



Part B—Progress Report

(A report on the progress of meeting the academic performance, financial compliance, contractual, organizational, and governance responsibilities of the charter school, including achieving the school or mission specific goals, objectives, student performance outcomes, state standards of excellence and other terms of the charter contract, including the accountability requirements set forth in the Assessment and Accountability Act during the Current Charter Term)

The following rubric will be used to evaluate the narratives in Part B:

Meets the Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In each year of the contract term, the school has a demonstrated record of meeting all standards, which is supported by evidence. 	
Demonstrates Substantial Progress	Demonstration Through Data	Demonstration Through Systemic Improvement Plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school does not have a demonstrated record of meeting all standards in each of the years in the contract term, <i>however...</i> An evaluation of <i>all</i> data and evidence (for academic narrative this includes all available academic performance data, including state assessment data) demonstrates at least two years of sustained improvement toward meeting the standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school does not have a demonstrated record of meeting all standards in each of the years in the contract term, <i>however...</i> The narrative describes specific adult (teacher, leader, board) actions taken to improve performance and outcomes by addressing the root cause of the inadequate performance; AND The site visit team can verify the implementation of reported improvement actions by evaluating specific evidence at the school site that is observable, verifiable, and readily available; AND The narrative identifies measurable successes during the most recent year resulting from the improvement actions taken; AND An evaluation of the data and evidence supports the observable and reported successes.
Failing to Demonstrate Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school does not have a demonstrated record of meeting all standards in each of the years of the contract term. An evaluation of data and evidence (for academic narrative this includes all available academic performance data, including state assessment data) does not demonstrate at least two years of sustained improvement toward meeting the standard. AND ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING: The narrative is focused on describing circumstances connected to the poor performance and/or excuses for the poor performance (e.g. serving a disproportionately high rate of students with disabilities, serving a disproportionately high rate of “at-risk” students, a lack of funding, teacher/administrator turnover, etc.), and/or either does not describe specific adult improvement actions taken or describes minimal adult improvement actions taken; or The site visit team is not able to verify implementation of the reported adult improvement actions because there is no observable, verifiable evidence presented during the site including renewal site visit; or The narrative fails to identify any measurable successes during the most recent year, or evaluation of the data and evidence directly contradicts reported successes. 	

1. Innovative and Distinctive Education Program

Some of the purposes of the Charter Schools Act are to encourage different and innovating teaching and educational programs that improve student achievement, and encourage parental and community involvement. 1978 NMSA §22-8B-3.

a. School or Mission Specific Unique, Innovative, and Significant Contributions

The school shall provide a narrative on how the school has fulfilled its mission and how the equity council has influenced any decisions for the 2020-2021 SY. These contributions may include:

1. Teaching methods
2. Measures of student achievement
3. Professional development for teachers
4. Learning programs
5. Encouraging parental or community involvement
6. School's Equity Plan
7. Monitoring students' social emotional and behavioral development

School response:

1. Innovative and Distinctive Education Program

a. School or Mission Specific, Unique, Innovative, and Significant Contributions

The school shall provide a narrative on how the school has fulfilled its mission and how the equity council has influenced any decisions for the 2020-2021 SY.

Our mission at VGHS is to provide a holistic education focused on critical and creative thinking, character, and community involvement.

Since Vista Grande High School's (VGHS) inception 14 years ago, the school has committed to equity in education. The original charter application was shaped with and supported by Taos Pueblo stakeholders. The school was consciously designed to serve a student population that reflected the demographics of Taos County. VGHS actively recruits students from a diverse demographic. Equity is also the foundation of the innovative and distinctive program offered at VGHS for students and the larger community. VGHS strives for equity in the design of curriculum experiences, instructional strategies, assessment, and vibrant community partnerships.

At VGHS, we realize that modern high school students are looking for relevance during high school to better prepare them for college and career readiness. Many students who attend Vista Grande select the school because they feel other schools have not served a lasting purpose in their lives. VGHS strives to shift that perception of schooling by creating authentic learning experiences with outcomes that are immediately useful to students, the school community, and the world outside school as much as possible. And it is within the past 5 years under the current school leadership that the original vision of school transformation at Vista Grande is being achieved.

Nine years ago, student academic achievement at Vista Grande was at an all-time low, as seen in graduation rates and measures of student academic achievement. The current school director was employed as the special education coordinator from 2010 to January 2013, when she entered the role of acting director. By the end of her first year as school director, she began to plan for school transformation. After intensive strategic planning based on needs assessment data and collaboration with community partners, particularly Taos Pueblo, school leadership made the decision to clear the slate by following the first principle in school improvement - all faculty and staff were required to reapply for their positions following a newly approved, rigorous hiring process. As a result of the implementation of this strategy and the focus on strategic improvement monitored using multiple sources of data, the VGHS program began to shift in order to attain the school's mission goals for students.

1. Teaching methods

VGHS has long been focused on creating a school culture that is inclusive, reflective of the local community, validates students' cultures and identities, and supports all students' sense of belonging. VGHS values the cultural backgrounds of all students in order to strengthen student's self-identities and self-worth. The unique teaching methods used at VGHS are fundamental to the development of this type of school culture. The students who choose to attend VGHS, mostly Native American and Hispanic, are often the students who have been most marginalized and left vulnerable by K-8 education, and who do not see themselves in the content and process of school.

Learning Expeditions. VGHS was established as an Expeditionary Learning school and continues to strive for alignment with the organization's Core Practices and Benchmarks. Curriculum design is a large component of the transformative power of the teaching methods used at VGHS.

Learning Expeditions - Increasing Student Achievement & Engaging All Students
(www.eleducation.org)

“In Expeditionary Learning schools, Learning Expeditions are the primary way of organizing curriculum. The subject matter of a Learning Expedition is a compelling topic derived from content standards. Learning Expeditions feature linked projects that require students to construct deep understandings and skills and to create products for real audiences. Learning Expeditions support critical literacy, promote character development, create a sense of adventure, spark curiosity, and foster an ethic of service. They address central academic standards of content, skills, and presentation, and include goals related to character and community. They allow for and encourage the authentic integration of disciplines. Teachers work together to ensure that Learning Expeditions align with local standards. A coherent sequence of Learning Expeditions is mapped vertically through the grade levels to ensure that expedition topics are not repeated and that students learn essential skills and knowledge.”

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching. According to the Education Alliance at Brown University, Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching (CLRT) is predicated on seven principles:

- Positive perspectives on parents and families.
- Communication of high expectations.
- Learning within the context of culture.
- Student-centered instruction.
- Culturally mediated instruction.
- Reshaping the curriculum.
- Teacher as facilitator.

The foundation of CLRT not highlighted in the list above is the building of relationships with students and getting to know about their home cultures. The CLRT principles outlined by the Education Alliance are infused with knowledge of students that are fundamental to the creation and implementation of learning expeditions at VGHS. The learning expeditions reshape the curriculum and learning experiences are situated within the context of student home cultures, with particular emphasis on the least represented students, our Indigenous students. At VGHS we design curriculum with authentic relevance to students' lives. We also partner closely with local Indigenous educators and stakeholders to reframe the narratives told to meet truth and reconciliation and teach students multiple perspectives that validate culturally different ways of knowing.

From the development of relationships with students, curriculum is reshaped with a focus on content that is relevant for secondary students at VGHS and in Taos County.

Culturally relevant teachers utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning.

- Gloria Ladson-Billings

VGHS values the cultural backgrounds of all students in order to strengthen children's self-identities and feelings of self-worth. Relevant curricular content helps students see themselves in what they are learning and have pride in their culture. Therefore, VGHS learning expedition themes are developed based on what students are thinking about, concerned with and motivated by; therefore, the content of the expedition is *relevant* to students' lives and perceived as *worthwhile* and *authentic* content to learning (even mathematics!). We know that when students find content relevant, then deep learning is facilitated. Further,

at VGHS, we incorporate culturally significant dates into the school calendar to encourage Indigenous participation in their traditional cultural events at Taos Pueblo.

VGHS is in its 3rd year of funding through the NMPED's Indian Education Initiative grant. The school was one of 4 educational institutions awarded this 3-year grant at \$150,000 per year to transform the school's identity and reopen with a new design. Vista Grande was the only charter school awarded these funds, because the school typically serves a large population of Native American students and has been making progress in the area of CLRT through an Indian Education Initiative 1-year grant in 2017-2018 that continued with McCune Foundation funding in 2018-2019.

Project-Based Learning. At Vista, we believe all students can contribute to the community of the school and the greater community of Taos. The typical VGHS student needs to know a relevant reason to be learning content and skills. Though project-based learning (PBL) is challenging for teachers to implement, we strive to shift classrooms to greater degrees of authentic and student-centric learning. Projects are the foundation of the semester-long learning expeditions that frame the curriculum thematically. Student-centered and project-based learning are keystone components of culturally responsive teaching. These practices lead to greater levels of student engagement and, thus, higher levels of proficiency on required western academic standards. The project-based curriculum is grounded in academic standards, student interests, and the VGHS Portrait of a Graduate. VGHS was chosen as one of sixteen schools to partner with Future Focused Education to develop the Portrait of a Graduate and align student portfolios to these commitments for students.



Students in the 9th grade work to disseminate to their peers countywide the healthy recreational activities adolescents can engage in outside of school. In the 9th grade students also learn about sustainable agriculture and local agricultural traditions of Taos by engaging in farming. The school now even runs a small farm in collaboration with the Taos Land Trust.

As sophomores, students explore themes of global colonization and racism in both the Humanities and biology in an art and activism experience. The students partner with local activist artists and the VGHS art teacher to process emotional topics through art. Student art is showcased in a gallery at the end of the semester. The 10th grade year culminates with a high-stakes digital portfolio presentation for matriculation to the 11th grade. At VGHS, these portfolio presentations are called Passages; and students present to a panel of in-school and out-of-school community members to provide feedback from an authentic audience. This 10th grade portfolio presentation experience helps prepare students for the required portfolio presentation to graduate in 12th grade.

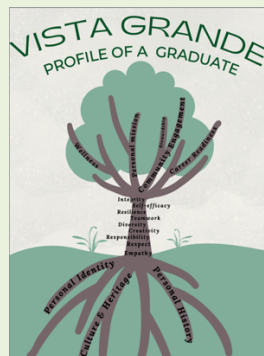
Juniors at VGHS explore the role of media in our culture in the past and how it influenced race relations in the 19th century US with enslaved, formerly enslaved, and Indigenous people. In science and mathematics, students explore the biases presented in the media surrounding climate change in science and mathematics. Students have created Public Service Announcements and other social media projects to influence public opinion on a topic, such as developing public service announcements to inform people about critical topics such as climate change, fracking in Chaco Canyon, Indigenous People's Day, and mental health.



By the time students enter their Senior year at Vista Grande, they are prepared to explore what it takes to be successful in life and career, how to prepare for post-secondary education, and goal-setting. In the winter of the 12th grade year students are designing their own semester-long, project-based curriculum and preparing for their graduation portfolio presentation.

2. Measures of student achievement

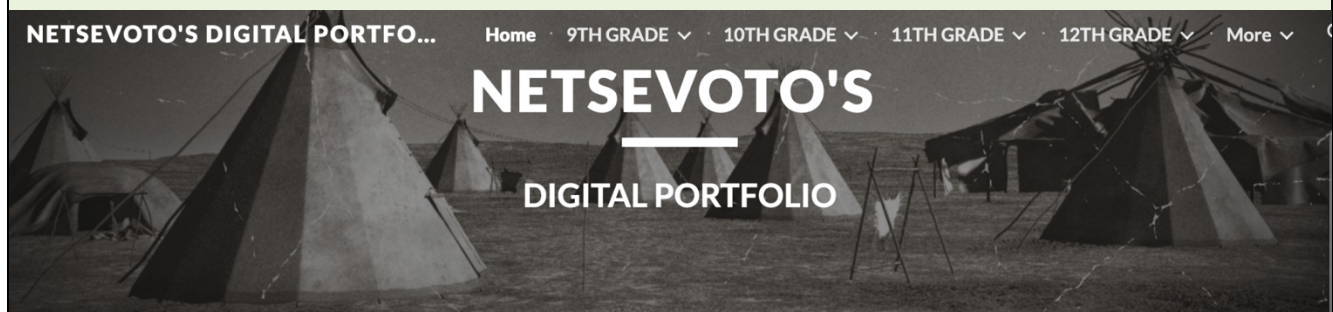
Data-driven decision making is deeply integrated into the school culture. Student data is examined at multiple levels, individual student, grade-level, and subgroups, so we can know our students and give them the support they need - socially, emotionally, and academically, as well as determining small groups for instructional purposes or reframing how to teach a skill or concept.



Portfolio Assessment. Standardized tests tell us little of the whole person and his or her ability to perform high quality, authentic work. At VGHS, students are required to present a Graduation Portfolio, so we can see a more holistic perspective of students and their growth. Throughout their time as a VGHS student, students archive and organize their work across content areas. The purposes of the Graduation Portfolio are to emphasize the unique identities and contributions of each student. Further, portfolios demonstrate growth in proficiency in skills and content over time. They also highlight students' Habits of Work and Learning. The student portfolios are central to student Capstone Projects that culminate in Passage Performance Assessments.

Passage Presentations. Passage is a tradition at VGHS in the 10th and 12th grades. These grades represent important transitions in secondary and to post-secondary school and experiences. During Passage, students present their portfolios to an authentic audience of community members from both within and outside the school building. During these presentations, students articulate their current levels of academic performance with an emphasis on exemplary work. They also share their artistic, athletic, technology, and/or job-related contributions as well as explicit reflection on their character and embodiment of the VGHS Portrait of a Graduate. Students are also taught and practice professional presentation skills, such as eye contact, clear articulation, and the use of media. 10th grade students create PowerPoints and 12th grade students build

websites to showcase their portfolio work and anchor their Passage presentations. Vista Grande is proud of all of its 2021 sophomore and senior students for fulfilling this rigorous assessment to determine their competencies for matriculating or graduating - *during the remote learning year of the pandemic.*



ABOUT ME, MY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE, & FUTURE...

