

# STATE OF NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT 300 DON GASPAR SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501-2786 Telephone (505) 827-5800

www.ped.state.nm.us

KURT STEINHAUS, ED.D. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION, DESIGNATE MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM GOVERNOR

## 2020-2021 Annual School Performance Report: Aldo Leopold Charter School

School Name: Aldo Leopold Charter School

School Address: 410 West 10th Street, Silver City, New Mexico 88061

Head Administrator: Wayne Sherwood

Business Manager: Harry Browne (will be retiring at end of school year)

**Authorized Grade Levels:** 6-12

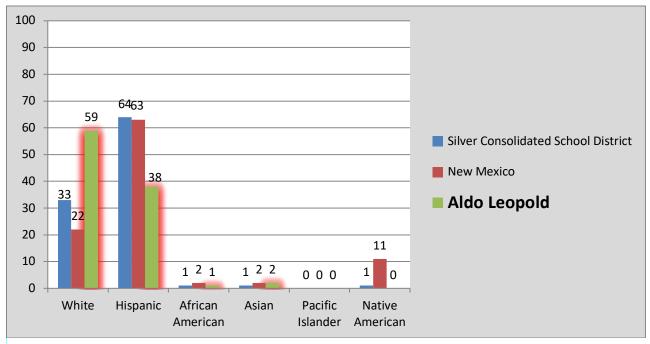
**Authorized Enrollment Cap: 210** 

Current Enrollment: 163
Contract Term: 2020-2025

Mission: At Aldo Leopold Charter School, the human and natural environments serve as text and lab for learning

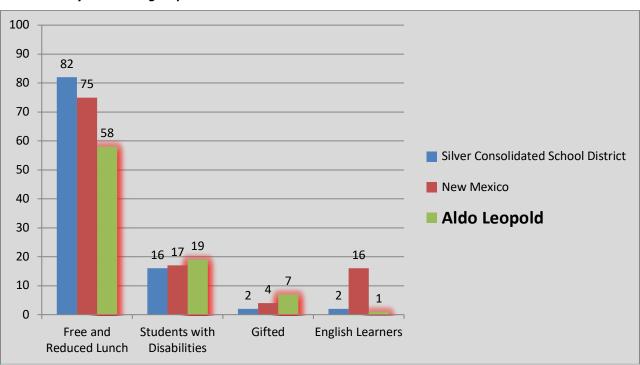
through direct experience, inquiry, and stewardship.

# Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



Source: STARS District and Location Reports General Reports Enrollment Subgroup Percentages with Averages

# **Enrollment by Other Subgroups**



Source: STARS District and Location Reports General Reports Enrollment Subgroup Percentages with Averages

## Site Visit Summary: May 3, 2021

## **Virtual Site Visit Participants**

School: Wayne Sherwood: Director; Harry Browne: Business Manager OPFD/CSD: Dylan Wilson; Missy Brown; Corina Chavez; Rachel Stofocik

## **Response to COVID Pandemic**

<u>Aldo Leopold Charter School</u> (ALCS) serves 165 students in grades 6-12 in Silver City, NM. Wayne Sherwood, the school's director, explained that the school staff learned how to manage as best they could during the pandemic. However, they did just have a recent break out of 3 positive COVID cases; thus, school had just gone virtual.

The director discussed how when he began in his position five years prior, many teachers did not have a cell phone, nor did they use email. Luckily, teachers evolved, and the school staff had learned Google Classroom in the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, so the transition to online learning was not as foreign as it could have been. In addition, the school did have a chrome book for every student. The school also began "Grab n' Go" lunches right away and found compostable wrapping for the food. ALCS teachers organized a drive-by graduation for the seniors last year. One teacher sang a different song for each student in the class; almost all teachers participated, and it took about three hours to get to each graduate's house.

Once permissible, the school brought back small group instruction for students with IEPs. The 5:1 student to teacher ratio began in August of 2020. ALCS's special education students thrived in the small group settings; the school staff was exploring ways to maintain that level of learning and engagement even after the return to all-school learning. The director said that the fact that students did not have to get "pulled out" of class for small-group instruction made a difference in performance.

Students started in-person learning on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and it was decided to have the kids outside all day long. To accommodate the outside classrooms, the school used CARES act money to rent 5-6 outdoor tents. The money was also used to hire more EAs to help manage the students in the outdoor classrooms. Once fully reopened, only four students remained online. Mr. Browne said that the outdoor classrooms is one of the school's innovative accomplishments during the pandemic. Mr. Sherwood added that the students love the outdoor classrooms, especially the middle school students who often feel restricted by "indoor voices" etc.

## Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

The middle school assistant principal reported that most of ALCS assessments have been formative during the pandemic. However, the director noted that the school did maintain reading screening the entire time so that it was easier to gauge how the students were doing and where they needed help.

In August of 2020, the director hired a consultant from <u>ENKI</u> Education, which is a "global cultures curriculum" with specific experiential education courses. The trainer provided professional development and gave the ALCS staff a lot of strategies and tools for how to facilitate experiential learning in a remote setting.

When asked about whether the school will keep any of the changes or innovations that were used during the pandemic, the director answered that yes, the school will most likely try to offer some alternative assignments online now that the teachers and students feel so comfortable.

School staff already started planning and adjusting the backpacking trips in the fall for the students in the case that they were allowed. The director admitted that it was clear when students returned how much they needed the outdoor activities and exercise. However, so far PED is stating that overnight class trips are not allowed.

### **Student and Family Support and Engagement**

Mr. Sherwood explained that the teachers worked very hard to keep kids engaged and active. The school leaders admitted that maintaining the ALCS mission and material terms was almost impossible when students were entirely online. The school bases the entire year of learning around experiential learning in the form of backpacking, trips to the Sonora Desert, Santa Fe trips, etc. While teachers did incorporate "virtual tours" of places in lessons, the result was not the same. Once students returned, outdoor activities (biking and gardening) began again.

The Youth Conversation Corp. (YCC), which is a large part of the school and part of students' class grade, was not an option last summer but luckily, the school was given an extension for using the funds. Accordingly, the YCC will happen all summer long and the students will be able to make some money. The director explained that the students did participate in YCC in the fall in groups of five but that it ended in November.

The director explained that student attendance was stellar compared to other schools; 90% of students were still coming to class. The teachers would use whatever source possible to reengage students, such as texts, FB, google, email and phone calls.

For parents, school messenger, email and phone calls were all utilized to communicate. ALCS has two secretaries who often called parents to check in. If the student did not show up, staff tried to call immediately and help the students get what they needed to get online. In the beginning, when it was clear that internet connection was lacking for some students, the school purchased about 8 hotspots for students; however, in such a small town the internet is bad in general.

For teachers, the school maintained the three important weekly meetings, a HS meeting, a MS meeting, and an all-staff meeting. Those meetings were helpful for planning, and they worked as times when the staff could discuss the difficulties that they were having. The school counselor was available to students and staff.

## Performance Framework Indicators (school-specific questions)

## 1.c. Is the school protecting the rights of students with special needs?

The school has IEPs for 31 students with disabilities and 9 students for gifted services. There are two students with overdue evaluations.

## How is the school addressing this?

The ALCS SPED director stated that one evaluation is complete, and they are completing the next. With regards to indicator 8, it has been finalized twice on the school side. School staff spoke to the PED last week regarding the issue.

### 1.d. Is the school protecting the rights of English Learner students?

The school has one student identified as EL. In addition, the STARS ELP Error Report lists three students. Has the school investigated the status of those three students?

The Director stated that school staff had been working to resolve this issue with the three students for quite some time. CSD staff suggested that students merely need to be marked as "exited" instead of "never." The director also stated that the school just got a student from Honduras that would also be classified as EL.

## 2a-2c Audit Findings FY20

# 2.a. How is the Governing Board tracking the mandatory training hours for its members?

It appears that only 2 of the 7 board members have completed training; several have not completed any.

The Director's DC chair will be doing some onboarding for members without training and will be providing a 3-hour training. The director said that it is mentioned at every board meeting. CSD directed the school leaders with regards to where and how they should access the CSD training provided.

