



## LA TIERRA MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCES

### GOVERNING COUNCIL BOARD

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### Governing Council Board

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Corina Chavez, Director  
Charter School Division  
Public Education Department

December 12, 2022

Dear Director Chavez,

The LTMAS board met in a working session / retreat on Saturday, December 10, 2022 to address the Mission Specific Goals and Mission Statement that were discussed on our conversation on November 29, 2022.

### Mission Statement

The board was able to address the mission statement scenario that seemed to switch our approved mission statement for an unapproved mission statement during the charter renewal process.

#### **Our LTMAS GC approved mission statement has always read:**

*La Tierra Montessori School of the Arts and Sciences will provide students and their families in the Española region the opportunity to improve educational outcomes utilizing an integrated approach that includes Montessori, Arts and Sciences.*

#### **The unapproved version (added by the former head learner in the new charter contract but not approved by the GC):**

*La Tierra Montessori School of the Arts and Sciences will prepare for students and their families an authentic Montessori environment that fosters collaboration, cooperation and peace; that promotes curiosity, exploration, and engagement; and that emphasizes a whole-child approach integrating the Arts and Sciences.*

This weekend, the board approved a new and modified mission statement that we believe more provides clarity of our school's goals and outcomes. We will be asking our attorney, Ms. Patty Matthews, to help us guide through the necessary changes as the

mission statement on file was illegally put forth without board consent or notification within the 72-hour requirement of the Open Meetings Act.

**New Mission Statement (Approved on Saturday, December 10, 2022 during our special meeting of an appropriately noticed meeting of the LTMAS GC):**

*La Tierra Montessori School of the Arts and Sciences will provide students and their families in northern New Mexico a school community that fosters curiosity, exploration, collaboration, and freedom to a quality integrated public education that includes a Montessori inspired environment, creative arts and sciences education.*

**Mission Specific Goal #1**

Being that the board was never offered any opportunity to review this document before it was presented to the PEC and that a special meeting was called outside of the OMA, we felt it was important to provide some clarifying statements as to the mission goals and how those goals will impact LTMAS.

**The board reworked Mission Specific Goal to now read:**

***Mission Specific Goals #1:***

*Introduction to school goals. When considering the measurement of progress in a Montessori-inspired, creative arts education and sciences environment, one must consider that there is no grading or standardized testing in a Montessori-inspired classroom. Instead, progress is measured based on the observation and documentation of each individual child's unique trajectory of development. In a traditional learning environment, mastery is evaluated by a test score or letter grade. However, in Montessori schools, mastery of a particular lesson or concept is evaluated during the lesson. This is done through the unique Montessori teaching technique called "the three period lesson."*

*As a public school, there are assessments we are required to administer as part of our accountability requirements as a recipient of public education funding. assessments we elect to administer also provide insights about whole child development and the effectiveness of our Montessori inspired, arts education and science environment.*

*Observation is a cornerstone of Montessori practice. Our educators will observe the child at work in the classroom and use the information they gather to shape their lessons.*

*The Three Period Lesson of the Montessori method is a tool of fluid instruction used across the Planes of Development by educators to deliver lessons, observe progress, and assess student learning. The first period is when a concept or lesson is presented by the educator; during the second period, the child then practices independently or with a peer while continuing to be observed; in the 3rd period, the child achieves conceptual and practical independence as they internalize the concept and demonstrate mastery to the educator which should be documented.*

*In the Upper Elementary and Middle School, mastery and culminating projects provide an opportunity to demonstrate third period understanding. “Assessments” are a tool to measure mastery; however, educators will need to provide documentation to families and the administration supporting such mastery.*

### ***The Planes of Development***

*The First Plane: Birth to Age 6 (Early Childhood. **LTMAS does not provide this service**) Primary 3-6*

*The Second Plane: Ages 6–12 (Childhood) Lower Elementary 6-9, Upper Elementary 9-12*

*The Third Plane: Ages 12–18 (Adolescence. **LTMAS provides educational services for seventh and eighth grade students up to 15 years of age.**) Adolescent Community 12-15*

*The Fourth Plane: Ages 18–24 (Maturity) - **LTMAS does not provide this service.***

*The Four Planes of Development is the holistic framework upon which Montessori built her vision of developmental psychology. This theory encompasses human development from birth until maturity at age 24. It considers all aspects of a child’s development— academic, spiritual, moral, and emotional. **LTMAS aims to provide for the needs of students in grades K-8 which encompasses 5-15 years of age.***

*Mission Specific Goal(s) for La Tierra Montessori School for the Arts and Science  
Goal #1:*