Haaahe (Hello) My name is Nestevoto (Eagle tail feather) most know me by my English name Isaiah or Tsay Whan. I am from Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo & Northern Cheyenne tribe. I was born in Espanola and grew up on and off the Ohkay Owingeh reservation. I currently live with my adopted grandparents near Picuris Pueblo. I grew up speaking English and Tewa.

Now as I am approaching adulthood I have picked up Tiwa and learning the Northern Cheyenne language. Learning new things about myself and my family is just one of my hobbies. As I got older I found out more new things my culture has to offer leading me to want to learn more. I practice many of the teachings as a hobby while flourishing my community to keep knowledge alive along with my spiritual connection.

I currently go to school at Vista Grande High School and I have been enrolled at the school since freshman year. During my time I have had many experiences, I really like one-on-one teaching. Vista is a great school for teamwork and helping community base needs such as giving back to the community and supporting student needs.

① After I move forward from school I plan on working for my community on the reservation. I want to give to the community by working for tribal office and giving ideas for the improvement of my home. I one day hope to be on warcheif staff or a head person of ceremonial duties. My biggest goal is to give back to my community and make a change for the better of my people, friend, and family at home.

NWEA Interim Assessments. While we certainly use the information provided through summative assessment results (e.g., PARCC and/or NM Vistas), this macro-level snapshot of student achievement yields little to inform continuous school improvement initiatives. Through the interim assessment (MAPs) result analysis three times a year, we can gauge student growth over the course of the year. The data resulting from MAPs tests can be used to immediately alter instruction or plan MLSS Layer 2 Targeted Interventions for students. While many VGHS students enter high school with academic concepts and skills gaps, monitoring individual student improvement can help students achieve at least a year of growth in academic outcomes. When combined with principles of Accelerated Learning (keeping our mind on appropriate and respectful *grade level learning* and having high expectations of student success) and the unique project-based learning approach at VGHS, students begin to feel successful in school - sometimes for the first time in their school careers.

Classroom Formative Assessments. At VGHS, class work is not punitive nor are quizzes and tests the foundation of student grades. We practice standards-based grading and, as a result, gather most of our actionable achievement data at the learning target (standard) level of student performance by learning from student work. The instructional coaches at Vista Grande work with teachers to create standards-aligned student assignments, projects and assessments so we can qualitatively analyze student work as compared to the expectations of proficiency demanded by the NM State Standards. Combined with the use of rubrics, when appropriate, and critique lessons, students can begin to have a concrete understanding of what they need to demonstrate to earn the grade in each class. When learning from student work, teachers can also immediately understand if the content or skill must be retaught to the entire class or if certain students need additional assistance to achieve the learning targets. Feedback to guide student work becomes specific to the work and the strengths and challenges of the student. Classroom-based assessment thus becomes an

opportunity to learn rather than punitive for students. Classroom assignments and assessment are also aligned to the VGHS Portrait of a Graduate and scaffold students across all four grade levels in preparation for the construction of student Capstone Projects and Graduation Portfolios. These projects and portfolios are required for graduation from VGHS.

3. Professional development for teachers

At VGHS we are not at all intimidated by the recent NMPED requirement for 80 hours of teacher professional development per year. We already surpass that amount of professional development - teachers often joke that Vista Grande does PD on steroids! We see teacher learning to be fundamental to school transformation efforts and student achievement.

Green Schools National Network (SEL). The GSNN has supported teachers in teaching social and emotional skills through the school's Crew structure. The organization has also assisted with a revision of the school's mission and vision statements to better reflect the shifts in school culture as we have begun to achieve the 5-year strategic plan (2016-21). The GSNN also assists with monitoring the SEL goals of the strategic plan by implementing the Panorama Education data collection tools. This partnership with GSNN to include SEL instruction supports the CLRT work because students and teachers need strong social and emotional regulation skills in order to discuss relevant, but charged, issues around race and privilege.

The Center for Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning (CLRTL). VGHS has been committed to culturally and linguistically responsive teaching for many years, since the first year of the current charter contract. The leadership team realized that relevant curriculum and responsive instructional practices were paramount for students to experience and foster engagement and achievement. VGHS teachers continue to participate in professional development from Dr. Sharroky Hollie and his team of coaches the school is certainly benefitting from the coaching. Vista Grande is on track to be a pathway school to become a model school for CLRTL for NM. Dr. Hollie's work operationalizes the seven principles of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching as outlined by the Educational Alliance of Brown University.

Partnerships with Indigenous Educators. Through the Indigenous Education Initiative grant, VGHS has been able to continue the focus on CLRT and to enhance the school curriculum through collaboration with Native American educators to develop and review curriculum that is accurate and appropriate for all students. Further, our Native American collaborators help us consider pedagogical shifts in order to honor different ways of knowing in all content areas, and especially science and math. We have an ethnic studies class, taught by a Native American educator, that emphasizes an accurate history of the Taos Valley and the unity between Pueblo and Hispanic people to work as stewards of the lands.

VGHS Teacher PD. VGHS also coordinates its own, home-grown professional development experiences for teachers. These opportunities include embedded student-centered instructional coaching and coaching for relevant content. Teachers also participate in weekly after school PD and Friday half days throughout the year. These PD sessions often focus on MLSS implementation and Domain 1-4 professional skills in order to help teachers succeed through the annual evaluation process.

4. Learning programs

CREW. At VGHS, Crew (similar to Advisory) is a fundamental structure to the academic program. Its number one purpose is to build relationships among small groups of students and an adult who is their advocate. Crew meets daily for an hour and is a required course for high school credit. It is not a homeroom and is a regular class. Students in a particular Crew are members from all grade levels and the intention is that the Crews stay together for their entire 4 years at the school with some students graduating and some new students entering Crew each year. The Crew leader develops learning targets and instructional plans that

address social and emotional learning, literacy, student-led conferences, portfolio and passage presentations, career and post-secondary exploration, and professional skills. Students across the years express that Crew is where they have made the most close and lasting relationships with their peers. They often feel that their Crew leader is their ultimate advocate and support.



Tiwa Language. Fifteen years ago, VGHS was created with input and assistance from the Taos Pueblo Parent Teacher Organization. A top priority of the Taos Pueblo parents at that time was developing a policy to excuse absences for student participation in cultural traditions at the Pueblo. It has been with the current school director that the relationship between the school and the Pueblo has deepened and strengthened. For the past 5 years, VGHS has offered Tiwa Language & Culture classes for Taos Pueblo students who choose to learn their language, taking full advantage of the NMPED 520 license.

The VGHS language program is designed with the intention of building a community of Taos Pueblo Heritage Language Learners who will continue to contribute to their community through the understanding that language provides. The gift of language is one that lasts a lifetime and the confidence it gives the speaker is manifested in many different ways throughout their lives, but the most important is the confidence to navigate their own community, sustaining their ways of knowing and learning, contributing through participation, and living as a Pueblo person. Vista Grande's Tiwa program has had a visible impact on the Taos Pueblo students in that they show great pride in their culture and use that opportunity to share with others a piece of themselves that would not otherwise be known to fellow students.

Extended Learning Time and Opportunities for Community Schools. Vista Grande prides itself on thinking outside the box. And while extended learning time includes high quality tutoring to accelerate learning for students, the time has also been structured to meet the needs of VGHS students for less conventional educational experiences. VGHS was awarded a Community Schools grant for funding beginning in 2020 with a planning grant; since this time, NMPED has funded 2 additional years of funding at \$150,000/year. This funding has resulted in the following initiatives:

- Enhanced opportunities for students through after school programs with both Vista Grande staff and community partners. Our community partners include True Kids 1, Penasco Theater, Native Roots, Taos Center for the Arts, STEM Arts Lab and Taos Alive.
- Increased access to internships and mentorship opportunities through formalized community partnerships that are driven by students' career interests.
- Developed an Experiential Learning program on Fridays that focuses on experiential learning and community-based learning, supporting students in applying what they learned in the classroom to real world initiatives. Students develop skills of collaboration, creative thinking, and critical inquiry.
- Developed a two-week summer program for students to continue hands-on learning that is also aligned with academic learning.
- Re-invigorated the Outdoor Adventure program coordinated by a VGHS staff member to create equitable access to wilderness programming.
- Implemented community pop-up events in collaboration with other area Community Schools.

CTE Programs. When the initial needs assessment was conducted in 2016 to inform the root cause analysis and drive school transformation efforts, students resoundingly reported interest in CTE program pathways for high demand and interesting careers available in Taos County: Natural resources management, sustainable agriculture/culinary skills, construction, and health sciences. In the school year 2017-18, VGHS received Next Generation CTE grant funding; and for the past two years, the school has had a small Perkins grant that is based on membership not need. Essentially, the funding was cut from the level of the Next Gen grants. VGHS has triaged and prioritized pathways due limited funding and teacher shortages during the pandemic in order to keep students' most desired pathways in place, such as sustainable agriculture in combination with the Vista Grande Gardens and, now, a food trailer and culinary after school club through a partnership with Inspire Education Network in Taos.

Some major accomplishments regardless of barriers external to the program include the following examples:

- In the summer of 2020, although during a global pandemic, the Vista Grande Gardens was established. The gardens are a collaborative sustainable agriculture farm project at the Taos Land Trust. The farm provides space for experiential learning in sustainable agriculture, internships and mentorships, community engagement opportunities, and free produce for VGHS families. Taos Integrated School for the Arts students will be working with high school students to engage in STEM learning activities at the gardens.
- Career internships and mentorships placements have continued after Covid. Community internships were put on pause during the 2020-2021 school year, due to Covid health concerns. So far in the 2021-22 school year, 6 students are earning credit for internships, with 4 more placements expected within the next month. Three students are receiving work study credit. New fields for internships this year include museum studies internships, art internships, and construction internships. Full program roll-out will continue in the spring, with the opportunity for all juniors and seniors to participate in internships or mentorships as a part of Friday programming.
- New internship program partners this year: Millicent Roger Museum, Taos Integrated School for the Arts, and the Taos Center for the Arts.
- Welding: The equipment and program were established in 2019 in collaboration with UNM-Taos and is taught by a local female welding artist. This program, when integrated into a sustainable construction pathway has inspired many girls at VGHS to think about careers in the industry and, maybe more importantly, to feel confident to use tools to make things.
- Historic Adobe Preservation: While this program is in hiatus due to the teacher shortage, we hope to resume this popular CTE pathway program. During this charter period, three Native American and one Northern NM Hispanic students were certified by the Earthbuilder's Guild as adobe builders. This certificate is required for any person working with World Heritage Sites and Park Service Sites in order to work on any adobe structures at the sites. Many jobs are available with this certification for a competitive starting salary.



5. Encouraging parental or community involvement

Community Schools. Vista Grande was one of 4 schools in Taos County to receive a Community Schools designation and awarded \$350,000 total for the 3-year implementation period. The school conducted another needs assessment in partnership with another Community School. We learned that students are struggling with mental health across the county. Vista Grande has employed a licensed students success coordinator and created a position for the Dean of Students to support students and connect students to appropriate community partners that provide systems of support for child mental health. The school usually employs a social worker, this position is currently unfilled due to shortages. In house, teachers continue with social and emotional learning strategies.

Parent Navigators. Parent Navigators became an important feature of VGHS wraparound services as a Community School during the Covid-19 pandemic; the position is of such help for families and students it is a position the school is choosing to continue. These Parent Navigators are hired from the Pueblo and the wider Taos Community to build relationships with parents and guardians. They also help conduct the continual needs assessments to understand what parents need from the school and the community. From the needs assessment data, VGHS programs are created to serve student and family needs and wishes. These programs have included cooking classes, health and wellness programs, and community building events. Parent Navigators also work with families to make referrals to outside service providers in the Taos community when students are in crisis. This work supports student attendance.

Collaborative Leadership. VGHS school leadership collaborates with VGHS staff, students, community organizations and leaders to collaboratively design and implement programs and create local policy changes to support our students and families. The school leadership team works with the school director and governing council to develop, implement and monitor strategic initiatives, including analysis of academic performance and social/emotional learning data. All staff at VGHS collaboratively design many aspects of the school, including revising the school's mission and vision and shaping professional development offerings.

6. School's Equity Plan

Since the inception of VGHS in 2007, it has focused on equity in the county in order to change the experiences of students who are academic casualties, mainly Native American, SPED, and ELL students by taking an asset-based approach to what students bring with them to the education setting. The requirement by NMPED in response to the Yazzie/Martinez court case to require that all schools develop an Equity Council merely brought formality to the social justice work we do at VGHS.

From the Equity Council work sessions, including the feedback gathered from on-going needs assessments, VGHS determined to seek greater equity for Native American students in the school:

- Reviewing curriculum by Taos Pueblo educators for accuracy and appropriateness.
- Learning Tiwa and/or Spanish for language credit. The Tiwa language program is helping students work toward bilingual seals. VGHS was the first charter school in the state to award the bilingual seal in Tiwa.
- Working toward an academic calendar based on input from Taos Pueblo about when students need to be attending traditional cultural events.
- Hiring an attendance liaison at the Pueblo to receive credit for cultural traditions participation for Alternative Demonstration of Competency.
- Planning for a 7th seat on the Governing Council that will be appointed by the Taos Pueblo tribal government.
- Designing recruitment plans to keep the demographic of the student body in proportion to that of the county.

- Creating equitable access to services such as health and wellness, social emotional learning, family and community programs. The Community Schools Initiative is designed to ensure that all students and families receive the holistic support needed to achieve wellness, academic success, career readiness and personal awareness and wellness.

7. Monitoring students' social, emotional, and behavioral development

The programs and positions included above in the section on parent and community involvement, Community School initiatives and the Parent Navigators, certainly support students' social, emotional and behavioral development. VGHS also provides direct services to students to support them in school.

Student Success Coordinator. The Student Success Coordinator (SSC) addresses chronic absences by meeting with the student and family. The Attendance for Success Act will be implemented at VGHS. If a student is in a hybrid learning model or remote learning models, the Student Support Coordinator will support the whole school interventions in order to improve attendance for all students. During tier 2 interventions, the SSC will coordinate the Attendance team and involve the student, Crew leader, and family to develop a plan that will improve attendance. In addition to all the support in tier 1 and 2, during tier 3 interventions, the SSC will notify the guardians of the intervention strategies being used and conduct home visits as necessary. The SSC will identify the underlying causes of excessive absenteeism and give written notice to the attendance team, including the school principal to establish non-punitive consequences as tier 4 supports. The SSC manages the referral to CYFD.

