

**CONCERNED LTMAS PARENTS AND TEACHERS
RESPONSE TO
Corrective Action Plan for *La Tierra Montessori School
of the Arts and Sciences***

January 27, 2023

Dear members of the NM Public Education Commission,

This document is a LTMAS parent and teacher collective response to the inaccuracies and fallacies in the Corrective Action Plan GC President Mr. Casados submitted to the NM PEC on Jan 20, 2023. We feel that we owe the PEC an opportunity to learn about the reality of the LTMAS GC's management and supervision, so that the Commissioners would be able to vote on accepting or rejecting Mr. Casados' CAP with a greater comprehension of the current issues that are still ongoing at LTMAS. We were frustrated to hear the inaccuracies stated by our GC President Casados at the January 20 PEC meeting and once we were able to review the CAP in full, were disheartened to read the changes the GC plans to make to our school's mission, goals and name.

First we would like to explain that the concerned parents and teachers of LTMAS were forced to construct our comments to the PAC post-submission of the CAP to PEC, as we were not provided any opportunity by our GC to read their Corrective Action Plan until it was available to the general public at the Jan 20 PEC meeting. Parents and teachers were not involved in the CAP process, despite many requests to the GC over the past month to discuss the Letter of Breach and our concerns about the governance of the school. In fact, members of this group offered to assist on a special subcommittee that Mr. Casados promised to form during his comments at a GC meeting following the Letter of Breach. We submitted our names and interest in the subcommittee work, and waited to be contacted. But to our knowledge no community member outside of the GC was ever contacted, no subcommittee with outside GC members was ever formed, and the CAP appeared to be written solely by Mr. Casados.

This situation is indicative of one of the major issues plaguing the school – the authoritarian and exclusionary manner in which Mr. Casados is implementing his personal agenda to create a new, non-Montessori-focused charter school.

Mr. Casados and the GC's CAP plainly states that the GC plans to dismantle the current school's charter by changing the mission, goals and even the name of the school in February 2023. This plan confirms and supports the GC's previously existing pattern of behavior in the 2022-2023 school year to move away from the Montessori focused mission of the school. The facts are there: they hired a non-Montessori educator to lead the school, canceled Montessori focused field trips and programs for students, and finally discontinued existing Montessori professional development requests and ignored new ones, even this past month ignoring offers by official Montessori trainers to immediately serve the school post Letter of Breach.

What's confounding about this movement away from Montessori instruction is that to our knowledge **no parents or teachers have asked the Governing Council to change or alter Montessori charter, or to make any instructional changes to the Montessori centered-school environment.**

From our observations and interactions with Mr. Casados, it is clear he is unfit to govern LTMAS, not only because of his violation of the school's charter leading to Letter of Breach, but also because of his lack of willingness to handle other critical issues at the school which have done considerable damage to the teachers' morale and deeply disrupted student's learning progress and well-being. His obvious lack of support for Montessori coupled with the dismissive, combative way Mr. Casados has acted towards parents and teachers has led to a toxic atmosphere where teachers are in tears daily and find themselves unable to explain to students why the capstone Model UN Trip was canceled, why a popular 5th/6th grade Montessori teacher was dismissed without warning (and replaced with a non-Montessori teacher.), or why they cannot receive basic communication from the GC or their head administrator about what changes are happening or why.

The GC claims that this is 'a small group of parents complaining' but the reality is that the majority of parents remain in the dark about the gravity of the Letter of Breach and the real possibility of a school closure. Recent conversations brought up by new parents at PTA meetings show that parents new to the school and not aware of the PEC Letter suspect that something is not right due to the lack of school-sponsored events. They are unaware of the internal governance issues because of a purposeful lack of communication from the GC to its constituents.

We believe the Letter of Breach issued by your Commission on December 16 was accurate in its assessment, and a necessary step. We had hoped that the Letter would help us to recover the school and recenter Montessori for the best interests of our children, who love learning within and thrive within the Montessori learning environment. We had also hoped that the Letter issuance would prompt Mr. Casados to either step down as GC President, or at the very least concede that his current activities were negatively impacting the school and begin to work with the school's teachers to recenter Montessori and repair relationships on the behalf of the students.