## 2.b. Is the school following Generally Accepted Accounting Principles?

2020-001 Purchasing (Significant Deficiency) • Five disbursements that had purchase orders created after the purchase or service took place in which the purchase price exceeded the approved purchase order amount. In total, this was approximately \$96,000 in total disbursements. • One disbursement for \$35 in which the supporting invoice/receipt was not included with the voucher packet. 2020-002 Internal Control Structure (Significant Deficiency) • an employee's FY19 stipend was not paid out to them in the respective payroll year in which it was earned. The employee notified the business office of the discrepancy, resulting in the employee stipend of \$1,500 being paid out in FY20. ● In addition, an employee received compensation in fulfilling the role as an occasional bus driver and substitute teacher, yet the employee file did not include a contract or written agreement in discussed with or distributed to order to recalculate the payroll expenditures against the hourly wage rate. by PED governance and management and not to be • While testing capital assets, we identified that the beginning asset cost was understated by \$22,932. The variance in the asset cost had been identified as a verbal recommendation over the past two audit years as the listing did not include the correct/historical asset cost. This resulted in understated beginning balance along with understated depreciation expense for the respective asset. • Two new asset additions included full year of depreciation instead of the depreciation beginning the month the asset was placed in service per the school policy. This resulted in excess depreciation of \$4,413, which required a correction to the schedule. 2020-003 Timely Submission of ERB Contributions (Other Noncompliance) • we noted 1 month in which the ERB contributions were not filed in a timely manner and the school was assessed a \$10 late penalty fee. 2020-004 Internal Controls over Cash Receipts (Other Noncompliance) • During our review of 16 cash receipts, we noted 1 cash receipt sample in which the \$136 transaction was not deposited within three days of receipt as per the school deposit rule with PED. • In addition, we noted a cash receipt packet which did not include a supporting cash receipt log to identify the number of transactions that made up that receipt. During our review of 17 cash receipts, we noted 2 cash receipt samples in which the transactions were \$200 or more, and the

receipts were not deposited within 24 hours of receipt. 2020-005 Travel and Per Diem (Other Noncompliance) • An employee was reimbursed on actual expenses, but the supporting receipt to agree the actual expense cost was unavailable. • Reconciliation of actual travel costs and supporting detail was unable to agree to travel reimbursement primarily caused by travel consisting of several POs and multiple employees' travel being reimbursed on behalf of others on one travel request form. 2019-006 Budgetary Conditions (Other Noncompliance) Sound financial management and 6.20.2.9 (A) NMAC and 22-8-5 through 22-8-12.2 NMSA final quality control review and 1978 require that budgets not be exceeded at the legal level of control, which the function is the legal level of control.

The business manager said that he has been working with staff to resolve these findings and issues.

## 5.c. Is the school complying with health and safety requirements?

Safe Schools Plan was approved May 2019; next submission is likely due in December 2021

## **Mission-Specific Goals:**

Goal 1: All students at Aldo Leopold Charter School (ALCS) participate in experiential education. 75% of students enrolled on the 40th and 120th day will score at or above their grade level expectation or the score determined in a Special Education student's IEP on the school's rubric for Ownership and Collaboration in Experiential Learning. All students at Aldo Leopold Charter School (ALCS) will have the opportunity to participate in experiential learning in the human and natural environments (outside of the school building) using direct experience, inquiry, and stewardship for a minimum of 100 hours per semester. The school's rubric is used to evaluate students' level of participation and engagement during these hours of experiential education.

Goal 2: Aldo Leopold Charter School students will respond to their experiential learning through writing and formal discussion. 70% of students enrolled on the 40th and 120th day will score at or above their grade level expectation or the score determined in a Special Education student's IEP on the school's rubric for Skills of Reflection in Experiential Learning. Student responses, either oral or written, will be drawn from their experiences outside the classroom.

School Response:

able to implement and r YES □	neasure the mission-speci	fic goals in	
I was virtual	until Manh the 4th nine were to trips were to the goal accomplishment		

#### **Assurances:**

The school provided the signed assurances document (Appendix B).

## Overall Financial/Organizational Framework Rating: Meets Standard

If a school receives a "Does Not Meet Standard" rating for three or more indicators, the school will receive an overall organizational framework rating of "Does Not Meet Standard" for the year. In addition, if a school receives a "Does Not Meet Standard" rating, on any indicator, the CSD and PEC may conduct a closer review the following year on that indicator, and/or the PEC may require the school to submit a corrective action plan in order to specify actions and a timeline to correct the performance deficiency. See ratings for individual indicators in Appendix A.

## PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK AND PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION (PEC) TIER LEVEL

The 2020-21 Performance Monitoring Plan was modified in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Many of the indicators were unmeasurable and the Performance Framework ratings in Appendix A is reflective of this. Rather than identifying evidence of compliance, schools are required to sign an assurance of compliance.