Implementation of CLRTL Rings of culture and VABB concepts. Vista Grande teachers have been training in CLRTL with Dr. Sharroky Hollie. This training provides teachers with 1:1 coaching support in writing culturally relevant lesson plans that utilize specific teaching and classroom management protocols, including VABB (Validate, Affirm, and Build a Bridge). In this way students' home cultures are validated and respected, and they learn the behaviors necessary to be successful in any professional setting.

CREW (SEL-based "Homeroom" provides the platform). Crew is small group (15 or less) instruction in Social Emotional Learning and Career and Technical Education. The term "crew" comes from Kurt Hahn's quote that "We are all crew, not passengers." Students and the crew leader sit in a circle to facilitate being equals and sharing thoughts and emotions. Students take the Panorama Survey by CASEL at the beginning, middle and end of the school year. This data shows where students' social emotional skills need improvement and drives instruction. Students engage in team building activities to strengthen their skills.

Student-Led Conferences (SLCs). Students and/or teachers select an assignment from each class to showcase to their families. They reflect on the learning targets, their areas of strength and opportunities for growth. Students also reflect on their MAPs scores and social emotional skills. Students are evaluated on a rubric that includes academic reflection as well as presentation skills. Parents have the opportunity to talk with crew leaders and academic teachers about any areas of concern.

Discipline Referrals. While all discipline referrals are logged in PowerSchool, referrals are handled on a case-by-case basis. Vista Grande is implementing a Restorative Justice program. If students are willing, they can participate in Restorative Justice circles. These circles facilitate open conversations about any harm that may have occurred, how to repair that harm, opportunities for learning, and how to change behavior going forward.

And we work to build programs for students so they can just have fun!



b. Equity and Identity within the Culture of the School including Student Support

This item of the renewal application allows schools the opportunity to include additional information that is not already collected, but that should be considered when making a determination about the renewal of its charter. The school will create a representation that highlights how their school environment is inclusive, reflective of the community, validates students' cultures and identities, and supports all students' sense of belonging.

Note: If your school wishes to display visual art or performance art (such as sculpture, painting, recorded performance or live performance by students), your school will be given no more than 15 minutes at its renewal hearing to present the representation. If a school wishes to submit a narrative, it shall be submitted along with the renewal application.

School response:

Vista Grande is preparing a short video presentation for the Public Education Commission for the December 2021 presentation of this charter renewal application. In this section, we would like to highlight the recently approved MOA between Vista Grande High School and Taos Pueblo to turn over some control and oversight to the Pueblo. For example, the VGHS academic calendar will be shaped around the Taos Pueblo ceremonial schedule. And, as one Caucasian student said when he heard about this alternative academic calendar, he responded with “that will be great for my life to be shaped by the Pueblo cycle and not by western culture, especially because we are on Pueblo land.”

TAOS PUEBLO

P.O. BOX 1846 • TAOS, NEW MEXICO 87571 • (505) 758-8626

PUEBLO OF TAOS TRIBAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION

No. TPTC-2009- 22

Authorizing the Implementation of an Educational Policy in Support of Cultural Integrity for the Pueblo of Taos

WHEREAS, the Pueblo of Taos is a federally recognized, sovereign and self-governing Indian tribe including the Tribal Council, a duly constituted governing body with the inherent authority, responsibility and vested interest in the education of Pueblo of Taos tribal members; and

WHEREAS, the Tribal Council established the Pueblo of Taos Board of Education (PTBE) by Charter Resolution #2006-27, to develop a comprehensive educational plan that is responsive to the cultural and socioeconomic needs of all Pueblo of Taos citizens through community based, life-long learning; and

WHEREAS, the Tribal Council supports educational plans and policies for tribal members that instill pride and preserve, protect, strengthen and perpetuate the tribe's heritage, tradition, and values and encourages them to become valued members of the community; and

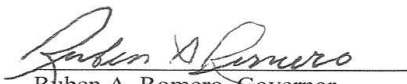
WHEREAS, the Tribal Council encourages and supports every tribal members' right to seek educational opportunities that allows them to develop culturally, intellectually, morally, physically and spiritually; and

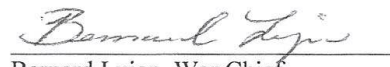
WHEREAS, the Tribal Council through the Board of Education will continue to collaborate and work with educational institutions to ensure equality and the education provided meets acceptable standards of excellence and quality in education for Pueblo of Taos members; and

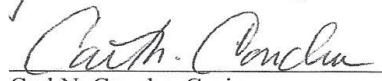
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Pueblo of Taos Tribal Council hereby authorizes the implementation of "An Educational Policy in Support of Cultural Integrity for the Pueblo of Taos," which defines an educational policy that protects tribal members' rights to a holistic education and perpetuates the Tribe.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Pueblo of Taos Tribal Council at a duly called meeting on the 12th day of November, 2009, by affirmative vote of 34 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstaining.


Ruben A. Romero, Governor



Bernard Lujan, War Chief


Carl N. Concha, Cacique


Senior Councilman

ATTESTED BY:


Ernesto Luhan, Tribal Council Secretary


Senior Councilman

Educational Policy in Support of Cultural Integrity for the Pueblo of Taos; A Partnership with Taos Pueblo to Re-charter as a NM State Charter High School (Taos Pueblo Council Resolution 2009-22)

The Taos Pueblo is vested with the “sacred trust” of upholding the long-held principles that have been at the heart of the cultural survival of all our students. As a community, we value our traditions, land, language, religion, and education with the understanding that this is vital to the continuation of our way of life. There are no rights or duties more precious to the Taos Pueblo people than these. Furthermore, equitable opportunities must be consistent and flexible to ensure the inherent rights for the preservation and protection of the cultural survival of our students. Legal commitments to all Native American students are fundamentally unique because of their legal and political status granted under the United States Government.

The Taos Pueblo further believes that providing an educational environment for all students, employees, volunteers and families, free from harassment, intimidation, or bullying supports a total learning experience. This environment promotes personal growth, healthy interpersonal relationships, wellness and freedom from discrimination and abuse.

Taos Pueblo, as a sovereign nation supports the purpose of this policy which is to address compelling, unmet educational needs of all Taos Pueblo students. The following overview will be helpful in identifying the need to more clearly articulate the shared responsibility, the desire to strengthen the necessary partnership to improve the quality of education for our children, and the commitment of federal, state, and local resources. This relationship will be carried forward in a spirit of cooperation, coordination, communication and good will. The language is consistent with Federal and State Legislative intent to strengthen the role of parents, tribal officials, and the school district in a meaningful and participatory way.¹

¹ Definitions:

1. Heritage – (1) Something that comes or belongs to one by reason of birth: a heritage of democracy. (2) Property, esp. land that is passed on by inheritance.
2. Sovereignty – (1) the status, dominion, power, or authority of a sovereign. (2) Supreme and independent power or authority in a state.
3. Sacred trust – recognizing that the people of Taos Pueblo value their traditions, land, language, religion, and education as vital to the continuation of their way of life.
4. Inherent rights – legal commitments to Native American students are fundamentally unique because of their legal and political status granted under the United States Government.
5. Cultural survival – heritage training is essential to the preservation of the Taos Pueblo culture, language, religion, and way of life.
6. Holistic learning – holistic learning signifies a predominantly “whole person” approach to learning, i.e., it seeks to engage fully all aspects of the learner – mind, body and spirit.

In accordance with Federal and State Legislation and in compliance with regulations promulgated by the New Mexico Public Education Department, the Taos Pueblo Board of Education acknowledges the right of parents or guardians of Taos Pueblo students to exercise their inherent right to a culturally appropriate education within their tribal communities without jeopardizing their education within any educational institution (See Appendices A-C). The Taos Pueblo recognizes that the key for Taos Pueblo students to live successfully in traditional and contemporary society is to first be grounded in their Taos Pueblo culture. This responsibility must be consciously acted on to enable students to live hopeful and purposeful lives. Therefore, the following components of a Communication and Attendance policy will be implemented for student success through this Memoranda of Understanding with Vista Grande High School.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN Vista Grande High School
AND Taos Pueblo**

1. **Parties.** This Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter referred to as “MOU”) is made and entered into by and between the Taos Pueblo, whose address is 120 Veterans Highway, Taos, NM, and the Vista Grande High School, whose address is 213 Paseo del Canon E., Taos, NM 87571.
 2. **Purpose.** The purpose of this MOU is to establish the terms and conditions under which a partnership will be formed with Taos Pueblo and Vista Grande High School to re-charter under the State of New Mexico as a State Charter High School.
 3. **Term of MOU.** This MOU is effective upon the day and date last signed and executed by the duly authorized representatives of the parties to this MOU and the governing bodies of the parties’ respective counties or municipalities and shall remain in full force and effect for not longer than five years. This MOU may be terminated, without cause, by either party upon 30 days written notice, which notice shall be delivered by hand or by certified mail to the address listed above.
-

4. **Responsibilities of Vista Grande High School.** Vista Grande High School will continue to provide an education institution where Taos Pueblo students will be provided a quality education, where culturally relevant instruction and support throughout their years at VGHS.

6. **Responsibilities of Taos Pueblo.** Taos Pueblo will be responsible for providing guidance through:

- Calendar development according to Taos Pueblo
- Weekly/daily schedule
- Attendance
- Curriculum review process
- Tribally-authorized assessments (HB 250)
- Alternative Demonstration of Competency
- Permanent seat on the VGHS Governing Council
- Data sharing agreement
- Tiwa language and culture program
- Implementation of Taos Pueblo Priority Process Education plan

A Taos Pueblo representative will take attendance for students that are participating in cultural educational experiences at Taos Pueblo. Taos Pueblo will notify Vista Grande High School at least one day prior to students being excused for a cultural educational experience at Taos Pueblo. All absences from the cultural program will be reported to Vista Grande High School within 2 days of the reported absence from the Taos Pueblo cultural activities.

7. **General Provisions**

A. **Amendments.** Either party may request changes to this MOU. Any changes, modifications, revisions or amendments to this MOU which are mutually agreed upon by and between the parties to this MOU shall be incorporated by written instrument, and effective when executed and signed by all parties to this MOU.

B. **Applicable Law.** The construction, interpretation and enforcement of this MOU shall be governed by the laws of the State of New Mexico. The courts of the State of New Mexico shall have jurisdiction over any action arising out of this MOU and over the parties, and the venue shall be the District Court, Taos NM.

C. **Entirety of Agreement.** This MOU, consisting of 9, pages, represents the entire and integrated agreement between the parties and supersedes all prior negotiations, representations and agreements, whether written or oral.

D. Severability. Should any portion of this MOU be judicially determined to be illegal or unenforceable, the remainder of the MOU shall continue in full force and effect, and either party may renegotiate the terms affected by the severance.

E. Sovereign Immunity. The Taos Pueblo, the Vista Grande High School, and their respective governing bodies do not waive their sovereign immunity by entering into this MOU, and each fully retains all immunities and defenses provided by law with respect to any action based on or occurring as a result of this MOU.

F. Third Party Beneficiary Rights. The parties do not intend to create in any other individual or entity the status of a third-party beneficiary, and this MOU shall not be construed so as to create such status. The rights, duties and obligations contained in this MOU shall operate only between the parties to this MOU, and shall inure solely to the benefit of the parties to this MOU. The provisions of this MOU are intended only to assist the parties in determining and performing their obligations under this MOU. The parties to this MOU intend and expressly agree that only parties signatory to this MOU shall have any legal or equitable right to seek to enforce this MOU, to seek any remedy arising out of a parties performance or failure to perform any term or condition of this MOU, or to bring an action for the breach of this MOU.

8. Signatures. In witness whereof, the parties to this MOU through their duly authorized representatives have executed this MOU on the days and dates set out below, and certify that they have read, understood, and agreed to the terms and conditions of this MOU as set forth herein.

The effective date of this MOA is the date of the signature last affixed to this page.

Taos Pueblo:



Governor Clyde M. Romero Sr.

9-18-21
Date



Lt. Governor Samuel G. Gomez Sr.

9-18-21
Date

Vista Grande High School:


Isabelle St. Onge, School Director

9-22-2021
Date

 9-22-2021
Elizabeth Roth, VGHS Governing Board President

9-22-2021
Date

APPENDIX A

SELECTED EXCERPTS FROM THE TAOS PUEBLO BOARD OF EDUCATION CHARTER

Article I. General Provisions

2. Authority and Declaration of Policy. Education is vital to the cultural and socio-economic well-being of the Taos Pueblo. In recognition of this reality, this Taos Pueblo Board of Education Charter ("Charter") is enacted in accordance with the inherent sovereign authority of the Taos Pueblo ("Pueblo") in conformance with the traditional and cultural values of the Pueblo and applicable laws. By this Charter and the regulations adopted under it, the Taos Pueblo intends to ensure that the education of Taos Pueblo members is a quality education that will prepare them for meaningful employment while addressing the unique needs of the Pueblo collectively to preserve its heritage, natural resources, and way of life.
3. Jurisdiction. The provisions of this Charter shall apply to the fullest extent of the sovereign jurisdiction of the Taos Pueblo as authorized by applicable tribal and federal law. The provisions of this Charter shall apply to and be construed consistent with all agreements and other cooperative arrangements entered into by the Taos Pueblo concerning education of Taos Pueblo members. The provisions of this Charter shall apply to all persons who are eligible to receive educational services and benefits from the Taos Pueblo.

Article IV. Policies and Procedures

1. General Policies and Procedures

- c. Additional Policies and Procedures. In addition to the provisions of this Charter, the Board of Education may develop and submit to the Governor for review and approval additional Education Program Policies and Procedures to fulfill the Board of Education's duties. The Education Director shall consult with the Board of Education in the formulation of such additional Education Program Policies and Procedures.

