Committee
Financial Management and Oversight: Indicator 2.d	Finance Committee; Academic Leader, Operations Director, and EdTec provide data.
Financial Management and Oversight: Indicator 2.e	Finance Committee
Governance and Reporting: Indicators 3.a through 3.c	Governance Committee
Students and Employees: Indicators 4.a through 4.e	Audit Committee; Academic Leader and Operations Director provide data.
School Environment: Indicators 5a through 5.d	Facilities Committee

Actions and Timeline for Organizational Outcomes:

During the planning year, the Governing Board and each Responsible Entity will work with the Academic Leader to identify for each Framework Requirement Indicator a metric(s) to use to demonstrate outcome and the source of the metric.

At each Governing Board regular meeting, each Standing Committee will report the metric for each Indicator and identify any discrepancy that results in non-compliance with the Framework Indicator.

Financial Outcomes

The "Financial Performance Framework" section of the PEC's Performance Review and Accountability

System is under development. After PEC adopts this Framework, Polaris School Governing Board will establish a set of metrics to monitor those financial outcomes.

Polaris School Governing Board will use two sets of indicators to monitor financial outcomes:

- The annual financial audit;
- A financial "Overview Report".

This table identifies indicators and responsible entity:

Financial Requirement Indicator	**Responsible Entity**
Annual Financial Audit	
Work with auditor during audit process	Audit Committee
Report findings and outcomes to Governing Board	Audit Committee
Work with Academic Leader to remedy audit findings	Audit Committee
Financial Overview Report	
Financial indicators report: Will be designed during Planning Year in conjunction with EdTec staff	Finance Committee

The Financial Overview Report will be designed by the Finance Committee working with EdTec staff, the Academic Leader, and the Operations Director.

Actions and Timeline for Financial Outcomes:

During the Planning Year, the Governing Board and the Finance Committee will identify metrics and data to use for the Financial Overview Report.

At each Governing Board regular meeting each Standing Committee will report the metric for each Indicator and identify any discrepancy that results in non-compliance with the Framework Indicator.

Academic Outcomes

Polaris School Governing Board will use two sets of indicators to monitor academic outcomes:

- The "Academic Performance Framework" section of the PEC's Performance Review and Accountability System (See Attachment C);
- The Place-Based Network's set of evaluation forms and example rubrics designed to ensure fidelity to place-based learning (See Attachment D for some examples).

Based on changes in law during the 2019 Legislative session, some changes to the PEC's Academic

Performance Framework can be expected. Polaris Governing Board will monitor legislative and regulatory activity in order to adjust or replace academic framework requirements.

This table identifies indicators and responsible entity:

Academic Requirement Indicator	**Responsible Entity**
Academic Performance Framework	
Components from NM A-F School Grading System: Indicators 1.1 through 1.7	Academic Committee
Subgroup performance- comparison to other schools: Indicators 2.1 through 2.3	Academic Committee
School Specific Goals: Will be developed during Planning Year	Academic Committee
Place Based Indicator*	
Place Based Site Evaluation Form (Attachment E)	Academic Committee; Place Based Network observer
Place Network Continuous Improvement Tool (Attachment F)	Academic Committee; Place Based Network observer

* The two indicators shown in the table are examples currently used by the Place-Based Network. During the planning year, the Governing Board will work with the Place-Based Network to design the set of indicators to use at Polaris School.

Total Points Available	**Expectations**
12	A complete response must • Identify a plan for how the governing body will monitor academic performance on an ongoing basis, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and identified criteria or standards; • Identify a plan for how the governing body will monitor organizational performance on an ongoing basis, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and identified criteria or standards; • Identify a plan for how the governing body will monitor financial performance on an ongoing basis, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and identified criteria or standards; and

	• Describe how each of the monitoring plans will focus on ensuring the school is meeting its mission, providing a quality education, and acting as a responsible public entity.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

C. (2) Identify and provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** plan for hiring a head administrator. Include a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive description of the leadership characteristics and qualifications for the head administrator needed to run the proposed school. In your description, take **into account the mission of the proposed school**. Include **evidence of a clear plan** (e.g., job search process, timelines) to hire and evaluate a highly qualified administrator no later than July 1.

If the proposed head administrator is a founder or already identified, provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** description of his/her leadership characteristics and qualifications for running the proposed school and delivering its unique mission.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Characteristics of the Academic Leader

The Academic Leader will collaborate with the Founding Team and the Governing Board to design, create and launch Polaris School. Desirable characteristics of an Academic Leader include:

- Collaborative;
- Designer and creative thinker, visionary;
- Driver of results; visionary;
- Analytical, used data to drive solutions;
- Background in instructional leadership;
- Successful people leader;
- Strong motivational/coaching/facilitating skills with students and adults;
- Background in Place-Based learning;
- Track record of submitting work in a timely fashion;
- Strong verbal and written communicator;
- Organized and self-motivated;
- Strength in growth mindset;
- Community-minded and community engaged;
- Active listener;
- Prefers a power sharing model of authority;
- Prioritizes collective decision making including student voice;
- Can create an inclusive culture that demands building a true community;
- Belief in and experience with restorative practices;
- Engages with community leaders and can create partnerships.

Qualifications of the Academic Leader

- Current NM Educational Administration License;
- Minimum of Master's Degree;
- Administrative License from another state - with ability to receive the NM Education;
- Administrative License before beginning of operating year 1

- Preferred experience in Place Based Education

Los Alamos community is highly educated, interested in quality public education, and engages in public school life. An Academic Leader must be qualified, engaging, and respected. Further, the Academic Leader must be able to communicate the Polaris School Mission to community leaders, larger community, parents, and students. The expectations of the place-based mission require the Academic Leader to reach out not only to Los Alamos community but to surrounding community leaders and to organizations and institutions surrounding Los Alamos such as Bandelier National Monument, Historic Los Luceros Ranch Museum, Santa Fe Opera, Villa Grande Preserve, and many other organizations and businesses.

To be able to demonstrate the Mission and success of Polaris School the Academic Leader will use data to present the success of the Mission. Analytic and persuasive presentation skills are important.

A qualified and effective Academic Leader is critical to the success of Polaris School. The Academic Leader will have a one-year contract. The Governing Board will evaluate the Academic Leader annually then decide whether to offer a new one-year contract or advertise the Academic Leader position. The Academic Leader may also choose not to seek a new contract at the end of each contract cycle.

The Polaris Founding Team feels that an Academic Leader needs to be engaged and working with the Governing Board and the Founding Team during the Planning Year. The Founding Team also recognizes that it becomes practically impossible to execute a timely Academic Leader search process immediately after Polaris School is authorized. Advertising, interviewing, selecting, and onboarding a new Academic Leader is a four to six month process. Therefore, the Founding Team proposes to hire a member of the Founding Team, Elizabeth Martineau, as the Academic Leader.

The Founding Team does recognize that Ms. Martineau must gain approval from the Governing Board.

Ms Martineau's qualifications are:

Elizabeth Martineau is a member of the Polaris Founding Team, bringing over 28 years of education, leadership, and community experience. Her teaching experience includes teaching regular and Gifted classes in grades K-8 in public and private schools. In 1993 the NM Council for the Social Studies awarded her Middle School Teacher of the Year. She holds a current New Mexico teaching license with an additional endorsement in art. She was president of the Los Alamos Public Schools Foundation, raising money for Los Alamos Public Schools.

She has proven leadership in education. In addition to her M.Ed. in Instructional Leadership, she worked as an Education Specialist for Los Alamos National Laboratory

for 11 years and received endorsement through their New Manager On-Ramp Program. She developed and led education programs, including "Science on Wheels," which visited over 40 schools throughout Northern New Mexico. Her work at the Laboratory included developing and implementing the *Science Ambassador Academy*, which taught scientists strategies to successfully communicate with the public, and training teachers in STEM methodology and content. She has worked as a teacher mentor for the College of Santa Fe and presented at local, regional and national conferences.

She has extensive ties to the community. She is a graduate of the Leadership Los Alamos program and organized a group of 25 local informal educators to collaborate on various education projects. She worked for a brief time with the Los Alamos Creative District, managing the program plan for our local signature event, Science Fest, expanding the number of STEM participants from 30 to 80.

She has been involved in many strategic planning initiatives. She participated in the Malcolm Baldrige strategic planning process twice, with Mountain Elementary and Los Alamos National Laboratory Community Programs Office. She was part of the Museum Assessment Program and Strategic Planning Team for Los Alamos History Museum. She has participated in several education summits, including *Mobilizing for Education Excellence Summit*, Santa Fe County, 2011, and *Out of School Time Working Group*, United Way of Santa Fe, 2008.

While her dedication to education and experience in leadership is proven, she does not currently hold an Administrative License. She is applying to the Cooperative Educational Services (CES) Principal Leadership Development (PLD) Program for the Fall of 2019. Her internship would run from August 2019 until June of 2020.

Funding for an Academic Leader during the planning year is uncertain and an open question at this point in time. CSP grant money is one source for funds. Polaris School Foundation also is seeking grant funds. Regardless and whether funds are secure, the Founding Team will recommend to the newly formed Polaris School Governing Board, after authorization, that an offer of employment be made to Ms Martineau. This recommendation will be made at the October or November 2019 Governing Board meeting.

If either Ms Martineau decides not to accept an offer or if the Governing Board elects to not make an offer to Ms Martineau, the following process will be initiated with the intent to hire an Academic Leader before July 1, 2020. This process will also be used whenever the Academic Leader position must be filled.

Process to Hire the Academic Leader

Date	Activity	Responsible Entity
December	Create an Academic Leader Selection Task Force	Governing Board

January	Post job description for Academic Leader in variety of online services, local and statewide news outlets, Place-based Network outlets, High Tech High outlet, and select college outlets.	Academic Leader Selection Task Force
March/April	Collect applications for 45 days	Academic Leader Selection Task Force
April	Create applicant scoring matrix, rank applicants, recommend final slate of candidates to the Governing Board	Academic Leader Selection Task Force ranks and recommends; Governing Board chooses a final set of candidates to invite for onsite interview.
May	Conduct candidate interviews including Polaris school visit, community forum, Polaris School staff, parent, and student visits.	Academic Leader Selection Task Force; Governing Board; Polaris School staff and families; Los Alamos Community
May/June	Prepare recommendation report and present to Governing Board	Academic Leader Selection Task Force
May/June	Select candidate and make offer to hire Academic Leader	Governing Board

Total Points Available	Expectations
12	A complete response must • Identify an ongoing process for hiring a head administrator, both for the initial hiring and for any time the position becomes vacant, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and identified criteria or standards; • Identify all leadership characteristics and all qualifications the head administrator must possess; • Explain why and how the identified leadership characteristics and qualifications will ensure the head administrator has the required capacity and enable the head administrator to operate the proposed school as a successful, high-quality public school;

	• Explain how the identified leadership characteristics and qualifications take into account the mission of the proposed school; • Describe how the identified process will ensure the school is able to identify and hire a highly qualified, licensed administrator no later than July 1, 2018; and • If a potential head administrator has already been identified and/or is a founder, include an assurance that the individual understands they must be selected and hired by an independent governing body and identify the individual's specific leadership skills and qualifications, through verifiable prior experience, that makes them qualified for the position, including holding the required licensure.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

C. (3) Describe how the governing body will convey and distinguish their roles and responsibilities with those of the proposed school's head administrator. Provide a proposed job description for the head administrator including responsibilities that are significant and unique to charter school leaders and the proposed school's mission, goals, and educational philosophy. Attach the job description as **Appendix B**.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

NMAC 6.29.1.9 B.(2) requires the "governing body of a charter school" to "employ and evaluate the local superintendent or charter school administrator".

The Polaris School Academic Leader will be evaluated annually using the process described in C.(4). Part of the annual evaluation criteria will be to ensure the Academic Leader demonstrates a clear understand of:

- the charter authorization contract between Polaris School and the Public Education Commission;
- the duties of a school principal as prescribed in NMSA 22-10A-18;
- the duties of a superintendent as prescribed in NMSA 22-5-14;
- the expectations of the MOU with the Place Based Network;
- the requirements and responsibilities of the financial support contract with EdTec, Inc;
- any other MOUs or contractual agreements entered into to support the Mission of Polaris School.

The job description and annual contract of the Academic Leader will be reviewed and updated annually by the Governing Board. At this time compensation and benefits will be established for the next year's term of employment.

As agreed in the MOU with the Place Based Network - Appendix D, the Academic Leader is a member of Place Network's Advisory Council which meets twice a year in a virtual conference. Place Based Network also expects Polaris School to participate in an annual conference for practitioners and leaders to share ideas and build solutions that benefit all network schools.

The Academic Leader job description is presented on Appendix B.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Identify the process the governing body will use for distinguishing their roles and responsibilities with those of the head administrator; • Include specific actions the governing body will take to ensure the head administrator understands the obligations of the charter contract and the requirements of all elements of the plan contained in this application; and

	• Attach a job description in **Appendix B** that includes the following: o Lists all major responsibilities of the head administrator o Includes responsibilities that are unique to charter school leaders o Includes responsibilities that specifically relate to the school's mission, goals, and educational philosophy o Identifies all hiring requirements including all previously identified requirements related to characteristics and qualifications.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

C. (4) Identify and provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** plan for annually evaluating the head administrator. In your description, take into account the mission and goals of the proposed school.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Evaluating the Academic Leader

The Academic Leader of Polaris must be dedicated to the mission of Polaris, to engage students in the community, environment, history and culture of Northern New Mexico through personalized hands-on learning experiences that strengthen and support student well being and intellectual growth. In order to achieve this mission, the Academic Leader must not only understand New Mexico education requirements and regulations, but also our targeted population and place-based education.

Middle school students are a unique age group. We expect the leader to understand current research, including characteristics and needs of adolescent learners. This includes both academics and social emotional learning, which are two of our mission specific indicators, which we aligned to the indicators for evaluating the Academic Leader.

Unique to Polaris is the Place-based Model, so in addition to the NMAC 6.69.7.9 Competencies and Indicators for school leaders, we added the six principles of place-based education. These include: 1) Local to global context; 2) Learner-centered; 3) Inquiry-based; 4) Design thinking; 5) Community as classroom; 6) Interdisciplinary approach.

The Academic Leader will be evaluated according to the requirements identified in NMAC 6.69.7.8

A. The Academic Leader will have an annual performance evaluation that is based on an annual professional development plan (PDP).

B. No later than October 15, of each year, Polaris Governing Board shall adopt policies, guidelines, and procedures for annual principal performance evaluation.

C. No later than forty school days after the Academic Leader commences his or her duties each school year, Polaris Governing Board Chair and Academic Leader shall establish a professional development plan, with measurable objectives, for the coming year based on:

(1) PED's principal competencies and indicators in 6.69.7.9 NMAC (see table below)
(2) Polaris's mission specific indicators and goals of the educational plan for student success, ;
(3) the previous year's annual evaluation, if applicable;
(4) assurance that the principal or assistant principal is appropriately licensed by the PED for his or her assignment.

D. The Polaris Governing Board Chair shall formally observe the Academic Leader's professional practice at least twice annually to determine his or her ability to demonstrate state adopted competencies and indicators.

E. The Governing Board Chair and the principal shall hold a mid-year conference annually to assess progress toward meeting the objectives of the professional development plan.

F. The Academic Leader shall reflect on their professional practice and ability to demonstrate the principal competencies by providing their supervisor with a written reflection document at least once annually.

G. Annual performance evaluations shall be based on, among other things, how well the professional development plan was carried out and the extent to which progress was made toward achieving the measurable objectives.

Annual Evaluation Plan for Academic Leader

Timeline	Action Step	Responsible Party	Description
No later than October 15, of each year,	Evaluation Guidelines	Polaris Governing Board	Adopt policies, guidelines, and procedures for annual principal performance evaluation.
No later than forty school days after the Academic Leader commences duties each school year	PDP	Polaris Governing Board President with Academic Leader	Establish a professional development plan, with measurable objectives, for the coming year
First Semester (November)	Formal Observation #1	Polaris Governing Board President	Formally observe the Academic Leader's professional practice
Mid-year (December/January)	Mid-year conference	Polaris Governing Board President with Academic Leader	Assess progress toward meeting the objectives of the professional development plan
Second Semester (March)	Formal Observation #2	Polaris Governing Board President	Formally observe the Academic Leader's professional practice
Annually Second Semester (April)	Personal Reflection	Academic Leader	Reflect on their professional practice and ability to demonstrate the principal competencies
End of the school year (April/May)	Annual Performance Evaluation	Polaris Governing Board	Annual performance evaluations shall be based on, among other things, how well the professional development plan was carried out and the extent to which progress was made toward achieving the measurable objectives.

Academic Leader Evaluation: Competencies and Indicators from NMAC 6.69.7.9 and Place-based Principles

Standards or Criteria	**Competency**	**Indicators**	**Measurable Objectives- Specific to Polaris** (to be developed as part of the PDP, these are just ideas and are not written in final SMART format)
Ensuring student success and academic achievement	The Academic Leader promotes the success of all students by maintaining a culture that supports student achievement, high quality instruction, and professional development to meet the diverse learning needs of the school community	(1) Works with all members of the school community to make quality instruction a prime focus; (2) Uses accountability literacy in making decisions about student success and achievement; (3) Evaluates teachers using the state (currently three-tiered) licensure performance evaluation system to promote high quality teaching and professional learning; (4) Incorporates the diversity of the student population and history of the school community in making curricular and school policy decisions.	(1) Communicates regularly with the community. Addresses current school issues and shares student achievement through coffee conversations, weekly "Compass" email updates, and weekly press releases/social media updates (2) Follows the Data Wise Improvement Process, developed by Harvard Graduate School of Education in partnership with educators around the world, to prepare our staff and stakeholders to use a process of inquiry to analyze the data that drives continuous improvement. (3) Meets all state deadlines and uses the state system to evaluate all teachers and staff.
Ensuring fulfillment to the school's mission	Academic Leader will fulfill Polaris Charter School's mission to engage students in the community, environment, history and culture of Northern New Mexico through personalized	<u>Mission Specific Indicators:</u> (1) Academic Achievement: Polaris students will demonstrate measurable academic	(1)Polaris will use the nationally normed NWEA-MAPS test to measure student growth at the beginning and end of the year. Students are expected to meet or exceed growth targets annually.

	hands-on learning experiences that strengthen and support student well being and intellectual growth.	growth that meets or exceeds annual yearly progress goals in math and English language arts as measured by a nationally normed assessment tool. (2) Social Emotional Learning: Polaris students, staff, and parents will rate the climate/culture and their own social-emotional learning with an average of 4 or higher (out of 5) on a nationally normed survey. (3) Active Citizenship: Each Polaris student will complete at least 2 community impact projects per year that are perceived as positive by community members. (4)Follow the Place-based model	(2)Climate and social-emotional learning surveys will be completed twice per year on both culture/climate as well as Social-Emotional Learning using a national normed instrument, Panorama. 85% or higher of Polaris students will score an average of 4 or higher on this nationally normed survey. (3) Once per year the Academic Leader will report on the number of community projects completed by students and community perception around each of those projects. (4) Use of place based evaluation forms, criteria, and rubrics.
Engage the community	The Academic Leader uses communication and relationship-building skills to engage the larger community in the knowledge of, and advocacy for, equity in meeting the diverse needs of the school community	(1) Engages in honest and respectful interactions with all stakeholders to make thoughtful and objective decisions that demonstrate sensitivity and integrity; (2) Builds and sustains relationships through team development and mediation skills to promote a climate of cooperation and student success;	Communicates regularly with the community. Addresses current school issues and shares student achievement through coffee conversations, weekly "Compass" email updates, and weekly press releases/social media updates Plans annual team building activities for the annual staff retreat. Rotates participation

		(3) Supports an environment of inclusion and respect; (4) Communicates with others objectively, sensitively, fairly and ethically; (5) Supports relationships that promote teaching and learning in the school community through communication skills such as speaking, writing, and active listening; (6) Communicates with all school and community stakeholders concerning current school issues and student achievement; and (7) Maintains a continuous dialogue with decision makers who affect the school community.	through all Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams to promote cooperation.
Organizes Professional Development	The Academic Leader organizes and coordinates ongoing professional learning opportunities that are aligned with the New Mexico professional development framework in 6.65.2 NMAC, and supports the diverse learning needs of the school community:	(1) Identifies and assesses student and staff performance to inform professional development needs; (2) Uses relevant professional literature and knowledge, collaborates with key partners, and uses technology to create professional	Each year the Academic Leader will create a strategic plan for professional development. The Academic Leader will collect data and use teacher observations to evaluate and determine the effectiveness of professional development programs annually (per NMAC 6.65.2.9). They will

		development programs; (3) Implements comprehensive, integrated and systematic ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty and community; and (4) Supports reflection, sustained mentoring, and coaching as critical processes for professional growth.	use student data, information from teacher observations and reflections, evaluations from parents, the board, and staff, and the PLCs' progress toward goals, to create a strategic plan for professional development. The plan will outline the content for the All Staff Retreat, All Staff Orientation, and PLCs. This will ensure that Professional development targets the areas that need additional training or support. Actively participates in the Place Network Advisory Council by attending the virtual Conference twice a year, and meetings, sharing data, and sharing learning with Polaris Staff.
Overseeing the stewardship and management of public funds and responsible government accounting	The Academic Leader manages the school campus, budget, and daily operations to equitably meet the diverse learning needs of the school community	(1) Manages the school campus to ensure that the environment is safe and clean for students and staff; (2) Manages the school budget to ensure that resources are maximized for student success; (3) Manages the day to day operations to maximize the efficiency of the school; and (4) Complies with federal and state initiatives to maximize	The Academic Leader will implement the school safety plan which the Governing Board will develop during the planning year. Budget Committee and Finance committee will work with the Academic Leader to understand use of budget for student success. The Academic Leader will be aware of new legislative initiatives and other funding opportunities.

		use of services and programs for which students are eligible.	
Student Achievement	The Academic Leader develops, supports, encourages, and supervises programs that lead to increased student engagement and achievement resulting in college readiness and work skills	(1) Supervises co-curricular and extracurricular activities to engage all students. (2) Develops 21st century skills throughout the curriculum. (3) Creates a student centered school environment and strengthens relationships among all stakeholders to improve student performance.	Understands the needs of adolescent learners and encourages student voice and personal responsibility for learning. Attends student exhibitions, community events, and Polaris Family meetups.
Supports Place-based Education Principles in school organization, curriculum, and instruction.	The Academic Leader supports the 6 Place-based Education Principles: 1) Local to global context 2) Learner-centered 3) Inquiry-based 4) Design thinking 5) Community as classroom 6) Interdisciplinary approach	1) Uses local learning as a model for understanding regional and global challenges, opportunities and connections. 2) Enables student agency. The teacher and Academic Leader serve as guides or facilitators to learning. 3) Learning is grounded in observing, asking relevant questions, making predictions, and collecting data to understand the world through economic,	1) Creates a curriculum that teaches students to make connections between local communities and global themes 2) Provides opportunities within the school community where students have choice and control over their learning 3) What types of research projects have the students completed? Are all of the projects the same? 4) Provide opportunities for students to make either the school or local community better?

		ecological, and cultural lenses. 4) Design thinking provides a systematic approach for students to make meaningful impact in communities through the Curriculum. 5) Encourage and support teachers to use the Community to serve as learning ecosystems for schools where local and regional experts, experiences, and places are part of the expanded definition of a Classroom. 6) The curriculum matches the real world where the traditional subject area content, skills, and dispositions are taught through an integrated and frequently project-based approach where all learners are accountable and challenged.	5) Do you allow your teachers to take students off-campus during school hours? If so, what is the process? How often are students out in the community? 6) How do you support teacher collaboration? How is the management system working to track student mastery and personalize learning?

Total Points	Expectations

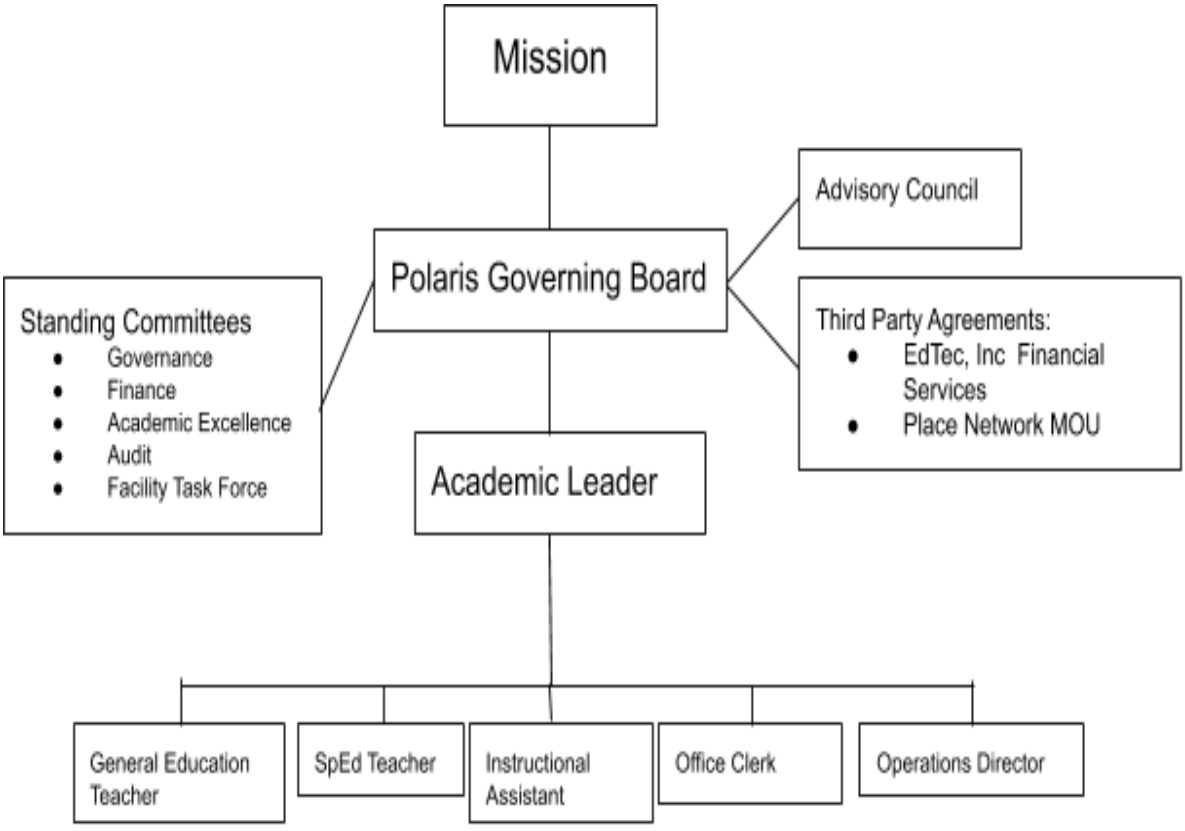
Available	
8	A complete response must • Identify the plan for annually evaluating the head administrator, including action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and standards or criteria; • Include action steps to evaluate the effectiveness of the head administrator in the following: o ensuring student success and academic achievement o ensuring fulfillment to the school's mission o overseeing the stewardship and management of public funds and responsible government accounting o ensuring compliance with legal obligations related to government organizations and public schools o addressing grievances received from staff and parents and families; • Describe how the plan specifically takes into account the mission and goals of the proposed school; and • Ensure the plan meets the requirements identified in NMAC 6.69.7.8 and 6.69.7.9.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

D. Organizational Structure of the Proposed School.

D.(1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, cohesive, and reasonable** organizational chart and narrative that **aligns structures with the mission of the proposed school** and demonstrates a **clear** understanding of appropriate relationships between governance, administration, teaching, support staff, and external agencies that are essential to the proposed school.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Organizational Chart



Structures and Relationships

Roles, responsibilities, and organizational structures are presented in the above organizational chart from planning year to operational year five. Polaris will be lightly staffed in Administrative areas so funds and teaching staff can be focused on student mastery, student leadership in their own learning, teacher leadership, and school cultural supports. To this end Polaris will have an Academic Leader, Operation Director, and Office Clerk. Each of these positions will be staffed beginning in the planning year in SY 2019-20, depending on availability of CSP funds or supplemental grant funds.