We regret to report that this has not been the case. In fact the opposite is true. Teachers continue to report that there is no response to requests for Montessori training, doors continue to be propped open in clear safety violation and there continues to be a lack of information to teachers about students accommodations and needs for Special Education. By speaking to teachers and our students, it is clear that the Plan is inaccurate and does not square with teachers' and students' daily realities. In addition the CAP makes clear that Mr. Casados and the GC plan to continue to break the charter by making major changes to the mission, goals, and name of the school next month. Again, this is a change of his own design as there is no existing motion or petition by any parent or teacher driving these changes.

We understand that the PEC cannot act out of its role and has limited options in which to assist us in removing Mr. Casados and the GC. **However, we humbly ask for the PEC's assistance in recovering what remains of our Montessori school and our student's academic year by strongly urging Mr. Casados and the current GC to step down immediately.**

We are poised to recenter Montessori education, follow the charter, and additionally have 5 willing members from our community and parent population ready to serve on a new Governing Council. Several have applications already waiting to be approved, but the current GC is in process of changing the rules.

One silver lining from this experience is that we have developed collective expertise in NM Charter School governance and feel we are qualified to serve our students and teachers by focusing on our children's safety and learning as outlined in our charter.

We have identified and connected with both national and local Montessori trainers who are happy to work with teachers at LTMAS and support their return to Montessori focused teaching. With your support in strongly urging our GC to resign, we can return LTMAS to a thriving charter school that exists as a model for serving a diverse student population in the Montessori method.

Signed,

Concerned Parents and Teachers of LTMAS

Suggested Questions (for the PEC to ask our Governing Council)

We would like the PEC to ask for the following from the GC:

1. Where they have determined evidence of need and verification of support from parents and teachers to change the charter's mission, goals and name away from Montessori-centered education.
2. The details of the agreement (and a signed contract with the Indigenous Montessori Institute), in particular outlining how their future training will benefit the Montessori instructional environment and students' learning at LTMAS.
3. Evidence that the incident of an assaulted student was indeed investigated by the school, by producing redacted paperwork that documented the assault and questioning of all witnesses in the school.
4. Comprehensive policy and procedures followed when a student is injured on campus and evidence that it is being followed.
5. Evidence that the Letter of Breach was shared with the greater LTMAS community and that the Corrective Action Plan included the feedback of teachers and parents.
6. Questioning why the GC has not admitted new members to the Council at its January 2023 meeting, despite having multiple applicants.
7. Provide the current school Safety Plan, including evidence of the performance of required drills, and any evidence of recent safety violations by staff, or safety violations in number of staff present, building codes or playground safety.

LTMAS Parents and Teachers Submitted Rebuttal to the LTMAS GC Jan 11 Corrective Action Plan

The next section contains our rebuttal to the LTMAS GC's Corrective Action Plan sections with our responses. Our responses to the GC's CAP are highlighted in blue text. Our responses are based on parent and teacher experiences but due to retaliation and our students' safety we are not providing our names.

Our comments hopefully provide proof that the GC's CAP is an inadequate response to the Letter of Breach and also does not allow the school to get back on track and focus on students. It should also provide the PEC with supporting details about the current state of the school and further prove that President Casados and the current GC are off track and are unable to serve our students.

Date of Submission: January 11, 2023 (per Chair Burt)

Cited Breach of Contract sections:

Section 2, Scope, paragraph 2, i. and ii. The school must act through the designated charter representatives in its contract negotiations; Section 4, Section 5, 1, Purpose, 2, Mission, 4, Comprehensive Educational Program of the School Performance Framework; Section 4.5, Governance, vi., viii. and ix. Section 4.6, Operation, ii., iii, vi. and Comply with all provisions of the Contract and law, hiring and overseeing the Head Administrator, and comply with Board Training requirements. Comply with all federal and state laws relating to the education of children with disabilities, comply with all laws related to safety, notify the Commission of allegations or inappropriate contact with a student, and Section, 5.2, i., ii. and iv. Participate in State-required assessment and meet State's standards of excellence

Corrective Action Plan Goals:

The LTMAS board has diligently worked to address prior challenges that were inherited prior to our elections in July of 2022. Every issue has been addressed quickly and without haste to ensure clear resolution and not alter the school's learning environment.