APPENDIX B NEW MEXICO STATE LEGISLATION

The purpose of the New Mexico Indian Education Act [22-23A-1 NMSA 1978] is to:

- A. Ensure equitable and culturally relevant learning environments, educational opportunities and culturally relevant instructional materials for American Indian students enrolled in public schools;
- B. Ensure maintenance of native languages;
- C. Provide for the study, development and implementation of educational systems that positively affect the educational success of American Indian
- D. Ensure that the department of education partners with tribes to increase tribal involvement and control over schools and the education of students located in tribal communities;
- E. Encourage cooperation among the educational leadership of Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and the Navajo Nation to address the unique issues of educating students in Navajo communities that arise due to the location of the Navajo Nation in those states;
- F. Provide the means for a formal government-to-government relationship between the state and New Mexico tribes and the development of relationships with the education division of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other entities that serve American Indian students;
- G. Provide the means for a relationship between the state and urban American Indian community members to participate in initiatives and educational decisions related to American Indian students residing in urban areas;
- H. Ensure that parents; tribal departments of education; community-based organizations; the department of education; universities; and tribal, state and local policymakers work together to find ways to improve educational opportunities for American Indian students;
- I. Ensure that tribes are notified of all curricula development for their approval and support;
- J. Encourage an agreement regarding the alignment of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and state assessment programs so that comparable information is provided to parents and tribes; and
- K. Encourage and foster parental involvement in the education of Indian students.

APPENDIX C FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Federal Indian Law

“Federal Indian Law” is the body of United States Law – treaties, statutes, executive orders, administrative decision, and court cases – that define and exemplify the unique legal and political status of the over 550 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes; the relationship of tribes with the federal government; and, the role of tribes and states in our federalism. Federal Indian Law has three fundamental legal principles:

- a) American Indian and Alaska Native tribes that are recognized by the federal government *are independent sovereign governments, separate from the states and from the federal government.*
- b) Unless Congress provides otherwise, the sovereignty of federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes *generally extends over their federally recognized geographic territory (e.g., reservations, allotments, trust and restricted Indian lands, and other Indian country), including over the activities and conduct of tribal members and non-tribal members within that territory.*
- c) The sovereignty of federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes *is inherent and exists unless and until Congress takes it away.*

Title 42 – Chapter 21 – Subchapter I - American Indian Religious Freedom Act

On and after August 11, 1978, it shall be the policy of the United States to protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise the traditional religions of the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiians, including but not limited to access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites.

P.L. 101-477 Sec. 104 Native American Languages Act of 1990

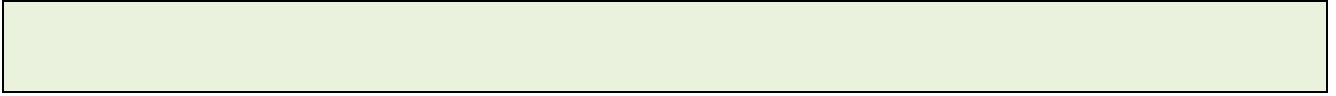
It is the policy of the United States to ---

- 1) Preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages;
- 2) Allow exceptions to teacher certification requirements for Federal programs and programs funded in whole or in part by the Federal Government, for instruction in Native American languages when such teacher certification requirements hinder the employment of qualified teachers who teach Native American languages, and to encourage State and territorial governments to make similar exceptions;
- 3) Encourage and support the use of Native American languages as a medium of instruction in order to encourage and support—
 - a. Native American language survival,
 - b. Equal educational opportunity,
 - c. Increased student success and performance,
 - d. Increased student awareness and knowledge of their culture and history, and,

- e. Increased student and community pride;
- 4) Encourage State and local education programs to work with Native American parents, educators, Indian tribes, and other Native American governing bodies in the implementation of programs to put this policy into effect;
- 5) Recognize the right of Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies to use the Native American languages as a medium of instruction in all schools funded by the Secretary of the Interior;
- 6) Fully recognize the inherent right of Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies, States, territories, and possessions of the United States to take action on, and give official status to, their Native American languages for the purpose of conducting their own business;
- 7) Supporting the granting of comparable proficiency achieved through course work in a Native American language the same academic credit as comparable proficiency achieved through course work in a foreign language, with recognition of such Native American language proficiency by institutions of higher education as fulfilling foreign language entrance or degree requirements; and
- 8) Encourage all institutions of elementary, secondary, and higher education, where appropriate, to include Native American languages in the curriculum in the same manner as foreign languages and to grant proficiency in Native American languages the same full academic credit as proficiency in foreign languages.

DEFINITIONS:

- 1. Heritage – (1) Something that comes or belongs to one by reason of birth: a heritage of democracy. (2) Property, esp. land that is passed on by inheritance.
- 2. Sovereignty – (1) the status, dominion, power, or authority of a sovereign. (2) Supreme and independent power or authority in a state.
- 3. Sacred trust – recognizing that the people of Taos Pueblo value their traditions, land, language, religion, and education as vital to the continuation of their way of life.
- 4. Inherent rights – legal commitments to Native American students are fundamentally unique because of their legal and political status granted under the United States Government.
- 5. Cultural survival – heritage training is essential to the preservation of the Taos Pueblo culture, language, religion, and way of life.
- 6. Holistic learning – holistic learning signifies a predominantly “whole person” approach to learning, i.e., it seeks to engage fully all aspects of the learner – mind, body and spirit.



2. Academic Performance

The Charter School Act provides as follows:

A charter may be suspended, revoked, or not renewed by the chartering authority if the chartering authority determines that the charter school... failed to meet or make substantial progress toward achievement of student performance standards identified in the charter contract.

a. School Support and Accountability

Any school that has not maintained a “C” or better letter grade in SY2017 and SY2018 OR is not identified in the top 75% of all schools in SY2019 and SY2020 on the NM System of School Support and Accountability, must provide a narrative that describes the improvement actions targeted to improve the student outcomes (school/adult/leader/teacher actions) and the success of those actions (student academic successes/improved outcomes).

Implementation of the described improvement actions should be verifiable through documented evidence at the site including renewal site visit. **Please identify specific evidence of both the school/adult/leader/teacher actions and the student academic successes/improved outcomes in the narrative.**

The narrative should reference performance data that can be reviewed and verified either during the renewal site visit or during the “desk audit” review of the application. If providing data, please attach in Appendix A1 and reference the appendix by name in this narrative. (Appendix A1 – Academic Data)

Schools that have maintained a “C” or better letter grade in SY2017 and SY2018 and were identified in the top 75% of all schools in SY2019 and SY2020 in the NM System of School Support and Accountability AND have not received a “D” or “F” in any indicator of the state report card during SY2017 and SY2018 do NOT complete this Section.

School response:

2. Academic Performance

a. School Support and Accountability

Vista Grande High School (VGHS) was established in 2007. In the first 9 years of its existence, the small school experienced 6 school directors; and the relationship the school has with its authorizer, Taos Municipal Schools (TMS), has been less than ideal. These two factors are very broad explanations for the school's variable academic performance through its history.

The first factor, stable and effective school leadership, was remediated with the hiring of Isabelle St. Onge, the current school director, when her tenure began in 2013-14. By the end of the fourth year of the 2nd charter contract and the first year of Ms. St. Onge's tenure, it became clear that the staff was balkanized and characterized by toxic behavior. Further, the teachers at that time were resistant to addressing their own biases and refused cultural sensitivity training with Taos Pueblo. Related and most importantly, students were showing disengagement with school, as seen in attendance, graduation and discipline rates. These issues in the school culture are closely correlated with student academic achievement, and leadership began to anticipate a drop in academic performance. Simultaneously, the school demographic was shifting to more accurately represent Taos County, which resulted in lower academic proficiency rates for in-coming 9th graders and a greater need for social and emotional and culturally responsive support at school for students and families. The school director saw the need for strategic transformation of the school model to better support the students choosing to attend VGHS.

While current TMS district leadership is generally supportive of the VGHS community, one overarching factor in Vista Grande's inconsistent academic performance is the lack of oversight and support by the district authorizer and a continually contentious relationship with district governance resulting in active undermining of the school in the domain of recruitment. Additionally, TMS struggles to equitably serve Native American, special education, and low-income students in K-8 settings. Many of the students have also attended the Taos Pueblo Day School, and the Bureau of Indian Education has not historically served Native American students equitably. As a result, VGHS 9th graders enter below grade level, particularly in mathematics. And many VGHS students enroll in the school in the 11th and 12th grades with substantial credit recovery needs – and the usual achievement gaps created by such circumstances. These children have been left behind. As you will see in this section, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, these vulnerable students were growing academically, socially, and emotionally in the supportive school culture they found at VGHS. Online learning and the trauma of the pandemic did not do these students any favors. And still the students persevered, many completing high school in 2021 against the odds.

The table below summarizes the summative school accountability measures in the form of School Grading Reports and the NM Vistas Summary Report:

Indicator	SY2017-18 School Grading Report Card	SY2018-19 School Grading Report Card	SY2019-20 NM Vistas Summary Report
Final Grade	C	C	Overall Performance 42/100 State average high school = 49
Current Standing	D	F	Academic Performance 19% proficient reading 3% proficient math
School Improvement	D	C	Academic Growth/Progress 54 Reading 48 Math
Improvement of Higher-Performing Students	A	B	
Improvement of Lowest-Performing Students	F	F	
Opportunity to Learn	B	B	
Graduation Rate	D	C	4-year graduation rate = 68%
College and Career Readiness	A	B	

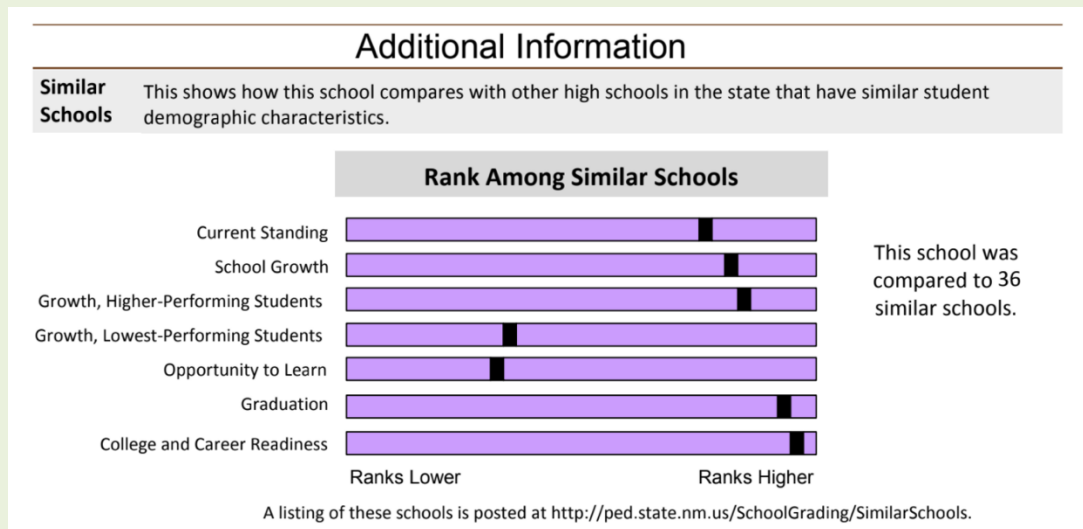
CURRENT STANDING/ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Thankfully, VGHS experienced a demographic shift in the student body to reflect the diversity of Taos County more accurately and avoid the common issue of inequities in the representation of underserved students in public schools of choice. The challenge of meeting this change in school identity is due to the difficulty high schools can face in attempting to close academic achievement gaps with older students. Not only do students enter VGHS with lower proficiency levels, they also bring with them the impacts of trauma caused by schools that hold lower expectations of their abilities to learn and the tacit, deficiency-based mindset often present in those schools. Students then start 9th grade believing that they are not good in math, they don't like to read, they can't learn... It is this degree of academic casualty that is motivating VGHS to choose PEC charter authorization and expand into the middle school grades so we can begin to help students succeed and achieve before high school.

Additionally, standardized tests, while they offer a snapshot of achievement, are biased and do not offer the more complete profile of a student we can get using authentic assessments. Thus, a discrepancy exists between more holistic measures of student success and the school's current standing on the School Grading Report or academic performance on NM Vistas.

Furthermore, issues exist with the Academic Performance scores from 2017-2020. First, current standing and academic performance are calculated using a statistic that sets baseline student achievement from 3 years of past test scores. These baselines are established for high school students when they are attending other schools. What will VGHS student baselines "look like" in the 9th grade when students begin school at Vista in 6th grade? We believe there will be improvement in students' starting points when the 3 vulnerable years of middle school can be experienced with the Vista Grande academic model.

Second, the drop in current standing from 2017-18 to 2018-19 is due to the NMPED decision to include only level 4 and level 5 PARCC scores to determine proficiency. Vista Grande's overall PARCC test results were similar both years. When level 3 scores were removed from the proficient categorization, the school's "grade" for current standing dropped. In both 2017-18 and 2018-19, VGHS was ranked among the top percentage of schools with similar student demographics. VGHS is not designated a Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) or Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school.



This image is from the 2017-18 School Grading Report. The results of a comparison with similar schools was similar in 2018-19; the NMPED no longer uses these reports, however, and we cannot locate a reproducible graph.

GRADUATION RATES

The VGHS graduation rate dropped in the 2017-18 school year and improved in the two years thereafter. Students often enroll in Vista Grande after attempting conventional high schools in the county. And they enter school as 11th or 12th grade students who have intense credit recovery needs. This situation impacts graduation rates in 2 ways. First, VGHS has a transient population and often admit students to the school in their 11th grade year. In the course of this charter and prior, we had opened an evening program to support students with overwhelming credit recovery needs. These students were non-traditional. During Covid, many students opted for a General Equivalency Diploma (GED). These diplomas are not factored into graduation rates for schools. Although we have offered a different online platform for learning, Edmentum, than other local schools, students have such intense credit recovery needs they often choose the GED route to avoid online courses. And with only 2 years as a student at VGHS, the school only receives half of the 16 student snapshots (40th day, 80th day, etc.) These snapshots stay with each school the student attended during high school to share the graduation rate between schools. Students enter with only 8 snapshots as Juniors but with so many Fs that they need more time to finish high school. Second, while VGHS works hard to help these students graduate, they often need to be 5th year graduates. Until recently, VGHS hosted a night school to support older students who needed to work, care for families, or had other life challenges to graduate from high school.