The Founding Team recognizes that the Governing Board and all Polaris School staff are essential to the success of Polaris School students. Culture, Mission, and student accomplishment are foremost responsibilities for all entities in the Polaris School framework. Each function (Governing Board, Advisory Board, school administration, teachers, third parties, contractors) needs to perform in order to make Polaris School students successful.

The Polaris Governing Board members are selected based on experience, expertise, and roles needed to support the Mission of Polaris School and set cultural expectations. Governing Board members will be nominated by a Governance Committee which will select candidates with specific expertise in these areas: finance, real estate, facility management, budgeting, audits, data analysis, programmatic evaluation, technology, and community outreach.

Responsibilities of the Polaris Governing Board include:

- Hire, annually evaluate, terminate, and set compensation for the Academic Leader;
- Oversee all fiscal responsibilities of Polaris School;
- Establish policies and governing procedures consistent with Polaris School Mission and Culture;
- Adopt and regularly maintain the Polaris Mission and Strategic Plan;
- Adopt and regularly maintain the Governing Board Bylaws.

Additionally and with support of the Academic Leader, the Governing Board will regularly report to and communicate with the Public Education Commission and the Public Education Department including annual site visits and organizational oversight as defined in NMSA 22-8B-12.

Polaris Governing Board will establish an Advisory Council. This Advisory Council will convene as need and annually at the Governing Board annual meeting. The Advisory Council may report to the Governing Board at any regularly scheduled Governing Board meeting. Advisory Council members will have expertise and experience to advise the Governing Board and Academic Leader in a manner to support the Mission of Polaris School.

Polaris Academic Leader

The Polaris School Academic Leader is hired by the Polaris Governing Board. The Polaris School Academic Leader's term of employment is one year. The Polaris Governing Board will annually review performance of the Academic Leader. The Academic Leader's responsibilities include:

- All areas shown in the responsibility table above;

- Hiring, evaluating, holding accountable, and terminating all other Polaris School employees;
- Maintaining the high cultural environment expected by the Governing Board and hiring employees to support this culture.
- Implement the Governing Board Strategic Plan.

Polaris Operation Director

The Academic Leader hires the Polaris School Operations Director. The Polaris School Operation Director's term of employment is one year. The Academic Leader will annually review performance of the Operation Director. The Operation Director's responsibilities include:

- All areas shown in the responsibility table above;
- Maintaining the high cultural environment expected in the Polaris School.
- Implement the Strategic Plan.

General Education Teachers

General Education teachers report to the Academic Leader. Teachers directly engage, plan, and lead students during their learning experience at Polaris School. Teachers are the heart and soul of a student's experience. Polaris sets high expectations for teaching staff:

- Actively support and live the Polaris School culture;
- Maintain fidelity to Place Based educational precepts;
- Implement the Strategic Plan.

Office Clerk

The Office Clerk reports to the Academic Leader. In many cases the Office Clerk will be the first contact people have with Polaris School. So, interpersonal interactions are important. Organizational and communication skills are necessary. The Office Clerk will also be the primary point of contact with some contractual support services including EdTec financial services.

Special Education Teachers

Special Education Teachers report to the Academic Leader. Special Education Teachers manage all matters directly related to special education services and IEP cases.

Instructional Assistants (IA)

Instructional Assistants report to the Academic Leader. Instructional Assistants support the Polaris School culture, fidelity to Place Based education precepts, general education teachers in classrooms, project based learning activities, and after school community activities.

Governing Board Committees and Task Forces

The Governing Board will use Committees and Task Forces effectively in order to minimize the number of Governing Board meetings, to make best use of Governing Board meeting time, and

to ensure the skills and expertise of Governing Board members is targeted. More complete descriptions are found in the Appendix A Bylaws.

Advisory Council

The Advisory Council has no governance or school management functions. It is comprised of community members with experience or skills that the Governing Board feels can aid in understanding some areas of community life. The Advisory Council members have no terms or expectations of length of service. Advisory Council members were selected by the Founding Team using an informal process that tried to understand who might be helpful resources for the Governing Board. Candidates were then simply asked to participate on the Advisory Council. The Founding Team expects the Advisory Council will meet with the Governing Board during the Governing Board's annual meeting.

Third-Party Relationships

The Founding Team established a third-party relationship with the Place Network for place-based learning educational support: collaborate with other Place Network schools; share project learning ideas; train Governing Board members; and teacher Professional Development.

Contract financial services

Polaris Governing Board will contract with EdTec, Inc to provide backend financial support services.

Total Points Available	Expectations
8	A complete response must • Include an organizational chart; • Include a narrative that describes the structures and relationships represented in the organizational chart; • Include all entities essential to the operation and success of the proposed school; and • Reflect an understanding of the appropriate relationship between each of the relevant entities.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

D. (2) Provide **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** job descriptions for all certified and licensed staff and any other key staff (if your charter requires non-traditional roles or positions, identify and describe here). In the job descriptions, clearly outline necessary qualifications and **appropriate** reporting lines that are consistent with the organizational chart. In your descriptions, take into account the mission of the proposed school. Attach staff job descriptions as **Appendix C**.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Certified and licensed staff job descriptions are found in Appendix C. The job descriptions outline necessary qualifications, identify supervisor, identify major responsibilities and roles of each job including Mission specific roles that are key to Polaris School operation and success.

General job requirements for certified and licensed staff are similar to those of the same staff in any successful school. Polaris School Mission specific qualifications and experience are in the following areas:

- Place Based education;
- Project based learning;
- Social Emotional Learning;
- Community engagement.

Non-certified or unlicensed staff job descriptions for the Operations Director and the Office Clerk are found in Appendix C. Both positions must have a commitment to the Polaris School Mission, Goals, and educational philosophy.

At Polaris School all staff are 'essential' to the success of the school. Culture is important for our students to succeed. Students must feel a sense of belonging and be comfortable to engage in their learning. Creating this culture falls on all staff.

All Polaris School Staff: Five Year Staffing Plan

Polaris Charter School											
Payroll Assumptions											
5/9/2019											
						Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
							2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
				Annual Increase			0.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
				Effective Payroll Increase			100.0%	102.0%	104.0%	106.1%	108.2%
Proposed Payroll											
Fund	Function	Object	Job Code	Position							
							15	18	16	17	17
11000	1000	51100	1411	General Education Teachers			4.00	6.00	9.00	10.00	11.00
11000	1000	51100	1412	SPED Teachers			1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
11000	1000	51100	1711	IA				2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
11000	2400	51100	1217	Office Clerk			0.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
11000	2300	51100	1111	Academic Leader			1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
24146	2300	51100	1111	CSP Founder		1.00					
11000	2400	51100	1112	Director of Operations			0.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
				Total # of Staff		1	7	12	16	17	18
Average Salary											
11000	1000	51100	1411	General Education Teachers	$46,000	-	184,000	281,520	430,726	488,156	547,711
11000	1000	51100	1412	SPED Teachers	$46,920	-	46,920	47,858	97,631	99,584	101,575
11000	1000	51100	1711	IA	$25,000	-	-	51,000	52,020	53,060	54,122
11000	2400	51100	1217	Office Clerk	$30,000	-	15,000	30,600	31,212	31,836	32,473
11000	2300	51100	1111	Academic Leader	$80,000		80,000	81,600	83,232	84,897	86,595
24146	2300	51100	1111	CSP Founder	$80,000	60,000					
11000	1000	51300	1621	Extended Day Additional Comp	$30,000	-	6,300	6,426	6,686	7,095	7,680
11000	2400	51100	1112	Director of Operations	$60,000	-	30,000	61,200	62,424	63,672	64,946
				Total Salaries		60,000	362,220	560,204	763,930	828,300	895,101

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Identify the following: o all certified and licensed staff identified in the application o all non-certified or unlicensed staff identified in the application who could be considered essential to the operation and success of the proposed school o any non-traditional roles or positions; • Describe why the identified roles are key to the operation and success of the proposed school; and • Attach staff job descriptions as **Appendix C** for all of the positions identified in the application response and include the following: o List all major responsibilities of the positions o Include responsibilities that specifically relate to the school's mission, goals, and educational philosophy o Identify all hiring requirements including qualifications and licensure or certification o Identify reporting lines ("reports to") that aligns to the organizational

	chart.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

D.(3) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** staffing plan that demonstrates an understanding of the proposed school's staffing needs, is **reasonable and adequate** to support effective and timely implementation of the academic program/curriculum, and is aligned with the budget and projected enrollment. Include evidence of a clear plan (job search process, timelines etc.) to hire and evaluate highly qualified staff no later than two weeks prior to the start of the proposed school year.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Polaris School understands that staffing is a large part of our annual budget. We have carefully chosen a staffing plan that will help us achieve our mission of academic achievement, social emotional growth and community involvement, while also holding us to high standards of accountability to the community and the state of New Mexico. We are committed to hiring highly qualified people that are dedicated to our mission.

Staffing: Annual Alignment with Enrollment and Budget

While it would be easier to anticipate a constant staffing number, we know that this is not the reality, and Polaris must be willing and able to make staffing adjustments. We believe that our current budget and staffing plan demonstrates that we understand different staffing models based on differences in the budget. We have chosen a growth model that begins with a small enrollment and staffing, and then expands slowly over time. We believe that our innovations require significant changes in how schools function, and successfully implementing these changes will require time and training. A slow growth model will allow us the flexibility to adapt to staffing needs as we implement changes. This staffing plan is aligned with the school's projected changing enrollment over time and our anticipated budget. Because a school's budget is based on actual enrollment, we will make adjustments to the staffing plan in the case that there are differences in projected and actual enrollment. Each year the Polaris Board and the Academic Leader will analyze the actual budget and make adjustments to the staffing plan in the case that there are differences in projected and actual enrollment or student needs.

The budget (see Appendix G: 5 Year Budget) includes line items for:

- Staff Recruitment, $500 per new staff member each year
- Staffing Salaries- Academic Leader, Operations Director, Office Clerk, Classroom Teachers, SPED Teachers, and Instructional Assistants
- Personnel Compensation and Benefits

Health Benefits (Medical, Dental, Vision, Life)	$7,225
SSI	6.20%
Medicare	1.45%
Retirement	13.9%
Unemployment	3.20%
Workers Compensation	1.10%
Retiree Health	2%
Life Insurance	31
Long Term Disability	60

Staffing Plan Years 0-5

	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Enrollment Projection		**75 students**	**125 students**	**175 students**	**200 students**	**225 students**
CPS Founder	1					
Academic Leader		1	1	1	1	1
Operations Director		0.5	1	1	1	1
Office Clerk		0.5	1	1	1	1
Classroom Teachers		4	6	9	10	11
SPED Teachers		1	1	2	2	2
Instructional Assistant			2	2	2	2
Total Teachers		5	9	13	14	15
Total Staff		7	12	15	17	18
Teacher to Student Ratio		1:15	1:18	1:16	1:17	1:17
Staff to Student Ratio		1:10	1:10	1:12	1:12	1:12

Hiring Process

The Polaris Hiring Process is designed to select outstanding candidates by the end of May prior to the opening and/or start of the school year. This should allow sufficient time (3-4 months during the planning year, and 2 months in subsequent years) to train staff/team members in the Place-based philosophy, innovations, curriculum, and orient new team members to our unique organization. It also allows time for team members to plan and add their professional voice to the annual strategic plan. Although the first year will have a longer time for recruitment and accepting applications, all hires, even those during the school year, will follow the same basic hiring process to ensure that highly qualified staff is hired.

The first hire will be the Academic Leader, which will occur by the Polaris Board of Governors immediately following authorization. We have identified a proposed Academic Leader who is a member of the Founding Team. If this person is not hired we will advertise the position and follow the official hiring process. After the Academic Leader is hired, he or she will oversee the

hiring process, with help from the Governing Board and/or other staff as they are hired.

1. Recruitment Campaign and Job Postings- Polaris will initiate a robust recruitment effort prior to opening. This will include advertising, outreach, and posting jobs in local, regional, and national networks. We will advertise through print and online resources, including: The Daily Post, Los Alamos Monitor, Rio Grande Sun, Santa Fe New Mexican, NM REAP, NM Coalition of Charter Schools, Linked-In and the Place Network. We will also advertise through our Social Media Accounts, newsletter and website. We will use our community and professional networks to seek out and recruit quality applicants.
2. Accepting Applications- Candidates will be asked to submit a resume, cover letter, three personal references, and respond to questions. Before opening Polaris, we will accept applications over a long period of time. We know that people will have questions about a new school and we want to reach out to gather a larger pool of applicants.
3. Application Review- The Academic Leader will review all applications and score them according to an internal rubric aligned to our philosophy, mission, and requirements of the available position. The top three applicants will be invited to interview with the Polaris Team.
4. Interviews- The Academic Leader will head up a team to an in-person interview of the top four applicants. Those being interviewed will be given a tour of the school. The interview team may include members of the governing board, school staff members, community partners, and/or parents. Applicants to be interviewed will be asked 5 questions related to the position, with answers scored on a scale of 0-5.
5. Decision - The interview team will rate all interviewees and collate the information to select a candidate.
6. Offer - A job offer will be extended to the top candidate within 2 days of the team's decision. Candidates will have seven days to accept or decline the offer. All employment is contingent upon completing and passing the required background check, per NMSA 22-10A-5.

Hiring Timeline

Timeline	Action Step	Responsible Party
October 2019	Hire Academic Leader	Polaris Governing Board
November 2019 - Ongoing	Recruitment Campaign- Advertising and Outreach	Academic Leader
December 2019 Ongoing- As soon as possible after a job opening is known (within at least 2	Official Job Postings and Accepting Applications Prior to Polaris opening, jobs will be posted and advertised for at least 8	Academic Leader

weeks).	weeks. After opening, jobs will be advertised for a minimum of 2 weeks.	
February 2020	Applications will be reviewed as they are received.	Academic Leader
March 2020	Interviews	Academic Leader and Interview Team, (Interview Team could include a member of the Governing Board, a teacher, parents, and community partners)
March/April 2020	Decisions and Offers	Academic Leader
April 2020	Accept or Decline the Offer- within 7 days contingent upon passing the required background check	Applicant

Total Points Available	Expectations
8	A complete response must • Identify an ongoing staffing plan and process for hiring all necessary staff, both for the initial hiring and for any time a position becomes vacant, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties; • Describe how the staffing plan and process will ensure the school is able to hire highly qualified staff, no later than two weeks prior to the start of the proposed school year, on an annual basis, and fill all vacancies within a reasonable time; include how the school will recruit and hire highly-qualified licensed staff; • Describe how the staffing plan and process is reasonable and adequate to support effective and timely implementation of the academic program/curriculum during the planning year and for all subsequent years; • Describe how the staffing plan and process is aligned with the budget and the school's projected enrollment; and • Describe how the school will make adjustments to the staffing plan in the case that there are differences in projected and actual enrollment.

INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.

D.(4) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and compelling** plan for Professional Development that meets state requirements and supports the implementation of the proposed school's educational plan, mission, and performance goals. Ensure that the plan is supported by the budget.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Polaris School is dedicated to an environment and culture that fosters continuous improvement through personal learning for students and professional growth for teachers. We recognize that teachers are the most important school factor impacting student achievement so it is essential that our teachers receive the support that they need to improve content knowledge, research-based instructional strategies, and build a supportive community that helps Polaris students meet our rigorous academic, social-emotional, and place-based goals. We know that implementing our innovations (Place based learning, Advisory Time/Social Emotional Learning, Personalized Learning) require developing a new culture, which takes time and effort. Our philosophy and professional development plan align with the state objectives outlined in NMAC 6.65.2.8 that professional development is an integral part of the school plans for improving student achievement, supports all staff with strategies, support, knowledge, and skills to help all students meet the New Mexico academic content standards, are high quality and sustained, and are developed and evaluated regularly with participation from Polaris staff and parents.

There is a high cost to having a high turnover rate of all staff in an educational facility. To attract and retain highly qualified experienced teachers, and to develop and support newer teachers, Polaris will invest time and resources in professional development for individuals and the entire staff throughout the year. Professional Development will be constantly driven by community, schoolwide, grade level, class level and teacher level goals, needs, and aspirations. It will be differentiated to ensure that teachers at all levels continue to grow. Our core development structure:

- Supports the implementation of the Polaris educational vision and mission, which include: personalized mastery-based learning, academic achievement goals, social-emotional goals, and place-based/citizenship goals.
- Is tailored to address specific professional development needs that have been identified by the Academic Leader, PLCs and individual teachers.

Polaris School has several unique and innovative features that will require additional professional development for successful implementation. The staff must understand our middle school population, the research behind our innovations, and our unique curriculum and instructional strategies. We have set aside time and resources before school begins during both a staff retreat and orientation to ensure teachers understand these important features of Polaris and how they connect current research to our school goals.

- Our Place-Based structure is unique, so few teachers have been trained in this philosophy. Our success will depend on ensuring that all of the staff has a solid understanding of the vision, mission, goals, and strategies of Place-Based Learning. We are partnering with the Place Network to help facilitate this ongoing training and professional development.

- Our Advisory Time innovation, which includes a curriculum to develop students' social-emotional skills, will require additional training. Staff will be provided with the research base to understand the social emotional needs of middle school students and the strategies designed to support student development at this unique time. Staff will also practice SEL skills as they build a

supportive professional community.

- Data Wise- We will follow the Data Wise Improvement Process, developed by Harvard Graduate School of Education in partnership with educators around the world to prepare our staff and stakeholders to use a process of inquiry to analyze the data that drives continuous improvement. All staff needs to understand the Data Wise Process and how we will use data to focus our instruction to meet our three goals.

- Personalized Mastery-Based Learning requires a specific system to track student learning. Teachers will need training in the computer systems and classroom strategies that make individual learning a reality. This is an essential part of Orientation at the beginning of the school year.

Finally, our belief in the benefits of social-emotional learning extends to our staff. We believe that educators who practice social and self-awareness, building positive relationships, and self-regulation, are more prepared to demonstrate and teach these skills to students. While many operational details may be conveyed electronically, we believe in the power of human connection. Our professional development plan includes time and space for intentional personal reflection and to connect with each other at the All Staff Retreat and during Team Meetings. Staff will use these times to practice intention and self-reflection, build supportive professional learning communities and teams, and improve physical and emotional health. Staff will examine student data and personal observations to collaborate to find solutions, not compete with each other. We believe that educators who practice self-care and community support will create a more productive and effective learning environment for students.

Professional Development Time is Structured and Purposeful
We have five full days (8:00 am- 4:30pm) for teacher professional development during the school year. Each kind of Professional Development has a specific purpose, action steps, and structure to ensure that they are not used for routine staff meetings. We also devote one hour weekly in addition to team collaboration time. This adds up to 76 hours of staff and professional learning time. This time is dedicated to developing a positive, collaborative, and professional staff and providing staff with the information and skills to grow and meet our mission and goals.

Polaris School Governing Board considers regular and ongoing staff professional development to be a component of success for Polaris School. The annual budget will include funding to support professional development in areas that are identified through consultation with the Academic Leader and staff. Additionally, the Polaris School Foundation will actively seek opportunities for professional development of staff in Mission specific interest areas.

Polaris has designated 5 days for teacher professional development in the school calendar. These dates are included in teacher contracts, so staffing expenses are covered as part of salaries. In addition to this, the budget has a line item designated for professional development. We plan to use our own funds, Title I and II funds, and CSP money, when possible. We have budgeted expenses relative to the staff, so our first year includes $10,000 for professional development (with 7 staff members), but that amount gradually increases as we gain staff members to $28,000 for our 5th year (with 18 staff members).

Polaris School budget estimates include funds from PED's extended learning grant. The Extended Learning initiative is new this year and has undergone extensive revisions since the legislative session

ended. Polaris School Governing Board considers the extended learning program to be in line with the place network model and with our ideas for community engagement. However, we expect PED to evolve the extended learning program over time. During the planning year, the Governing Board will evaluate the extended learning opportunity and decide whether to apply for operating year 1.

Part of our Place-based education training, such as the annual retreat, will be an outdoor experience collaborating with community partners. This should result in lower training expenses, and/or expenses shared by our collaborating partner. So, we estimate the cost of the retreat the first year to be about $2,000 ($200 per staff member and $100 per board member) which leaves $8,000 for additional training costs.

Professional Development Plan- Program Design and Implementation

PDs	**Purpose/ Action Steps**	**Timeline/ Duration**	**Responsible Party**	**Budgeted Costs**
Place Network Advisory Council and Annual Conference	**Build Professional Relationships and Network with Place-based Schools** Participate in the Place Network Annual Conference to build relationships with other schools across the country that are using a place-based philosophy. Together, school leaders will share ideas and build solutions that benefit all schools. The Academic Leader will ensure alignment between the Place Philosophy and NM state requirements.	Annually	Academic Leader working with the Place Network	Dates included in the contract. Annual budget will include funds to cover costs.
	As part of the Place Network, the Academic Leader is a member of the Place Network Advisory Council. They meet twice a year in a virtual conference.	Twice a year	Academic Leader	Dates included in the contract
Annual PD development	Each year the Academic Leader will create a strategic plan for professional development. The Academic Leader will collect data and use teacher observations to evaluate and determine the effectiveness of professional development programs annually (per NMAC 6.65.2.9). They will use student data, information from teacher observations and reflections, evaluations from parents, the board, and staff, and the PLCs' progress toward goals, to create a strategic plan for	Every Spring Due in May	Academic Leader with help from the Operations Director and Includes teacher input	Dates included in the contract

	professional development. The plan will outline the content for the All Staff Retreat, All Staff Orientation, and PLCs. This will ensure that Professional development targets the areas that need additional training or support. Polaris will utilize the resources provided by the NM PED (which includes professional learning modules, lessons, focus bulletins, and videos) and WIDA (which provides access to high quality standards, assessments, research, and professional learning for educators).			
Board Retreat	**Polaris Vision, Mission, Goals** Meet school staff and participate in activities to clearly understand the vision, mission, and goals. **Board Responsibilities** Review PEC Board Training Schedule	1 Day Coincides with the All Staff Retreat	Academic Leader	$50-100 per person
All Staff Reflection Retreat	**Current Research, School Culture, and Mission** Develop a solid understanding of the current educational research about adolescent learners and the philosophical basis behind Polaris's Place-Based Learning Model. This includes a clear understanding of the vision, mission, goals, culture and innovations of Polaris. Staff will apply their learning to create behavior norms, language norms and routines that support a culture of learning. **Curriculum** Introduce the curriculum, including the scope and sequence, assessments, and instructional goals for Advisory time, Math and Language, and Integrated Learning Time (Science and Social Studies). **Staff Mindfulness, Team Culture, and Collaboration** In alignment with our local Place-based Model, social-emotional learning, and best practices for adult learners, this retreat will include time for intention and self-reflection,	Fall (September /October) 2 days	Academic Leader and Manager of Operations working with the Place Network and a community partner (PEEC, the Valles Caldera, or Ghost Ranch).	Dates included in the contract, No additional staffing cost Retreat costs- $150-200 per person. We believe that this is a reasonable cost estimate, because we plan to camp as part of our place-based experience.

	building supportive professional learning communities, physical and emotional health, and team building. The retreat will be held in one of our great local "places": PEEC, the Valles Caldera, or Ghost Ranch.			
All Staff Orientation	**Using Data and Mastery-based Learning** Familiarize the staff with the Data Wise Improvement Process and Personalized Mastery-Based Learning to meet academic goals, including the Novare computer system and effective research-based classroom strategies for successful implementation. **School Systems and Procedures** • Create norms and consistency in transition times and routines, including: arrival, dismissal, lunch, advisory time, and field trips. • Behavior management-FBA's/BIP's, Behavior Management, Programming For Emotional Disturbance, Avoiding Power Struggles • Restorative practices **School Operations** • HR complete paperwork and other training. • Safety plan, drills, procedures • Supply ordering • Reporting- attendance, discipline **Serving Diverse Learners** • RtI process (Interventions for Tier 1, 2, and 3 students) • Student Assistance Team (SAT) process • Referral process for Special Education (and GATE) • English Language Learners (ELL)	Week before school begins 5 Days	Academic Leader and Manager of Operations All Staff participates	Dates included in the contract No additional cost

	• IEP process and implementation • Autism • 504 Plans • Emotional Needs of Students			
Monday Team Huddle	Each Monday morning teachers will meet at 7:30 for a brief meeting to set the tone for the week, provide announcements and reminders for staff, celebrate success, and ask for assistance.			
Team Meetings	Weekly team meetings are designed for teachers to work together in a supportive and collaborative environment to design and implement effective data driven curriculum and instruction. Teams work to design the most effective programs for student learning through immediate ("real time") design and assessment. Together they support each other and hold the team accountable to high standards. **Curriculum Design and Development** • Place-based learning • Team Planning • Lesson and Unit Plans • Curriculum Alignment • Personalized Mastery Learning **Effective instructional Strategies** • What is working well? What needs improvement? • Reflective practice- Thinking about your teaching • Evaluating student work • Blended learning **Community Support** • Build team spirit • Share resources • Share personal reflections and professional ideas	Three times a month	All teachers	Dates included in the contract No additional cost
Professional Learning Commu	**Assessment and Data Analysis** Three PLCs will ensure that we are strategically focused on our learning priorities. Each PLC meeting will have specific	Set aside dates on the school calendar	All Staff Academic Leader	Dates included in the contract

nities (PLCs)	goals to ensure that discussions are focused with specific outcomes. PLCs will gather and assess student data, monitor progress, determine professional development needs, create action plans and work toward achieving school goals. All PLCs will focus on the continuous improvement of Polaris processes and procedures to improve student outcomes. PLCs: 1. Social-Emotional Learning 2. Place-based community networking and citizenship opportunities. 3. Academic Achievement and Personalized Mastery-based Learning. The first PLC of each year will be devoted to understanding the use of data driven instruction, Data Wise Process, and collaboration that will be used during PLC time. The Academic Leader will rotate through all three teams to offer professional advice, answer questions, and guide continuous improvement. Each PLC will provide an outline that includes progress toward school goals that the Academic Leader will share with the board of directors each May.	Once a month		No additional cost
Individual Learning	**Intention and Reflection** Teachers will use personal journaling and dialogic storytelling to set intentions and personally reflect on their teaching role. Personal journals will not be shared, but teachers will have time to share thoughts at team meetings and during conferences with the Academic Leader.	Weekly	All Teachers	Journals
	Peer Observations Teachers are expected to be peer mentors and work collaboratively. This includes at least two peer observations each year for Level 2 and 3 teachers. (Level 1 teachers will fall under the Mentoring program, which includes additional peer observations.)	Twice a year	All Teachers (support from Academic Leaders)	No additional cost

	"Walk-Through" Observations We expect the Academic Leader to be in classrooms weekly. Short 5-minute observations allow the Academic Leader to connect weekly with teachers and students and generate a more holistic and balanced view of the climate, culture, and needs of teachers and students.	Weekly	Academic Leader	No additional cost
	Formal Observations The Academic Leader will make a 30-minute formal observation based on the NMTEACH rubric and Polaris goals followed by a 30-minute conference with the teacher each semester. Teachers will be expected to work with the Academic Leader to reflect on the success of the lesson, set personal goals and create action plans. The Academic Leader will provide additional weekly coaching and instructional support for teachers who are struggling and novice teachers (Level1) teachers. (The specific number and times may change to align with new PED rules about teacher PD and licensure.)	Twice a year, once each semester Weekly for novice or struggling teachers	Academic Leader	No additional cost
	Annual Outside Professional Development Each year teachers will participate in outside professional development opportunities that strengthen their professional skills. The Academic Leader will work with teachers to determine appropriate training. These may include taking classes for additional certification or endorsements, webinars and digital badging, visiting other high-performing schools, in-person training presented by experts, or participating in conferences.	Annually May last several hours or several days	All Teachers	$500 Per staff Funding to cover costs of endorsements
	Summer Shared Reading Each summer, the staff (together) will select one research-based book related to our school goals to read independently. Parents and board members will be invited to read the book too. During the summer retreat teachers will discuss and reflect on the	Annually	All Staff Academic Leader	$25 x number of staff

	research and how it can inform learning at Polaris. This will help build a reflective thoughtful culture around a shared language and research base. Examples: "The Power of the Adolescent Brain: Strategies for Teaching Middle and High School Students" by Thomas Armstrong Ph.D. "Data Wise, Revised and Expanded Edition: A Step-by-Step Guide to Using Assessment Results to Improve Teaching and Learning" by Kathryn Parker Boudett, Elizabeth A. City, and Richard J. Murnane			

Mentorship Plan

It has been widely researched that strong mentorship programs aid in having stronger retention of quality educators. It is in the best interest of our school and our students that all teachers receive the support necessary for success. In addition to the regular professional development outlined above, our mentorship program will provide additional support for novice teachers and teachers who are new to Polaris (after the first year). We believe that each teacher that is new to Polaris needs time to process and align their teaching style with our philosophy, mission, innovations, and culture, and our mentorship plan will help facilitate this integration. Our mentorship plan aligns with NMAC 6.60.10.8. This plan is supported by the budget, providing the time and compensation for mentors and training for mentors. Mentors and the Academic Leader work with Mentees to specifically address the Place-based philosophy, education plan, mission, innovations and specific performance goals (Mastery-based learning, Advisory time/ Social Emotional Learning, and Place-based learning) of Polaris through weekly observations and meetings with Mentees. Weekly meetings also include time to address specific Mentee needs.