As with our prior work, this board and the head learner are committed to addressing the additional issues that were raised during the December 2022 Public Education Commission meeting. We are committed to ensuring that our students have the very best educational opportunities, environment and staff to achieve that goal.

Opportunities to achieve Action Plan Goals:

We will address each issue in the Corrective Action Plan and then provide a response to prove that such issue is already being worked on, completed or provide a remedy for successful implementation.

Corrective Action Plan Response and Goals:

Section 2, Scope, paragraph 2, i. and ii.

The school must act through the designated charter representatives in its contract negotiations. The Governing Board breached the contract either:

1) by representing to PEC that the Charter Contract was negotiated by a person with authority and approved by the Board when the present board now represents that those people did not have such authority,

The designated representatives who negotiated the Charter Contract acted outside of their scope and without approval from the board.

The Charter Contract amendment was never provided to the board and was held in confidence by the former head learner Angela Feathers and board President Willie Williams. The attached agenda to the Charter Contract is invalid because of the following issues:

- A. The meeting was called outside of the 72-hour time period for a special meeting on May 9, 2022 at 5:13 PM by Willie Williams at the insistence of Mrs. Angela Feathers.
- B. This agenda was not posted to the website nor were parents or the board informed of the meeting within the 72-hour required time period. This was a clear violation of the Open Meetings Act.
- C. The special meeting minutes have never been uploaded the school's website because the meeting was held outside of the OMA. **(Please see appendix A)**
- D. Our May 23, 2022 Regular Meeting agenda of the GC lists “ - Please see attached agenda b) Contract Renewal Paperwork” under “unfinished business.” **(Please see appendix B)**
- E. Then Vice President Isaac Dakota Casados and Secretary Brenda Atencio were not present for the special meeting because it was called outside of the OMA and both felt that holding such a meeting would cause significant issues later on. We also were concerned that documentation had yet to be sent to the members of the board.
- F. No documentation of the performance framework or mission statement were sent to the board prior to the Special Meeting called by Ms. Williams or Mrs. Feathers.
- G. During the Special Meeting on May 11, 2022, the two present members were asked to vote on Agenda item IV. Charter Renewal and Amendment (ACTION*) **without discussion or sharing such documentation with the board.**
- H. The recording from this Zoom meeting and the meeting prior (which Angela Feathers had control of) vanished from the server.
- I. The minutes attached to the charter school renewal application were the first time absent members were able to see these minutes. These minutes were not posted to the LTMAS website (by former President Ms. Williams or Angela Feathers) prior to their inclusion with the contract application.
- J. The board was not provided the frame work goals nor does the documentation look like something we would have approved as a board.

Response: 1) The contract was negotiated by persons with authority and approved by the board as evidenced by the meeting minutes on May 11th, 2022. (06.c.1.La-Tierra-Amendment-2022-Signed.pdf).

Below is a partial timeline with supporting docs attached for Charter Renewal:

Dec 10, 2021- Charter Renewal presentation before the PEC. The entire faculty shows up in person. Mr. Casados zooms in and speaks in favor of renewal. The LTMAS charter is renewed for 5 years.

April 25, 2022- GC Meeting, school atty Patty Matthews and Charter Schools Division's Missy Brown in attendance and spoke to the GC members explaining Charter Renewal, amendments, etc. Patty gives an approximately 20 minute explanation. She mentions the deadline and the importance of approval. Documents provided (again) to the GC members. She encourages them to schedule a meeting to discuss.

During the time between 4/25 and 5/9- GC members were not working with Ms. Williams. She made several attempts to get charter docs approved and signed. There seemed to be resistance. She consulted with CSD and Patty Matthews to try to resolve these issues.