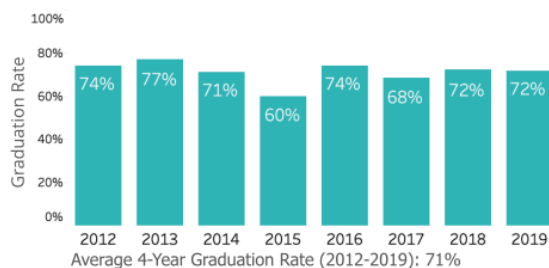
Recent data from the Taos School Zone (see the charts below) highlights comparative statistics for graduation in Taos County across schools. The upward trend in graduation rates at VGHS corresponds to the school

transformation efforts resulting from the 2016 needs assessment and root cause analysis. Graduation rates were comparable with Questa Independent Schools, Taos Municipal Schools, and Penasco.

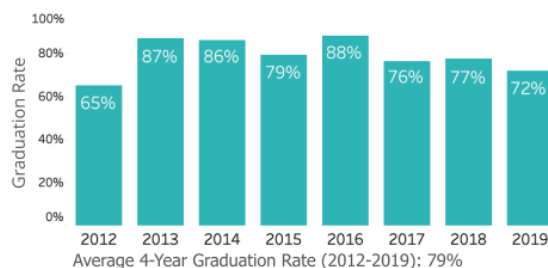
School demographics illustrate a potential reason Taos Academy Charter School is an outlier in terms of graduation rates. VGHS serves a greater proportion of Native American students and much fewer White, non-Hispanic students than other schools. Further, VGHS serves more special education students than other schools. We accurately represent, in accordance with Taos County demographics, the number of Native American students. And the school has a high proportion of special education students, because differently abled students and families feel that their needs are best met in the inclusive learning environments at VGHS.

4-Year High School Graduation Rates, by District:

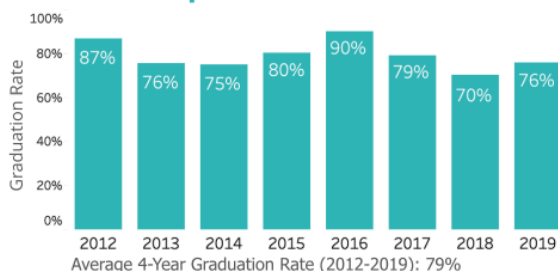
Taos Municipal Schools



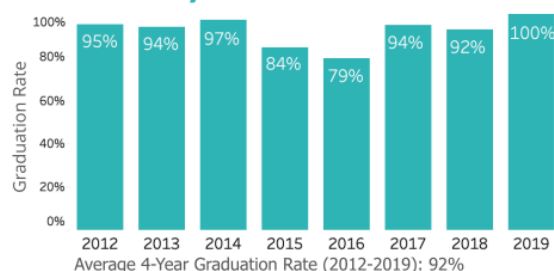
Questa Independent Schools



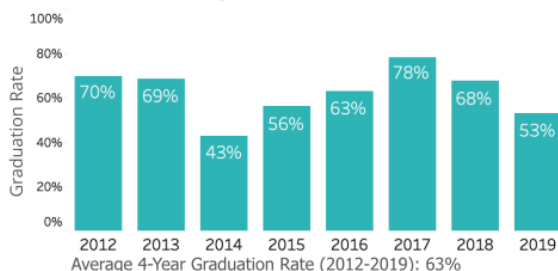
Peñasco Independent Schools



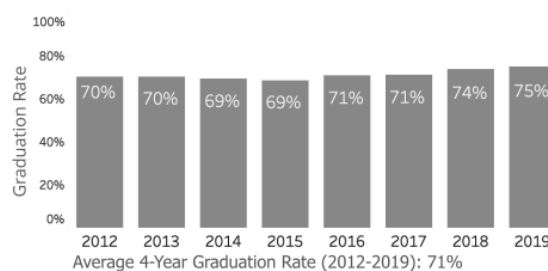
Taos Academy Charter School



Vista Grande High Charter School



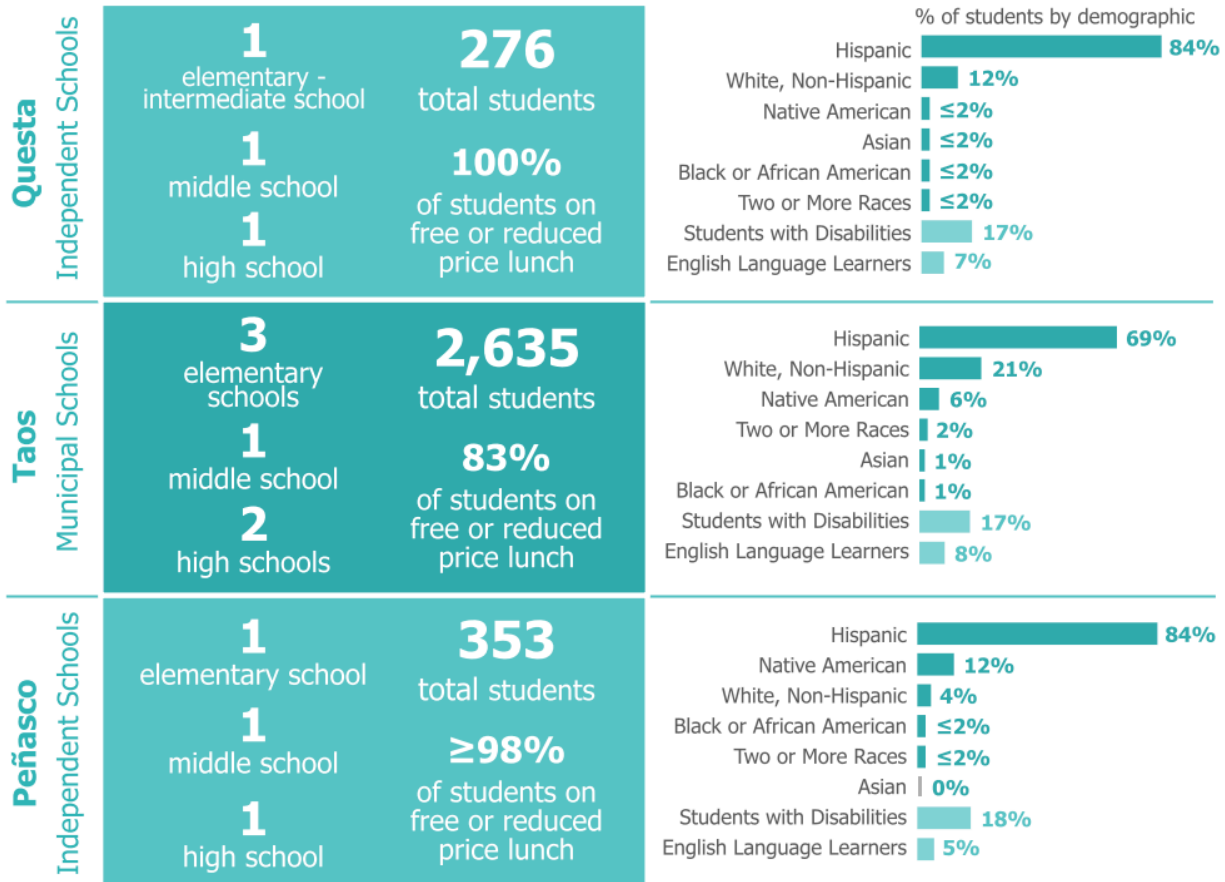
New Mexico Statewide



Note: Graduation rates represent the percentage of students from a given cohort who have graduated within 4 years of entering high school, after adjusting for any of those who have moved or transferred schools. Average Graduation Rates are calculated strictly as the mean of the annual graduation rates, without accounting for differing class sizes (non-weighted).

Source: New Mexico Public Education Department.

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS, 2019-20



Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, SY 2019-20 and New Mexico Public Education Department. Note: Categories represented by ≤2% or ≥98% are masked to protect student privacy.

Taos Academy Charter School

5-12

grades served

241

total students

Features: Dual credit college link program for juniors and seniors

56%

of students on free or reduced price lunch

Vista Grande High Charter School

9-12

grades served

97

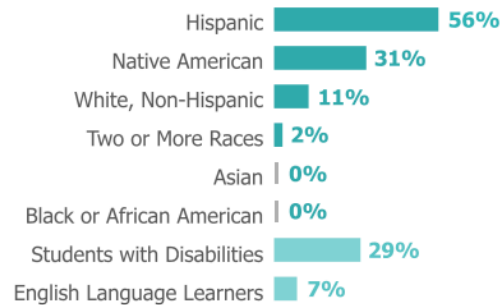
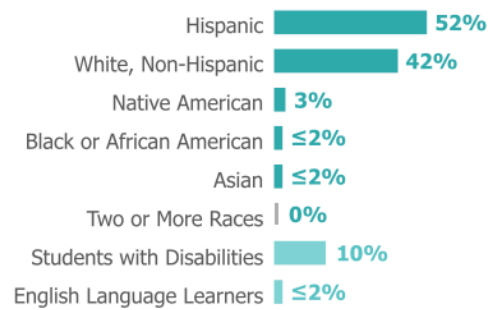
total students

Features: Project-based learning, community school

100%

of students on free or reduced price lunch

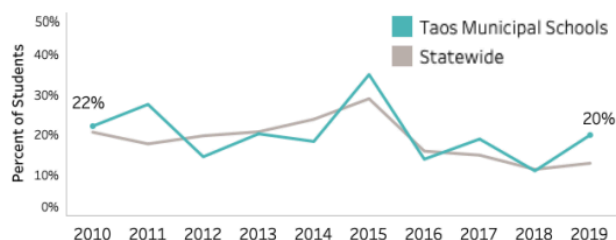
% of students by demographic



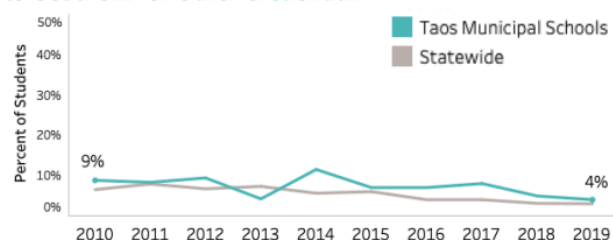
In 2015-2016, VGHS began the Nightflyers program to help non-traditional students graduate with a high school diploma. See the information below regarding the Disconnected Youth in Taos County. As a result of this program, the 4-year graduation rate declined, because students required additional time to complete their credits due to personal events, such as pregnancy, or extreme credit recovery needs. One student returned to VGHS as a 5th year Senior in the program because she was just 1 credit short to graduate from Taos High School. Due to the method to calculate graduation rates, THS gets the credit for the student graduating based on the number of "snapshots" the student attended the school; and as a result, VGHS received graduation credit for four of the student "snapshots," whereas THS, who failed the student, received credit for 12 of the student "snapshots", which improved that schools' graduation rate. This type of event provides somewhat inaccurate graduate rate data at best.

Outcomes of Non-Graduates in Taos Municipal Schools and New Mexico, by Cohort Year:

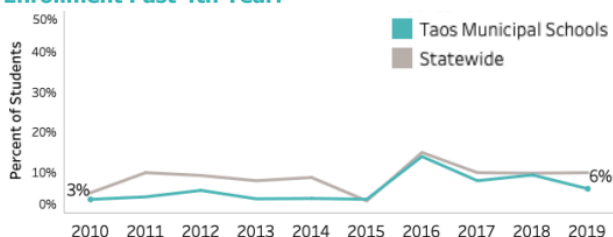
Percent of all Enrolled Students who Dropped Out or whose Status is Unknown:



Percent of all Enrolled Students who Exited with Intent to Get a GED or Other Credential:



Percent of all Enrolled Students who Continued Enrollment Past 4th Year:



Note: Percents are calculated based on all students ever enrolled in each school. Each student counts once at each school attended. Students who completed coursework but did not pass an exit exam are excluded from these graphs; fewer than 10 students in Taos Municipal Schools fit this category each year. Due to small class sizes, data is unavailable for Peñasco and Questa school districts to protect student privacy.

Percent of Disconnected Youth in Taos County, 2015-2019:



18%

of those aged 16 to 19 are neither enrolled in school nor working.

What does Disconnected Youth mean?

Disconnected youth are young people who are neither working nor in school. Some struggle to stay in school because they lack educational support or have faced personal challenges. Others may lack the skills required by the job market but are not enrolled in further education or training for financial or other unidentified reasons.

Sources: New Mexico Public Education Department, US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates 2019, and the Opportunity Nation website:
<https://opportunitynation.org/disconnected-youth>

GROWTH OF LOWEST PERFORMING STUDENTS

Regardless of the limitations of statistical reasoning in the calculation of school grades or performance scores or the relationship of the school with Taos Municipal Schools, once a student and family chooses VGHS, they become our priority and our greatest concern. The school inherits students who have academic trauma and low proficiency rates, and we work to do whatever necessary to help support these students and achieve academic success. We are continually focused on the lowest performing students and providing them with the equitable and grade-level educational experiences that engage, motivate and support them to fill the skill and knowledge gaps they brought with them into the school. As a team of educators, we are using more formative assessments in the classroom so we can perform the error analyses necessary to drill down into the specific skills in which these students need intervention, rather than waiting 3 months to see the results of assessments. More frequent assessment snapshots assist in accelerating the learning due to the appropriate use of layers of support.

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

Beginning in 2016-17 and the current 5-year charter, VGHS had implemented school turnaround strategies based on comprehensive needs assessment data. From this work to get ahead of the impacts of a toxic staff culture, high administrative turnover, and the shifting demographic of the student body, school leadership developed a 5-year strategic plan focused on integrating social and emotional learning (SEL) and culturally and linguistically responsive teaching (CLRT) practices in our work. This plan has been refined and enhanced over the past 4 years. The current 5-year strategic plan was based on the following Root Cause Analysis.