Plan	Action Steps Educational plan, mission, and performance goals	Timeline	Responsible Party	Budgeted costs

Mentor Training	Effective teachers who are paired with a novice teacher will receive mentor training at the beginning of the year. This training will explain their roles and responsibilities, as well as effective mentoring strategies.	Before school begins/ July	Academic Leader	Depend what % might be new teachers. No new costs because this training will occur at beginning of year during preparation periods.
Mentor Assignment	Each novice (Level 1) teacher and each new hire (after year 1) will be paired with an experienced Polaris teacher as soon after hire as possible, ideally before school begins.	Before school begins	Mentor and Mentee	Mentor stipend
	Weekly Observations for 6 weeks, then monthly observations Each Mentor teacher will observe the Mentee weekly and then provide formative assessments using NMTEACH rubric to improve teaching practice. They will include observations and supportive suggestions.	Weekly for 6 weeks, then monthly	Mentor and Mentee	
	Weekly Meeting Collaborative curriculum and lesson planning Polaris performance measures and data analysis Classroom management and culture Answer questions and address concerns Discussions will include how to align teaching with Polaris philosophy, goals and innovations: • Mastery-based learning • Advisory time/ Social Emotional Learning • Place-based learning	Weekly	Mentor and Mentee	
Self Evaluation	**Self Evaluation** Mentee will practice self-reflection using the NMTEACH rubric. They will share questions and concerns with	Weekly	Mentee	No additional cost

	their Mentor during weekly meetings.			
Coaching and Observations	**Weekly Observations, Debriefing, and Coaching** Academic Leader will provide formative assessment by observing each Novice teacher for 30 minutes and then meet to debrief each week. During the debriefing the Academic Leader will provide specific coaching, strategies, and goals to address specific needs, which will become the focus of the observation for the next week. Teachers will also use debriefing sessions for personal reflection.	Weekly	Academic Leader or Coach	No additional cost
Summative Evaluations	The Academic Leader will monitor the Professional growth and development of novice teachers through summative evaluations through NMTEACH rubrics for the first three years to determine whether the novice teacher is suitable to renew his or her license and move on to a Level 2 license. Experienced teachers who are new to Polaris will follow the regular evaluation process for the level of their license developed by NM PED.	Annually	Academic Leader	No additional cost

This plan is in alignment with NMAC 6.65.2.8

A. We have content standards which:

1. Improve the learning of all students by organizing adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of Polaris (a) Social-Emotional Learning, (b) Place-based community networking and citizenship opportunities, and (c) Academic Achievement and Personalized Mastery-based Learning.
2. Include skillful instructional leaders (PLCs), administrative leaders (Academic Leader and Manager of Operations), professional community partners (Place Network), and board leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement;
3. Have dedicated resources (time and money) to support adult learning and collaboration;

This plan is aligned with B.6.65.2 NMAC 3 B. process standards:
(1) PLCs will improve the learning of all students by using disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement;
(2) Polaris will use multiple sources of information, including student achievement data, Novare social-

emotional data from teachers and students, and community partner surveys to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact;
(3) Our summer institute begins with current educational research that teachers will use to then use in collaborative groups and PLCs to guide decision-making; Our shared summer reading program is dedicated to current research.
(4) Teachers will understand and use learning strategies appropriate to Place-based learning and school goals;
(5) Teachers will work with PLCs to apply knowledge about middle school student brain development, learning, and change to implement appropriate strategies;
(6) Polaris school leaders will provide educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate in PLCs; This will be part of the continuous learning culture developed during the annual retreat and first PLC meeting.

And B.6.65.2 NMAC 3 C. content standards which:
(1) Improve the learning of all students by preparing educators to understand and appreciate all students and especially the unique needs of middle school/adolescent students. Topics included in annual orientation.
(2) Create safe orderly and supportive environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement reinforced through behavior norms, language norms and routines that support a culture of learning developed during the All Staff Retreat.
(3) Deepen educators' content knowledge through weekly team meetings, outside professional development, and shared readings;
(4) Provide them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting, rigorous academic standards and prepare them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately;
(5) Provide educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.

The plan also meets the requirements outlined in NMAC 6.19.8.10:

A.(1) How are the resources (time, leadership, personnel, and budget considerations) structured to support the plan? School resources support this strategic professional development plan that fosters continued professional growth, student achievement and mastery learning, social-emotional learning, and place-based learning.
A.(2) How are roles of leaders and participants defined and goals determined? Roles are clearly outlined. Each year the Academic Leader will create a strategic plan for professional development.
A.(3) How are data related to student learning to be used to determine goals and assess outcomes? The Academic Leader will collect student data, surveys from teachers, and use teacher observations to evaluate and determine the effectiveness of professional development programs annually.
A.(4) How is collaboration among administrators and teachers embedded in the professional development process? Teachers and administrators are part of three professional learning communities strategically focused on our learning priorities. Each summer, the staff (together) will select one research-based book related to our school goals to read independently. During the summer retreat teachers will discuss and reflect on the research and how it can inform learning at Polaris. This will help build a reflective, collaborative culture around a shared language and research base.

B.(1) What should participants know and be able to do? As part of a PLC, all teachers will understand the school goals and use data to determine progress. All staff will focus on the continuous improvement

of Polaris processes and procedures to improve student outcomes.

B.(2) Is the content clearly connected to workplace requirements and clearly articulated goals? The Academic Leader will use student data, information from teacher observations and reflections, evaluations from parents, the board, and staff, and the PLCs' progress toward goals, to create a strategic plan for professional development.

All PLCs will focus on the continuous improvement of Polaris processes and procedures to improve student outcomes in our three identified goals:

- Social-Emotional Learning;
- Place-based community networking and citizenship opportunities;
- Academic Achievement and Personalized Mastery-based Learning.

B.(3) Are appropriate adult learning strategies used that will support program effectiveness? PD includes a variety of strategies to meet the needs of novice and experienced teachers through a retreat, orientation, mentoring, team meetings, PLCs, and individual development. Teachers will work collaboratively through team meetings and PLCs. They use reflective practices and individually chosen outside development opportunities to insure that professional development opportunities target their individual needs.

B.(4) Is there a range of learning opportunities that address areas of need, diversity, skill development and refinement? PD learning opportunities address the following topics: Current Research, Mission, Curriculum, Culture and Collaboration, School Systems and Procedures, School Operations, Serving Diverse Learners, Curriculum Design and Development, Effective instructional Strategies, and Assessment and Data Analysis. We also include topics specific to Polaris: Personalized Mastery-based Learning, Social-Emotional Learning, and Place-based Philosophy. Finally, we provide time for teams and individuals to address the needs that they identify.

B.(5) How are data related to student learning to be used to determine goals and assessment outcomes? PLCs will gather and assess student data, monitor progress, determine professional development needs, create action plans and work toward achieving school goals. All PLCs will focus on the continuous improvement of Polaris processes and procedures to improve student outcomes.

B.(6) How is collaboration among administrators and teachers embedded in the professional development process? Teams of teachers work cooperatively to design the most effective programs for student learning through Curriculum Design and Development and Effective Instructional Strategies. Professional Learning Communities include teachers and administrators. They ensure that we are strategically focused on our learning priorities. The Academic Leader will collect data from teachers and use teacher observations to evaluate and determine the effectiveness of professional development programs annually

References

Nankin, I., Ph.D. & Fenchel, M. (2019). Social-emotional learning matters . . . for students and teachers. Retrieved February 7, 2019 from https://www.edsurge.com/news/2019-02-05-social-emotional-learning-matters-for-students-and-teachers?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=ad&fbclid=IwAR31AB2OVw3xWPBqG8nYASFtKsbFTkCfZA3ZIMBRTk5Kle2z_BPV7KjpPUs

Total Points Available	Expectations
8	A complete response must • Identify an annual professional development plan with action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and associated costs o Describe how the plan meets state requirements found in NMAC 6.65.2.8, 6.65.2.9, 6.19.8.10 o Describe how the school will ensure professional development time is not used for routine staff meetings; • Identify a mentorship plan for novice teachers, including action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and associated costs that meets the requirements of NMAC 6.60.10.8; and • Describe how the annual professional development plan and the mentorship plan for novice teachers ensure the following occur: o are supported by the budget o support the implementation of the proposed school's educational plan, mission, and performance goals o not only address required annual trainings, but are also tailored to address school- and teacher-specific professional development needs.
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E. Employees.

E. (1) **Clearly describe** the employer/employee relationship and provide **clear terms** and conditions of employment for all classes of employees (administration, professional staff, and administrative staff). Include benefits, work schedules, annual number of contract days, pay terms. Please offer a **complete and appropriate explanation of** how you will address employees' recognized representatives.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Primary Classes of Employees

Full-Time Employees work all days on the instructional calendar at least 32 hours per week. Full time employees qualify for benefits.

Part-time Employees work less than 32 hours per week and do not qualify for benefits.

Professional Licensed/Certified Staff are staff who are required to have the educator or administrator license as required by the New Mexico PED Professional Licensure Bureau. This includes Instructional Staff. All staff holding a teaching license will be paid according to the Certified Instructional Staff Pay Scale.

Classified Staff/Non-Certified Staff are staff who are not required to hold a license to complete the requirements of their job.

Classified Instructions Staff are staff who are not required to hold a license to complete the requirements of their job. This includes Instructional Assistants.

Exempt Employees do not qualify for overtime pay per the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Non-Exempt do qualify for overtime pay per the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Contract or Consultants are independent contractors who sign an agreement with Polaris School. They are not considered employees and do not qualify for benefits. This may include Diagnosticians, financial support service providers, specialty trainers, etc.

Primary Conditions of Employment
Benefits and pay terms

Polaris School staff will be paid twice a month, once mid way through the month and once at the end of the month, totaling 24 paychecks per year. All full-time staff will qualify to receive benefits, including health insurance (medical, dental, vision), life insurance, disability coverage, unemployment, and worker's compensation.

Certified Instructional Staff Pay Scale (Full Time)

Years of Experience	Level I License		Level II License		Level III
	Bachelor's (BA)	Master's (MA)	Bachelor's (BA)	Master's (MA)	Master's (MA)
0	41,000	42,000	*	*	*
1	41,820	42,840	*	*	*
2	42,656	43,697	*	*	*
3	43,510	44,571	51,000	52,000	*
4	44,380	45,462	52,020	53,040	*
5	45,267	46,371	53,060	54,101	*
6	46,173	47,299	54,122	55,183	61,000
7	47,096	48,245	55,204	56,286	62,220
8	48,038	49,210	56,308	57,412	63,464
9	48,999	50,194	57,434	58,560	64,734
10	49,979	51,198	58,583	59,732	66,028

Leadership Team Salary Schedule

Years at Polaris	Academic Director	Director of Operations	Office Clerk
1	80,000	30,000 (0.5 FTE)	15,000 (0.5 FTE)
2	81,600	61,200	30,600
3	83,232	62,424	31,212
4	84,896	63,672	31,836
5	86,594	64,945	32,473
6	88,326	66,244	33,122
7	90,092	67.569	33,785
8	91,894	68,921	34,461
9	93,732	70,299	35,150

10	95,607	71,705	35,853

Daily work schedules and annual work calendars:

Certified 12 month: The regular workday for certified 12 month employees is generally considered to be 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (7:45-4:00 once a week for teacher meetings) for 188 Days each year.

Certified Administration 12 month: The regular workday for certified 12 month administrator employees is generally considered to be 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (7:45-4:00 once a week for teacher meetings) for 220 Days each year.

Classified 12 month: The regular workday for classified 12 month employees is generally considered to be 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m for 260 Days each year.

Classified Instructional Staff: The regular workday for instructional staff follows the instructional calendar with hours 8:30-3:45. Instructional assistants may request additional hours monitoring students as part of after school programs from 3:40 p.m. -5:00 pm for 188 Days each year.

Major conditions of employment:

Polaris will follow all New Mexico Administrative Codes as outlined in

NMSA 22-10A-5 Background Checks
NMSA 28-2-3 Eligibility for Employment
NMSA 28-2-4 Power to refuse, renew, suspend or revoke public employment or license.
NMSA 22-10A-21 Employment Contracts
NMAC 6.66.2.8 Licensed School Instructor Contract

As outlined in these codes, each employee will be required to complete a background check, fingerprints, a signed contract, and provide proof of any licensure required for their specific position.

Leave: **Full time staff**

- Sick Days: A total of 10 days each school year accrued on the first day of each month that the school is in session.
- Bereavement Leave: Three consecutive days of paid leave are allowed to attend the death of an immediate family member as defined to include: mother, father, spouse, sister, brother, son, daughter, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, or any other person who may have functioned in either a mother or father status with respect to the employee.
- Family Medical Leave under the FMLA: Employees may, on occasion, need extended leave time in order to care for themselves or for an immediate family member. Pursuant to the provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave will be granted to eligible employees for eligible situations as defined in the FMLA.
- Judicial Obligations: All employees summoned for jury duty, or subpoenaed as witnesses in court cases pertaining to school-related business, will be granted leave with pay at their normal rate. In the case where an employee is required to be present in court pertaining to school-related business, and it is outside of an employee's normal workday, employees will be reimbursed at their daily rate.
- Military Leave: Employees who are members of the National Guard (Army or Air) or Reserves

(Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine, or Coast Guard) shall be given military leave with pay when they are ordered to duty for training. Such leave shall not exceed 15 working days per federal fiscal year.

Any employee who is a member of a military reserve unit and is ordered to active duty shall be given military leave in accordance with federal guidelines. Upon application for re-employment, the employee shall be placed in his/her former position or in one that is available and suitable. No employee will be subject to loss of seniority or benefits because of such leave.

In order to exercise the above rights, an employee must apply for reemployment within 90 days following a release from active duty or within a period of one year should hospitalization continue after release from active duty.

- Personal Leave: Employees receive two personal days of leave each school year.

Employee conflict and grievance resolution processes

Polaris believes in the continuous improvement process, which includes listening to feedback and using it to improve the school. Concerns, complaints, and negative feedback will be taken seriously through a process that is transparent, fair, accessible to the community, and ensures a timely and meaningful response. Our goal is to secure, at the level closest to the complaint, discussion and resolution of problems with the community, families, students, and staff. Polaris will follow NMAC 6.10.3.8, which clearly outlines the complaint procedures for public school administration.

Grievance Initiation

Any employee who has a grievance with a member of Polaris should first attempt to resolve the differences or conflict by reaching out to the specific person directly involved. (This follows the restorative justice model, which is one of the innovations of Polaris.) The Academic Leader may be asked to mediate a meeting between the conflicting parties. Most concerns should be resolved at this level. If resolution is not possible, then a formal complaint may be filed with the Operations Director.

Formal Complaint

Formal complaints regarding a violation of a federal statute or regulation, including discrimination or harassment based on race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, health, or age at Polaris School by a staff member should be sent to the Academic Leader within 30 days of the incident. The complaint must be written and signed by the complaining party or his or her designated representative. The formal complaint should include:

- Name of complaining party
- Contact Information for complaining party (address, phone number and email address)
- Name of the person with whom the grievance is being filed
- Statement of the facts. This should be a detailed description of the discrimination or harassment.
- The specific requirement or law that is alleged to have been violated.
- Date of discrimination or harassment
- Names of witnesses or those who may have additional information about the incident.
- Description of how the person filing the complaint would like the issue to be resolved.

Review of the Complaint

After receiving a formal complaint, the Academic Leader will review the complaint, investigate and interview both parties within 10 days of receiving the complaint. The Academic Leader will then meet with the complaining party and attempt to resolve the issue. A written summary of the complaint, reasons for the decision, and resolution or an update on the investigation (if additional time is required) will be provided to the complaining party and the Board of Directors within 20 days of the formal complaint.

Final Step and Appeal to the Governing Board

If the complaining party is not satisfied with the decision or resolution provided by the Academic Leader, they may send a written appeal to the Governing Board. The Governing Board will review the appeal and respond within 30 days.

Whistleblower Policy

Polaris School Governing Board is responsible to abide by local, state and federal laws concerning waste, fraud, abuse, criminal, or unethical activity. Any individual coming forward with information regarding illegal, inappropriate or questionable behavior is protected from retaliation by Polaris School.

The following whistleblower policy will be reviewed and adopted as policy after the Governing Board is formed in October 2019. Development of this policy relied on whistleblower policy reviews of Albuquerque Public School District and Hozho Academy.

Definitions:

Whistleblower means a person who reveals any suspected wrongdoings or malpractices that are taking place within an organization using the method identified by the Governing Board.

Whistleblower complaint means the information, complaint or concern received from a whistleblower.

Inquiry means a search for knowledge and understanding about the reported matter.

Investigation means a formal, systematic, detailed examination into the reported matter.

Audit means the formal examination of an individual's or department's accounting records, financial situation or compliance with some other set of standards.

Program evaluation means a systematic inquiry into the efficiency and effectiveness of accomplishing stated objectives; ethical issues; adherence to applicable federal and state law and regulation; responsible and appropriate use of resources, including funds, property and personnel; adequate operating and administrative processes, practices and internal management controls of specific projects and/or services administered by the school.

Responsibility to Report Criminal, Unethical or Concerning Activity

Polaris School shall maintain an anonymous whistleblower service through which any individual may issue a complaint or concern regarding the Polaris School. These concerns may include any suspected

unethical activity observed by the individual. Whistleblower complaints shall be directed to the Academic Leader for appropriate delegation as outlined in this procedural directive.

Individuals also may directly contact the Academic Leader regarding complaints and concerns with Polaris School. These complaints and concerns shall be appropriately delegated as outlined in this procedural directive.

School employees shall notify the Academic Leader, within one (1) business day of knowledge of any suspected unlawful action, including theft of school property, of which employees are aware. The Academic Leader shall investigate any and all suspected unlawful actions reported by school employees and may refer the matter to an internal audit committee or law enforcement in the event that the complaint involves suspected criminal activity.

Whistleblower Complaints

The Academic Leader shall resolve each whistleblower complaint to the best of their ability. If, in their opinion, this resolution requires information, the Academic Leader will investigate; however, they shall not provide any information that must remain confidential to protect the anonymity of the individual(s) filing the complaint, to protect Polaris School from claims of retaliation, to avoid conflicts of interest or due to state statute or regulation.

The Academic Leader shall track the number of and other appropriate information regarding whistleblower complaints for reporting to any required or appropriate agencies.

*Note: If at any time the Academic Leader discovers suspected unlawful activity of a criminal nature, they shall immediately notify the appropriate law enforcement agency of the activity and the inquiry being conducted. The law enforcement agency may assume the sole responsibility of the investigation or may share responsibility of the investigation with the school.

Academic Leader

If the nature of the whistleblower complaint concerns the Academic Leader, reports of any unethical behavior on the part of the Academic Leader should be brought to the Governing Board Chair. The information on how to make contact with the Governing Board shall be posted in a conspicuous place at Polaris School.

The Governing Board Chair shall forward the information to the appropriate agencies for investigation then will meet in closed session with the Governing Board to determine any necessary action steps.

Governing Board Member

If the nature of the whistleblower complaint is about a member of Polaris School Governing Board, the complaint should be made to the Academic Leader who shall refer it to appropriate state and local officials, which may include the State Auditor or the Attorney General.

Criminal

If the nature of the whistleblower complaint is suspected criminal activity, felony or misdemeanor, of an employee, student or activity, the matter will be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Criminal activity may include, but is not limited to, substance abuse at the workplace, threats, physical

violence, theft, falsification of information, and destruction of property.

Employee Discipline, Re-Contracting and Contract Termination Process

Several New Mexico statutes contain provisions related to contracting, re-contracting, termination, and discipline including:

- 22-10A-21 Employment contracts; duration.
- 22-10A-22 Notice of reemployment; termination.
- 22-10A-23 Reemployment; acceptance; rejection; binding contract.
- 22-10A-24 Termination decisions; local school board; governing authority of a state agency; procedures.
- 22-10A-25 Appeals; independent arbitrator; qualifications; procedure; binding decision.
- 22-10A-26 Excepted from provisions.
- 22-10A-27 Discharge hearing; procedures.
- 22-10A-28 Appeals; independent arbitrator; qualifications; procedure; binding decision.
- 22-10A-29 Compensation payments to discharged personnel.
- 22-10A-30. Supervision and correction procedures.

During the planning year, the Polaris School Governing Board will adopt policies covering these provisions.

However as a note for the purpose of this application, some of the requirements are:

- Employee contracts are for the period of one school year.
- On or before the last day of the school year of the existing employment contract, employees will receive written notice of reemployment or termination. A notice of reemployment shall be an offer of employment for the ensuing school year. A notice of termination shall be a notice of intention not to reemploy for the ensuing school year.
- All employees being offered reemployment must accept the offer within 15 days of the date of offer or within 15 days after the end of the school year when a reemployment offer is not made.
- Termination of employees must follow the process defined in 22-10A-24.

Explain how the school, through the governing body and head administrator, will address employee unions and other school-specific employee representatives.

Polaris Founding Team and Governing Board believe in the continuous improvement process, which includes listening to feedback and using it to improve the school, so we value the opinions and concerns of employees. Teachers have roles in governance and developing school strategies and programs through Professional Learning Communities and Teams. We are dedicated to building a community that benefits students, teachers, and our local communities.

During the planning year, the Academic Leader or the Governing Board Chair will open a discussion with the local LAPS union representative. Together we would assess the options for a union contract with Polaris School. After school staff is hired, the Governing Board is committed to a discussion with the

union and all Polaris staff before making any decision.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Identify all primary classes of employees the school will employ (e.g., administrative, professional, term, contract); • Identify the primary conditions of employment for each class of employees, including: o Benefits and pay terms o Daily work schedules and annual work calendars o Major conditions of employment o Employee conflict and grievance resolution processes o Employee discipline, re-contracting, and contract termination processes; and • Explain how the school, through the governing body and head administrator, will address employee unions and other school-specific employee representatives.
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F. Community/Parent/Employee Involvement in Governance.

F. (1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** plan that describes school structures that will provide meaningful parental, professional educator, and community involvement in the governance and operation of the proposed school. The plan includes structures to facilitate **parental involvement that will help to advance** the proposed school's mission.

Please note that charter schools *may not require* community or parental support or involvement as grounds for accepting or not accepting a student.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

A large body of research indicates that family involvement in their child's education promote positive outcomes, including reduced dropout rates, increased student achievement, reduced absenteeism, better attitudes toward learning, and fewer conduct problems. Family engagement is also associated with higher student expectations, better student-teacher relationships, and improved trust in schools (http://s28742.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Outcomes-research-11-12-10.pdf).

In order to fulfill our mission "to engage students in the community, environment, history and culture of Northern New Mexico through personalized hands-on learning experiences that strengthen and support student well-being and intellectual growth" we believe that integrating parents into the culture of the school is vital. As a "Place-based" school, Polaris School has a vested interest in integrating families and the community into the fabric of the school in order to build a strong educational ecosystem of support for students.

In order for parents and community members to become effective partners in education, we must have a shared vocabulary and two-way communication. We have established a continuum of opportunities and different methods of communication for parents, educators, and the wider community to help us create Our communication plan includes many different opportunities to communicate with and engage families and the wider community in achieving our mission and goals.

Polaris School is dedicated to student academic and social emotional growth, and we know that success depends upon all stakeholders understanding and working toward the same goals. We believe in honest transparency and regular communication that holds Polaris accountable and builds trust with our stakeholders.

We believe that providing avenues for two-way communication and strategies for stakeholders to engage with the school is essential to student success. In order to become effective partners in education, we must have a shared vocabulary and two-way communication. We have established a continuum of opportunities and different forms of communication for parents, educators, and the wider community to help us achieve our mission and goals.

Polaris Family and Community Communication and Engagement

Event	Time	Participants	Purpose
Coffee Conversations	Monthly	Hosted by Family Council. Includes parents, academic leader, teachers, and community members	Family Council will host a monthly conversation between parents and Polaris School Leaders. Parents may suggest topics for discussion to Family Council Leaders. This is an opportunity for Polaris School to share schoolwide data and celebrate student successes. It is also a chance for leaders to address parent concerns.
Exhibitions	At least once a year	Community, parents, students, teachers	Periodically throughout the learning experience, the entire school will gather to share personal growth and community impact. The school and community partners will work together to determine the type, number, and scope of these exhibitions. Collect survey data about the success from community partners.
Capstone Projects	Annually	Parents, students, teachers	Capstone projects are completed during the end of each level of study and support students through an independent study chosen by the student. Capstone project provide an opportunity for students, parents, and teachers to celebrate student growth and progress over the year.
Polaris School Meetup	Monthly	Parents, students, teachers	Families will be invited to attend weekend events and learning opportunities each month. These are optional times for parents and students to meet outside of the school setting informally learning together. It might be a hike, visiting a museum, or enjoying a play.

Compass Email Updates	Weekly	Academic Leader, parents	The Compass is a weekly email update sent to parents that includes important school information about events happening that week.
Press Releases and/or Social Media	Weekly	Academic Leader, students, Families	Media will be used periodically to share stories, pictures (with permission), news, and school (not individual) data with the community.
Place Network	Quarterly	Academic Leader and Place Network Community Coordinator	The Academic Leader will work with *Krista Hollis*, the Place Network Schools Community Coordinator, to build connections, share resources and new tools, and generally enhance the community experience.
Family Conferences	Twice a year, first and third quarter	Parents, students, teachers	Parents, students, and teachers share aspirations for students, analyze student work and assessments and set learning goals and strategies.
IEP Meetings	Annually	Parents of identified Special Education students, teachers	Parents of students qualified for special services (Gifted and those with other Special Needs) and teachers share aspirations for students, analyze student work and assessments, evaluate strategies and intervention supports for students, and set learning goals.
Social Media Facebook Page	Weekly	Community	Social Media will be used to share information with the community, such as upcoming engagement opportunities, exhibitions, Family Council meetings, school wide data, and school celebrations. Students and Family Council will help curate this site with photographs and events.

Novare	Weekly	Students, parents, teachers	This online platform is used to personalize learning and monitor progress toward competencies. Students submit assignments that demonstrate mastery of concepts into an online portfolio (Novare). Teachers will use the portfolio to communicate student progress in "real time" with parents.
Summer Shared Reading	Annually, summer	Teachers, parents, board members	Each summer, the staff will select one research-based book related to our school goals to read independently. Parents and board members will be invited to read the book too. During the summer retreat teachers will discuss and reflect on the research and how it can inform learning at Polaris. This will help build a reflective thoughtful culture around a shared language and research base.
Polaris School Foundation	Meet monthly		501c3 dedicated to supporting Polaris through fundraising.
Family Advisory Council	Meet monthly	Organized by the Polaris Foundation with grade level parent and teacher representatives, all parents are members and encouraged to participate	Communicate the mission and goals of the school, shares schoolwide data and progress toward goals, provides an opportunity for family and community input and participation in supporting the goals and mission. Family council works closely with the Polaris Foundation.

Novare and Family Conferences: Students, Families, and Educators

We know that education continues outside of our classrooms, and we believe that providing avenues for two-way communication and strategies for families to engage with the school is essential to student success. Polaris will provide families with accurate and timely data to support their understanding of student progress, mastery of concepts, and achievement, so

that we can all effectively support students.