May 6, 2022- Julia Barnes reaches out to check on the status of charter docs, etc. Patty Matthews also checks in. They are informed the board will be voting at their retreat, as stated on their agenda, created by Brenda Atencio and Willie Williams.

May 6-7 (Fri & Sat), 2022- The GC holds a board retreat. Voting on the Charter Renewal and Amendments are on the agenda. Missy Brown is invited and attends. After Isaac Dakota Casados has issues with Patty Matthews, Willie Williams invites Dr. Helen Wakefield, JD to offer explanations. The board did not vote, unsure why.

May 9 (Mon), 2022- school atty Patty Matthews sends an email to the GC members. She summarizes what she had already explained in the 4/25 meeting, attaches the documents (again) and offers to speak to any GC member if they had any questions or concerns. She encourages them to attend the Special Meeting to get the items completed.

The meeting was noticed and sent to parents.

May 11, 2022- GC Meeting, Isaac Casados and Brenda Atencio did not attend. When President Williams asked if there were any questions, Delisha Gordon Brown responded- no Patty explained all of this at the last meeting. Charter docs and amendment are approved 3-0.

Because Secretary Atencio was not present, Delisha Gordon-Brown prepared the minutes. Brenda Atencio was included in the email.

See attached copy of email.

Maitai Lopez, Office Manager/CPO, sends the audio. She hosted all GC meetings and would forward the audio after each meeting. This one was forwarded to Angela Feathers, Brenda Atencio and Delisha Gordon Brown.

From there, the documentation is difficult to understand. Minutes of the May 23rd meeting show a call to approve past meeting minutes without the approval listed as action items with votes. A vote to approve the minutes of the May 23rd minutes appears in the minutes from June 27th, 2022 minutes, but a vote was not recorded.

There were several motions to amend the agenda in this meeting while the posted agenda does not reflect the changes made during the meeting. It is clear from even a cursory review of LTMAS GC documents posted to the school website that there were many OMA violations and also internal conflict happening within the board-two distinct groups-with documentation pointing towards "a hostile takeover" and willful intent to confuse and conflate issues using procedural moves.

Additionally, the recording of basic meeting information such as clear designation of document titles: **Agenda** and **Minutes**, both in **DRAFT** and **APPROVED** forms were incorrectly recorded during this time period and to date, are still incomplete and incorrectly labeled, as available on the school website. Clearly the Governing Board has shown issues with OMA compliance and documentation that persist to date.

Suggested Steps: It was our hope that the following steps be taken:

- 1) That the Governing Body and other parties agree to set aside grievances and issues related to the events regarding authority to negotiate, board composition and other related issues in deference to the bigger issue: working to retain and restore the amended and approved Charter and move out of Breach of Contract.
- 2) That the Governing Board, Head Learner, and other interested supporters and partners come together to resolve and correct any and all issues required by the PEC in the shared goal of retaining the Contract of the school.
- 3) That the Governing Board abandons attempts to substantively change the mission, educational program, and mission-specific goals of the school and resubmit, if necessary, the Charter Amendment and Renewal, as written, approved and submitted to the PEC between May-July 2022.

- 2) *if the designated charter representatives were appropriately acting on behalf of the school, then the present board has failed to comply with the signed contract and implement it.*

Even with the above challenges, the board has fulfilled its duty by carrying out the Charter Contract by the following:

- A. Addressing the mission specific goals and adherence of the mission statement. We additionally have ensured the head learner and our staff are doing the same.