1. **School Leadership.** With the high rate of turnover of the school director, VGHS suffered from a lack of comprehensive school vision and strategic initiatives to meet the needs of students. As a result, teachers did not engage in a coherent academic program with consistent approaches to curriculum, instruction, assessment/grading, and developing school culture. Teachers had not been held consistently accountable for student outcomes or for their own professional behavior, or lack thereof. Toxic and balkanized staff culture often develops when the leadership position is a vacuum.
2. **Faculty Training and Retention.** School leadership is again important for faculty training and retention. Without the vision and direction for a school, staff do not receive the appropriate and continuous training to work with students unique to VGHS. Teams need to feel that they are part of something bigger, and they look to charter schools for that chance to work in a mission-driven educational environment. Faculty were not experiencing the passion for teaching and learning that can come with strong leadership. As a result, their interactions were characterized by gossip, complaining, and working to undermine the school leader and any developing vision for school improvement.
3. **Academic Vulnerability.** Students are inadequately served by local schools either at the K-8 level, as seen in extremely low academic proficiency entering the 9th grade, or in Taos County high schools, as evidenced by credit recovery needs. VGHS also attracts a high number of special education students who have really been underserved by learning in pull-out classrooms with no exposure to accelerated learning and taught “at their level” to remediate skill gaps. The students at VGHS are the academic casualties Judge Singleton spoke of in the Yazzie/Martinez NM Supreme Court case. VGHS is committed to closing these achievement gaps. This commitment is a central feature of the school’s mission.

Addressing Root Causes

Leadership is a core practice in an EL Education inspired school. Great school leaders build a coherent school vision and keep the focus on student wellness and achievement in the framework of continuous school improvement. And continuous school improvement initiatives are grounded solidly in data for monitoring impact. Best practices in leadership of developing a leadership team and structures for shared decision-making with stakeholders was re-initiated with the current school leader. And importantly, Ms. St. Onge began work to immediately engage the larger school community, including Taos Pueblo stakeholders, to garner input and develop strategic transformation initiatives for school improvement.

School (adult, leader, teacher) level improvement actions

School Year 2016 - 2017

- Faculty and staff reorganization and hired using new, rigorous hiring process
- Overarching 5-year strategic plan developed to include foci on student social and emotional learning (SEL) and support and culturally and linguistically responsive teaching (CLRT)
- A culture of data-driven decision-making is beginning to be developed
- Revision of teacher professional learning structures and practices
- Renewed partnership with Taos Pueblo

School Year 2017 - 2018

- The school is awarded (accidentally) an Indigenous Education Initiative (IEI) grant through the Indian Education Division of the NMPED to support CLRT professional learning
- Crew begins the revision process
- In-house social workers are seen as necessary positions in the school as student supports

School Year 2018 - 2019

- CLRT professional learning focus was continued through McCune Foundation funding
- CTE program pathways begin to be established with a focus on sustainable agriculture
- The CTE internship and mentorship program is re-established at the school
- Green Schools National Network partnership and focus on SEL and the Crew structure
- Began to revise the school's authentic assessments - portfolio and passage

School Year 2019 - Winter 2020

- The CLRT focus is deepened with funding through the Indigenous Education Initiative 3-year grant cycle from the NMPED. VGHS is the ONLY charter school awarded these funds. VGHS begins the required activities for funding:
 - Curriculum redesign so it reflects the value of diversity and different ways of knowing and learning. It is designed to foster growth in students by validating their home cultures and belief systems. The curriculum is reviewed by a team of Native American educators for accuracy and appropriateness.
 - Creation of an expanded Tiwa Language program with curriculum support from Taos Pueblo.
 - Direct communication and an improved relationship with Taos Pueblo.
 - Dr. Sharroky Hollie provided training for school administrators (CLRTI)
- The school was also awarded Community Schools Grant funding. This program requires collaborative planning between staff, students/families, and community members to create programming based on needs assessment data. The programming focus areas follow the 4 pillars of community schools: Integrated Student Supports, Extended Learning Time and Opportunities, Collaborative Leadership Practices, Active Family and Community Engagement.
- CTE pathway and program development continued.
- VGHS is selected as one of 14 schools to participate in the statewide Community of Practice on capstone projects and Portrait of a Graduate creation.

Indigenous Education Initiative (IEI)

- Dr. Sharroky Hollie's team (CLRTI) provided individual coaching pathway 1 for all teachers.
- Culturally responsive education technology PD provided to support teachers in remote learning strategies.
- Content coaching PD provided by Native American educators for math, science, ELA, and history teachers related to the school design.
- Partnership with Taos Pueblo further developed to include the development of policy and developing a pending MOA to enter the next charter contract.
- Family Navigator hired under the IEI grant-responsible for co-creating programming with CS family navigator to meet family and student needs, engagement of families in the school culture and activities. Creation of focus groups

CTE Pathways

- Vista Grande Gardens is established. The gardens are a collaborative sustainable agriculture farm project at the Taos Land Trust. The farm provides space for experiential learning in sustainable agriculture, internships and mentorships, community engagement opportunities, and free produce for VGHS families.
- Career internships and mentorships placements continued.

Community Schools Initiative

- A Student Success Coordinator is hired. This coordinator works to develop student-led programming to support holistic learning, health, experiential learning, attendance, and student awareness of available resources at VGHS and in the Taos Community.
- A Family Navigator is hired. The Navigator is responsible for co-creating programming with VGHS families in order to meet family needs and engage families in the school culture and programming.
- Student needs assessment conducted through the Community Schools Initiative to better respond to students extracurricular interests and difficult to discern academic needs.
- The Student Success Coordinator and Attendance Clerk provided one-on-one support to students in order to get them attending classes regularly. Students failing at the end of a semester were triaged for intervention.

Other initiatives to support students

- Continued the Community of Practice work with Future Focus to integrate the Portrait of a Graduate into the academic program and to enhance the existing portfolios and passage presentation student experiences.
- Continued the partnership with the Green Schools Network to integrate SEL into all classrooms and continued improvement of the Crew structure and curriculum.
- Teacher wellness focus.
- Immersion Learning weeks were developed that brought in community organizations and leaders to provide hands-on learning experiences for VGHS students during remote learning.

Evidence of Student Academic Successes and Improved Outcomes

SY 2018 – 2019 Lowest Performing Student Growth (NWEA)

Lowest Performing Student = in the low and low-average achievement quintile Fall 2019 (BOY)

* Based on NWEA Map Growth Normative Data 2020

RIT = a test structure that measures levels in academic difficulty. The higher the RIT score, the more academically difficult the test items are before students begin to answer erroneously.

The number in the “Difference” column is the change in RIT score from one test to another. So, a difference of -7 indicates the student performed more poorly on the 2nd assessment than the first. A score of +4 indicates a gain of 4 RIT points.

During this school year, 90% of 11th grade students progressed beyond the mean student growth norm in ELA. In the 10th grade, 63% of students achieved above average student growth. And in the 9th grade, 90% students not only gained above average growth in ELA but also achieved growth at more than one standard deviation above the mean for growth.

Through the growth of lowest performing students as demonstrated on interim assessments, the school demonstrates two years of sustained improvement prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

English Language Arts

	RIT Student Score Change Fall to Spring	Difference
11th Grade ELA Student Growth Fall to Spring	203-196	-7
	217-221	+4
	218-228	+10
	205-207	+2
	207-216	+9
	206-233	+27
224 = mean RIT score*	219-230	+11
	213-226	+13
	217-219	+2
1.18 = mean student growth norm		
Average score change: 7.88 (8.68 = 1 standard deviation from mean student growth)		
10th Grade ELA Student Growth Fall to Spring	213-190	-23
	211-216	+5
	216-219	+3
	198-192	-6
	194-199	+5
	207-214	+7
223 = mean RIT score*	209-209	0
	205-219	+14
2.04 = mean student growth norm		
Average score change: .625 (with -23 outlier removed = 4) (7.8 = 1 standard deviation from mean student growth)		

9th Grade ELA Student Growth Fall to Spring	214-215 208-217 175-195 212-228 199-204 211-223 210-220 204-210 206-200 191-200	+1 +9 +20 +16 +5 +12 +10 +6 -6 +9
220 = mean RIT score*		
2.51 = mean student growth norm		
Average score change: 8.2 (2.51 = 1 standard deviation from mean student growth)		
<p>Mathematics</p> <p>In the 2018-2019 school year, VGHS made significant growth in mathematics. Most students in all three grade levels exceeded growth goals and grew more than one standard deviation from the mean.</p>		
	RIT Student Score Change Fall to Spring	Difference
11th Grade ELA Student Growth Fall to Spring	214-218 224-236 219-238 216-237 225-239 215-224 209-230 224-240 204-223 216-227 226-227 220-235 226-237	+4 +12 +19 +21 +14 +9 +21 +16 +19 +11 +1 +15 +11
234 = mean RIT score*		
2.52 = mean student growth norm		
Average score change: 13.31 (8.37 = 1 standard deviation from mean student growth)		
10th Grade ELA Student Growth Fall to Spring	223-216 221-239 222-234 210-216 207-218 215-231 216-218 224-236	-7 +18 +12 +6 +11 +16 +2 +12
232 = mean RIT score*		
3.35 = mean student growth norm		
Average score change: 8.75 (7.37 = 1 standard deviation from mean student growth)		
9th Grade ELA Student Growth Fall to Spring	220-236 212-210 219-234 198-215	+16 -2 +15 +17

230 = mean RIT score*	214-223	+9
	221-229	+8
	208-215	+7
	214-210	-4
3.35 = mean student growth norm	205-219	+4
	193-208	+15
	208-213	+5
	205-212	+7
	221-215	-6
Average score change: 7 (7.41 = 1 standard deviation from mean student growth)		
SY 2019 – 2020 (Winter) Lowest Performing Student Growth (NWEA)		
The tables below reveal substantial growth occurring in ELA and mathematics for VGHS through winter of 2020, only one semester of instruction.		
English Language Arts		
	RIT Student Score Change Fall to Spring	Difference
11th Grade ELA Student Growth Fall to Winter 224 = mean RIT score* .08 = mean student growth norm	175-178	+3
	209-203	-6
	212-217	+5
	212-224	+12
	206-210	+4
	215-223	+8
	174-188	+14
	212-218	-4
	210-209	-1
	212-218	+6
Average score change: 4.1 (5.62 = 1 standard deviation from mean student growth)		
10th Grade ELA Student Growth Fall to Winter 222 = mean RIT score* .6 = mean student growth norm	217-219	+2
	213-214	+1
	212-214	+2
	198-214	+16
	180-208	+28
	214-211	-3
	211-209	-2
Average score change: 6.29 (5.38 = 1 standard deviation from mean student growth)		
9th Grade ELA Student Growth Fall to Winter	193-196	+3
	204-218	+12
	208-223	+15
	205-187	-18

220 = RIT mean score*		
.88 = mean student growth norm		
Average score change: 3 (10 if -18 outlier removed) (5.5 = 1 standard deviation from mean student growth)		
Mathematics		
	RIT Student Score Change Fall to Spring	Difference
11th Grade ELA Student Growth Fall to Winter (233 = RIT mean score*) (.76 = mean student growth norm)	212-211	-1
	211-220	+9
	220-219	-1
	226-225	-1
	199-212	+13
	217-223	+6
Average score change: 4.17 (5.25 = 1 standard deviation from mean student growth)		
10th Grade ELA Student Growth Fall to Winter (231 = RIT mean score*) (1.21 = mean student growth norm)	220-217	-3
	208-220	+12
	215-227	+12
	215-209	+6
	222-218	-4
	219-224	+5
	214-213	-1
	202-210	+8
	211-205	-6
	216-211	-5
	216-213	-3
Average score change: 1.91 (4.97 = 1 standard deviation from mean student growth)		
9th Grade ELA Student Growth Fall to Winter (228 = RIT mean score*) (1.36 = mean student growth norm)	201-202	+1
	213-211	-2
	221-228	+7
	201-206	+5
	206-217	+11
	214-218	+4
Average score change: 4.33 (4.98 = 1 standard deviation from mean student growth)		

The VGHS Commitment to Continuous School Improvement

School Year 2021-2022 90-Day DASH plan

Data-Driven Instruction. All students will take the NWEA MAPS Reading and Math assessments for baseline data by 9/10/21. All teachers will give a reading assessment to all students by 10/27/21. By 12/22/21, all students will be able to track their progress and set a goal with action steps to meet the goal for the semester.

Vista Grande will use MAPS data to differentiate and accelerate instruction utilizing the Exact Path program from Edmentum. Edmentum will provide data-driven instruction PD for teachers. Instructional coaches/special education coordinator will provide PD for differentiation and individual student learning goals. Students will close any learning gaps by working in Exact Path curriculum.

Alternative Demonstration of Competency. All juniors and seniors will participate in an internship or mentorship program within the community. This will inform the student's capstone project. All sophomores and seniors complete a digital portfolio presentation of their learning to present during Passages. For seniors, this presentation, along with the capstone project, will count as an Alternative Demonstration of Competency for graduation.

School climate and culture. Vista will implement a Restorative Justice program and re-write the Student Handbook to reflect those practices as well as Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Instruction. All students and their families will have a family navigator who works in partnership with the Crew Leader, student and family to create a Family Learning Plan and connect students and families with community resources.

Indigenous Education Initiative. The goals of the 3rd year of Indian Education Initiative (IEI) funding move the school forward to relaunching the redefined program in 2022-2023:

- Implementation of newly redesigned curriculum and continued curriculum design and review for approval.
- Instantiation of the Taos Pueblo partnership (consultation, support, inclusion, etc.).
- Continuation of CLRT professional development for teachers.

Community Schools. Vista Grande is in our second year of the Community Schools Implementation Grant funding. The Community Schools model is based on the four pillars of Integrated Student Support, Extended Learning Time and Opportunities, Active Family Engagement and Collaborative Leadership. VGHS works with a Community Council and Site Based Leadership team to survey the needs of students, families and community members and create needs-based programming. In the last two years this has included increased programming in after school opportunities, counseling, student success advising, dropout prevention, enhanced mentorship and internship opportunities and food sovereignty and education at our school farm.

Equity Council. Vista Grande established an Equity Council that consists of school staff and community members. This year, the Equity Council will need to recruit new student and parent representatives. The Council has conducted a Readiness Assessment to identify areas of need for improved equity. This year, the Council will use the Readiness Assessment to create an Advisement Package. This will consist of a recommendation or recommendations for the Director and/or Governing Council for actions and/or initiatives for improving equity at the school.