Parents will have access to the online platform, Novare, through the parent/guardian portal, where they can view student progress and mastery of competencies at any time. Parents will receive regular progress reports at each quarterly reporting period, these will include academic progress, formative and summative assessments, and social emotional information.

Parents are invited to participate in family conferences twice a year. All families (parents and student) will have a scheduled time at school to review student assessment data and share their perspectives. The conference will begin with students guiding parents and teachers through their progress on competencies during a specific time period. Students, parents, and teachers will review individual student goals and, together, develop specific steps that students can take at school and at home to progress toward those goals. If needed, conferences may conclude with time for just the parents and teachers.

Family conferences are not limited to twice a year. Parents, students, and teachers are encouraged to proactively schedule meetings at any time to address student concerns. Teachers will notify parents when a student performs below the standard deviation on the NWEA MAP assessment or is not mastering competencies. They will set a family meeting to create action steps to support the student. The teacher will send regular updates to parents over the next six weeks to ensure that parents are aware of students who are struggling.

Polaris is focused on developing a strong community, so we have additional opportunities for families to engage with the students, staff, and community partners through community events and information.

Family Council: Advancing the Mission with Families, Community Members, Educators
The goal of the Family Council is to facilitate family and community involvement that helps advance the mission of the school. The Academic Leader will communicate the mission and goals of the school and share schoolwide data and progress toward goals to the Family Council. Family Council will provide opportunities for family and community members to voice their concerns and provide input in helping Polaris School achieve our mission and goals. Every Polaris Charter School parent or guardian is automatically a member of the Family Council.

Polaris School Family Council will elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and grade level representatives. This core group will serve as Family Council Leaders who run monthly meetings and Coffee Conversations in accordance with the open meetings act. Family Council Leaders will focus on developing an action plan to engage families and the community in furthering the mission and goals of Polaris. They will also serve as advisors to the Polaris Leadership Team.

Family Council Leaders will serve as advisors to the Polaris School Leadership Team. They may provide feedback or advice regarding the school's budget, serve on Polaris Governing Board Committees, or be invited to serve on the Audit Committee in compliance with Public School Finance Section 22-8-12.3.

Family Council Leaders will communicate regularly with parents and faculty to support school initiatives. They will coordinate parent/guardian volunteer opportunities such as event support (end of term celebrations, family night, etc), teacher breakfasts/lunches (during conferences), and development (fundraising events, etc.), classroom volunteer needs, work parties, etc.

All Family Council members are encouraged to support Polaris School students and staff in the following ways:

- Families and other community members are encouraged to serve on Polaris Charter School Foundation and help with fundraising to help support the school.
- Community, parents, and staff are encouraged to attend end of session portfolio/project celebrations.
- Assist school leaders in identifying opportunities for students to collaborate with community organizations for projects and other learning opportunities on a regular basis.
- Complete an annual input survey.

Polaris School will collect feedback from stakeholders, including families and community members, through an annual input survey. The survey will provide data to help the Governing Board evaluate the school's effectiveness and inform priorities and goals for the following academic year.

Polaris School will not require family or parental support or involvement as grounds for accepting, not accepting, enrolling, dis-enrolling, or otherwise differentiating treatment of a student.

The Family Council may elect to **suggest** a certain amount of family service or contribution, but may not require service or contribution from families who are unwilling or unable to meet the council's suggested service or support commitment. Families may always choose not to participate or opt out of Family Council initiatives by simply notifying the Family Council of their intent to opt out. Retaliation or retribution against anyone for choosing not to participate is strictly prohibited and can result in disciplinary action.

Teacher Input in Polaris Mission, Goals and Governance

Teachers are experts in understanding students and provide an important voice in analyzing data, determining the strategies to achieve the mission and goals, and the governance of Polaris. Because of this, they serve in several important roles.

Professional Learning Community: Provide Strategies to Achieve Mission and Goals

Teachers will participate in a Professional Learning Community (PLC). Three PLCs will ensure that we are strategically focused on our learning priorities. Each PLC meeting will have specific meeting goals to ensure that discussions are focused toward specific outcomes. PLCs will gather and assess student data, monitor progress, determine professional development needs, create action plans and work toward achieving school goals. All PLCs will focus on the continuous

improvement of Polaris processes and procedures to improve student outcomes. While the mission and goals will provide direction, PLCs will provide specific school and classroom strategies, actions, and activities to reach those goals.
PLCs:

1. Social-Emotional Learning
2. Place-based community networking and citizenship opportunities.
3. Academic Achievement and Personalized Mastery-based Learning.

Teacher representatives serve on the Family Council. They work with families and the community to brainstorm resources and activities to advance Polaris mission and goals.

Weekly Team Meetings
Weekly team meetings are designed for teachers to work together in a supportive and collaborative environment to design and implement effective data driven curriculum and instruction. Teams work to design the most effective programs for student learning through immediate ("real time") design and assessment. Together they support each other and hold the team accountable to high standards. Weekly team meetings focus on curriculum design and development, effective instructional strategies, and building a supportive professional community.

Teacher: Governance Roles

Annually, all teachers will be asked to complete an anonymous survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the Academic Leader and gauge teacher satisfaction. This valuable feedback will help the Governing Board evaluate the Academic Leader's strengths and areas needing improvement, which will inform goals for the following academic year. It will also help the Governing Board to hear the concerns of teachers regarding other organizational and personnel issues.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Identify school operation and governance structures that will provide the following: o A meaningful opportunity for parental input and participation o A meaningful opportunity for professional educator input and participation o A meaningful opportunity for community input and participation; • Describe how the structures will facilitate parental involvement that will help advance the proposed school's mission; • Include assurances that the school understands it may not require family or

	parental support or involvement as grounds for accepting, not accepting, enrolling, dis-enrolling, or otherwise differentiating treatment of a student; and • If the school plans to have a suggested amount of parent service or contribution, explain the process of opting out for parents who are unwilling or unable to meet the proposed school's suggested service or support commitment.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

F. (2) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** plan to receive and process concerns and complaints from the community and parents. The plan is transparent, fair, accessible to the community, and ensures a timely and meaningful response from school administration and the governing body.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Polaris School Governing Board believes in the continuous improvement process, which includes listening to feedback and using it to improve the school. Concerns, complaints, and negative feedback will be taken seriously through a process that is transparent, fair, accessible to the community, and ensures a timely and meaningful response. Our goal is to secure, at the level closest to the complaint, discussion and resolution of problems with the community, families, students, and staff. Polaris will follow NMAC 6.10.3.8, which clearly outlines the complaint procedures for public school administration.

Grievance Initiation

Any member from the community (community, parents and families, and students) who has a grievance with a member of Polaris should first attempt to resolve the differences or conflict by reaching out to the specific person directly involved. (This follows the restorative justice model, which is one of the innovations of Polaris.) The Academic Leader may be asked to mediate a meeting between the conflicting parties. Most concerns should be resolved at this level. If resolution is not possible, then a formal complaint may be filed with the Academic Leader.

Formal Complaint

Formal complaints regarding a violation of a federal statute or regulation, including discrimination or harassment based on race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, health, or age at Polaris School by a staff member should be sent to the Academic Leader within 30 days of the incident. The complaint must be written and signed by the complaining party or his or her designated representative. The formal complaint should include:

- Name of complaining party
- Contact Information for complaining party (address, phone number and email address)
- Name of the person with whom the grievance is being filed
- Statement of the facts. This should be a detailed description of the discrimination or harassment.
- The specific requirement or law that is alleged to have been violated.
- Date of discrimination or harassment
- Names of witnesses or those who may have additional information about the incident.
- Description of how the person filing the complaint would like the issue to be resolved.

Review of the Complaint

After receiving a formal complaint, the Operations Director review the complaint, investigate and interview both parties within 10 days of receiving the complaint. The Academic Leader will then meet with the complaining party and attempt to resolve the issue. A written summary of the complaint, reasons for the decision, and resolution or an update on the investigation (if

additional time is required) will be provided to the complaining party and the Governing Board within 20 days of the formal complaint.

Final Step and Appeal to the Governing Board
If the complaining party is not satisfied with the decision or resolution provided by the Academic Leader, they may send a written appeal to the Governing Board. The Governing Board will review the appeal and respond within 30 days.

Transparency and Accessibility
To the greatest extent possible, Polaris will maintain confidentiality of the person making the complaint and any witnesses or those providing additional information. Retaliation or retribution against anyone making a complaint is strictly prohibited and can result in disciplinary action.

Special Education
Polaris has specific processes, procedures, and guidelines for communicating and working with families of special needs students based on NMPED 6.31.2.13. The purpose of our school specific procedures is to not only meet legal requirements regarding records, notifications, consent, and meetings, but also to develop a working relationship with families. We believe that developing positive two-way communication will enable most conflicts to be solved between families and teachers. If, however, a formal grievance is filed over a student's IEP or educational program, it will either follow the standard grievance process, or, if a family or the school chooses, they may elect to request a trained mediator from the NMPED Special Education Bureau. The Facilitated Individualized Education Program (FIEP) is provided, at state expense, to parents and school districts in order to resolve a dispute. Finally, families may choose to file a state-level complaint with the Special Education Bureau.

McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act
Polaris will not discriminate against students who are experiencing homelessness. We will first work through the grievance process outlined above to resolve any disputes. If we are unable to resolve the dispute, Polaris will follow NMAC 6.10.3.8 B and complete the NMPED dispute resolution process. The Governing Board will complete the dispute resolution process form and written explanation of the school's decision to the department's homeless liaison within 5 calendar days of the Governing Boards final decision.

Total Points Available	Expectations
8	A complete response must • Identify a grievance process to receive and process concerns and complaints from the community, parents and families, and students that includes action steps, timelines, and responsible parties;

	• Include a final step in the process that provides the grievant a meaningful opportunity to be heard by, and receive a response from, the governing body; if they are unable to obtain resolution from the head administrator; • Describe how the process is transparent, fair, accessible to the community, and ensure a timely and meaningful response; and • Provide assurances that the school will additionally meet the specific legal requirements of the McKinney Vento and special education grievance processes.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

G. Student Recruitment and Enrollment.

G.(1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** outreach and recruitment plan that ensures equal access to the proposed school and is likely to be effective in attracting a representative student body from the targeted community. The recruitment/enrollment timelines presented are **reasonable.**

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

During the planning year, the Polaris Governing Board, with input from parents, the community, and the school's legal counsel will develop and approve a lottery policy that describes when and how the lottery will be conducted.

Polaris School's prospective student outreach and recruitment plan ensures equal access to the school and is designed to attract a representative student body from Los Alamos and surrounding communities. In order to ensure equal opportunity for all parents and students to learn about Polaris and apply before the deadline, Polaris School will advertise our enrollment process in a variety of ways over a large window of time prior to when the lottery is held. In order to attract a representative student body we have developed the following action steps for student enrollment:

Action Steps:

1. Polaris staff and board will build a marketing plan that will include recruitment events within the community (planning year) and at the school (subsequent years). The school will invite potential applicants and their families to a pre-application orientation where they learn about the mission and educational philosophy of Polaris School. We will also go over grade levels we serve, number of seats available each year, and application process and timeline. Once the school is up and running and we have a facility, these events may also include a tour of the school and presentations by current students, staff, and family council.

2. Polaris will engage staff and families in our marketing plan through face-to-face events, bulletin boards, digital marketing and social media.

3. Application deadline notices will be published in the local newspapers (including Los Alamos, Jemez Springs, Española, and local pueblos), Polaris and other local Facebook pages, and the Polaris website. All information about enrollment will advise potential students and their parents that all available spaces will be included in the lottery.

Timeline:

September 1-December 31: Outreach and Recruitment

Polaris Governing Board and staff will implement our marketing plan, which includes recruitment events, pre-application orientations, newspaper ads, bulletin board flyers, digital marketing and social media. It will be our goal to recruit 25% more students than there are

seats for, knowing that not all applicants will choose to attend the school.

November 1- December 31: Identify Student Capacity

Each year, prior to January 1 opening enrollment, Polaris Governing Board and the Academic Leader will determine student capacity for the next school year. Factors that may impact capacity include the Charter Contract, facility constraints, grade level limits, and teacher/student ratio calculations.

Polaris School staff will submit student capacity by grade level to PEC prior to beginning our enrollment process.

January 1-March 31: Application enrollment period

The first week of January the enrollment period will open and the lottery application will be available through the SchoolMint platform. In accordance with *New Mexico Administrative Code 6.80.4.12-D "Initial Requirements and Review Process for Start-up Schools" section D.1.* Polaris will enroll students on a first-come, first-served basis or through a lottery selection process if the total number of applicants exceeds the number of spaces available. If by the first week of April we have not received enough applications to fill all available seats, all applicants will be admitted and remaining seats will be filled in the order the application was received.

First week of April: Lottery drawing

If more applications are received than there are seats for, then a lottery will be held the first week of April. In accordance with *New Mexico Administrative Code 6.80.4.12-D "Initial Requirements and Review Process for Start-up Schools" section D.4.* Polaris will give enrollment preference to previously properly admitted students who remain in attendance and siblings of students already admitted to or attending the school.

Evaluation:

Annually, in the months of May and June, the Polaris School Governing Board will evaluate the effectiveness of the outreach and recruitment plan, application, and enrollment goals and monitor whether Polaris School is attracting students that are demographically representative of the local community. The school will use this information to make adjustments to the outreach and recruitment plan in subsequent years.

Responsible parties:

During the initial planning year, the Polaris School Governing Board and staff will work to recruit students through the methods described above. Once the school is in operation, the governing board and the families of current students will be asked to help staff recruit on a volunteer basis. We believe that amplifying the voices of students and their families will be the most effective way to conduct outreach for the school.

Associated costs of recruitment:
We have budgeted $2,000 for student recruitment. This will be used for publicity materials such as flyers and brochures.

SchoolMint application and lottery software will run $7,500 in year 1 and about $5,000 in subsequent years. We plan to use CSP money to cover the cost of this platform. The link to SchoolMint: https://www.schoolmint.com/online-application-and-lottery-management/

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Identify a prospective student outreach and recruitment plan, including action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and associated costs; • Describe: o how the plan is tailored to ensure equal access to the school o why the plan is likely to attract a student body that is demographically reflective of the local community and school district; • Describe how the school will annually evaluate the effectiveness of the outreach and recruitment efforts in ensuring equal access to the school and attracting a student body that is demographically reflective of the local community and school district and how the school will use that information to make adjustments to the outreach and recruitment plan; and • Explain why the recruitment and enrollment timelines are reasonable.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

G. (2) Provide a **complete, comprehensive, and cohesive** plan to implement a lottery process. Ensure all proposed procedures and policies comply with state statutes and **support equal access** to the proposed school; include how a wait list will be maintained. Please provide tentative timeframes or dates.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Polaris School Governing Board values a diverse community and is dedicated to providing all students and parents with an equal opportunity to apply to Polaris. In order to implement this inclusive philosophy, our plan is designed to reach areas within and surrounding Los Alamos County.

In order to ensure all Polaris School procedures and policies comply with state statutes and **support equal access** to the school we plan to use the SchoolMint software to implement our lottery admissions process. SchoolMInt allows families to submit applications on either a mobile device or computer and uses a single account to submit applications for multiple children to the school. It also allows families to track application status, respond to enrollment offers, and fill out or upload additional enrollment forms. The platform is designed to deliver **access equity** by offering the application, forms, and tech support in both English and Spanish. In addition, each account is linked to a cell phone number rather than email address ensuring all families can participate. In case there are families who do not have access to a mobile device or computer or need additional help filling out the lottery application, they may contact the school for help and use one of the school's devices to apply.

Polaris plan to implement a lottery admission process

If more applications are received than there are seats for, then a lottery will be held the first week of April using the SchoolMint lottery platform. SchoolMint uses a secure algorithm to run the lottery process that ensures fairness and transparency. As families accept or decline an admissions offer, waitlists are automatically populated and updated. Families receive instant status updates with documentation that generates an automatic audit trail for the school and the state.

Pre-lottery: Families will apply for the lottery using the SchoolMint platform, which is available in the language that the user's mobile device or computer is set up in. Polaris will operate the lottery to comply with NM Statute 22-8B-4.1 NMSA (1978). In accordance with *New Mexico Administrative Code 6.80.4.12-D "Initial Requirements and Review Process for Start-up Schools" section D.4.* Polaris will give enrollment preference to previously properly admitted students who remain in attendance and siblings of students already admitted to or attending the school. Lottery application will ask for the student's name; grade level they seek to enroll; parents' names; two ways to contact them (not an address); and ask if there is a sibling at the school. Lottery applications will not ask for any demographic information including gender, race, or special education information. Polaris will validate NM residency post-lottery.

Before running the lottery, Polaris staff will validate authenticity of applicants and check for discrepancies such as duplicate applications for the same student in order to ensure a fair lottery process for all applicants.

Lottery: Through the SchoolMInt platform, the lottery will be run using student numbers generated by the system, not by student names. When the lottery is run the student numbers will be associated with a lottery number in the system. The school may then make offers to lottery winners and notify remaining families of their waitlist number.

Post-lottery registration and Waitlist maintenance: As families accept or decline admissions, students on the waitlist are automatically notified that they have been awarded a seat and may accept or decline the offer. Families that accept offers will have access to school application forms and more detailed enrolment package via the SchoolMint platform.

Lottery Policy Development

During the planning year, the Polaris School Governing Board will develop a lottery policy. When and how the lottery will be conducted should be set forth in this policy. The policy should be developed with input from parents, the community, and the school's legal counsel.

The following will be considered during policy development:

Polaris School will take a variety of actions to promote community awareness of the lottery. The process involves several months of extensive information dissemination and recruitment activities. Polaris School will advertise its enrollment process using newspapers, bulletin boards, and other methods designed to disseminate the availability of spaces over a sufficiently large window of time prior to the time the lottery is held. Out intent is to ensure that there is equal opportunity for all parents and students to learn about the school and apply. The information about enrollment will advise potential students and their parents that all available spaces will be included in the lottery.

Prior to opening each year's lottery process, Polaris School will determine its capacity for the particular school year. This determination may depend upon several factors, including any enrollment capacity established in the charter contract, facility constraints, and teacher/student ratio calculations. Grade level enrollment limits will be identified.

Polaris School will accept all applications received during the enrollment period. If the number of applicants does not exceed the number of spaces available, a lottery selection is not necessary and all applicants can be admitted to the school. However, if at the end of the enrollment period the total number of applicants exceeds the number of spaces available, a lottery selection should be conducted.

After the initial enrollment is completed, students will be enrolled on a first come, first served basis until the enrollment capacity is reached. When enrollment reaches capacity, new applications will be placed on the waitlist.

Waitlists will not carry over from year to year. A new enrollment period will be conducted each school year and families must reapply.

Information which may be collected during enrollment will allow the school to identify students and determine the grade being requested: name, grade level, parent names, whether a sibling attends Polaris School, and two contact methods which cannot include an address but may include a phone number and email address.

Polaris School will not request ethnic, racial, religious or language information from the applicants; require applicants to submit copies of test scores, transcripts, immunization records, IEP or 504 files from the last school; or require applicants to write an essay or letter of intent before an applicant's name is placed in the lottery. Verification of New Mexico residency is not part of the lottery process but

will become part of the school registration process.

The following categories of applicants will be exempted from the lottery process: (1) students who have been admitted to the charter school through an appropriate admission process and remain in attendance through subsequent grades; and (2) siblings of students already admitted to, or attending, the same charter school. There is no exemption for children of the charter school's founders or children of employees of the charter school.

During policy development, Polaris School staff will identify any legislative or policy changes to lottery requirements and include these into the policy.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Identify a plan to implement a lottery admission process if necessary, include action steps, timelines, and responsible parties; • Describe each of the steps of the process to include the following: o Pre-lottery entry o Lottery o Post-lottery registration o Waitlist maintenance and entry; and • Describe how the lottery process supports equal access to the school.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

H. Legal Compliance.

H. (1) Provide a **current, clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** Conflict of Interest Policy that demonstrates an understanding of, **and capacity** to, meet the requirements of the law (NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-5.2(2011)). Provide a sample disclosure statement of any real or potential conflict of interest.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

The Polaris Governing Board Conflict of Interest Policy is aligned with and meets all of the requirements of NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-5.2(2011). Polaris Governing Board will review and vote to accept the Polaris Conflict of Interest Policy during the first official Board meeting after authorization and will review the policy at the beginning of each fiscal year.

Polaris Governing Board Conflict of Interest Policy

1. A person shall not serve as a member of the Polaris Governing Board if the person or an immediate family member of the person is an owner, agent of, contractor with or otherwise has a financial interest in a for-profit or nonprofit entity with which Polaris contracts directly, for professional services, goods, or facilities. A person who knowingly violates this conflict may be individually liable to Polaris for any financial damage caused by the violation.

2. No member of Polaris Governing Board or employee of Polaris shall participate in selecting, awarding or administering a contract with the charter school if a conflict of interest exists. A conflict of interest exists when the member, employee, officer or agent or an immediate family member of the member, employee, officer or agent has a financial interest in the entity with which Polaris is contracting. A violation of this subsection renders the contract voidable.

3. Any employee, agent or board member of the chartering authority who participates in the initial review, approval, ongoing oversight, evaluation or charter renewal process of Polaris is ineligible to serve on the Governing Board.

As used in this section, "immediate family member" means spouse, father, father-in-law, mother, mother-in-law, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law or any other relative who is financially supported.

Disclosure Agreement

In order to identify any potential conflict of interest, Polaris will have all Board Members complete and sign the following disclosure agreement annually.

> Describe any relationships, circumstances, or positions in which you or any immediate family members have that may be in conflict with the Polaris Conflict of Interest Policy or result in a conflict of interest, as defined by the Polaris Conflict of Interest Policy.

I ensure that the information stated above is true, to the best of my knowledge, and that I have reviewed and will follow the most current Polaris Conflict of Interest Policy.

Attachment G contains a draft form that will be reviewed and adapted when the conflict of interest policy is adopted by the Governing Board.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Provide a governing body conflict of interest policy that includes action steps, timelines, and responsible parties; • Describe how the policy meets the requirements of NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-5.2(2011); and • Include all forms the governing body will or may be required to submit pursuant to the policy.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

I. Evidence of Partnership/Contractor relationship. (If Applicable.)

I.(1) If there is /are third party relationship(s) (partner organization, a contractor, etc.) that are essential to the existence of your charter school, governance, key instructional staff, or management functions, identify them (entity, person, contact information etc.). Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** description of all of those third-party relationships that are considered integral to accomplishing the mission of the proposed school. In your description, please demonstrate that you have a **complete understanding** of the legal implication of the relationship to the proposed school.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Name of Partner Organization: The Place Network
Address: 700 Coyote Canyon Road, Jackson, Wyoming 83001
Contact: Nate McClennen, Vice President of Education and Innovation for Teton Science Schools
p: 307.734.9850
m: 307.413.5654
e: nate.mcclennen@tetonscience.org

The Polaris Team has entered into a partnership with the Place Network, headquartered at the Teton Science Schools in Jackson, WY. The Teton Science School has been using the place-based learning model for over 50 years and therefore has a wide breadth of experiences for new schools to learn from. The Place Network is a collaborative network of rural K-12 schools that connect learning and communities to increase student engagement, academic outcomes, and community impact. Place Network Schools inspire curiosity, leadership, and engagement through transformative place-based education. Place Network Schools partnerships provide support and ongoing consulting prior to the opening year of a school. This will include school model development based on the Place Network framework as well as administrative support to answer questions regarding school operations. Once school is open, Place Network Schools partnerships provide ongoing and on-demand support to accelerate learning at both the program and operations levels.

Polaris has chosen to be a member of the Place Network. They are not essential to our existence and we can quit the network at any time. The Place Network does not have any control or influence over decisions or governance at our school. The partnership is voluntary and collaborative, focusing on enhancing curriculum, instruction, and professional development by sharing resources. We share this information in this application as part of our commitment to facilitating an open and honest relationship with the PEC, our local community, and other stakeholders.

All legal implications as well as benefits and responsibilities of Place Network and Polaris School are defined within the MOU and described below in I(2). There are no other agreements or documents related to the relationship between Place Network and Polaris School.

Total Points Available	Expectations
8	A complete response must • Identify any third party relationships with specific, identified organizations that control or influence essential elements—including the existence, operation, curriculum, or instruction of the proposed charter school—that are required by a partner organization or any part of the application; • Describe, in detail, the relationships; • Describe why the relationships are essential or required, or how they control essential elements of the proposed charter school; • If any such relationships exist identify the following: o The specific, identified organizations o Contact information for that organization o Specific individuals in the organization that will be associated with the proposed school; and • Describe all legal implications of the essential/required relationships, including the legal benefits and responsibilities of each party.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

I.(2) If applicable, provide and attach as **Appendix D**, a proposed, **signed, clear, formal** agreement between the applicant and each third party relationship **OR** memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the applicant and each prospective third-party, delineating the appropriate responsibilities, activities, and costs of both sides.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Appendix D contains the MOU between Place Network and Polaris School.

By Signing a Memorandum of Understanding, Polaris and the Place Network agree to the following:

The Place Network agrees to facilitate and support the following elements.

1. Accelerated growth through the use of common co-constructed learning tools.
2. Access to ongoing research and data-collection to inform school model.
3. Partners to collaboratively access philanthropy through the power of a larger Network.
4. Collaborative platform to share ideas/resources around school model and school elements.
5. Premium access to virtual micro-credentials, on-site professional development, and remote faculty via online school (fee-based).
6. Access to model project plans and collaboration through common technology platform.
7. Risk management documents to support high quality off-campus programming.
8. Learning tools and resources including program guide template, project planning templates, and resources linked to Place-based Education Framework.

As a Place Network member Polaris commits to the following learning model elements:

1. Place-based education principles as a core philosophy (learner-centered, interdisciplinary, inquiry-based, design thinking, community as classroom, local to global).

2. Implementation of four common learning model elements surrounding a place-based context:

a. Personalized core skill pathways in ELA, math, and technology;
b. Project-based learning with community impact;
c. Competency-based assessment;
d. Habits of success focused on leadership and self-awareness
e. Common set of competencies and performance indicators based on seven key domains and constructed from national standards
f. Competencies and performance indicators can all be linked to local and state standards as required by the school, district, or state.

3. Use of common tech solution and dashboard to record accountability and performance on mastery of competencies.

4. School elements

a. Student committees: Schools commit to having student committees that are invested in the real management of the school in appropriate ways.

b. Community Partnership Program: Schools commit to building a Community

Partnership Program to ensure that the community sees the school and students as vital resources.

5. Maker-Space: Schools commit space in classrooms/building where prototyping, building, and making can happen to support innovation and entrepreneurship in student projects.

a. Collaboration: Schools agree to collaborate on the following elements

b. Sharing data on engagement, academic outcomes, and community impact to inform the model

c. Sharing projects linked to competencies and performance indicators through a common platform

6. Branding: Schools commit to using the same branding for network logo and place-based principles/framework. Schools can use their own branding for all other materials.