PEC Tier Levels are based on three indicators: (1) NM School System of Support and Accountability, (2) Student Subgroup Performance, and (3) Mission Specific Goals. Again, due to the pandemic and the resulting flexible administration of state assessments, in 2020-21 there is limited academic data, that could be used as an accountability measure. **Therefore, PEC Tier Levels cannot be assigned for the 2020-2021 academic year.** 

<u>Academic Performance</u>: The school may provide evidence of meeting mission-specific goals to receive a rating on indicator 3 of the Academic Performance, however, if the school was unable to implement the goals due to the pandemic, the school will not be rated in this section.

<u>Organizational Performance</u> The assurances document covers the majority of the indicators of organizational performance. Where possible, results of desktop monitoring and bureau/division reports will be considered.

<u>Financial Performance Framework</u>: For indicator 2.c, evidence of implementing an Action Plan to prevent further findings will not be collected this year, therefore the school's rating is solely based on repeat findings.

Aldo Leopold Charter School	2020-2021	
Category I. Academic Performance Framework		
Indicator 1 Components of School Accountability System	Unable to Review - COVID	
Indicator 2 Subgroup Performance	Unable to Review - COVID	
Indicator 3 Mission Specific Goals	Unable to Review - COVID	
Category II. Organizational Performance Framework		
Indicator 1a Educational Program: mission and educational program of approved charter application	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	
Indicator 1b Educational Program: state assessment requirements	Unable to Review - COVID	
Indicator 1c Educational Program: protecting the rights of students with disabilities	Working to Meet Standard	
Indicator 1d Educational Program: protecting the rights of English Language Learners	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	
Indicator 1e Educational Program: meeting program requirements for all PED and federal grant programs	ASSURANCES	
Indicator 1f Educational Program: NM DASH Plan	Not Applicable	
Indicator 2a Financial Mgmt & Oversight: meeting financial reporting and compliance requirements	Working to Meet Standard	
Indicator 2b Financial Mgmt & Oversight: following generally accepted accounting principles	Does Not Meet Standard	
Indicator 2c Financial Mgmt & Oversight: responsive to audit findings	Does Not Meet Standard	
Indicator 2d Financial Mgmt & Oversight: managing grant funds responsibility	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	
Indicator 2e Financial Mgmt & Oversight: staffing to ensure proper fiscal management	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	
Indicator 2f Financial Mgmt & Oversight: meeting obligations timely / appropriate internal controls	Working to Meet Standard	
Indicator 3a Governance & Reporting: complying with governance requirements	Working to Meet Standard	
Indicator 3b Governance & Reporting: complying with nepotism and conflict of interest requirements	ASSURANCES	
Indicator 3c Governance & Reporting: meeting obligations timely / appropriate internal controls	ASSURANCES	
Indicator 4a Students & Employees: protecting the rights of all students	ASSURANCES	
Indicator 4b Students & Employees: attendance, retention, and recurrent enrollment	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	
Indicator 4c Students & Employees: meeting teacher and other staff credentialing requirements	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	
Indicator 4d Students & Employees: respecting employee rights	ASSURANCES	
Indicator 4e Students & Employees: completing required background checks / reporting ethical violations	ASSURANCES	
Indicator 5a School Environment: complying with facilities requirements	ASSURANCES	
Indicator 5b School Environment: complying with transportation requirements	ASSURANCES	
Indicator 5c School Environment: complying with health and safety requirements	ASSURANCES	
Indicator 5d School Environment: handling information appropriately	ASSURANCES	
Category III. Financial Performance Framework		
Self-Assessment Survey completed and signed by Head Admin, SBO, and Finance Chair	Not Applicable	