The goal set by the VGHS Equity Council for the 2021-22 includes an emphasis on how we can better serve the large proportion of Special Education students who choose to attend the school. The Readiness

Assessment provided by the NMPED to guide the Equity Council work was important in highlighting this area of student need

b. School or Mission Specific Charter Goals

Pursuant to 1978 NMSA, §22-8B-9.1 each charter school authorizer must allow for the inclusion of additional rigorous, valid and reliable indicators proposed by a charter school in each school's performance framework to augment external evaluations of its performance, provided that the chartering authority approves the quality and rigor of the indicators and the indicators are consistent with the purposes of the Charter Schools Act.

All applicants must report on each school or mission specific charter goal that is included in the school's performance framework. Applicants must provide a summary analysis of their performance on each goal over the term of the contract. This analysis must state, for each year of the contract, whether the goal was met and must include longitudinal data that can show the progress of the school over the contract term. For each goal, the applicant should provide a visual representation of the longitudinal data.

For any applicant that did not meet all of their goals in each year of the contract term, provide a narrative that addresses the improvement actions (school/adult/leader/teacher actions) targeted to improve the school's performance on that school or mission specific goal and the success of those actions (student academic successes/improved outcomes). The purpose of the narrative is to demonstrate substantial progress toward achieving and maintaining sufficient performance on the school or mission specific goal. The narrative should only address a goal that was not met in each year of the contract term.

Implementation of the described improvement actions should be verifiable through documented evidence at the renewal site visit. **Please identify specific evidence of both the school/adult/leader/teacher actions and the student academic successes/improved outcomes in the narrative.**

The narrative should reference performance data that can be reviewed and verified either during the renewal site visit or during the "desk audit" review of the application. If providing data, please attach in Appendix A2 and reference the appendix by name in the narrative. (Appendix A2 – Mission Goal Data)

Schools that have met all of their school or mission specific goals in each year of the contract term do NOT provide a narrative.

School response:

2. Academic Performance

b. School or Mission Specific Charter Goals

Students come to VGHS for a strong, standards-based education that is fully integrated with Indigenous and heritage Hispanic culture and language within a small, close-knit, and place-based community. Many students come to Vista Grande after failing to thrive at the other local high schools and are entering VGHS below grade level in academics, need for credit recovery, and many require social services that can be better provided by a Community School. VGHS embraces each student, and our approach is designed to provide the individualized support that will help each student thrive. VGHS is committed to continuous school improvement efforts, and our data indicate room for growth. And in both math and reading, VGHS grade cohorts were showing strong conditional growth on interim assessments, until the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Conditional growth indicates the number of standard deviations greater or less than the project growth for a particular student. Strong conditional growth means students at VGHS are experiencing greater growth in academic proficiency than other students nationally who started at the same proficiency level regardless of grade level. We believe that with the VGHS academic program and with the support of the PEC as Authorizer and support of the Charter School Division, we will be able to get back on the path of student academic improvement as we are able to offer in-person school, which is the better fit for VGHS students.

After the 2016-17 school year, the use of the Discovery interim assessment was terminated. During 2017-18, we experimented with the Edulastic platform for teacher-designed interim assessments. This attempt at greater teacher autonomy with interim assessments did not achieve the results for which we were hoping to see. Since 2018-2019, VGHS has used the NWEA MAP interim assessment in Mathematics and Reading. The assessments are administered in the Fall, Winter, and Spring of each year to provide feedback that can be addressed within each school year. Teachers use assessment results to drive instruction and interventions, and students use assessment results to understand their own levels of proficiency and set goals for improvement.

In 2020, NWEA conducted a new norming study. NWEA strongly advises educators to use the 2020 MAP Growth test norms, especially when analyzing data longitudinally, because the norms are the most current and accurate reference for MAP growth scores. All analyses in this report are based on the NWEA 2020 Normative Data.

Growth. In order to show growth (the first phrase in each of the standards set forth below), FAY (full academic year) students will demonstrate academic growth in Reading as measured by three short cycle assessments using grade level assessment. The growth will be determined using Discovery projected growth targets for each student as set by the fall test as shown on the attached sample report. Students may show the growth on either of the winter or spring assessments or growth as defined in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Proficiency. In order to show proficiency (the second phrase in each of the standards set forth below), a student scores at Achievement Level III, Adequate or Achievement Level IV, on the winter or spring short cycle assessments.

Summary of Interim Assessment Results

In the 2018-2019, VGHS met the standard for student proficiency attainment and growth in mathematics and demonstrated strong conditional growth in both reading and math. These data were strong indicators that the

school transformation efforts begun in 2016-2017 had gained traction and were leading to positive student outcomes.

And then a pandemic happened... In the 2019-2020 school year, VGHS did not administer the interim assessment spring of 2020 due to the NMPED waiving the testing requirement; therefore, we have only a .5 academic year of data to monitor. Based on the percent proficient and FAY rates by winter of 2020, as well as conditional growth rates, it appears that VGHS students were on a trajectory to meet the academic framework mission-specific goals. During the 2020-2021 school year, when school was fully remote, students were required to test at home. First, students would not do the test at home; and further, if they did take the test, how can we be sure they did not get assistance from someone in their home? By the spring of 2021, students were attending a hybrid school model. Two issues existed with regard to interim assessment: Students did not come to the school to take the assessment, and many students had not taken the earlier tests, so no growth data were available.

The 2020-2021 school year was structured for remote learning due to the continuing pandemic and public health orders. VGHS students attend the school because they *need* in-person relationships, the one-on-one support for authentic “minds-on” activities, and the in-person wraparound support; they are not students who choose or do well with remote learning. Remote learning was also a challenge due to internet connectivity issues and economic disparities that cause the digital divide. The school worked diligently to fill these gaps and get students connected so they could attend school. Further, many Vista Grande students need to work to help support their families. And because local businesses did not adhere to the rule to not hire students during the school day, our students took day jobs.

- 1. SHORT CYCLE ASSESSMENT READING:** Short Cycle Assessment data will be used to measure academic growth or proficiency in Reading of Full Academic Year (FAY) students.

The school set the following goals based on Full Academic Year (FAY) students:

- Exceeds standard: 80%+ FAY students meet or exceed the projected RIT score OR test proficient or advanced on the Winter or Spring NWEA MAP according to the grade level proficiency report.
- Meets standard: 68-79% of FAY students meet or exceed their projected RIT score OR test proficient or advanced on the Winter or Spring NWEA MAP.
- Does not meet: 58-67% of FAY students meet or exceed their projected RIT score OR test proficient on the Winter or Spring NWEA MAP.
- Falls far below standard: Less than 57% of FAY students meet or exceed their projected RIT score OR test proficient on the Winter or Spring NWEA MAP.

As defined by NWEA, FAY, or Full Academic Year growth, is equivalent to 1.5 years of academic growth (this equals 1.5 times the growth norm) in a year.

The Conditional Growth Index “enables you to compare growth between any of your students. This measurement correlates your student’s growth with the growth patterns of matching peers within the NWEA norms study (same grade, starting RIT score, and Weeks of Instruction before testing). In addition, this measurement involves a conditioning process that incorporates how difficult it was for each student to grow. As a result, you can see each student’s growth in the same national context and compare them fairly, regardless of grade or subject.” (NWEA)

	2018 - 2019		2019 – Winter 2020		2020 - 2021	
Grade Level	% Met Conditional Growth Goal*	% Proficient OR FAY	% Met Conditional Growth Goal*	% Proficient OR FAY	% Met Conditional Growth Goal*	% Proficient OR FAY
9 th	56	72	n/a	60	n/a	83
10 th	50	92	50	45	n/a	50
11 th	63	79	56	69	n/a	43
Average		81		58		57

* NWEA Student Summary Growth Report

* Met Conditional Growth Goal (FAY) or Met or Exceeded the NWEA RIT 2015 Normative Cut Score

n/a = small sample size

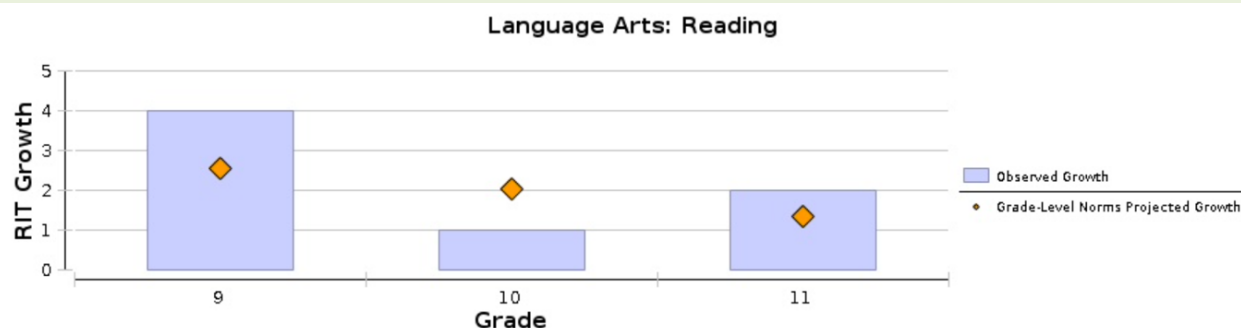
In the table above, you will find the information regarding the percentage of students who met conditional growth goals set by NWEA and students who were proficient or who attained FAY in English Language Arts (ELA). The green highlighted areas show which grade levels and the whole school average that met the academic performance benchmarks. Notice the trend line of improvement through the first semester of 2019-2020. A primary issue related to short-cycle assessments during pandemic remote school in 2020-2021 was the decreased likelihood of VGHS students taking the online assessments at home.

In 2018-2019, eighty-one per cent of students at VGHS had either achieved a proficient rating or FAY in ELA. Further, the fact that 11th grade had already met the performance framework benchmark goal by Winter 2019 pre-pandemic, and half of the 10th grade had met conditional growth goals for ELA, shows that VGHS students were poised to demonstrate the continued trajectory of improvement for students who enter Vista Grande severely behind grade level.

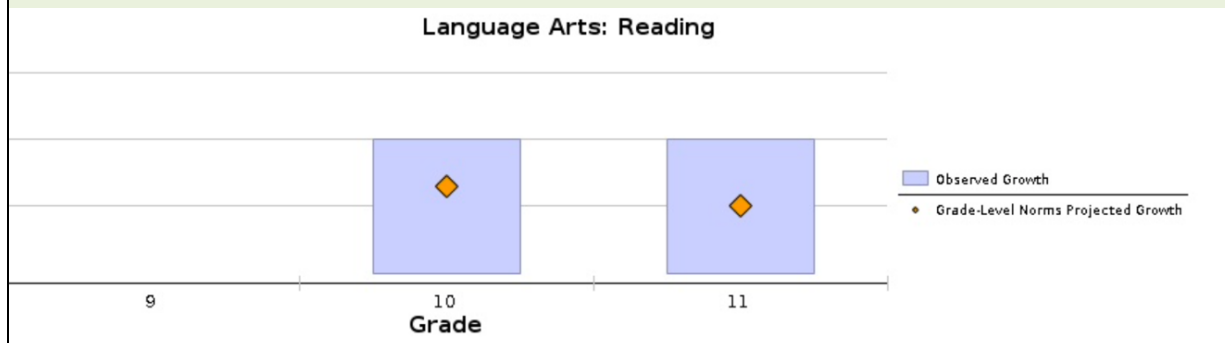
NWEA Student Growth Summary Reports

Growth summary reports show the aggregate growth within a school in order to revise instruction and use of materials to support student achievement.

2018-19 NWEA Student Growth Summary Report



2019-20 NWEA Student Growth Summary Report



We see in the 1.5 years of student growth summaries that VGHS was on a trajectory, prior to the pandemic, of exceeding NWEA grade-level norms projected growth benchmarks.

2. **SHORT CYCLE ASSESSMENT MATH:** Short Cycle Assessment data will be used to measure academic growth or proficiency in Math of Full Academic Year (FAY) students.

The school set the following goals based on Full Academic Year (FAY) students:

- Exceeds standard: 80%+ FAY students meet or exceed the projected RIT score OR test proficient or advanced on the Winter or Spring NWEA MAP according to the grade level proficiency report.
- Meets standard: 65-79% of FAY students meet or exceed their projected RIT score OR test proficient or advanced on the Winter or Spring NWEA MAP.
- Does not meet: 54-64% of FAY students meet or exceed their projected RIT score OR test proficient on the Winter or Spring NWEA MAP.
- Falls far below standard: Less than 54% of FAY students meet or exceed their projected RIT score OR test proficient on the Winter or Spring NWEA MAP.

	2018 - 2019		2019 – Winter 2020		2020 - 2021	
Grade Level	% Met Conditional Growth Goal*	% Proficient OR FAY**	% Met Conditional Growth Goal*	% Proficient OR FAY**	% Met Conditional Growth Goal*	% Proficient OR FAY**
9 th	72	77	n/a	50	n/a	33
10 th	71	87	39	39	n/a	60
11 th	80	55	36	56	n/a	45
Average		73		48		46

* NWEA Student Summary Growth Report

* Met Conditional Growth Goal (FAY) or Met or Exceeded the NWEA RIT 2015 Normative Cut Score

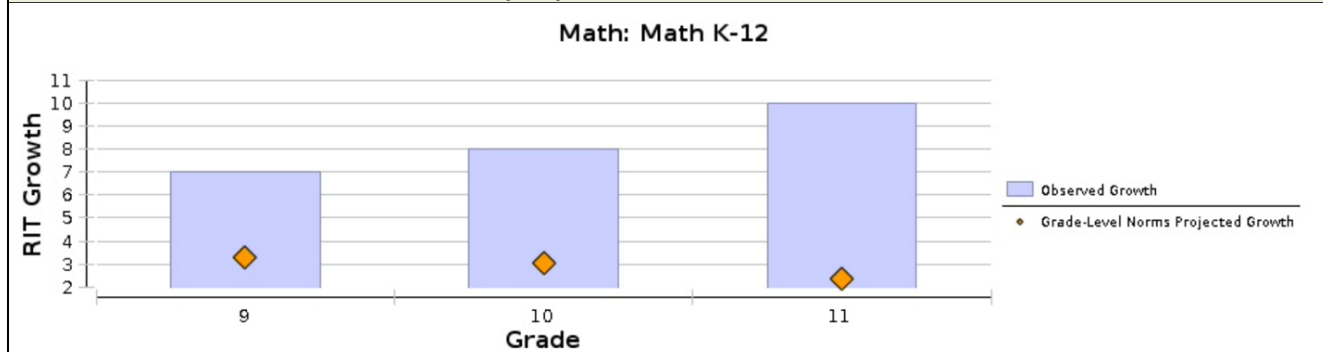
n/a = small sample size

In the table above, you will find the information regarding the percentage of students who met conditional growth goals set by NWEA and students who were proficient or who attained FAY in mathematics. The green highlighted areas show which grade levels and the whole school average that met the academic performance benchmarks. In 2018-19, 73% of students at VGHS had either achieved a proficient rating or FAY in math. Further, the percentage of students achieving conditional growth was above the norm for each grade level. And though the data do not present such a clear trend of improvement as in ELA, note that 48% of VGHS students had reached proficiency or achieved FAY by the Winter of 2020, prior to the pandemic.