***Measure Rating Category***

***Description of Target for this Performance Level***

***Points Assigned***

***Exceeds the standard***

*90% or more of Primary and Lower Elementary students with two semesters of attendance and Upper Elementary and Adolescent Community students with four semesters will receive and exhibit mastery of Montessori-inspired lessons, arts education and science presented for their Plane of Development.*

100

***Meets the standard***

*75-89% of Primary and Lower Elementary students with two semesters of attendance and Upper Elementary and Adolescent Community students with four semesters will receive and exhibit mastery of Montessori-inspired lessons, arts education and science presented for their Plane of Development.*

75

***Does not meet the standard***

*60-74% of Primary and Lower Elementary students with two semesters of attendance and Upper Elementary and Adolescent Community students with four semesters will receive and exhibit mastery of Montessori-inspired lessons, arts education and science presented for their Plane of Development.*

25

***Falls far below the standard***

*Less than 60% of Primary and Lower Elementary students with two semesters of attendance and Upper Elementary and Adolescent Community students with four semesters will receive and exhibit mastery of Montessori-inspired lessons, arts education and science presented for their Plane of Development.*

## **Reasoning, Remedy and Plan**

The board was never provided educational testing outcomes from the former HL and educational staff. We were met with responses that providing such information “was not the Montessori method” or that information was “outside of our purview.”

The first time the board was able to see any measurable student outcome results came during the start of this school year as DASH plan numbers were shared amongst a teacher training program. The overview was brief and we scheduled a more in-depth overview but that didn’t happen as our Asst. Head Learner departed the school.

In seeking to provide more clarity and information to our parents and the governing council, we added that our educators will now be required to **provide “documentation to families and the administration supporting such mastery,”** verses just relying on observation techniques. As a board, we want to ensure if the school is called before the PEC, we can speak to the challenges, deficiencies and successes more clearly.

In doing so, we hope to have this goal now read:

***Primary and Lower Elementary students with two semesters of attendance and Upper Elementary and Adolescent Community students with four semesters will receive and exhibit mastery of Montessori-inspired lessons, arts education and science presented for their Plane of Development.***

This change would allow a sample of our primary, lower (**with one year of attendance vs. two years**), and upper elementary and adolescent students (**with two years of attendance vs. three years**) to be screened and tested for their level of mastery of Montessori inspired lessons and creative arts and science education. This sample group would be selected at random by the HL to allow for a much clearer level of mastery. Our HL and board believe this will ensure our students are receiving and mastering the courses being taught.

## **Mission Specific Goal #2**

The training and certification of our educators is something that this board takes very seriously. Our previous board constantly asked the former HL about these trainings and were met with “that is an operational question.”

In order to provide a clearer training opportunity for our educators, the board reworked Mission Specific Goal #2 to allow for “**Montessori-inspired instruction and observation training by a MACTE accredited or local Montessori program(s).**” We believe this change will provide our educators an opportunity not only receive national training, but training from local programs to satisfy such training opportunities.

**The board reworked Mission Specific Goal to now read:**

*Description of Target for this Performance Level*

*Exceeds the standard*

*90% or more of teachers will be provided with Montessori-inspired instruction and observation training by a MACTE accredited or local Montessori program(s) within three years of employment.*

100

*Meets the standard*

*75-89% of teachers will be provided with Montessori-inspired instruction and observation training certified by a MACTE accredited or local Montessori program(s) within three years of employment.*

75

*Does not meet the standard*

*60-74% of teachers will be provided with Montessori-inspired instruction and observation training certified by a MACTE accredited or local Montessori program(s) within three years of employment.*

25

***Falls far below the standard***

*Less than 60% of teachers will be provided with Montessori-inspired instruction and observation training certified by a MACTE accredited or local Montessori program(s) within three years of employment.*

**Reasoning, Remedy and Plan**

The Board President reached out to the Indigenous Montessori Learning Center to discuss providing Montessori training for our educational staff.

The President has since coordinated a dialogue between our HL and the center's director to discuss how that process will play out, costs associated and contract opportunities. This process will be carried out by our HL and not involved the Governing Council.

The board believes that this is an opportunity for LTMAS as both schools reside on Native American reservations and serve diverse indigenous populations.

The head learner will be holding more in-depth discussions to find ways to incorporate their programmatic instruction and resources into our school environment.

I hope this overview provides clarity as to the work being conducted by the Governing Council and head learner to address the Mission Specific Goals.

As always, I am free to discuss more in-depth any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Isaac Dakota Casados