# Appendix A: Historical Performance Framework Ratings during Current Charter Contract Term

# 2016-2019 Contract Term

Aldo Leopold	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Category I. Academic Performance Framework			
I-A.00 NM A-F School Grading System	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	61.05 Points (Spotlight)
I-A.01 Required Academic Performance Indicators	Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet)	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
I-A.02 Optional Supplemental Indicators (school specific items in charter)	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Category II. Financial Performance Framework			
Self-Assessment Survey completed and signed by Head Admin, SBO, and Finance Chair	Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet)	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Category III. Organizational Performance Framework			
III-A.00 Educational Plan: material terms of the approved charter application	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
III-A.01 Education Plan: applicable education requirements	Working to Meet Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Working to Meet Standard
III-A.02 Education Plan: protecting the rights of all students	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
III-A.03 Educational Plan: protecting the rights of students with special needs (IDEA, 504, gifted)	Working to Meet Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
III-A.04 Educational Plan: protecting the rights of English Language Learners (Title III)	Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet)	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Working to Meet Standard
III-A.05 Educational Plan: complying with the compulsory attendance laws	Working to Meet Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
III-A.06 Educational Plan: meet their recurrent enrollment goals	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard ▼
IV-A.00 Business Management & Oversight: meeting financial reporting and compliance requirements	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Working to Meet Standard	Working to Meet Standard
IV-A.01 Business Management & Oversight: following generally accepted accounting principles	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet)
V-A.00 Governance and Reporting: complying with governance requirements	Working to Meet Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Working to Meet Standard
V-A.01 Governance and Reporting: holding management accountable	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard ▼
VI-A.00 Employees: meeting teacher and other staff credentialing requirements	Working to Meet Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Working to Meet Standard
VI-A.01 Employees: respecting employee rights	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
VI-A.02 Employees: completing required background checks	Falls Far Below (or Does Not Meet)	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
VI-A.03 4d. General Info: Staff Turnover, if applicable			Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
VII-A.00 School Environment: complying with facilities requirements	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
VII-A.01 School Environment: complying with health and safety requirements	Working to Meet Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
VII-A.02 School Environment: handling information appropriately	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard	Meets (or Exceeds) Standard
Category: Organizational Performance Framework			
School Specific Terms: data on any terms specified in the school's Performance Framework	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

## **Appendix B: Assurances**



#### Charter Schools Division **Performance Indicator Assurances** 2020-21

Charter School Name | Aldo Leopold Charter School

In an effort to support the 2021 modified site visits and ensure compliance with contracts and applicable federal and state law, state-authorized charter schools shall provide assurances of compliance with the performance framework indicators listed below. Please check the box next to the indicator, then date and sign the form. Signatures of school leaders and governing board presidents are required.

## The school protects the rights of students with special needs, by:

- Providing services per individual IEP.
- Maintaining both direct service and ancillary support logs,
- Including a Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) sheet documenting date, person, and purpose for reviewing student's IEP in all IEP folders.

#### The school protects the rights of English Learner (EL) students:

School complies with requirements for English Learners in accordance with federal and state guidance, for identifying, screening, serving, assessing students and providing annual notification to parents.

## The school complies with federal and state grant program requirements.

### The school meets Governance and reporting requirements:

- Governing Board completes and documents (with signatures) an annual evaluation of Head Administrator. School has a governing board-approved Conflict of Interest Policy that complies with NMSA § 22-88-5.2.
- School has a governing board-approved Anti-Nepotism Policy that complies with NMSA § 22-88-10(B).

## The school protects the rights of all students:

- School meets all Culturally & Linguistically Responsive Framework requirements.

  School maintains lottery and enrollment practices as described in NMSA § 22-88-4.1.

- School has a Discipline Policy to Include the prevention of bullying and cyber-bullying per NMSA § 22-35-1. School follows a board-approved student/parent grievance policy and dispute resolution process per NMSA § 22-88-9(12)
- School complies with the McKinney Vento Act, with a board-approved dispute resolution policy that meets ESSA guideline.
- School is Implementing the Multi-Level Systems of Support (MLSS) NMAC 6.30. 17
- School updates Next Step Plans annually for all high school students.

The school's attendance policy aligns with the Attendance for Success Act NMSA § 22-12A-1.

#### The school protects employee rights:

- Staff files contain signed contracts, official transcripts, and verification of employment forms. School has an employee handbook that includes discipline and grievance policies.
- School has a salary schedule that complies with minimum teacher salaries.

  School has a documented mentorship program for first year Level One teachers.
- School obtains legally compliant background checks per NMSA § 22-10A-5.

## The school complies with facility requirements in NMSA § 22-88-4.2.

The school complies with transportation requirements, including all inspections and insurance, if applicate the school complies with transportation requirements, including all inspections and insurance, if applicate the school complies with transportation requirements, including all inspections and insurance, if applicate the school complies with transportation requirements.

### The school complies with health and safety requirements:

- √ The school conducts all required emergency drills per PED memorandum of 3/25/21.
- The school maintains immunization records, including a master immunization log.
- All staff complete training on reporting child abuse and neglect.
- The school has a Diabetes Management plan.

#### The school handles information appropriately:

- ✓ School completes all STARS reporting requirements on time.
- School follows proper security procedures, including keeping student files locked.
- School follows all FERPA and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) guidelines.
- School maintains a procedure for the transfer of cumulative files.

By checking the box for each indicator above (on both pages) and signing this document, I affirm that the school complies with the performance framework items listed.