7. Advisory Council: The school leader at each school belonging to the network is automatically part of the advisory council.

a. Meetings: The advisory council meets twice per year in a virtual conference.

b. Annual Conference for practitioners and leaders will be held to share ideas and build solutions that benefit all schools.

c. Authority: The advisory council has the following authority.

i. Vote to remove a school from the network should fidelity not be met.

ii. Reviews the annual report that measures the learning model against available research.

iii. Suggest changes and additions to the learning model based on data

8. Fees: An annual fee will be assessed to support the administrative operations of the Place Network. The Fee for Polaris is $1000 per year.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A response is only required if relationships were identified in questions I.(1) A complete response must • Identify all MOUs or formal agreements that are attached in **Appendix D**; • Include proposed formal agreements or MOUs that are signed in **Appendix D**; and • Identify the responsibilities, activities, and costs of both sides.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

J. Waivers.

J. (1) Identify all non-discretionary waivers that will be utilized and discretionary waivers that will be requested. For discretionary waivers, specifically identify statutes or state rules for which a waiver is requested. For all, describe how the waiver will support the proposed school's plan; the description should **clearly demonstrate** how requested waivers **align with the proposed school's mission and the educational program and curriculum**. For further information please see the following link: https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/information/waivers/		
NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-5(C) Waiver	**Utilized**	**Description of how waiver will support school's plan.**
Individual class load	☐	Click here to enter text.
Teaching load	☐	Click here to enter text.
Length of school day	☐	Click here to enter text.
Staffing pattern	☐	Click here to enter text.
Subject areas	☐	Click here to enter text.
Purchase of instructional materials	X	Polaris School is requesting a waiver for the purchase of instructional materials, to provide us with the flexibility to select instructional materials that aligns to our Place-based framework, mission, and integrated curriculum. Polaris School intends to use resources that reflect the local culture and environment of New Mexico and provide accurate information for project-based learning. While we anticipate that most of our chosen materials will be on the state approved list, we do not want to limit our resources to exclude relevant resources. All materials will be aligned to the NMCCSS, NGSS, and the NMSS
Evaluation standards for school personnel	☐	Click here to enter text.
School principal duties	☐	Click here to enter text.
Drivers education	☐	Click here to enter text.
Statute for which Waiver Requested under NMSA 1978 § 22-2-2.1	**Description of how waiver will support school's plan.**	
22-15-8	To allow purchase of instructional material identified under the "Purchase of instructional Materials" above.	
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	

Total Points Available	**Expectations**

3	A complete response must • Identify all non-discretionary waivers that will be utilized; • Describe how the non-discretionary waiver will support the school's plan, including the following: o a specific description of how the waiver will be used and how the school's practice will vary from the standard legal requirement o a specific explanation of how the waiver aligns to the school's mission, educational program, and curriculum; • Identify all discretionary waivers that will be requested and the specific statutes or state rules for which the waivers will be requested; and • Describe how the discretionary waivers will support the school's plan, including the following: o a specific description of how the waiver will be used and how the school's practice will vary from the standard legal requirement o a specific explanation of how the waiver aligns to the school's mission, educational program, and curriculum o how the school will meet the requirements for being granted a discretionary waiver.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

K. Transportation and Food.

K. (1) *If applicable, s*tate how the proposed school plans to offer transportation to its students. Provide **a clear description** of how student transportation needs will be met that are supported by the proposed budget. For further information, please see the following link: https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/transportation/.
APPLICANT RESPONSE: Polaris does not currently plan to offer transportation or food. Los Alamos County currently offers a free bus service in town. Also, we anticipate that many students may commute with their parents who work in Los Alamos.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A response is only required if the school plans to offer regular transportation either for daily transportation to/from school OR for transportation to/from school specific activities and events that are a necessary part of the mission. These are awarded as "preference points" if the school plans to provide to and from school transportation to all students.

	All schools must be prepared to meet IEP transportation requirements. A complete response must • Identify a plan for establishing transportation services at the school including specific action steps, timelines responsible parties, and associated costs that address the following: o Identifying equipment purchase or contracting needs o Identifying hiring and or contracting needs o Hiring or contracting o Establishing training needs and inspection process needs o Establishing travel routes and pickup/drop off points o Establishing transportation policies and practices o Identifying student transportation needs; • Identify how the school will fund the transportation plan costs; and • Identify all, but at least one, specific entities or organizations that have been identified as potential partners or vendors for these services and describe all steps that have been taken to create a relationship, establish a relationship, or develop a partnership to provide these services.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

K.(2) *If applicable,* provide a plan to offer food services to students (e.g., contracting with approved/appropriate food service vendors, providing free and reduced lunch). Provide a **clear description** of how food services will be provided that is supported by the proposed budget.
APPLICANT RESPONSE: Polaris School does not plan to offer food service to students at this time. However, we understand the important role that nutrition plays in the academic success of our students. Our facility plan does include a kitchen and we have talked with vendors, a licensed and certified vendor, about the possibility of providing food service in the future.

Total Points Available	Expectations

4	A response is only required if the school plans to offer food services at the school. These are awarded as "preference points" if the school plans to participate in free and reduced lunch programs.
	
	A complete response must
	• Identify a plan for establishing food services at the school, including specific action steps, timelines responsible parties, and associated costs that address the following:
	  o Identifying equipment purchase or contracting needs
	  o Identifying hiring and/or contracting needs
	  o Hiring or contracting
	  o Establishing training and inspection process needs
	  o Identifying and completing relevant program application and reporting requirements;
	• Identify all federal and state food service programs the school plans to participate in;
	• Identify how the school will fund the food service plan costs prior to receiving any applicable reimbursements; and
	• Identify all, but at least one, specific entities or organizations that have been identified as potential partners or vendors for these services and describe all steps that have been taken to create a relationship, establish a relationship, or develop a partnership to provide these services.

INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

L. Facilities/ School Environment.

Applicants must complete the required Facilities Master Plan Ed. Spec. Checklist form, referenced below as III M. (1), and submit it to the Public Schools Facilities Authority no later than **the published deadline in the month of April**. The Facilities Master Plan/Ed. Spec. Checklist form can be accessed on the PSFA website at:
http://www.nmpsfa.org/legacy/pdf/planning/Con2_PSFA_Ed_Specs-FMP_Contract%20_Rev_03-05-15.pdf

L.(1) **Complete, submit, and attach as Appendix E,** the Public Schools Facilities Authority (PSFA) approval of the proposed school's Facilities Master Plan Ed / Spec Checklist.
APPLICANT RESPONSE: Appendix E contains the approval letter from PSFA dated April 11, 2019 and the Facilities Master Plan and Educational Specification document.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Demonstrate the applicant submitted a Facilities Master Plan to PSFA by the deadline; and • Demonstrate the PSFA has approved the applicant's Facilities Master Plan.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

L. (2) Provide evidence that you have researched potential facilities/properties and **identified at least one appropriate, viable facility/property in the targeted geographic location**. Include evidence of a **clear plan** to prepare the facility/property in time for the proposed school's opening, including a reasonable estimate and description of capital outlay needs and how the project will be funded.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Outreach and Research:

Our search for a facility within the 87544 zip code of Los Alamos county began by reaching out to Los Alamos Public Schools (LAPS) and a local developer. A letter was sent to LAPS on March 26, 2019 requesting information regarding available District facilities or property for Polaris School. A copy of this letter is Attachment 1 in the Polaris Charter School Facility Management Plan (Appendix E). A reply from LAPS was received on 16 May indicating that no space is available (See attachment H).

Communication with LAPS did not offer any viable options of public facilities for Polaris School. So, we are currently seeking privately owned facilities that may negotiate a lease-purchase agreement to comply with NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-4.2.

Facility Research:

We engaged with local REMax realtors Trish Maes and Kelley Meyers to conduct a review of public and private properties available for a Polaris school facility within the targeted region. The report listing potential buildings is Attachment I. Members of the Polaris team reviewed and visited a number of properties, including office buildings, commercial stores, and warehouses.

Los Alamos County is a relatively small, 109 square miles, land-locked area with few available facilities, so during our search we also noted available land. Although land was not our primary focus, we felt that it was important to explore all options.

Property Review:

Address	Type of Property	Size	Ownership	Notes: available, appropriate, viable.
132 Hwy 4 in White Rock	COM	3465 sqft	Private	Current use is office space. No eOccupancy. Small. Renovation required.
63 Rover	COM	5033	private	Limited outdoor space. No eOccupancy.

in White Rock		sqft		Renovation required. Too small at full enrollment.
81 Camino Entrada in Los Alamos	COM	20,116	private	Some small amount of renovation to meet eOccupancy. High bay for project learning and maker space. Good classroom sized rooms. Entry can be controlled. Located on Los Alamos bus route. Sufficient parking. Would be a good school facility. Currently fully leased. Problem with purchase cost of $3.3 million.
535 Central Ave. Mari-Mac Shopping Center (Old Smith's)	COM-Shopping Center		Private	no eOccupancy, near downtown, large parking area, no outdoor area, no trail access, renovation of the large open space would be cost prohibitive
Deacon Street (LANS Legal)	COM		Private	No eOccupancy. Need further exploration. Expect renovation costs to be high.
3491 Trinity Dr. (Dentist Office)	COM-mixed		Private	Metal construction (might have eOccupancy)
4015-3901 Arkansas Ave. (Black Hole)	COM-retail		Private	Block construction-no eOccupancy

Many of the above facilities were either too small to accommodate Polaris School, did not meet eOccupancy standards, or renovation was either too costly.

The building at 81 Camino Entrada in Los Alamos would be a good school facility. Privately held but available to purchase. Currently fully leased.

Potential Facility

Polaris School identified the property at 81 Camino Entrada in Los Alamos as appropriate, viable, and located within the targeted geographic region. We reached this conclusion after the following steps:

1. Visiting with the owner to discuss lease requirements, eOccupancy standards, state requirements, including owner upkeep, and maintenance during Polaris School occupancy.

2. Meeting with realtor representing the facility owner to discuss tentative intent to lease the property, the charter school application and approval process, and state lease requirements.

Currently the facility is leased to a long term tenant. The facility is on the market. In order for Polaris School to gain access to this facility would be for a private entity to purchase the building, evict the current tenant, make some small renovations and then lease to Polaris School. The chance is slight that this will happen.

Plan to Prepare the Facility

Timeline	Action Step	Responsible Party	Capital Outlay Needs
October 2019	PSFA visit to assess facility	Building owner, PSFA, Polaris School Facility Committee	
October 2019	Work with developer to develop a facility renovation plan	Building owner, Polaris School Facility Committee	Unknown. Cost estimate is prepared.
November 2019	Accept Construction Bids	Building owner, Polaris School Facility Committee	
December 2019	Select and Contract for Construction	Building owner	Capital costs identified during the selection process.
January 2020	Obtain Construction Permits	Construction contractor, Los Alamos County	
February 2020	Construction	Construction contractor	
July 2020	Move into facility	Polaris School staff	
July 2020	Staff Training	Polaris School staff	
August	Start of School	Polaris school staff	

2020			

Finding a school facility is difficult in Los Alamos because of limited availability of private buildings and no vacant public buildings.

Our approach will be two fold. First we will approach the private owners of the most feasible buildings on the list above: 81 Camino Entrada in Los Alamos and Deacon Street. We will discuss Polaris School's ability to pay based on the allotted dollars per student and identify the scope of needed renovation. If an agreement can be reached, we would start to prepare the facility using the schedule identified in the table above.

Second, we will approach the Los Alamos County Manager and selected County Council members to identify options for use of public space. Since there are no vacant public buildings, the discussion would include option to lease empty County land or to ask the County to build a school facility that could serve as a multipurpose facility at the point that Polaris School no longer needed the facility. If County land could be leased, Polaris School could begin initially by using portables.

Funding

Renovation of private space would be funded by the building owner. Polaris School would enter into a lease and use allotted PSCOC reimbursements and CSP funds for lease payments. Similar arrangement would be used to fund County land or building space.

Long term, the Polaris School wants to build a facility using private or County funds. The Polaris School Foundation would assist with fundraising efforts. This option will be explored in the first two operating years.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Demonstrate the applicant has done the following: o Conducted outreach and research to understand if there are public facilities that are available, appropriate, and viable o Researched multiple facilities or properties in the targeted geographic location to identify all facilities or properties that are available, appropriate, and viable o Identified whether or not each potential property will meet the requirements of NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-4.2, including occupancy, adequacy, and ownership; • Identify at least one potential facility or property that is appropriate, viable,

	and located in the targeted geographic location; • Identify a plan that would enable the applicant to prepare the facility/property to meet the facility needs of the proposed school in time for the proposed school's opening date, include specific action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and capital outlay needs; and • Identify how the project to prepare the facility will be funded.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

III. Financial Framework

A. School size.

State the requested enrollment, grade levels to be served, and student/teacher ratio.

A.(1) Academic Year	Number of Students	Grade Levels	Student/Teacher Ratio
Year 1	75	6th, & 7th	15:1
Year 2	125	6th, 7th, & 8th	18:1
Year 3	175	6th, 7th, & 8th	16:1
Year 4	200	6th, 7th, & 8th	17:1
Year 5	225	6th, 7th, & 8th	17:1
At Capacity (Enrollment Cap)	225	6th, 7th, & 8th	17:1

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Identify the anticipated number of students for each of the first five years and "at capacity", based on the long-term strategic plan; • Identify the grade levels requested to be served in each of the first five years (phase in plan) and "at capacity", based on the long term strategic plan; and • Identify the student/teacher ratio (not student/staff ratio) that aligns with the number of students served, grade levels, and staffing plan for each of the first five years and "at capacity", based on the long term strategic plan.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

B. Budgets.

Please note that the PEC will ask the applicants to respond to questions on the budget during the Community Input Hearing. The applicants may have the personnel with the technical expertise with them at the table (and *should* have these people with them if these people were primarily responsible for drafting a section). However, the applicants themselves should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of all areas of the budget.

B.(1) Provide, and attach as **Appendix F**, a completed 910B5 State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) Computation Revenue Estimate Worksheet, using appropriate values and computations for each year of the five-year budget plan (use projected unit value and for special education, please budget the local district's percentage of special education unless the school has a sufficient justification for why it will have a larger population). Ensure that your worksheet **clearly demonstrates your understanding of, and your capacity to implement,** New Mexico public school funding.
APPLICANT RESPONSE: The 910B5 State Equalization Guarantee Computation Revenue Estimate Worksheet is attached as Appendix F. Our first five years of SEG worksheets were based on the projected enrollment outlined in Section II.A.(1). We are using the new 910B5 worksheet that was just released for the 2019-2020 school year. We have accounted for the change in T&E and TCI as well as the phase out of small school size adjustment in future years.

Total Points Available	Expectations
8	A complete response must • Include a complete 910B5 Worksheet in **Appendix F**; • Use appropriate values and computations in each year; • Use projected unit value; and • Budget the correct special education percentage based on the local special education population, unless the school has a sufficient justification for why it will have a larger population (provide justification, if applicable).
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

B.(2) Provide, and attach as **Appendix G**, a proposed five-year budget plan, based on the 910B5 SEG Revenue Worksheet that clearly supports the proposed school's mission and aligns with the proposed school's five-year growth plan, including staffing, facilities, educational program, and services. Ensure that your draft budget clearly demonstrates the financial capacity and long-term sustainability of the proposed school (consider your growth plan, including staffing, facilities, educational program, mission etc.).
APPLICANT RESPONSE: The proposed five-year budget plan, based on the 910B5 SEG Revenue Worksheet with our proposed enrollment, including special education estimates based on the Los Alamos Public School District average, is attached as **Appendix G**. Two specific expenditures demonstrate Polaris School's focus on students and on Mission. First is the cost in line 11000.1000.53414 for membership in the Place Network to support Mission. Second is the first operating year staffing level of four General Education Teachers. In order to support four teachers the first operating year, the Founding Team decided to maintain a low administrative staff overhead. Specifically, the Operations Director is funded at 0.5 FTE and the Office Clerk at 0.5 FTE the first operating year. Polaris School's Founding Team feels strongly that an additional General Education Teacher is needed during the first operating year. Both the Operations Director and the Office Clerk are funded at a 1.0 FTE beginning in operating year 2.

Total Points Available	Expectations
12	A complete response must • Include a five-year budget plan in **Appendix G** that is based on the 910B5 SEG Revenue Worksheet from Appendix F; • Support the proposed school's mission and all elements of the proposed program laid out in the application; and • Align with the proposed school's five-year growth plan.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

B.(3) Provide a clear, comprehensive, cohesive, and reasonable budget narrative that explains basic assumptions, how those were determined based on reliable sources, and identifies all priorities that are consistent with the proposed school's mission, educational program, staffing, and facility. The budget narrative demonstrates the proposed school's thorough understanding of the budget and of budgeting.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Projected Five-Year Budget Plan

Polaris Charter School						
Proposed Charter School Budget						
As of 5/9/19	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	Planning Year	Preliminary Forecast	Preliminary Forecast	Preliminary Forecast	Preliminary Forecast	Preliminary Forecast
SUMMARY						
Revenue						
State Revenues		782,203	1,608,018	1,949,434	1,936,884	2,156,698
Federal Revenues	220,692	104,928	175,885	43,102	51,493	59,883
Local & Other Revenues	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Revenue	**220,692**	**887,131**	**1,783,904**	**1,992,536**	**1,988,377**	**2,216,581**
Expenses						
Personnel	60,000	362,220	560,204	763,930	828,300	895,101
Payroll Taxes & Benefits	20,988	150,951	242,692	328,681	353,855	379,672
Contracted Services	27,000	118,000	136,896	155,889	161,369	167,195
School Operations	93,376	107,623	181,695	114,571	91,876	113,133
Facility Operations & Maintenance	18,480	128,483	176,712	196,544	212,892	229,474
Title and Federal Fund Expenses	-	19,831	38,262	48,877	58,093	67,308
Total Expenses	**219,844**	**887,107**	**1,336,461**	**1,608,492**	**1,706,385**	**1,851,884**
Operating Income (EBIDA)	**847**	**24**	**447,442**	**384,044**	**281,992**	**364,697**
Beginning Fund Balance		847	872	448,314	832,358	1,114,350
Ending Fund Balance	**847**	**872**	**448,314**	**832,358**	**1,114,350**	**1,479,048**
Operating Income as % of Total Revenues		0.0%	25.1%	19.3%	14.2%	16.5%
Fund Balance as % of Total Revenues		0.1%	25.1%	41.8%	56.0%	66.7%
Total Revenue Per Student		$11,828	$14,271	$11,386	$9,942	$9,851
Total Spending Per Student		$11,828	$10,692	$9,191	$8,532	$8,231

Polaris School's Projected Five-Year Budget Plan shows a balanced budget each year. In years 2-5 the ending fund balance steadily grows to provide a buffer for any funding variability due to NM Legislative actions or the price of oil, which is the primary income support for NM public schools. Depending on the ending fund balance and financial climate for charter schools the Polaris School Governing Board may choose to keep a larger ending fund balance or to use part of the ending fund balance to enhance staffing and support of Mission. An ending fund balance of at least 3% relative to total annual expenses will be maintained after year two.

Revenue Assumptions

Polaris Charter School							
Revenue Assumptions							
As of 5/9/19							
		Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
		2019-2020	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
State Revenues	**Assumptions**						
State Equalization Guarantee	2019-2020 SEG workseet		724,753	1,548,918	1,852,034	1,802,009	2,002,673
Instructional Materials	$33/student		2,475	4,125	5,775	6,600	7,425
Lease Assistance	80/120)		54,975	54,975	91,625	128,275	146,600
Federal Revenues	**Assumptions**						
CSP Grant	2000*225	220,692	87,573	141,748			
Title I	13.36/student		1,003	1,671	2,340	2,674	3,008
Title II	9.58/student		719	1,199	1,678	1,918	2,158
IDEA	3908.40/Special Ed student (Level C & D)		15,634	31,267	39,084	46,901	54,718
Total		**220,692**	**887,131**	**1,783,904**	**1,992,536**	**1,988,377**	**2,216,581**

Student Equalization Guarantee (SEG): The revenue assumptions use the 910B5 that was created for the 2019-2020 school year. The current 2019-2020 unit value is $4,565.41, which is the value for all schools. The following numbers and assumptions used to populate the SEG workshop are Los Alamos specific:

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	
Membership/Program Units	**40th day**	**40th day**	**40th day**	**40th day**	**80/120 Previous Yr**	
Growth	**40th day**	**40th day**	**40th day**	**40th day**	**40th day**	
TCI/T&E	**1.108**	**1.108**	**1.108**	**1.108**	**1.108**	
At Risk	**.032**	**.032**	**.032**	**.032**	**.032**	

Overall SPED	**30%**	**30%**	**30%**	**30%**	**30%**	
Ancillary Multiplier	**.019**	**.019**	**.019**	**.019**	**.019**	
Unit Value	**$4,565.41**	**$4,565.41**	**$4,565.41**	**$4,565.41**	**$4,565.41**	
Extended Day	**40th day**	**40th day**	**40th day**	**40th day**	**40th day**	
Fine Arts	**6th grade MEM**	**6th grade MEM**	**6th grade MEM**	**6th grade MEM**	**6th grade MEM**	
Small Schools	**60%**	**40%**	**20%**	**0**	**0**	

Polaris Charter School						
Student Assumptions						
As of 5/9/19						
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Key Assumptions						
Enrollment						
6th Grade		25	25	75	75	75
7th Grade		50	50	50	75	75
8th Grade		0	50	50	50	75
Enrollment		75	125	175	200	225
Special Education						
Level A Students %		17%	17%	17%	17%	17%
Level B Students %		7%	7%	7%	7%	7%
Level C Students %		3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Level D Students %		3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
SPED %		30%	30%	30%	30%	30%
Level A Students		13	21	30	34	38
Level B Students		5	9	12	14	16
Level C Students		2	4	5	6	7
Level D Students		2	4	5	6	7
Total SPED Count		22	38	52	60	68

Student Assumptions: The table above outlines the assumptions for enrollment as well as the potential special education population. The special education assumptions come directly from the Los Alamos School District special education population percentage.

T&E/TCI: The number being used of 1.108 is the average for the Los Alamos Public School district. We wanted to use a realistic T&E/TCI number so used the average from the district. Also we understand that the T&E and TCI percentages will shift over the next few years. In year 1 this will be a 50/50 split, in year 2 this will be 75% TCI and 25% T&E, and in year 3 this will be 100% based on the TCI.

At Risk: The number being used of .032 is the as risk number for the Los Alamos Public School district.

Statute 22-8-25 D3: *calculate the number of program units to which a school district or charter school with a MEM of two hundred or less is entitled by using an average of the MEM on the second and third reporting dates of the prior year or the fortieth day of the current year, whichever is greater.* This guidance is used to calculate the membership and growth units for the first 5 years. However, in year 5 the SEG is calculated on membership units based on 80th/120th from the prior year, 220, and growth units based on our projected 40th day data of the current year, which is 225 because the Polaris School will have more than 200 students in year 5.

Fine Arts Funding: Polaris School supports Mission by enabling students to know themselves and know their place in the community and in the world. Knowledge is interdisciplinary and art is one of the essential methods that people use to communicate. Polaris School students will have opportunities to experience, create, perform, and exhibit artwork. Art is an integral part of the curriculum that will help Polaris synthesize information and achieve its goals of academic achievement, social emotional learning, and community engagement.

Polaris will support an arts program through a dedicated Art/Maker Space and curriculum aligned with National Art and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards. We plan to apply for public education funds through the Fine Arts Education Act (22–15D NMSA 1978) to support our Arts program. We have allocated funding for only our 6th grade students since this is a K-6 program. This funding comes straight from the 910B-5 worksheet.

Extended Day Funding: Polaris has extended learning time to support student learning and improve academic success that includes advisory time, extended day learning, and optional opportunities. Each day begins with advisory time to support academic achievement by focusing on social emotional skills, organization/executive functioning skills, metacognition, and developing positive relationships with peers and also between students and staff. Extended learning days occur every Tuesday, this extra hour each week adds up to six extra days each year. On this day, we plan to offer individual study opportunities and help sessions for at-risk students, as well as an open art studio/makerspace time for students to work on projects. Finally, we understand that important learning occurs outside of the classroom, so Polaris has a unique calendar and schedule that provide optional intersession classes and family meet-up opportunities. Our calendar currently includes two long (two-week) breaks, one in the fall and

the other in the spring. We plan to use at least one week during each break to offer intersession classes, additional learning opportunities, or extra help for students needing assistance. Family meet-up opportunities occur at least once a month (usually on the weekends). These meetups will be family "field-trip" opportunities, such as hikes, special programs, or community events.

Instructional Materials: Current assumption of about $33/student income from the instructional material fund are used to help with textbook and other curriculum costs. There are additional instructional material funds that are included in the SEG worksheet and will use the appropriate code: 11000-1000-56112.

Lease Assistance: Current assumption of $733/student is used to calculate the amount received for lease reimbursement. Lease reimbursements are calculated based on a school's 80/120 numbers from the previous year. The only exception is a school's first year; the reimbursement is calculated on the schools projected enrollment for year 1. Since the year 1 membership and the 80/120 day numbers for year 2 are both based on the assumption of 75 students, our reimbursement in year 1 and year 2 would be the same.

Charter School Program (CSP) Grant: Polaris School plans to apply for the Charter School Program Grant. The funding is based on $2000/student at full enrollment capacity. For Polaris School the anticipated income is $450,000. The plan is to use $203,780 of these funds in the planning year and the additional funds, $229,066, during the first two years of operation. In the absence of CSP funding Polaris School will reduce costs through personnel cuts and also finding inexpensive vendors and materials. A more detailed explanation is contained in the expense section.

National School Lunch Program: Polaris School will not participate in the NSLP. This decision is based on the similar determination not to participate made by the Los Alamos Public School District. The basis of this decision is the expected low percentage of student participation in the National Student Lunch Program and the expected high level of administrative effort needed to file for reimbursement under the National School Lunch Program.

Transportation Funding: Polaris School is not planning to offer transportation services to students. Los Alamos has an excellent public transportation system that students can utilize. Many parents drop students at school during their commute to work.

Title I: Overall Los Alamos doesn't receive much Title I funding as a district. We calculated the amount of Title I funds Polaris might receive based on the amount the district currently gets per student. Los Alamos received $49,465 in funds and has approximately 3700 students, which means they receive about $13.37 per student. We got this assumption from the Awards and Carryover page on PED's website: https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/administrative-services/awards-and-carryover/ which shows the current FY18-19 Title I allocations for Los Alamos. Charter Schools are allocated Title I funds starting in year 1.

Title II: Like our Title I assumption we based our Title II assumption from the Awards and Carryover page on PED's website: https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/administrative-services/awards-and-carryover/ which shows the current FY18-19 Title II allocations for Los Alamos. The district currently receives $35,484 and has approximately 3700 students, which means they receive about $9.59 per student. We understand that we most likely will not get access to these funds in year 1, but based on guidance from CSD, we were asked to budget them to help illustrate our capacity to budget and spend Title II funds.

IDEA: Similar to the Federal funds above, we got our assumption from PED's Awards and Carryover website. Approximately 6% of the student body in Los Alamos qualifies as a level C or D student for special education services. For FY18-19 Los Alamos received $867,667 in IDEA funds. If you take 6% of 3700 and multiply that by $867,667, that would mean they receive about $3,908.41 per student.

Private Funding Sources: While private funding sources will be pursued, we take the conservative approach to budget planning by not assuming any at this time. The Polaris School Foundation is established to raise funds and provide supplemental support to Polaris School programs.

Student Enrollment: Enrollment in operating year one is an unknown for Polaris School. However, the Founding Team expects to fully meet the 75 student planned enrollment. Factors in favor of meeting enrollment are:

- The Los Alamos Public School District is growing;
- Los Alamos National Laboratory is expanding and expect to hire 3000 new employees in the next two years;
- Out of District enrollment in Los Alamos Public School District will decrease as space is needed for new in-district students. Polaris School will be an option for out of district families with middle school age students;
- New residents in Los Alamos come from locations across the country where school options already exist and they expect some options to exist in Los Alamos.

One factor that negatively affects enrollment is the availability of housing for new residents in Los Alamos County. Very few houses are on the retail market because residents tend to remain in Los Alamos after retiring from the Laboratory. As many as 60% of Laboratory employees live outside of Los Alamos County.

Expense Assumption

Contracted Services:

			Annual Expense Increase			0.0%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%
			Effective Expense Increase			100.0%	101.8%	103.5%	105.3%	107.2%
Fund	Function	Object	Contracted Services	Assumptions	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
11000	2300	53411	Audit	Per Amiela Saiz at PED		14,500	14,754	15,275	16,091	17,247
11000	2300	53413	Legal Services	Based on Legal Contract		8,000	16,000	24,000	24,000	24,000
11000	2500	53414	Payroll	based on EdTec actuals		1,662	1,790	1,891	1,917	1,942
11000	2100	53211	Diag	Based on 2% of students		3,000	5,000	7,000	8,000	9,000
11000	2100	53218	Ancillary	Based on 6% of students		9,000	15,000	21,000	24,000	27,000
11000	2400	56113	SIS System	Based on PowerSchool Rates			5,500	5,500	5,500	5,500
24146	2400	56113	CSP SIS System	Based on PowerSchool and School Mint Rates	15,000	5,500				
11000	2200	53414	Technology Support	700/month		7,000	7,123	8,697	8,849	9,004
24146	2500	53414	CSP Back-Office Support & Financial Consulting Implementation costs	1500/month	12,000					
11000	2500	53414	Back-Office Support & Financial Consulting	4950/month		59,400	59,400	59,400	59,400	59,400
11000	2100	53218	Nursing	800/month		8,000	9,768	9,939	10,113	10,290
11000	2300	53711	New Mexico Coalition of Charter Schools	12.5/student		938	1,563	2,188	2,500	2,813
11000	1000	53414	Place Network	Quote from Place Network		1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
				Subtotal	27,000	118,000	136,896	155,889	161,369	167,195

Assumptions: Assumptions on which Contracted Service expenses are based are in the table above. These expenses are all based on actual expenses and vendor rates that current operating charter schools have incurred. In the absence of CSP funding Polaris School will not invest in SchoolMint and not use a back-office provider in our planning year. Instead of School Mint, Polaris School will look for less expensive software and systems to help with student enrollment and the lottery process. Several charter schools still use a manual process for their lottery, and depending on funding Polaris School might also have to use this system during the implementation year. Polaris School will need to purchase PowerSchool or a similar Student Information System. In the absence of CSP funds, Polaris School will not have an audit in year 1 and apply the $14,500 budgeted for the audit in year 1 to pay for a Student Information System.