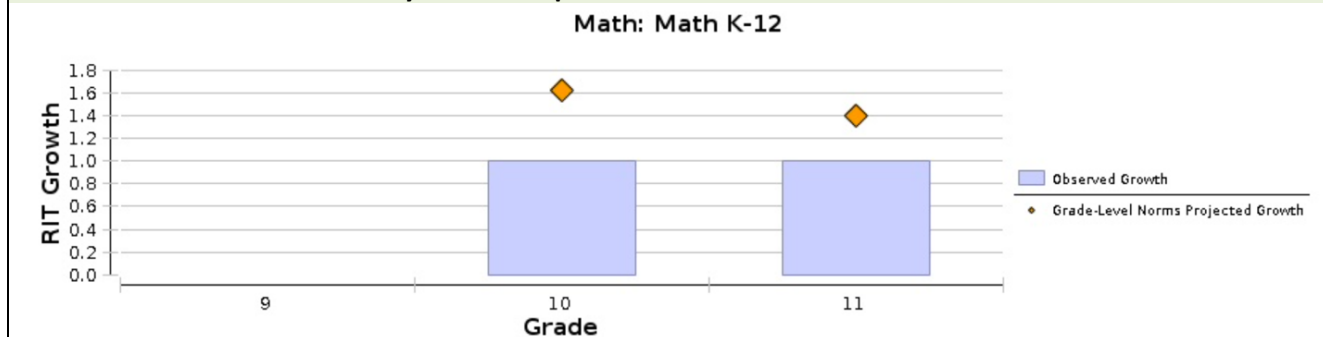
NWEA Student Growth Summary Reports

Growth summary reports show the aggregate growth within a school in order to revise instruction and use of materials to support student achievement.

2018-19 NWEA Student Growth Summary Report



2019-20 NWEA Student Summary Growth Report



3. **CIVIC ACTION:** 90% VGHS students, by the time they graduate in 12th grade, will participate in at least one civic action, based on their personal stance on a key issue in our world. Civic action includes, but is not limited to, petition writing, letters to newspapers and/or government representatives, public service announcement creation, public debates, etc. This work can be done through the regular curriculum and/or on their own volition.

The school set the following goals:

- Exceeds Standard: All students participate in more than one civic action by the time they graduate from VGHS
- Meets Standard: 90% of students participate in more than one civic action by the time they graduate from VGHS
- Does Not Meet Standard: 80-89% of students participate in more than one civic action by the time they graduate from VGHS
- Falls Far Below Standard: Less than 80% of students participate in more than one civic action by the time they graduate from VGHS
-

VGHS students engaged in civic action through the school and, often, independently with school support every year, even during the hybrid model the spring of 2021. When hybrid instruction began, VGHS students developed social media campaigns to raise awareness of social justice and climate change issues.

A word of caution...

The quote from John Bonin in the NWEA blog explains some of the hazards in relying on FAY as the statistical litmus of academic program quality:

“It’s true that students who are behind academically are not going to match their peers if they make average growth, so above-average growth is necessary for them to catch up. The fact that something is necessary, however, doesn’t always make it reasonable. Is it an admirable aspiration for students behind grade level to make 1.5 years of growth each year? Sure, as long as we don’t label students who fail to achieve this ambitious goal as failures. So is the 1.5 times the growth norm a reasonable goal for most schools? No. We have empirical data across a large population of schools that indicates that the vast majority of schools do not reach this target. The empirical data also show that it is far less common for elementary students to reach this target than middle and high school students. So what’s the harm in setting unrealistic goals for schools? The harm comes when we make high-stakes decisions about the performance of teachers and schools based on a standard that is rarely reached. Of course, average growth is not enough for low performing students to catch up to new and higher standards. It’s necessary. But that doesn’t mean it’s a good idea to hold teachers and schools accountable for a goal that has been shown to be rarely reached.”

<https://www.nwea.org/blog/2016/how-many-students-and-schools-actually-make-a-year-and-a-half-of-growth-during-a-year/>

3. Financial Compliance

The Charter School Act provides as follows:

A charter may be suspended, revoked, or not renewed by the chartering authority if the chartering authority determines that the charter school...failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.

a. Audit Report Summary

Every charter school is subject to the Audit Act. (1978 NMSA §22-8B-4; 1978 NMSA 22-8-1 *et. seq.*) The Public School Finance Act requires the audit committee of each charter school governing body to track and report progress on the status of the most recent audit findings and advise the local school board on policy changes needed to address audit findings.

Please edit the actual year you are referring to in the table. For example, Year 1 should be changed to the audited year (such as FY16) within the current contract. Also, provide a summary of the nature of findings including category levels. Include and indicate any repeat audit findings involving a material weakness or significant deficiency.

Year	Total # of Findings	Nature of Findings including Rating (Compliance, Significant Deficiency, Material Weakness)	School's Corrective Action Plan
Year 1 (FY2018)	1	OTHER MATTERS -UNMODIFIED AUDIT	CASH RECEIPTS – REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES WITH CHANGES TO FUNDRAISING POLICIES TO INCLUDE STAFF ARE TRAINED IN MANDATES FOR COLLECTION, RECEIPTING, AND DEPOSITING OF MONEY.
Year 2 (FY2019)	2	OTHER MATTERS, COMPLIANCE- UNMODIFIED AUDIT	OVERSPENT BUDGET – IMPLEMENTED QUARTERLY REVIEWS OF BUDGET WITH FINANCE COMMITTEE, ADMINISTRATOR, AND FINANCE DIRECTOR. GRANT REIMBURSEMENTS – REVIEW OF PROCEDURES FOR BEST PRACTICES
Year 3 (FY2020)	0	NO FINDING – UNMODIFIED AUDIT	

b. Board of Finance

Pursuant to 1978 NMSA §22-8-38, failure of the governing body of a state-chartered charter school to qualify for designation as a board of finance constitutes good and just grounds for nonrenewal or revocation of its charter.

Further, pursuant to 1978 NMSA §22-8-39, the department may at any time suspend a local school board or governing body of a state-chartered charter school from acting as a board of finance if the department reasonably believes there is mismanagement, improper recording or improper reporting of public school funds under the local school board's or governing body of a state-chartered charter school's control.

When the governing body of a state-chartered charter school is suspended from acting as a board of finance, the department is required to consider commencing proceedings before the Commission to revoke or refuse to renew the charter of the state-chartered charter school.

If the school's **Board of Finance was suspended** at any time during the term of the contract, the school must provide a narrative explaining the actions taken (**school/adult/leader/board actions**) on the school's own initiative to correct financial compliance and regain the Board of Finance Authority and the success of those actions (**improved practices and outcomes**).

The school must also describe the current status of the Board of Finance and continuing actions to ensure the same financial challenges do not reoccur. Success should be identified by specific changes in practice.

The narrative must be supported by evidence to be reviewed and verified at the renewal site visit. **Please identify specific evidence of both the school/adult/leader/board actions and the improved practices and outcomes in the narrative.**

Schools that have maintained all Board of Finance authority during the entire term of the contract do NOT complete this Section.

School response:

As a district-authorized charter school, Taos Municipal Schools is the Board of Finance.

4. Contractual, Organizational, and Governance Responsibilities

The Charter School Act provides as follows:

A charter may be suspended, revoked, or not renewed by the chartering authority if the chartering authority determines that the charter school...committed a material violation of any of the conditions, standards, or procedures set forth in the charter... *or*...violated any provision of law from which the charter school was not specifically exempted.

a. Charter Material Terms or Comprehensive Educational Program

Pursuant to 1978 NMSA §22-8B-9, each charter contract must contain material terms of the charter application as determined by the parties to the contract. The PEC's contract identifies all material terms, or in some contract versions, the components of the comprehensive educational program.

If a school received a rating of "working to meet standard" or "falls far below standard" for Indicator 1.a in its Web-EPSS annual report for any year within the contract term, the school must describe the improvement actions the school made to address the deficiencies.

School response:

VGHS, as a district-authorized charter school, has not been included in Web-EPSS. Taos Municipal Schools has never provided an annual report on the status of VGHS meeting the material terms of the charter contract. The material terms are outlined in the VGHS Charter School Contract 2017-2022 pages 31-42. Also please refer to the 2a. and 2b. responses in this renewal kit. VGHS monitors its charter frameworks internally and to the highest standard possible given the lack of partnership and oversight provided by the district authorizer.

b. Organizational Performance Framework

Pursuant to NMSA §22-8B-9.1, the performance framework for each charter school must include performance indicators and performance targets for governing body performance, including compliance with all applicable laws, rules and terms of the charter contract.

For any school that has received a repeated “working to meet standard” rating or any “falls far below standard” rating for one or more of the organizational performance framework indicators on the most recently completed organizational performance framework evaluation provide a narrative explaining the improvement actions made (school/adult/leader/board actions) to meet all legal compliance requirements and the effectiveness of those actions (improved practices and outcomes) in improving organizational performance and compliance.

The purpose of the narrative is to demonstrate substantial progress toward achieving and maintaining organizational performance and compliance.

Implementation of the described improvement actions should be verifiable through evidence at the site visit. **Please identify specific evidence of both the school/adult/leader/board actions and the improved practices and outcomes in the narrative.**

If the school has received any Office of Civil Rights complaints, formal special education complaints or NM Attorney General complaints or enforcement action, or the school must identify those, provide all communications (redacted to protect PII) related to those complaints in an appendix (Appendix B – Complaint Communications), and describe the current status of the complaint. **If any of those complaints have been resolved and resulted in a finding that the school violated any law**, the school must provide a narrative describing the required compensatory and corrective actions required and their status in implementing those actions. The implementation of such actions must be verifiable through evidence during the renewal site visit.

Schools that do not have any repeated “working to meet standard” ratings or any “falls far below standard” ratings on the most recent organizational performance framework evaluation do NOT complete this Section.

School response:

VGHS has never had a Civil Rights complaint filed against the school. Further, the membership of the VGHS governing board have remained stable. Board members have completed their trainings and participate in assigned committees. VGHS has never had a “working to meet standard” or falls far below standard in the organizational performance framework as the authorizer never monitored the school’s organizational performance. School administration has monitored the organization framework internally to the best of its ability. To ensure a smooth transition between district- and state-authorized charter school, VGHS has contracted with Mr. Matt Pahl of NMPCS to attend all board meetings and provide all trainings. He will assist governance in understanding how to monitor the organizational performance of the school, as this level of monitoring has never occurred.

c. Governance Responsibilities*

Pursuant to 1978 NMSA §22-8B-4, each charter school must, at all times, have at least five members and no members may serve on any other charter school governing body. Further, the governing bodies must operate in accordance with their charter contract and bylaws. The PEC's performance contract requires that the PEC is notified of board vacancies within 30 days, and that vacancies are filled within 45 days.

Additionally, pursuant to NMSA §22-8-12.3, Boards must maintain audit and finance committees that meet statutory requirements.

Further, pursuant to NMAC 6.80.5.8, and 6.80.5.9, each charter school governing body member must annually complete certain hours of approved training.

Finally, governing body members are held to the conflict of interest requirements laid out in NMSA §22-8B-5.2.

Each school must identify how they have met governance responsibilities during the term of the contract. Specifically, the school must identify:

- the membership of their boards, at all times, during the term of the contract (with roles and service terms for all members), this should also include membership of the required committees;
- any time when membership on the governing body fell below the requirements in their by-laws or the statutory minimum of 5 members;
- any time when the governing body did not maintain the required committee membership;
- the amount of time any vacancies were open;
- any board members that did not complete required training hours in any of the years of the contract term.

If the school identified any governance requirements, they were unable to meet, the school must provide a narrative describing the improvement actions the school implemented to move toward full compliance with governance responsibilities.

The purpose of the narrative is to demonstrate substantial progress toward meeting all governance requirements.

The implementation of such actions must be verifiable through evidence during the renewal site visit.

School response:

Board members and terms:

2016-2017

Elizabeth Roth
(2017-2021)

Willow Lopez
(2017 - 2018)

Dennis Hedges
(2017 - 2020)

Mark Goldman
(2017 - 2021)

Eleanor Romero
(2017 - 2021)

Harold Cordova
(2016 - 2021)

2018-2019

Eleanor Romero, Dennis Hedges, Mark Goldman, Elizabeth Roth, Harold Cordova
Shona Mares Bond
(2019 - 2023)

2020 - 2021

Eleanor Romero, Dennis Hedges, Mark Goldman, Elizabeth Roth, Harold Cordova, Shona Mares-Bond
Sonya-Silva Baca
(2020 - 2024)

Compliance with membership by-laws:

The membership of the governing body of VGHS never fell below 5 members.

Committee memberships:

All committee memberships were maintained over the course of the charter contract.

Board vacancies:

Vacancies on the board were filled quickly when they occurred.

Board member training:

Only one board member, a Taos Pueblo elder, encountered difficulty completing the trainings due to the fact that the trainings have been online and he does not use technology. The VGHS governing council and NMPED worked together to support him to complete all necessary training. This situation represents an equity issue we have worked to resolve.