The fee for Place Network is essential to the Polaris School Mission, to student accomplishment, and to teacher support. More information about Place Network integration into Polaris School Mission is contained in the Academic Framework section of the application. The $1000 annual membership fee is small compared to other expenses. Polaris School Founding Team will not cut this expense. If needed the Polaris School Foundation will be asked to pay the Place Network membership fee.

School Operations:

			Annual Expense Increase			0.0%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%
			Effective Expense Increase			100.0%	101.8%	103.5%	105.3%	107.2%
Fund	Function	Object	School Operations	Assumptions	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
11000	1000	56118	Classroom/Teaching Supplies & Materials	100/student		5,000	12,719	18,118	21,068	24,117
11000	1000	56112	Textbooks/Workbooks	225/student		1,000	1,000	11,647	5,926	6,029
24146	1000	56112	CSP Textbooks/Workbooks	225/student	16,875	11,250	22,894			
11000	1000	57332	Special Education Materials	125/special education student				6,794	7,901	9,044
24146	1000	57332	CSP Special Education Materials	125/special education student	2,813	4,770	12,500			
11000	1000	57332	Student Tables & Chairs/Desks	200/student and Staples Rates				10,353	5,267	5,359
24146	1000	57332	CSP Student Tables & Chairs/Desks	200/student and Staples Rates	15,070	10,175	20,706			
11000	1000	57332	Classroom Furniture	2500/classroom				5,000	5,000	5,359
24146	1000	57332	CSP Classroom Furniture	2500/office	15,000	10,000	15,000			
11000	2500	57332	Office Furniture	2500/office						2,500
24146	2500	57332	CSP Office Furniture	Staples Quotes	10,000	5,000	10,000			
11000	2600	54416	Internet	150/month based on Comcast Actuals		1,800	1,832	1,864	1,896	1,929
11000	2600	54416	Telephone	150/month based on Comcast Actuals		1,800	1,832	1,864	1,896	1,929
11000	1000	57332	Staff Computers	850/staff				2,550	850	911
24146	1000	57332	CSP Staff Computers	850/staff	4,888		9,350			
11000	1000	57332	Ipads	315/student				15,750	7,875	4,220
24146	1000	57332	CSP Ipads	315/student	11,813		47,250			
11000	1000	57332	Ipad Replacement	275/student (warrenty replacement)						11,813
11000	2200	56113	Other Assessments & Evaluation	10.13/student				3,687	3,687	4,214
24146	2200	56113	CSP Other Assessments & Evaluation	10.13/student	2,760	4,472	3,266			
24146	3100	57332	Kitchen	Based on a quote from a NSLP vendor		30,000				
11000	1000	55817	Student Travel	350/trip		2,800	3,080	3,388	3,727	4,099
11000	2500	54630	Copier Lease	125/month		3,000	3,053	4,740	4,740	4,823
11000	2500	56118	Copier Supplies	50/month		3,750	6,359	9,059	10,534	12,058
11000	2500	56118	Office Supplies	700/month		6,400	8,547	13,045	4,424	9,004
11000	1000	53330	Professional Development (including travel)	250/staff				4,141	4,477	4,823
24146	1000	53330	CSP Professional Development (including travel)	750/staff	5,250					
11000	2500	55400	Staff Recruitment	500/open postions				500	500	
24146	2500	55400	CSP Staff Recruitment	800/staff	5,409	4,371				-
11000	2300	55400	Student Recruitment	Based on other charter advertising in Y4 and Y5				518	527	
24146	2500	55400	CSP Student Recruitment	Based on other charter advertising	2,000	2,035	782			-
11000	2600	54416	School Website	Website Developer Quote			1,526	1,553	1,580	900
24146	2600	54416	CSP School Website	Website Developer Quote	1,500					
				Subtotal	93,376	107,623	181,695	114,571	91,876	113,133

Assumptions: Assumptions on which School Operation expenses are based are in the table above. These expenses are all based on actual expenses and vendor rates that current operating charter schools have incurred. As shown Polaris School plans to use a large amount of CSP funding to help fund school operations. In the absence of CSP funding Polaris School will

most likely cut several staff positions including at least one teacher and the Office Clerk. The Office Clerk's roles are visitor access and security, support of Academic Leader and Operations Director, answering phones, and greeting visitors. Lack of an Office Clerk would be regrettable, however, if funding will not support an Office Clerk, Polaris School will look to parent volunteers to take on this role at least for the first year of operation. Cutting a teaching position is detrimental to the Mission during the first operating year since the teacher/student ratio in the first year will be closer to 1:19 vs. the 1:15 as currently planned. There is also a potential to reduce administrative costs by eliminating the Operations Director position during operating year 1. During the planning year, staff PD will be covered by CSP funds; each year after that Title I and II funds will be used for this purpose.

School operations that support our mission and educational programs.

Polaris Charter School's mission is to engage students in the community, environment, history and culture of Northern New Mexico through personalized hands-on learning experiences that strengthen and support student well-being and intellectual growth. This is an ambitious mission that requires careful budgeting. Mission related expenses may be higher for Polaris School than for a Traditional Middle School because, in addition to funding a core classroom environment, Polaris School offers maker/art/creator space, supplies, and staffing designed to support hands on project based learning. Presentation of project work and outcomes to community is one demonstration of competency and accomplishment that is unique to Polaris School. To provide this capability requires equipment, materials, and staff beyond that of a Traditional Middle School.

Several line items in the budget are designed to support our unique school operations: materials and supplies, technology, furniture, a kitchen, and student travel.

Materials and Supplies

General Classroom Supplies: (Function:1000, Object 56118) $150 allocated per student per year.

Textbooks and Workbooks: (Function:1000, Object 56112) We know that the start-up costs for school supplies and textbooks are substantial. We have budgeted for these using a combination of regular and CSP funds for the implementation year and years 1 and 2. According to our research, the cost of curriculum for the first year is about $4,000 per class.

One of our main goals is to support Social Emotional Learning, which is extremely important to adolescent/middle school aged students. Knowing self, understanding place in the community, understanding place in the world, developing skills to effectively navigate society are difficult skills to teach. These skills are best modeled. School culture must support these expectations. Our budget for textbooks and supplies includes a curriculum that supports social emotional learning and advisory time. Some

of the material to be purchased include:

- SMARTS curriculum $425;
- Step-up to Writing $439;
- Guide to the Reading workshop $24.95;
- Book Clubs $62.95 x 4 = $440.65;
- Local Authors $12 x 50= $600

Special Education Materials: (Function:1000, Object 57332) Special Education Materials are based on a rate of $125 per student. We have budgeted for these using CSP funds for the implementation year and years 1 and 2.

Furniture: (Function:1000, Object 57332) Furniture is based on a rate of $200 per student or $2500 per classroom, based on a quote from Staples Office Supply. This will include flexible seating options that support personalized learning and special student needs. We have budgeted for these using CSP funds for the implementation year and years 1 and 2, and then our regular budget would supply any additional classes. Office and classroom furniture are calculated at $2,500 per room. We anticipate our office furniture to last for many years, so after the first two years, only a small replacement amount is in the budget.

Kitchen: (Function:3100, Object 57332) Since Polaris students are collaborating with the community and will be engaged in hosting events at the school, including exhibitions and demonstrations, we will need a kitchen that allows us to prep healthy food for these events. Although we do not anticipate providing lunch for the first year, we understand the need for healthy lunches and are in talks with a local vendor to potentially provide lunch at a later time. In order to cook lunches locally, they will also need a kitchen. We have budgeted $30,000 of CSP money for kitchen materials. If we do not receive CSP funding, this item will be eliminated from out budget, and we will try to fund it by other means, such as through donations or grants.

Student Travel: (Function:1000, Object 55817) As a place-based school, we expect our students to be studying out in the community, visiting cultural sites, examining the flora and fauna of the local environment, and meeting with local experts. While we anticipate most student trips to locations within Los Alamos county will be available through our free local transportation system, we also want to take students to locations within our region, such as the Valles Caldera National Preserve, Puye Cliff Dwellings, or the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture in Santa Fe. Our budget includes $350 per trip to fund a bus. At this rate we should be able to fund 8 trips the first year. We hope to increase this number through grants and donations.

Technology:
Technology is essential for students to access local place-based resources (from museums, archives, and maps) that are needed to engage students in the community, environment, history and culture of Northern New Mexico. Technology will provide the most up-to-date resources for student research. Students will also use technology to create presentations and

projects to share with the community. All of this requires adequately funded technological resources:

- Copier Lease: (Function: 2500, Object 54630) - $125/mo
- Copier Supplies: (Function: 2500, Object 56118) - $50/mo (paper=5,000/$40)
- Office Supplies: (Function: 2500, Object 56118) - $700/mo
- Internet: (Function: 2600, Object 54416) Cost is based on actual Comcast charges or approximately $150/month
- Telephone: (Function: 2600, Object 54416) Cost is based on actual Comcast charges or approximately $150/month
- Staff Computers (Function: 1000, Object 57332) We have budgeted $850 per staff member for computers using CSP funds for the implementation year and years 1 and 2, and then our regular budget
- Student Computers (Function: 1000, Object 55817) with $1425 for cart; Chromebooks at $325 each; Ipads at $1,000 each
- Website development (Function: 2600, Object 54416) We have budgeted using CSP funds for the implementation year and year 1 for initial website development. After this, regular maintenance will become part of our regular funding.

Student Recruitment: (Function: 2300, Object 5540) Our budget assumes CSP funding (24146) during the implementation year and years 1 and 2. This will cover the advertising expense, including promotional materials, flyers, event participation, and newspaper advertising to introduce our unique school mission and education programs to the public and recruit students. After the school is in operation, the per student enrollment cost is anticipated to be about $20 per new student.

Staff Recruitment: (Function: 2500, Object 55400) Our budget assumes CSP funding (24146) during the implementation year and years 1 and 2. This will cover the advertising expense to recruit, identify, select and hire highly qualified staff.
After the school is in operation, cost is anticipated to be about $500 per open position.

Professional Development: (Function: 1000, Object 53330) It is essential that staff is knowledgeable and comfortable in understanding the philosophies, processes and procedures for successful implementation of Novare and Place-based learning. Our budget assumes CSP funding (24146) during the implementation year and years 1 and 2 of $750 per staff member for initial training. This will cover the cost of training staff in the place-based education framework that is essential to our school model, including school leader attendance at the Place-based Education Symposium ($250) and place network training for all staff. It also includes Novare training for staff, which is the online platform that we will be using to monitor student competency mastery.

Facility Operations & Maintenance:

			Annual Expense Increase			0.0%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%
			Effective Expense Increase			100.0%	101.8%	103.5%	105.3%	107.2%
Fund	Function	Object	Facility Operations & Maintenance	Assumptions	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
11000	2600	55200	Insurance	Per Poms & Associates		9,900	13,126	15,426	17,803	20,258
11000	2600	54312	Janitorial Services	1/sq ft		7,725	9,285	10,353	11,272	12,219
11000	2600	56118	Custodial Supplies	25/student		1,875	3,180	4,529	5,267	6,029
24146	2600	54610	CSP Lease Deposit	20% of our estimated lease in Yr1	18,480					
11000	2600	54610	Building and Land Rent/Lea	13/sq ft		26,970	63,650	38,375	10,825	1,600
31200	4000	54610	Lease Reimbursement	$733/student		54,975	54,975	91,625	128,275	146,600
11000	2600	54311	Repairs & Maintenance	0.5/sq ft		3,863	4,642	5,177	5,636	6,110
11000	2600	54411	Electricity	1.5/sq ft		11,588	13,927	15,530	16,907	18,329
11000	2600	54412	Gas	1.5/sq ft		11,588	13,927	15,530	16,907	18,329
				Subtotal	18,480	128,483	176,712	196,544	212,892	229,474

Assumptions: Assumptions on which the Facility Operations & Maintenance expenses are based on in the table above. These expenses are all based on actual expenses and vendor rates that current operating charter schools have incurred. If Polaris School is awarded CSP funds, a lease deposit of about 20% of the first year's lease will be made in the planning year. In the absence of CSP funds, Polaris School will negotiate with the landlord to make this payment on July 15th, 2020 after receipt of the first SEG payment from PED. Currently Polaris School plans to find a facility with the following sq feet over our first five year: Year 1: 7,725; Year 2: 9,125; Year 3 10,000; Year 4: 10,700; Year 5; 11,400.

School facility that supports our mission and educational programs.

We understand that finding a building may be our greatest challenge. We have found some possibilities, but will continue to explore possibilities. In order to secure space needed at full enrollment, we may need to lease more space than needed during the early years of operation. Our Facilities Task Force will look for a building with features that support our mission and education programs.

- Meet all safety requirements.
- Meet eOccupancy standards.
- Near a community bus stop or near downtown. This will help us access the partners and community resources that are an important part of our place-based education program.
- Spaces to support a flexible education program, including an Art Studio/Maker Space
- Adequate infrastructure to support our technology needs.

Title and Other Federal Fund Expenses:

Fund	Function	Object	Title & Federal Funds	Assumptions	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
14000	1000	56111	Instructional Material	$33/student		2,475	4,125	5,775	6,600	7,425
24106	2100	53218	IDEA Expenses	Los Alamos rates with Polaris C & D Population		15,634	31,267	39,084	46,901	54,718
24154	1000	53330	Title II Expenses	Los Alamos rates per Polaris student population		719	1,199	1,678	1,918	2,158
24101	1000	53330	Title I expenses	Los Alamos rates per Polaris student population		1,003	1,671	2,340	2,674	3,008
				Subtotal	-	19,831	38,262	48,877	58,093	67,308

Title I: Los Alamos Public School District receives a very small amount of Title I funds. If Polaris Schools receives Title I funds it will be used to support additional PD for teachers and support work for students who are underperforming academically.

Title II: These funds will go towards providing PD for teachers so they gain a further understanding of the Place Based model that is essential to the Polaris School Mission.

IDEA: The IDEA funds will be spent to provide ancillary services for level C and D special education students.

Instructional Materials: These funds will be used to buy additional curriculum as needed.

Payroll Expenses:

Polaris Charter School											
Payroll Assumptions											
5/9/2019											
						Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
							2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
				Annual Increase			0.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
				Effective Payroll Increase			100.0%	102.0%	104.0%	106.1%	108.2%
				Proposed Payroll							
Fund	Function	Object	Job Code	Position							
							15	18	16	17	17
11000	1000	51100	1411	General Education Teachers			4.00	6.00	9.00	10.00	11.00
11000	1000	51100	1412	SPED Teachers			1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
11000	1000	51100	1711	IA				2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
11000	2400	51100	1217	Office Clerk			0.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
11000	2300	51100	1111	Academic Leader			1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
24146	2300	51100	1111	CSP Founder		1.00					
11000	2400	51100	1112	Director of Operations			0.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
				Total # of Staff		1	7	12	16	17	18
				Average Salary							
11000	1000	51100	1411	General Education Teachers	$46,000	-	184,000	281,520	430,726	488,156	547,711
11000	1000	51100	1412	SPED Teachers	$46,920	-	46,920	47,858	97,631	99,584	101,575
11000	1000	51100	1711	IA	$25,000	-	-	51,000	52,020	53,060	54,122
11000	2400	51100	1217	Office Clerk	$30,000	-	15,000	30,600	31,212	31,836	32,473
11000	2300	51100	1111	Academic Leader	$80,000		80,000	81,600	83,232	84,897	86,595
24146	2300	51100	1111	CSP Founder	$80,000	60,000					
11000	1000	51300	1621	Extended Day Additional Comp	$30,000	-	6,300	6,426	6,686	7,095	7,680
11000	2400	51100	1112	Director of Operations	$60,000	-	30,000	61,200	62,424	63,672	64,946
				Total Salaries		60,000	362,220	560,204	763,930	828,300	895,101

Staffing that supports our mission and educational programs.

Positions and Salaries:

The Polaris Founding Team recognizes the risks and uncertainties within the areas of enrollment, CSP funds, foundation grants, and support of Mission. We have chosen to start out as a very small school with only two grades (4 classes) for the first year, and then grow slowly over time. We believe that this slow growth will allow us to adapt and revise our programming. Our payroll expenses support the mission and educational programming of Polaris, to engage students in the community, environment, history and culture of Northern New Mexico through personalized hands-on learning experiences that strengthen and support student well-being and intellectual growth.

One Founding Team goal is to maintain as low as possible teacher to student ratios. Personalized learning is more effective when teachers engage individual students' needs. Lower class size is difficult to support in a school with a relative small enrollment such as Polaris School, but we are dedicated to providing the classroom support that students need. Staffing estimates are based on the minimal needs of Polaris at the time of this submission. The staffing structure will be evaluated annually to ensure that we have adequate resources to support our mission. If additional funds become available through grants or other sources, we will revisit and revise the staffing structure of Polaris.

		Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Benefits	Assumptions	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Health Benefits (Medical, Dental, Vision)	$7,225	5,418	50,576	86,702	115,603	122,828	130,054
SSI	6.2%	3,720	22,458	34,733	47,364	51,355	55,496
Medicare	1.5%	870	5,252	8,123	11,077	12,010	12,979
Retirement	13.9%	8,340	49,473	76,975	105,257	114,148	123,352
SDI	$9	9	63	108	144	153	162
Unemployment	3.20%	771	11,389	17,721	24,232	26,279	28,397
Workers Compensation	1.10%	660	3,984	6,162	8,403	9,111	9,846
Retiree Health	2.0%	1,200	7,118	11,076	15,145	16,424	17,748
Life Insurance	$31		217	372	496	527	558
Long Term Dis	$60		420	720	960	1,020	1,080
Total Benefits		20,988	150,951	242,692	328,681	353,855	379,672

Benefits: Standard and current benefit deductions are used for all staff.
We have budgeted an average annual contribution of $7,225 per employee for medical, dental, vision, and life insurance benefits. Medical benefits are an average of several of the plans that NMPSIA offers. The assumption is $6480 for medical, $635 for dental, and $110 for vision. Each of these employer contributions is based on the current contribution of the New Mexico Public School Insurance Authority (NMPSIA). We have budgeted 13.9 % of employee salaries for employer contributions to the state retirement system, New Mexico Educational Retirement Board (NMERB). Additional budget considerations include: Social Security, 6.2%; Medicare, 1.5%; Workers Compensation 1.1 %; State Unemployment Insurance 3.2%.

In Year 0 we plan to only pay for 50% of the normal benefits package because the Academic Leader, if we receive CSP, will start in October 2019 at the earliest. Also, we have calculated SSI and Medicare for the Additional Compensation amount for the Extended Day pay.

The Polaris School Governing Board Finance Committee will monitor the budget to be able to adjust financial resources to support our mission and educational program. The Facilities Task Force will be committed to finding a school building to meet the requirement of the FMP, which is designed to support our mission. The Polaris Academic Leader will be charged to recruit and retain talented teachers and staff who are dedicated to place-based education and social emotional culture of Polaris School. Together, as a team, the Governing Board and staff will create a unique learning culture for Polaris School students.

The Founding Team will establish these cultural expectations with members of the Polaris Governing Board. Yearly, the budget planning will consider how best to support these Mission essentials. Difficult decisions will be made to balance Mission support against maintaining sufficient fund balances to ensure financial viability of Polaris School.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Explain basic assumptions; • Identify reliable sources for each assumption; • Include priorities consistent with the proposed school's mission; • Include priorities consistent with the proposed school's educational program; • Include priorities consistent with the proposed school's staffing; and • Include priorities consistent with the proposed school's facility.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

B. (4) Provide a **clear and meaningful** description of what budget adjustments will be made to meet financial budget and cash-flow challenges, or to address the failure to receive any anticipated funding sources. Ensure that your explanations provide **clear evidence** that the adjustments are viable and realistic. The suggested budget control strategies demonstrate **capacity** to manage the budget successfully.

Provide a narrative description of how the proposed school will modify the budget when there are students with special education needs currently attending the proposed school, but under the funding formula, the proposed school will only receive additional funding during the next school year.

Provide a narrative description of how the proposed school will address the budget in the event that the proposed school has budgeted for more students, based on early enrollment, than actually enroll in the proposed school at the beginning of the proposed school year.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Application Budget Investigation

The Founding Team worked extensively to understand school finance, budget, and the PED SEG process during the application period. The addition of EdTec, Inc. brought the real world experience lacking by the Founding Team. Several budget scenarios were reviewed using different combinations of student enrollment, staffing levels, and administrative support. Factors of importance to the Founding Team are:

- Creating the culture of a small, neighborhood school;
- Maintaining as small as possible teacher to student ratio;
- Creating unique learning opportunities for the whole child as described in more detail in the Academic Framework;
- Maintaining a low administrative overhead, which allows more funds for student services.

Several formulations were created before the final set of compromises that are presented in this application. The final adjustment was to add one additional classroom teacher in operating year 1. The trade-off used to find funding is to cut the Operations Director to 0.5 FTE and the Office Clerk to 0.5 FTE. This decision demonstrates the Founding Team's and the future Governing Board's commitment and focus to Mission and to students.

Annual Budget Process

Roles of the Governing Board Finance Committee are presented in the II Organizational Framework of this application.

The Finance Committee is a year round standing committee. Much of the work to develop a budget, present to the Governing Board, and gain approval of a budget begins in January each year. Approval of the next operating year's budget must occur before the end of each fiscal

year. However, the Finance Committee will be active from July to January each year by working with the Academic Leader, the Operations Director, and EdTec staff to monitor expenses and provide the Governing Board updates at each meeting.

At the beginning of each fiscal year, the Finance Committee will create a high level set of activities to guide their work. EdTec staff, the Academic Leader, and the Operations Director will be part of this planning process. Here is a starting guide for Finance Committee use which will be revised after the formation of the Governing Board and the Finance Committee:

The guidelines in the table above show the Founding Team's expectation of focus on Mission, Place Network learning, and early identification of unexpected or unforeseen expenses and budget concerns. Specific challenges are expected and will be dealt with as described in the following paragraphs.

Enrollment and Student Demographic Challenges

Lower than forecast student enrollment, especially during operating year one, would have a profoundly negative impact on budget and school operations. The Founding team and Governing Board will minimize enrollment concerns by actively promoting enrollment in Los Alamos and surrounding communities. However, in the case that enrollment is lower than projected, the Governing Board must have a strategy to align the budget.

Student demographic challenges also include higher than expected enrollment of Title I eligible students or English Language Learners. A differing number of Special Education students will impact budget because Special Education services are funded using prior year student numbers. Special Education services must be provided. Adjustments to services needed to support these categories of students will be identified, expenses calculated, and budget adjustments identified.

Some ideas the Governing Board may use to align budget include:

- Adjust instructional materials and other expenses related to the number of enrolled students;
- Adjust staff levels if enrollment numbers are drastically lower than expected. Ensure teacher skills align with Mission. Include administrative staff in this process. Maintain focus on Mission and support for place network and student services;
- Identify discretionary expenses. Align with Mission and reduce expenses as needed to align budget;
- Negotiate with facility lease holder to defer payments to future years when ending fund balance is larger;
- Re-negotiate vendor contracts.

CSP Funds

The budget presented in Appendix G includes CSP funds for the planning year, year 1 and year 2. Failure to receive CSP funds will require adjustments in staffing levels including administrative staff, delaying some facility furnishing, cutting instructional materials, and reduced place based and community project support.

Cash Flow Challenges

Failure to receive CSP funds will lead to extensive cash flow problems in the planning year, year 1 and year 2. Issues will most clearly occur in areas that are back-funded by New Mexico or Federal programs: Facility lease, SpEd student services, and Title II. Plans to decrease costs to offset a lack of CSP funding include: elimination of Operations Director position, elimination of Office Clerk position, reduction by at least one general education teacher, and an analysis by the Finance Committee to identify other cost saving measures.

Polaris School Foundation

Polaris School Foundation is a non-profit organization whose mission is fund raising support for Polaris School. This Foundation will apply for grants to support Polaris School Mission, place-based learning, community engagement, project based methodology, teacher professional development, and social emotional learning program. To date, the Foundation has not received any grant funds. Polaris School Foundation will apply with Excellent Schools New Mexico for planning year funds but, to be conservative, Polaris School has not identified those funds in the 5 year budget.

Timeframe	Activity	Responsible Entities
July - August	Monitor new staffing, training, professional development, and "open the school" costs. Identify unexpected expenses and options to cover those costs. Ensure expenses support Mission programs and fidelity to place network. Finance Committee report at each Governing Board meeting.	Finance Committee, Academic Leader, EdTec, Operations Leader.
August - December	Review enrollment levels, student demographics, and programmatic expenses. Some considerations include SpEd enrollment, possibility of food service, project learning needs, community learning costs. Evaluate impact of 40 day student enrollment. Identify areas the budget differs from actual expenses. Work to identify budget adjustments and how to mediate new expenses. EdTec will have major role during this process.	Finance Committee, Academic Leader, EdTec, Operations Leader.

	Special attention will be paid to identify costs needed to support Mission and fidelity to place network. During this time, the Finance Committee will begin to understand issues that will affect the next operating year's budget. Finance Committee report at each Governing Board meeting.	
January - February	Finance Committee begins work to create a budget for next operating year. EdTec will create a budget, assumptions, and areas of concern for the next operating year. Identify how budget supports Mission and fidelity to place network.	Finance Committee, EdTec, Academic Leader, Operations Leader.
March - April	Initial budget proposal presented to the Governing Board at March meeting. Community meetings held to present budget and gain community input. Involvement of Polaris School students, parents of students and staff will be solicited. Explain how Mission is supported by the proposed budget. Report at the April Governing Board meeting the information collected during community meetings and suggest adjustments that need to be made to budget.	Finance Committee, Academic Leader, EdTec, Operations Leader, Polaris School community, Los Alamos Community.
May – June	Complete final budget recommendation to present for discussion at May Governing Board meeting. Presentation to Governing Board must include description of how proposed budget supports Mission and fidelity to place network. Revise budget based on May Governing Board meeting. Present final budget for approval at June Governing Board meeting.	Finance Committee, Academic Leader, EdTec, Operations Leader.

Total Points Available	Expectations

4	A complete response must • Describe budget control strategies **as well as** budget adjustments that will be made to meet financial budget and cash-flow challenges; • Describe budget control strategies **as well as** budget adjustments that will be made to address the failure to receive any anticipated funding sources; • Include explanations that are viable and realistic, based on the professional judgment of experienced, licensed, school business officials; • Address how special education students will receive services ***before*** special education funding is provided, based on accurate 40-day counts; and • Address how gaps between budgeted students and actual enrollment will be addressed.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

C. Financial Policies, Oversight, Compliance, and Sustainability

C.(1) Provide a description of the internal control procedures the proposed school will utilize to safeguard assets, segregate its payroll and other check disbursement duties, provide reliable financial information, promote operational efficiency, and ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state statues, regulations, and rules relative to the proposed school's procedures.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Financial policies and procedures including internal control procedures are presented in Appendix H. These policies and procedures were created in partnership with Polaris School's proposed back-end finance and budget support vender EdTec, Inc. Staff at EdTec, Inc provide similar support to successful and currently operating New Mexico charter schools. Therefore, the Founding Team is confident these internal control procedures are tested and will safeguard assets, segregate payroll and other check disbursement duties, provide reliable financial information to Polaris School Finance Committee, promote operational efficiency by reducing the number of Polaris School administrative staff, and ensure compliance with applicable New Mexico and Federal statutes, regulations, and rules.

The Polaris School Founding Team has as one of its core values to minimize the number of administrative staff and administrative costs thereby providing a maximum of resources to support Mission, place network, and student services. EdTec is able to use different staff to perform roles that must be segregated without the need for Polaris School to maintain staff for those purposes. EdTec is able to spread its staff costs across their support for several charter schools.

EdTec, Inc. has charter school support staff located in New Mexico, which creates an effective and efficient working relationship. Additionally, EdTec, Inc. employs certified accountants, financial policy staff and other support infrastructure that a small size school such as Polaris School would simply be unable to hire.

One governance role of the Polaris School Governing Board is finance and budget oversight. The following high level process will be used to ensure that Polaris School is using and is in compliance with procedures in Appendix H and any other internal control procedures and policies developed by Polaris School and Polaris School Governing Board:

- The Finance Committee will annually review financial policies and procedures;
- EdTec, Inc will provide expertise and support for the Finance Committee annual review;
- Polaris School Academic Leader and Operations Director will as requested provide data and information to support the Finance Committee process;
- Outcomes of this annual review include ensuring that:
    - internal control procedures are implemented and used properly;
    - payroll processes are segregated as procedures specify;
    - cash and check disbursement duties are segregated;
    - accurate and timely financial information and reporting occurs; and

- all applicable New Mexico and Federal statutes, regulations, and rules are met.

- The Audit Committee will as part of the annual audit solicit feedback from the external audit team regarding the implementation of internal control procedures and suggestions to improve these policies and procedures based on current best practices. This information will be communicated to the Governing Board during the annual audit review process and used to improve the Polaris School and EdTec financial procedures.

Partnering with EdTec as a financial services back-end provider guarantees segregation of duties in the areas of non-payroll cash disbursements, payroll cash disbursements, and cash reconciliation. No single staff of EdTec, Inc has responsibilities that cross these three areas, hence guaranteeing a separation of duties. These activities will be formally established by policy of the Governing Board as presented on Appendix H.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Identify all the internal control procedures that have been attached in **Appendix H**; • Attach in **Appendix H** internal control procedures the proposed school will utilize to assure the following: o safeguard assets o segregate its payroll o segregate cash and check disbursement duties o provide reliable financial information and promote operational efficiency o ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state statues, regulations, and rules; • Attach procedures that—based on the professional judgment of experienced, licensed, school business officials—successfully ensure appropriate segregation of duties; and • Provide a process the school will use to regularly evaluate compliance with the internal control procedures that have been attached in **Appendix H** and other internal control procedures that will be developed and implemented by the school.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

C. (2) Identify the appropriate staff to perform financial tasks and ensure that the staff positions are **completely supported** in the organizational structure/chart and in the budget. Clearly provide the qualifications and responsibilities for those positions. Include evidence of a clear plan (e.g., job search process, timelines) to hire and evaluate highly qualified staff no later than two weeks prior to the start of the proposed school year.

APPLICANT RESPONSE: Operational financial tasks are performed by the following Polaris School staff:

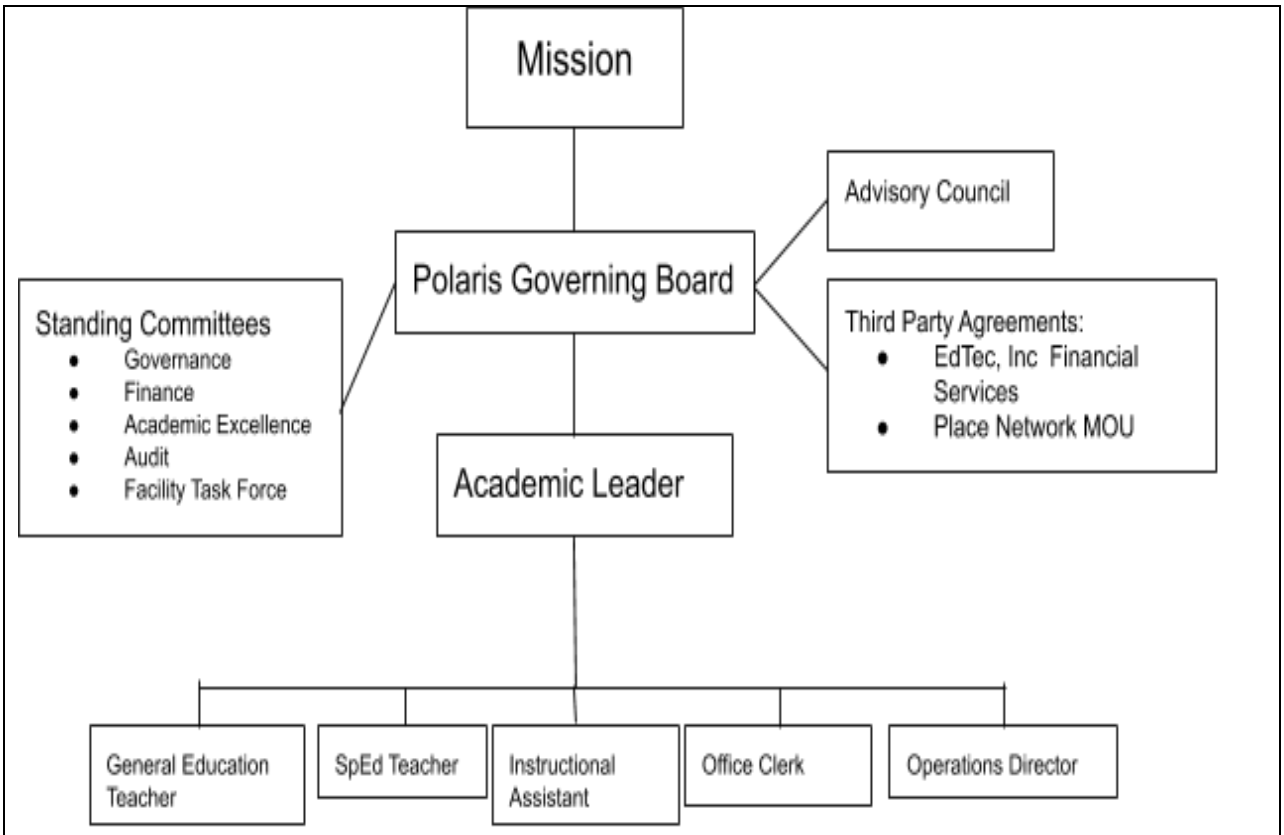
- Academic Leader
- Operations Director
- Office Clerk
- EdTec, Inc staff

Governance functions and oversight of Polaris School financial operations are performed by the following Governing Board standing committees:

- Finance Committee
- Audit Committee

The organizational chart in II Organizational Framework, D(1) is copied below to demonstrate the relationships of staff and Governing Board functions. The Academic Leader is hired and evaluated by the Governing Board. The Operations Director and Office Clerk are hired and supervised by the Academic Leader. Finance Committee and Audit Committee are standing committees of the Governing Board and report at each Governing Board meeting. Support from EdTec, Inc is set up on a contractual basis with the Governing Board.

Organizational Chart (reproduced from II Organizational Framework, D(1).



Polaris School budget including Payroll and Expense Assumptions, 5-Year plan with staff positions and salaries, and 910B5 forms for 5 year planning cycle is presented in III Financial Framework: B(1), B(2), and various Appendices. Positions and salaries of the Academic Leader, Operations Director, and Office Clerk are found in these sections and spreadsheets.

Job descriptions for Academic Leader, Operations Director, and Office Clerk contain financial responsibilities for financial management and operational budget. These job descriptions are located in II Organizational Framework C(2) and D(2) and Appendix C. Complete process descriptions and areas of responsibility of the Academic Leader, Operations Director, Office Clerk, and EdTec, Inc. for financial policies, oversight, compliance, and sustainability is found in III Financial Framework C(1) and Appendix H.

The planning year budget contains a position for Founder Leader, which will be hired by the

Governing Board before January 1, 2020. The Founding Team will recommend hiring the Founder Leader identified in the NOI and the Polaris School Application – Elizabeth Martineau. If the Governing Board chooses to not to hire Ms Martineau, an Academic Leader job ad will be posted and an Academic Leader hired by January 1, 2020. The year 1 budget for staff contains salaries for the Academic Leader, Operations Director, and Office Clerk. The Academic Leader will advertise for these other positions beginning in February 2020 and hire these positions to begin work in July of 2020.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Identify the appropriate staff to perform each financial task identified in the response to B(1) and all other required financial tasks; • Align completely with the organizational chart from response to D(1) in the Organizational Framework; • Align completely with the budget in A(1) and A(2) responses in Financial Framework; • Describe appropriate qualifications and responsibilities for each of the identified positions; and • Include a plan that will result in the recruitment, identification, the evaluation of candidates, and the hiring of highly qualified staff for each of the identified positions, no later than two weeks prior to the start of the proposed school year.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

C.(3) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan for** how the Governing Body will provide proper legal and fiscal oversight, include the responsibilities of the state-required audit and finance committees, and explain how these committees will operate in the proposed school's overall governance and management.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

The Governing Board's financial and legal oversight responsibility is a duty of the Finance Committee and the Audit Committee.

Finance Committee
As stated in the Polaris School Governing Board Bylaws (Appendix A):

> The finance committee will be composed of at least three (3) people as appointed by the Governing Board at its annual meeting. The Polaris School Operations Director and the Governing Board Treasurer must be members of the finance committee. Additional committee members will be appointed and need not be Governing Board members.
>
> Duties of the finance committee are as identified in NMSA 22-8-12.3:
>
> 1. To make recommendations to the Governing Board in the following areas:
>   a. financial planning, including reviews of the Polaris School's revenue and expenditure projections;
>   b. review of financial statements and periodic monitoring of revenues and expenses;
>   c. annual budget preparation and oversight; and
>   d. procurement.
> 2. To serve as an external monitoring committee on budget and other financial matters.

The Finance Committee will report at each Governing Board meeting.

The Finance Committee will work closely with the Academic Leader and the Operations Director to monitor expenses and ensure alignment of operating costs with Mission and Place Network expectations.

Audit Committee
As stated in the Polaris School Governing Board Bylaws (Appendix A):

> The Audit committee will be composed of at least two (2) Governing Board members with experience in financial matters, one (1) volunteer member who is a parent of a student attending Polaris School and one (1) volunteer member who has experience in accounting or financial matters. The Board Chair at the annual meeting will appoint members. The Polaris School Academic Leader and Polaris School Operations Director

will serve as ex-officio members of the audit committee.

The school's financial accounts will be audited annually by a certified public accountant.

Duties of the audit committee are as identified in NMSA 22-8-12.3:

a. evaluate the request for proposal for annual financial audit services;
b. recommend the selection of the financial auditor;
c. attend the entrance and exit conferences for annual and special audits;
d. meet with external financial auditors at least monthly after audit field work begins until the conclusion of the audit;
e. be accessible to the external financial auditors as requested to facilitate communication with the Board and the Academic Leader;
f. track and report progress on the status of the most recent audit findings and advise the Board on policy changes needed to address audit findings;
g. provide other advice and assistance as requested by the Governing Board; and
h. be subject to the same requirements regarding the confidentiality of audit information as those imposed upon the local school board by the Audit Act [12-6-1 through 12-6-14 NMSA 1978] and rules of the state auditor.

The Audit Committee will report at each Governing Board meeting.

The Audit Committee will work closely with the Academic Leader and the Operations Director during the Annual Audit to ensure compliance with all audit requirements and that timely response is provided to the state. After the audit is completed, the Audit Committee will monitor and ensure any findings or issues identified in the Audit report are corrected. The Governing Board will be kept informed about the annual audit and correction of any findings or issues by reports from the Audit Committee at regular Governing Board meetings.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Describe how the Governing Body audit and finance committees will be formed and how they will: o Function generally o Ensure proper legal oversight o Ensure proper financial oversight; • Describe how the proposed school's audit and finance committees will interact with the school's management; and • Describe how the audit and finance committees will interact with the full

	Governing Body.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

IV. Evidence of Support

A. Outreach Activities.

A.(1) Provide **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** evidence that you have developed an effective and thoughtful outreach program. Provide **sound** evidence that you have addressed a broad audience to develop community support for the proposed school. Provide clear descriptions of outreach activities, demonstrating that the applicant is attempting to reach a broad audience and understand the community's needs.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Outreach Program to Develop Community Support

For the past four years members of the community and Los Alamos Public Schools have been in open dialogue about new educational options for its students. Initially in 2015 a diverse team of community members and educational professionals embarked on a nine-month journey to reimagine our high school and win a nationally offered 10 million dollar grant from the XQ Foundation. The team's model was successful for three rounds and became one of 50 finalists. As one of the top applications a film was made about the project (https://www.usatoday.com/pages/interactives/sponsor-story/xq/). A key to the team's success was its ability to engage the community, students, and staff in conversations about reimagining high school. The team hosted over two dozen events including broad community forums, school site discussions, multiple showings of the film "Most Likely to Succeed", an alumni forum, and teen input sessions. The team presented to multiple groups including the school board, Leadership Los Alamos, and the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board. The bright yellow XQ bus even made Los Alamos one of its cross-country tour stops, which garnered even more interest and support for another educational option for its students. The press covered the events and the team collected the community's feedback and ideas, which informed the design of the school. It is estimated that close to a thousand people attended at least one event over the nine-month period. The group continued to reach out to the community after the competition ended through a blog, Facebook page, weekly coffee conversations, and an email list of over 200 supporters.

We include activities and event outcomes for the XQ process below because much of what was learned through these activities has informed the model, focus, and innovations proposed for Polaris Charter School.

Date	Activity	Outcome
Nov 2015	First gathering of Team to apply of the XQ grant to reimagine high school	Team brainstorms ideas and decide to move forward with the first phase of the application.
Dec 2015	Community Forum with Focus Groups	Gathered community's ideas on a range of topics from student engagement to teaching and learning. Approximately 30 participants.
Dec 2015	LAPS Alumni Dinner	Gathered alumni's input on education and preparing for life and work in the 21st century. Approximately 30 participants

Dec 2015 Jan 2016	Teen Forums at Teen Center	Gathered teen input on their vision for a reimagined high school. Three forums (~40 participants)
Apr 2016	Film & Discussion "Most Likely to Succeed" at multiple locations including auditorium, churches and schools	Gathered community input and answered questions. Raised awareness. (~400 community members participated)
April 2016	Student created public service announcement on the future of education begins showing at the Reel Deal theater	Ran for two months and increased public awareness of the possibilities in education
May 2015	"Most Likely to Succeed" Dinner & a Movie Event for LAPS staff	Gathered staff input during table conversations. (~200 participants)
May 2016	XQ Super School Bus Event	The XQ interactive school bus traveled across the country to visit some the applicant districts. Stopped in Los Alamos and talked to a wide cross section of community members about 21st century education. Large numbers of students and community members visited the bus and the surrounding activities over the course of three days.
July 2016	High Tech High Summer Institute (HTH featured in the film "Most Likely to Succeed"	Team members attended the "unconference" and met educational professionals from the around the country while participating in the workshops about 21st century learning.

An outgrowth of the XQ project was the formation of this team to establish a charter school based on similar beliefs about reimagining education. In order to continue the momentum of the XQ work, the Polaris Charter School team has adopted a three prong approach to community outreach which includes; developing ongoing communications, hosting community events, and building strategic relationships.

Ongoing communication with the community

The Polaris Founding Team believes that to be successful we must continuously reach out to the community including parents, businesses, the nonprofit sector, the education community, elected officials, and youth in order to develop meaningful relationships grounded in dialogue and trust. Our communication strategy includes; *digital communications* including an active Facebook page, a school website, and an email list; *Print communication* including a brochure, a news bulletin, and articles about the school that have been printed in the local newspaper; *Surveys* (hard copy and digital via facebook, email, and sent by partner organizations), and f*lash polls* to gauge community opinion on a variety of topics related to the school. We were also interviewed on local radio station KRSN.

The Polaris Charter School Facebook page currently has 350 followers. One goal of the Facebook page is to educate our audience about the Polaris model and innovations. Therefore, we post articles, graphics and videos on a regular basis with a reach of up to 650 people per month.

Our new website was launched in November 2018. Since that time, it has had over 600 page views. Our website provides information about our mission, design principles, frequently asked questions, contact information, and ways to volunteer and donate to our foundation.

Our news bulletin has 163 subscribers. We have used news bulletins to stay in contact with supporters about events and to pass along updates about progress regarding application writing.

Our brochure was developed after consultation with media experts. All publications include our multiple forms of contacting us.

- **Phone:** 505.663.6694
- **Email:** hello@polarisschoolnm.org
- **Web:** www.PolarisSchoolNM.org
- **Facebook:** facebook.com/PolarisSchoolLosAlamos

For further information about our communication strategy, please see the following links:
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/PolarisSchoolLosAlamos/
Website: www.PolarisSchoolNM.org

News Bulletins: email hello@polarisschoolnm.org to be added to newsbulletin.
Newspaper coverage: 11/2/17:https://ladailypost.com/content/local-group-proposes-charter-school-los-alamos
11/26/17:https://ladailypost.com/content/polaris-school-project-launch-fuller-lodge-dec-1
11/29/17:http://www.lamonitor.com/content/charter-school-be-discussed
12/6/17:http://www.lamonitor.com/content/polaris-charter-school-proposal-draws-crowd
12/28/17:https://ladailypost.com/content/2017-education-year-end-wrap
3/10/18:https://ladailypost.com/content/rotary-hears-plans-local-polaris-charter-school
3/14/18:https://ladailypost.com/content/community-learns-about-polaris-charter-school

KRSN Radio Interview:
http://www.krsnam1490.com/InterviewStreaming/01_11_18%20Schoolboard%20member%20Bill%20Hargraves%20.mp3

http://www.krsnam1490.com/InterviewStreaming/11_29_17%20Liz%20Martineau%20and%20Branden%20Willman-Kozimor%20.mp3

Digital and print communication has strengthened our network of supporters throughout Los Alamos and surrounding communities. We have received meaningful feedback and encouragement from community members as well as future stakeholders such as parents and teachers, which has contributed to the qualitative data that we have collected. We have also used Facebook and our website to collect quantitative data by linking our survey and “flash polls”.

Community events and presentations
Since the Polaris founding team began meeting in May 2017 our members have presented to 19 local

groups including the Family Strengths Network, Informal Educators, Los Alamos School Board, Partnership in 21st Century Education, VOICES Los Alamos, Los Alamos Historical society, Pajarito Environmental Education Center, and the Los Alamos Public Schools Foundation. We also attended 7 networking events including several Leadership Los Alamos Youth Summits and Los Alamos Business After Hours. Finally, we set up over 15 one-on-one meetings with individual community stakeholders to gather feedback and community support for the school.

A public Launch event on December 1, 2017 attracted approximately 120 participants who were invited to participate in hands-on, place-based activities to simulate the kind of learning students at Polaris will engage in. During the Launch event, the Polaris founding team formally presented the idea of Los Alamos's first charter school, introducing our mission and how Polaris will support young people's well being and intellectual growth through a place-based learning model that is student centered, inclusive, and promotes deep engagement and innovation. Of those who completed a survey at the event, 69% said that it is important for students in Los Alamos to have another middle school option, 24% were undecided, and 7% said no. The number one reason that would cause a family to choose a different educational option for their child was "more engaging methods of instructions" at 64%. Informally, parents will often tell us that the district public school would be fine for one of their children, but their other child would need something different. The message from our community is clear. They want another option for their children.

Several supporters hosted Pop-up Community Conversations inviting a core group of friends and colleagues to their homes and businesses to learn more about Polaris, ask questions, and engage in dialogue with Polaris School's founding team members.

Representatives of the Polaris founding team have also actively participated in community events including: Leadership Los Alamos Session on Youth, LA Community Health Council's Youth Focus Group, the Family Strengths Network School Choice Fair, and the Los Alamos Nature Centers Earth Day Event.

Building Strategic Relationships

The purpose of these community events and presentations has been to create a meaningful connection with the community of Los Alamos, gather feedback, answer questions, tap into local expertise, build strategic relationships for future collaboration, and generate support for the school. The figure below lists community events and presentations that the Polaris founding team has been a part of since July 2017.

Community Events, Presentations, Publicity and Consultations

Date	Event/Presentation	Outcome
Jul. 2017	Cindy Montoya, President of the Art Institute at the New Mexico School for the Arts Charter High School and Art Institute, Consult	Consulted with team about academic framework, operation and finances of a charter school.
Aug 2017	Mike Garcia at Nex+Gen Academy High Magnet School, Consultation and School Tour	Consulted with team about academic framework, operation and finances of a charter school
Aug 2017	Justin Biarado, Founder and	Consulted with team about academic framework,

Ongoing	Director of Explore Academy Charter School, Consultation and School Tour	operation and finances of a charter school
Sep 2017	Interfaith Coalition for Public Education: Charter Schools: *More or Moratorium? Panel*, Community Event	Small group discussion and full group exchange of resulting ideas and observations.
Nov. 2017	Sandra West, Publicity Specialist, Consultation	Consulted on possible Polaris marketing strategies, such as news articles, brochure, and website.
Nov. 2017	Community of Informal Educators Networking Event, Polaris Presentation	Generated support from area organizations that have educators on staff including Los Alamos Public Library, Pajarito Environmental Education Center, Fuller Lodge Art Center, Valles Caldera National Preserve, Los Alamos Teen Center, Los Alamos Youth Center and LAPS school board members. (~ 30 participants)
Nov. 2017	Partnership in 21st Century Education Working Group, Polaris Presentation	Updated group on Polaris's progress and generated support. (~12 participants)
Nov. 2017	La Daily Post, Publicity	Interview with Kristen Laskey resulting in a front page article about efforts to open Polaris Charter School.
Nov. 2017	KRSN Radio, Publicity	Interview on local morning news show that showcased the efforts of the Polaris founding team
Dec. 2017	Polaris LAUNCH Event, Polaris Presentation	Introduced community to Polaris. Gathered input and generated support. Approximately 120 participants gathered to hear about plans to open Polaris Charter School.
Dec. 2017	Partnership in 21st Century Education, Polaris Presentation	Updated group on Polaris's progress and generated support. (~10 people)
Dec.2017	Cheryl Pongratz, Former LAPS Assistant Superintendent and Founder of the LAPS Foundation, Consultation	Provided information about the place-based model for Polaris Charter School and consulted with her on working with the Foundation and LAPS.
Jan. 2018	School Choice Fair hosted by Family Strengths Network, Community Event	Tabled an informational booth about Polaris, which helped to develop the community's understanding of the Polaris model and the team's work. Gathered community input and broadened our base of support. Connections/support from community

		parents and students, primarily from private and homeschool community, at event promoting school choice. (Talked with ~40 visitors to table)
Jan 2018	Leadership Los Alamos Education Focus Session, Polaris Presentation	Provided information, gather input, and generate support among local business and organizational leaders. (~50 participants)
Jan 2018	Voices, Indivisible Group of Los Alamos, Presentation	Presented information about the Polaris model and the team's work. Generated support (~20 participants)
Feb 2018	Leadership Los Alamos Youth Focus Session, Community Event	World Cafe style event with community leaders to discuss youth issues and solutions. Polaris networked with diverse community leaders and organizations. (~50 participants)
Feb 2018	LA Community Health Council Youth Focus Group, Community Event	Focus group with teens and community members to discuss the needs of youth in Los Alamos County. Polaris networked with organizations interested in the social -emotional aspects of youth.(~15 participants)
Feb. 2018	Robert Gibson, Legislative Analyst, Former County Councilor and Utility Board Representative, Consultation	Consulted about setting up non-profit and structuring a financial framework
Feb 2018 Ongoing	Nate McClennen, Place Network and Vice President of Education and Innovation, Teton Science Schools, Consultation	Consulted with Polaris founding team about the place-based academic framework and operation.
Feb. 2018	UNM-LA Leadership Breakfast, Community Event	Network with community leaders during LAPS District hosted event.
Feb 2018	Camino de Paz Open House, Community Event	Connections with farm school in Santa Cruz. Camino de Paz is a private Montessori middle school for grades 7 through 9. Students are well spoken, take initiative, confident.
Feb 2018	Los Alamos School Board, Presentation	Provided information, answered questions, generated support.
March 2018	Board of Directors Pajarito Environmental Education Center, Polaris Presentation	Presented to the board to establish support from local Nature Center Board of Directors and staff.
Mar	Valles Caldera National Preserve,	Meeting to establish support from VCNP staff.

2018	Presentation	
Mar 2018	Bandelier National Monument, presentation	Meeting to establish support from Bandelier staff.
Mar 2018	Rotary International, Polaris Presentation	Provided information, answered questions, generated support.
Mar 2018	Partnership in 21st Century Education, Presentation	Provided status update and discussed methods for interested members to support establishing Polaris
Mar 2018	Polaris Pop-up Presentation and Community Conversation at the home of Sharon Allen, retired LAPS teacher and local leader of African Library Project.	Generated connections and support Gather input from community members interested in Polaris. (~8 participants)
Mar 2018	Polaris Pop-up Presentation and Community Conversation at the home of Ken Holmes, High School Librarian, and Jennifer Holmes, retired teacher, Presentation	Generated connections and support. Gather input from community members interested in Polaris.
Mar 2018	Joanna Gillespie, LANL Community Giving Specialist and former Executive Director of Los Alamos Public Schools Foundation, Consultation	Consulted about fund development specialist about best practices for local fundraising.
Mar 2018	Board of Directors, Los Alamos Historical Society, Presentation	Presented to board to establish support from local Historical Society.
Apr 2018	Polaris Pop-up Community Conversation at the home of Becky and Frank Cocina, LANL Scientist (Frank) and LAPS parents.	Generated connections and support and gather input from community members interested in Polaris.
April 2018	Polaris Pop-up Community Conversation at Family Strengths Network	Generated connections and support and gather input from community members interested in Polaris.
April 2018	Earth Day Festival at LA Nature Center	Generated connections and support and gather input from community members interested in Polaris.
June 2018	League of Women Voters	Generated connections and support and gather input from League of Women Voters members.
June 2018	Los Alamos Community Development Corporation	Consultation about possible facilities for future school.

July 2018	Kiwanis	Presented to Los Alamos branch of Kiwanis community service organization to generate connections and support from members.
Nov 2018	Leadership Los Alamos Youth Summit	World Cafe style event with community leaders to discuss youth issues and solutions. Polaris networked with diverse community leaders and organizations. (~50 participants)
Nov 2018	Consult with Santina Shije	Consultation about ways to collaborate with regional Pueblo communities.
Oct 2018	Consult with NM Charter Association	Consultation about future collaboration and membership.
April 2019	Business After Hours	Networked with Los Alamos business leaders.
April 2019	Pajarito Environmental Education Center	Consultation about future collaboration with local Nature Center.
April 2019	Meeting with Randy Ryti	Meeting with Los Alamos County Council member to generate support for school.

Outcomes from key events and presentations
Our robust and comprehensive outreach efforts have enabled the applicant team to understand community needs by networking with a wide range of community organizations, stakeholders, and individuals. Through these interactions we have laid the groundwork for wide range community support for a place-based middle school alternative in Los Alamos.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Describe an outreach program to develop community support for the proposed school that has been implemented during the application process; • Describe specific activities that have been implemented, include evidence of implementation; • Include evidence that demonstrates the activities reached a broad audience that is representative of the whole community; and • Describe how this outreach has enabled the applicant team to understand community needs.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

B. Community Support.

B. (1) Provide **sufficient measurable**, quantifiable, and **qualitative** data-based evidence of abundant, broad-based support for the proposed school among residents in the targeted community. (For instance, provide the total number of students interested in the charter by grade level. **DO NOT provide names or specific letters of interest from families or students.** If appropriate, to support earlier descriptions of the anticipated demographics of the students who will be served by the proposed school, disaggregate the number of prospective students by zip code, school of attendance (current), gender, type of current school (home, private, public), or other pertinent data.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Quantitative Data Demonstrating Support for Polaris Charter School

Over the past two years, the Polaris founding team engaged in extensive community outreach in order to gather community support from a broad audience and listen to feedback about what is needed in a new middle school option. As outlined in sections IV.A(1) and IV.C(1) The Polaris founding team has participated in a wide variety of outreach activities including more than 15 on-on-one consultations, 7 networking events, 19 group presentations, 9 newspaper and radio appearances, over 600 website page views, 163 newsbulletin subscribers, and 350 Facebook followers. Through these outreach activities we have reached out to thousands of community members over the last two years. A majority of people we have met with support Polaris Charter School as an alternative learning option in Los Alamos. The evidence is clear, there is abundant, broad-based support for Polaris Charter School.

We collected quantitative data through surveys (online and hard copies) as well as qualitative data that we collected through one-on-one meetings, Facebook, and written comments in email and open ended survey questions. In December 2017 the Polaris founding team began collecting data to gauge support. A 10 question paper survey was available at our December 1, 2017 Public Launch event and was then posted electronically on the Polaris website and Facebook page. In total, 63 respondents completed the survey. From the survey we learned that 70% of respondents think that it is important for students in Los Alamos to have another middle school option while 24% were undecided and 6% said it is not important. The three features of the proposed Polaris Middle School that respondents liked the most were; *real world application of learning* (71%), *Design thinking and building creative confidence* (56%), and *flexibility in how students learn and demonstrate what they know* (54%). The top reason that would cause respondents to choose a different educational option for their child included; *More engaging methods of instruction* (61%), *Increased amount of individual attention* (13%), and *More positive relationships* (13%).

At the end of the survey there was an open ended question asking respondents for general comments about Polaris. Below is a sample of qualitative feedback we received from this question:
“Good luck! Thank you for your diligence. It is worthy.”

“We're so excited for another alternative learning environment for our children and having place-based education model! Way to go!”

“Please make this a middle school/high school together.”

"I no longer live in the community but raised three kids in Los Alamos. It would have been wonderful to have more educational opportunities for my kids."

"You're jumping into the unknown and then you'll teach students to jump into the unknown."

"Students need to know the future and present has a place for them - they belong."

Additional questions and responses to the full survey may be reviewed in Attachment J: Polaris Community Survey.

The Polaris Facebook page has 350 followers. The page has been active in engaging the community in conversations around a new middle school option in Los Alamos and posts frequent articles, videos, and news concerning innovative learning and why it matters. From the Polaris Facebook community we have received feedback, including the following quotes:

"The educational system used today is essentially the same one established by "The Committee of Ten" back in 1892. Ten men were brought together to define how education should be structured. And so now, students sit in neat little rows, attend sequential classes each day, and learn the same curriculum defined over 100 years ago with very little change. Teachers lecture, give out homework, test the students, report the grades, etc. Thousands of books have been written on how to revamp the classroom environment and yet little has changed. Polaris offers an invaluable opportunity to Los Alamos to revisit the foundations of education and to leverage technology and community structures in a way that will revolutionize learning. I do hope the community understands the potential value afforded by the establishment of Polaris School!"

"We need an educational revolution and it's clear that any real solutions will come from grass-root community efforts like the Polaris School."

At the time of application submittal, we have received at least 10 letters and emails of support from community stakeholders. Full letters may be found in Attachments K. The following are quotes taken directly from some of these supporters;

Prisca Tiasse, Executive Director of the Los Alamos Maker Space writes, "The Polaris School initiative is a much needed alternative and our organization plans to partner with the schools in any way possible. We look forward to working with Polaris School to help enrich their curriculum with diverse hands-on learning opportunities that will strive to give every student the tools to not only succeed academically but also figure out how they can positively contribute to their communities."

Bernadette Lauritzen, Executive Director of Champions of Youth Ambitions writes, "We are excited that Polaris School is dedicated to providing an enriching and emotionally grounded learning environment through local, place- based resources and experiences, a commitment that is shared by our organization. Our mission operates on the 40 Developmental Assets, of the Search-Institute. We value the traits, experiences and relationships that help youth become successful adults. Our organizations both value similar goals and we believe they have what it takes to encourage kids to love learning again."

Heather McClenahan, Executive Director of the Los Alamos History Museum writes, "As preservationists who own and maintain historically significant buildings in our community, the Society's board, staff, and

members are also proponents of place-based education. We have seen through the years that hands-on education in the sites where history happened has the most impact on learning and information retention for students. The Los Alamos Historical Society can provide resources to Polaris, including field trips, expertise, teacher training, outreach programs, living history, and other resources that deliver authentic learning experiences."

With the support of the board of directors, Katherine Burell, Executive Director of the Pajarito Environmental Education Center (PEEC) writes, "PEEC enjoys working with all educational institutions and would look forward to working with Polaris to achieve their mission of project-based, place-based learning that fosters connections to the community. The PEEC Board extends their support and recommends approval of the Polaris School."

John Pawlak, Los Alamos resident and math teacher at NM School of the Arts writes, "In recent years, many of my students' parents have openly discussed with me their strong desire to be active stakeholders in the day-to-day structure and goals of the school's activities. They see a need for an increased role of the community to address the concrete constructs that define the Polaris educational platform. By exposing our children to real-world issues and encouraging hands-on experiences, Polaris will provide a rich learning environment that leverages environmental relevance (such as local geology and plant biology) and connects historical significance to the concepts we teach in our curricula. But like many citizens of Los Alamos, parents and non-parents alike, I do not view Polaris as an incremental improvement to our youth's education. I view it as a necessary step to provide the quality of education that we need now, not later."

Community member John Gustafson writes, "The Polaris model offers an important opportunity to connect kids with their community and the environment in an immersive experience. It can teach kids, through direct experience, the importance of democratic and social participation, break them out of whatever electronic echo chamber they may otherwise fall into. It also will connect them with the natural and cultural environment, which Northern New Mexico offers in rich abundance. It can help present them a more complete understanding of what it means to be a citizen invested and engaged in the world around them."

Community member, Randy Ryti wrote, "In 2018 I ran for and was elected to the Los Alamos County Council. I am writing this letter of support as a private citizen but I did get some important feedback from voters on our public schools. Many residents told me how important they felt the local schools were to our community. Some were also aware of the crowding issues at our schools. Having the Polaris School option will help alleviate crowding and continue to improve the quality and community connections of our public schools."

George Silva-Bañuelos, Superintendent of the Valles Caldera National Preserve writes, "We look forward to working with Polaris School to continue our existing Youth Forest Restoration Monitoring Program and possibly other place-based education programs. During the monitoring program field trip, students are immersed in hands-on field work, scientifically credible data collection, fire-science labs, and guided discussions on the ramifications land management decisions have on provisioning and regulating ecosystem services. We also are able to loan our education program materials and supplies to Polaris School."

In an email, NM Land Commissioner and former NM State Representative, Stephanie Garcia-Richards wrote, *"Although Los Alamos provides many quality, well-rounded educational opportunities to its students, there are families who are seeking an educational experience that approaches the whole child; with a particular emphasis on social and emotional development. We know this because families from Los Alamos leave the public school system for home schooling opportunities and to attend other private and charter schools outside town. Our community needs a high quality educational alternative in the vicinity. Polaris can offer that opportunity to the families looking for an alternative to the traditional public school district."*

In addition to these adult voices, we have also heard from our youth that an alternative school option is needed in our community. At a recent Los Alamos Community Health Council Youth Focus Group meeting, teens expressed the need for more diverse educational opportunities. They brought up wanting more vocational training opportunities, more hands-on learning through internships and apprenticeships, and more job training opportunities with practical life skill training. They spoke about the unnecessary pressure of grades, and that expectations of "success" at the high school level were stressful.

Former Los Alamos Teen Center Director, Sylvan Argo, helped plan the focus group. She works with and advocates for our local youth on a daily basis and therefore has a strong understanding about how we, as community, can do to better serve this population. Sylvan expressed the following support for Polaris Charter School, "I think the place-based learning that Polaris will offer is so very needed to better meet the needs of youth in our town whose learning styles are not fully met by the current middle school's learning model. (Though the current MS does work for some kids, and I believe that the more options we have, the better!) If Polaris can offer connections to wider community, opportunities to integrate learning through hand-on service projects and training opportunities – the kids will thrive. I think that as a community, we need to support a wide variety of educational options to best meet the needs of our youth. We will be stronger and more resilient for it!"

The founding team believes the evidence demonstrates the school will be embraced and supported as the community's school and that there is abundant support for this school among local families, political leaders, non-profits, businesses, educators, and other community members.

Total Points Available	Expectations
8	A complete response must • Include quantitative data that demonstrates community support from a broad audience for this proposed school; • Include qualitative data that demonstrates community support from a broad audience for this proposed school; • Ensure the demonstrated support includes support within the community of the specific targeted geographic location; and

	• Describe why the applicant team believes the evidence demonstrates the school will be embraced and supported as the community's school and that there is abundant support for this school as a part of the community.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

C. Community Relationships

C. (1) Clearly demonstrate that you have developed **meaningful and strategic** networking relationships or resource agreements with local community agencies, groups, or individuals. (This differs from the formal partnership agreements that are integral to the proposed school's operations, as described in Section II. I (1) of this application.)

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

Central to the mission of Polaris Charter School is our place-based learning model which leverages the local community and landscape as a framework for learning. As a Place Network school we are guided by principles which includes "Community as Classroom", the idea that communities serve as learning ecosystems for schools where local and regional experts, experiences, and places are part of the expanded definition of a classroom. Leveraging the local community through strategic and meaningful networking and resource relationships will be integral to the school's success.

Thus far, the Polaris Team has been in touch with a variety of agencies, groups, and individuals who strongly support the establishment of the school and have pledged to nurture its success in a variety of ways. The following is a list of the networking and resource relationships we have established, thus far:

- **The Valles Caldera National Preserve (VCNP):**
  The Valles Caldera Preserve is 18 miles west of Los Alamos in the heart of the Jemez Mountains. The preserve protects a large portion of the Valles Caldera, which is rich in geological, ecological, historical, and cultural significance. Preserve staff have expressed interest in including Polaris students in the Youth Forest Restoration Monitoring Program, a project designed to give middle and high school students experience conducting hands-on field work through data collection that will be used by NPS to make important decisions about the restoration of natural fire regimes and fish and wildlife habitat improvement projects.
- **The Pajarito Environmental Education Center (PEEC):**
  PEEC operates the Los Alamos Nature Center. Executive Director, Katie Watson and the PEEC board of Directors have expressed interest in collaborating with Polaris by offering science and ecology based programs for our students. There is also potential to match Polaris students with volunteer opportunities at the Nature Center.
- **Family Strengths Network (FSN):**
  FSN is a nonprofit organization that supports local families by providing workshops and classes on a variety of topics that help strengthen families, and in turn our community. FSN has shown strong support for Polaris, even hosting a Pop-up Community Conversation event at their facility to help facilitate conversation about Polaris Charter School.
- T**he Los Alamos Historical Museum:**
  Aimee Slaughter, museum educator has expressed an interest in collaborating through education programs at the school sight, field trips to the museum, loaning educators "Traveling Trunks" with local history artifacts including Indigenous People, Homesteaders, Ranch School, Manhattan Project, and the Cold War. The museum may also be available to assist students with local history projects.
- **Bandelier National Monument:**
  Bandelier National Monument is 12 miles from the heart of Los Alamos. The Park protects over 33,000 acres of wilderness, including ancestral puebloan cliff dwellings, earth structures and petroglyphs. Fire Ecologist, Lara Trader and Archeologist, Jamie Civitello have both expressed an interest in collaborating with Polaris on future programs related to their fields in the park.

- **ReMax:**
  Owner Christy Ortega and agents Kelly Meyers and Trish Mayes are assisting in finding a suitable facility for Polaris. They have met with our facilities team and provided listings of vacant property in Los Alamos.
- **Sam Gardner:** Sam Gardner is a local developer who grew up in Los Alamos and feels strongly that there needs to be another educational choice for students in this community. He has volunteered his time and wide breadth of knowledge about properties in Los Alamos to assist in finding a suitable facility for the school.
- **Los Alamos MakerSpace**
  Director, Prisca Tiasse, has attended Polaris meetings and is interested in partnering with the school. The MakerSpace provides a location for experts and meetup groups to help students and teachers. Their resources include 3D printing, sewing machines, coding for kids, Arduinos and Raspberry Pie, woodworking supplies, and molecular biology supplies.
- **LA Arts Council:** Director**,** Patrick Neher, has expressed an interest in providing opportunities in which students may choose to participate as an elective such as Summer Drama.
- **Zia Credit Union:** Has provided a small grant to help with expenses associated with events and publicity for Polaris.
- **Fuller Lodge Art Center:** Ken Nebel, Executive Director, has expressed an interest in providing opportunities for youth to participate in Art Shows and classes at the Historic Fuller Lodge Art Center. He also has contacts with artists who may be willing to provide "artist in residence" programs at the school.

The Polaris founding team believes the identified relationships demonstrate that the school will be embraced and supported as the community's school.

Total Points Available	Expectations
4	A complete response must • Identify and describe specific meaningful and strategic networking relationships with local community agencies, groups, or individuals that will support the school. Include evidence of these relationships; • Identify and describe specific meaningful and strategic resource agreements with local community agencies, groups, or individuals that will support the school. Include evidence of these relationships; and • Describe why the applicant team believes the identified relationships demonstrate the school will be embraced and supported as the community's school and that there is abundant support for this school as a part of the community.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

D. Uniqueness and Innovation.

D.(1) Provide **clear evidence** demonstrating the **uniqueness, innovation,** and significant contribution of your educational program to public education through meaningful comparisons and contrasts with the educational programs of other public schools that serve the same grade levels in the geographic area in which you plan to locate. Ensure that the evidence establishes a compelling demand for the proposed school's educational program and that it is based on reliable research, effective practices, or replicated successfully in schools with diverse characteristics.

APPLICANT RESPONSE:

The Polaris approach is shaped by several key insights developed from our community conversations as well as from our understanding of research-based methods. Our key insights include: learning is best when students connect with others, when students are engaged in learning that has a purpose, and when students have voice and choice in how they learn. Polaris's place-based framework will entail four major paradigm shifts that will make the Polaris Charter School a unique experience for area middle school students. The four paradigm shifts are supported by the compelling demand of our community.

1. Authentic Place Based Learning

Students will engage in inquiry-based, interdisciplinary learning connected to our local community and the real world. The community serves as learning ecosystems for schools where local and regional experts, experiences, and places are part of the expanded definition of a classroom. Learning is grounded in observing, asking relevant questions, making predictions, and collecting data to understand the world through economic, ecological, and cultural lenses. Local learning serves as a model for understanding regional and global challenges, opportunities and connections. An understanding of self is a starting point to understanding place. Students will tackle purposeful projects that positively impact their community and promote a broader understanding of the world. They will use technology to communicate and create and thereby expand the classroom and become true global citizens.

How is Polaris's approach to student learning different from the approach at Los Alamos Middle School? There are a few examples of Los Alamos Middle School teachers engaging students in occasional field trip based projects. Conducting in-depth projects with community impact is hampered by a schedule with seven 47 minute periods a day, limited interdisciplinary instruction, and time pressure to cover material before administering the state assessment/PARCC. Our place-based education framework will create learning experiences built around interdisciplinary project-based learning connected to the community beyond the school.

Additionally, we have found that the interpretation of what constitutes "project based learning" varies quite a bit within the Los Alamos Public School District. Too often hands-on learning or "fun" activities are mistaken for PBL, instead of the deeper authentic learning that it actually entails. The Buck Institute of Education (BIE) defines Project Based Learning as "a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge." The BIE has created a comprehensive, research-based model for PBL – a "gold standard" to help teachers, schools, and organizations to measure, calibrate, and improve their practice. The schedule is a major limiting factor for implementing PBL. Some teachers are able to implement some elements of PBL.

2. Mastery-Based Learning

Polaris's mastery-based learning is a personalized approach to learning that gives learners more agency and accountability. There are three elements that will be core to mastery-based learning at Polaris. First, using a learner profile, Polaris teachers will have a record of each student's strengths, needs, motivations, progress, and goals upon which to build a deeper understanding of each child. Second, Polaris students will often have a choice in their learning and multiple options to complete a task. Together with their teachers they will develop personalized learning pathways, which will hold all students to high expectations, but be adapted to fit the student. Third, rather than measuring progress by grade level, progress will be measured by competency-based progressions and continual progress monitoring, Competency-based assessments will allow Polaris students to move on when they've mastered a skill or content.

How is Polaris's approach to student learning different than the approach at Los Alamos Middle School?

Most educational systems today, including Los Alamos Middle School, base student progress on completing a year in a specific grade (time in class) and grades. There are problems with this system. First, a student spending time in class (and a teacher teaching) does not equal learning. Secondly, grades are not standardized; they are based on many factors including work completion. An "A" can mean many different things to different teachers. They do not show us what a student actually knows. Competency-based education requires a student to demonstrate mastery on specific measurable targets, independent of their age or grade level. We know that students learn at different rates and through different strategies. Competency-based education focuses on independent growth and learning.

3. Restorative Practices

Polaris will use Restorative Practices in a deliberate way because we want to build an environment that has systems in place to foster caring relationships and community. Academic achievement increases when students are in a safe space. Restorative practices help create the safe space through relationship building. As Polaris is a learner-centered community, we want the students to be involved in responding to conflict. Restorative practices allow for flexibility in addressing wrong doing. Using circles to address problems gives everyone a voice and leads to empathy for both the harmed and the person who harmed. Schools that have implemented restorative practices have realized significant reductions in office referrals and suspensions. Polaris wants to create a safe, respectful community that responds to behavior issues proactively. For that reason, Polaris will have all staff trained in restorative practices.

How is Polaris's approach to behavior management different than the approach at Los Alamos Middle School?

To a large extent, Los Alamos Middle School uses a punitive system of behavior management. The following is a list of disciplinary actions/possible consequences as described in the LAMS student handbook:

Incident Report Write-Up

Phone Call to Parent(s)

Removed Privilege (i.e. non attendance or participation at dances, athletics, end of year activities,

field trips, Hawktime, etc.)

Restricted Activity

Assigned Time-Out

Assigned (Lunch) Detention

Restorative Justice

Assigned Suspension (ISS/OSS)

School Community Service

Emergency Removal

Hearing/Expulsion

Though Restorative Justice is on the list, punishments such as write-ups, detention, suspension, and expulsion are the norm at Los Alamos Middle School. At Polaris, relationship building and finding solutions to repair harm will be the top priority when responding to conflict. Using Restorative Practices alongside Advisory Time will be very beneficial because for Restorative Practices to be effective, a certain amount of time needs to be invested. Advisory Time allows for that structure to already be available.

4. Advisory Time- Social Emotional Learning

The Polaris Founding Team believes that it is essential for all students to be proficient in math, literacy, and the sciences, but we also believe that this is not enough. Middle schools are tasked with supporting students in their growth toward readiness for high school, college and life.

Success in 21st Century learning requires students who have the ability to set and achieve their own goals, work well with others, and have developed strategies to solve problems. For this reason, student well-being is part of our school mission, and social emotional learning is an important part of our focus and culture. We believe it is important to have regularly dedicated time to teach specific social emotional and habits of success that build a sense of community, support student progress and help students plan for the future.

Our advisory curriculum has two parts: Social Emotional Learning and Organizational/Executive Functioning Skills. We believe supporting students in metacognitive, social-emotional and executive function (EF) skills will help students develop the habits and skills to become agents of their own learning and improve academic skills. We know that "EF processes are the underpinning for most academic work from the fourth grade on, when the curriculum increasingly emphasizes performance on tasks that require coordination, integration, and synthesis of the many processes and sub-skills needed for effective performance. "(Meltzer, 2018, p. 132) Recent studies suggest that effective ways to support and promote executive functioning processes are "to support social, emotional, and physical development. "(Meltzer, 2018, p. 116) The term social emotional learning (SEL) is broad, including many different "skills, attitudes, and behaviors that can affect a student's success in school and life. Critical thinking, managing emotions, working through conflicts, decision making, and team work—all of these are the kind of skills that are not necessarily measured by tests but which round out a student's

education and impact his/her academic success, employability, self-esteem, relationships, as well as civic and community engagement." (CASEL, 2018) Advisory time is a specific time of the day each morning dedicated to learning and practicing the social emotional and organizational/executive functioning skills that are necessary to become independent learners and, together, will help us achieve our mission and goals of improved social emotional learning and academic achievement.

Our advisory curriculum is based on the five SEL competencies identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). CASEL was established in 1994 and works to provide evidence and research-based information to advance education practices and policies related to social emotional learning. The five SEL competencies identified by CASEL form the backbone of our advisory curriculum, "self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making." (CASEL, 2018)

However, with the fast pace of technological advancement and globalization, the meaning of "readiness" can no longer be defined by the needs of the current job market or the extent of student's knowledge. In 2012 the Innovation Lab Network defined readiness as the interrelationship between knowledge, skills, and dispositions—behavioral capacities such as persistence and adaptability.

Based on the results of the Polaris Survey, Facebook Flash Poll and our community conversations, the community has overwhelmingly stated that students' acquisition of dispositions in creativity, collaboration, communication, and self-direction are of equal importance to their acquisition of knowledge and academic skills. Therefore, Polaris will prioritize student attainment of dispositions that lead to habits of success in several ways. Students at Polaris will acquire skills in collaboration, communication, creativity and self-directed learning through best practices in Mastery Learning and Project Based Learning. These dispositions will also be acquired through our maker space and the teaching of design thinking strategies, which will guide students through a creative but structured approach to understanding a problem. Students will generate new ideas and solutions that have real impact. Our students' creative confidence will grow as they learn to embrace challenges, reflect on feedback, and explore new strategies.

How is Polaris's approach to social emotional learning different from the approach at Los Alamos Middle School? The LAPS Middle School uses a more traditional ASCA-based counselor/student model. Counselors teach life skills classes but are not directly engaged with all students on a regular basis. As a result some students lose their way during their middle school years. Polaris's advisory practices provide regular interactions between students and staff in a small group setting that remains intact throughout the students' time at Polaris. Students will develop a sense of belonging within an inclusive learning culture based on mutual respect, dialogue, interdependence, and compassion.

How is Polaris's approach to student learning different than the approach at Los Alamos Middle School? Currently there is no state requirement to teach the skills and dispositions for success. AVID, a program that prepared students for college readiness and success in a global society was implemented with a select few students at the Los Alamos Middle School for two years. This year the formal AVID program was terminated. Polaris's approach is to use the four frameworks throughout the curriculum in order to assess where the four readiness elements are already integrated into student learning opportunities and where there is a need to enhance educational practices and environments.

Compelling Demand

The Polaris Founding Team has identified several compelling demands based on its on Survey, the New

Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (YRRS), and the Los Alamos Middle School state report card.

Polaris Survey

Using the Polaris Survey mentioned in Part B. (1) Community Support we identified several compelling community demands for an educational model different than that offered by the current middle school. When asked to identify the top reason that would cause respondents to choose a different educational option the overwhelming choice was a *More engaging methods of instruction* (61%). (Second in priority *Increased amount of individual attention* (13%), and third in priority *More positive relationships* (13%). Informally, parents will often tell us that the district public school would be fine for one of their children, but their other child would need something different. The message from our community is clear. They want another option for their children. Clearly families are seeking more engaging learning models for their students. The three features of the proposed Polaris Middle School that respondents liked the most were; *real world application of learning* (71%), *Design thinking and building creative confidence* (56%), and *flexibility in how students learn and demonstrate what they know* (54%). The Polaris learning framework addresses the interests expressed in the survey. Polaris is designed to engage students through interesting, high quality projects rooted in the local learning ecosystem and to provide for flexibility within a learner-centered environment.

New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey, 2015

The YRRS is administered to a sampling of students across the state of New Mexico. In Los Alamos, there was a 70% participation rate, which is considered excellent. According to the YRRS description of the report, it is organized into two major content areas: risk behaviors and protective (resiliency) factors. Violence, bullying sadness and attempted suicide stand out in contrast to all other factors in the report: 42.4% reported being in a physical fight, 55.1% reported being bullied on school property, and 20.7% reported that they had seriously thought about killing themselves. When these risk behaviors are compared to resiliency factors, such as adult involvement in students' lives, there is an inverse relationship. As resiliency factors decrease risk behaviors increase. For students involved in physical fights 70.5% say it is not true that "A parent or guardian knows where I am and who I am with when I am not home" and 66.6% say it is not true that "An adult in my school listens to me." For students who have seriously thought about suicide 44.2% say it is not true that "A parent or guardian knows where I am and whom I am with when I am not home" and 39.7% say it is not true that "An adult in my school listens to me." Overall 82% of students responded that that they get mostly A's or B's.

The implications of the YRRS are that a narrow focus on academic success in isolation from the other components of youth social emotional development can undermine their feelings of success as individuals who have agency and can influence the world around them. The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research conducted a study funded by the Wallace Foundation, which resulted in the Foundations for Young Adult Success A Developmental Framework. It defines three factors key to young adult success. Agency, shaping the course of one's life rather than simply reacting to external forces. Integrated identity, a strong sense of who one is, which provides an internal compass for actively making decisions consistent with one's values, beliefs and goals. Competencies, the abilities to be productive, effective and adaptable to the demands of different settings. Also the report finds that key to students making meaning out of experience are strong, supported and sustained relationships with adults who can encourage young people to reflect on their experiences and help them to interpret those experiences in ways that expand their sense of themselves and their horizons. Many elements of Polaris Charter School will focus on learner agency including Mastery Learning and projects with community impact. Also Advisory and Project Wayfinder tools will create a space in the

schedule that provides time to foster students' sense of belonging, to develop students' social-emotional skills, and to build community. Through restorative practices Polaris will respond to challenging behavior through mutual respect, authentic dialogue, coming to understanding, and making things right.

Los Alamos Middle School Data

The most recent Los Alamos Middle School report card details academic performance for special populations in Reading Proficiency: White 53%, African American 46%, Hispanic 28%, Asian 69%, Native American (too few), Economically Disadvantaged 16%, Students with Disabilities 17%, and ELL (too few). Math Proficiency for special populations details are also provided: White 53%, African American 31%, Hispanic 23%, Asian 73%, Native American (too few) Economically Disadvantaged 19%, Students with Disabilities 17%, and ELL (too few).

The Polaris Place-Based framework was chosen to help improve the academic proficiency of our students who are particularly motivated by real world experience. This framework has been shown to help foster a sense of belonging in the community. Studies have found that integrating the local environment as a context for learning improves student achievement in core subjects. According to "Closing the Achievement Gap" by Lieberman and Hoody, students, teachers and administrators report significant positive effects on problem solving skills, critical thinking and decision making. They also report an "increased enthusiasm and engagement in learning and gains in summative measures of educational achievement such as standardized test scores and grade point average." (Lieberman and Hoody, 1998)

Resources:

Chapter 5: Economic Report of President Obama 2016
https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2016/02/22/2016-economic-report-president

Habits of Success
EPIC: Educational Policy Improvement Center
CIE: National Center for Innovation in Education

PBL Global
https://pblglobal.com/fixing-the-flaws-in-project-based-learning-from-learning-to-inquiry/

PISA study on student engagement
http://www.oecd.org/education/school/programmeforinternationalstudentassessmentpisa/33689437.pdf

Leaving to Learn
How Out-of-School Learning Increases Student Engagement and Reduces Dropout Rates
By Elliot Washor, Charles Mojkowski

University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research

Leaving to Learn
How Out-of-School Learning Increases Student Engagement and Reduces Dropout Rates
By Elliot Washor, Charles Mojkowski

BIE
https://www.bie.org/about/what_pbl

Total Points Available	Expectations
8	A complete response must • Describe the uniqueness, innovation, and significant contribution of your educational program to the broader or the local NM public education environment; • Include meaningful comparisons and contrasts with the educational programs of other public schools that serve the same grade levels in the geographic area in which you plan to locate; and • Describe how the applicant team knows there is a compelling demand for the proposed school's educational program in the geographic area in which the school plans to locate.
INDEPENDENT REVIEWER EVALUATION: Click here to enter text.	

Appendices and Attachments

Appendix Number	Appendix Description	Attached (Check if Yes)
A	Governing Body Bylaws	X
B	Head Administrator Job Description	X
C	Job Descriptions for Certified, Licensed, and Other Key Staff	X
D	Proposed Agreements Governing Third Party Relationships and Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs) (*Required if applicable*)	X
E	PSFA-Approved Projected Facility Plan Documentation	X
F	Five Years of 910B5 State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) Computation Revenue Estimate Worksheets	X
G	Five-year Budget Plan	X
H	Internal Control Procedures	X