It is unclear to us that the GC was ever asked formally by the PEC to amend mission specific goals, however they chose to do so without understanding the content. They also failed to do any of the following during the AY 2022-2023

a. Seek clarification from the former Head Learner, Angela Feathers, on the content, definitions, and intent of the amended and approved -mission -educational program -performance framework -mission specific goals. Ms. Feathers is currently employed by the school, and available to clarify these items if requested. No such requests seem to have been made.

b. Seek clarification from Montessori-trained co-founder and principal author of LTMAS Charter, Prairie Boulmier . Ms. Boulmier and three others, to-date, sent letters to the GC asking to be considered for a seat on the board(two of the four applicants are Montessori-trained educators). None of the letters have been addressed in compliance with the GC Bylaws with the exception of Ms. Boulmier's case, which was unanimously voted down, without discussion of what she might bring to the board.

c. Seek advice and support from National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector (whose board President, Richard Ungerer, attended a December LTMAS GC meeting, offering assistance), the American Montessori Society, Association Montessori Internationale, The Montessori Foundation, or any other organization that could clarify and assist with interpreting and evaluating all of the above-mentioned items in the Charter Contract.

- B. Ensuring students have a Montessori environment that has the appropriate materials and equipment. No changes to the environment, curriculum or materials being used have been instituted by this board or the head learner from our prior Montessori head learner's program.

We parents and teachers assert, through communication with school staff and students, that the school, that under the direction of Head Learners Cliff Tompson and Patricia Herrera, has proceeded to remove, damage and throw away Montessori materials and

other equipment (such as the equipment purchased for the agriculture program). As of this writing, there is a shed full of Montessori materials, which Ms. Herrera has stated need to be removed ASAP, and suggested that “the items could be donated to a Montessori school”. These materials represent thousands of dollars of essential equipment and it is unclear why they are not in use the school or why they would be disposed of.

Without complete sets of materials for each grade level being offered, teachers are unable to ensure that the mission-specific goals are met. Teachers need training to present the materials to students. LTMAS was not in the position at the start of school year 2022-2023 to keep the status quo-the school was in need of changes to environment, curriculum, and materials at that time, as it remains today.

The analysis from CSD is clear: there is some evidence of Montessori practice in the school, but it is not seamless across to the upper grades. The plans for training and support, staffing and other essential pieces of a Montessori program were scrapped before the 2022 school year began. Former Head Learner Ms. Feathers planned to send a number of teachers for Montessori training with the Southwest Institute of Montessori Studies and The Montessori Institute of Denver. Neither Head Learner has followed up on that training OR sought a comparable and suitable alternative arrangement. Seven days of Professional Development during August 1-10 were also missed without any substantive work towards supporting the charter.

That the school, under the direction of Head Learners Cliff Tompson and Patricia Herrera knowingly took steps to alter school functioning in contradiction to the previous arrangements, and in conflict with Montessori best-practices, without consultation of trained Montessori individuals on the following items:

i) Daily Schedule-the daily schedule was amended to remove the Montessori tenet 3-hour morning work period.

ii) Class composition and size: the arrangement of grade levels in each classroom was amended in contrast to Montessori tenets, based on 'planes of development'. The school adopted and implemented classroom arrangements with 2 grade-levels in each, rather than 3, and an isolated Kindergarten classroom without a second year present. These age groupings are essential to the delivery of successful Montessori programs and were knowingly disregarded without seeking expertise by Mr. Tompson and Mr. Lang. There were many discussions and opposition from the staff to no avail.

C. Retaining on staff a certified Montessori educator, who is also the former head learner.

Angela Feathers, the former Head Learner, asserts that she is not a certified Montessori

trainer. She is not currently providing any training to staff, only informal conversations and helpful pointers or advice. Her presence is not sufficient to provide the staff with certification or training, or keep the school Montessori-focused. She has sent several emails to administration suggesting that staff register for formal Montessori training and development. These suggestions have been met with silence—with no reply or acknowledgement from administration.

No modification to the instructional programming of the school— all Montessori programming has remained the same from two years prior.

There *were* major changes to the Montessori curriculum. Montessori is no longer implemented with fidelity. At the beginning of the school year in August 2022, the classes were reorganized as well as the schedule in ways that were disruptive and out of compliance with Montessori education. For example, there is no three hour uninterrupted work period for teachers. There is no three year cycle. Materials are not in every classroom. The GC did stop the Montessori Model UN program. Currently there are no assistants in any classrooms.

The STEM coordinator for the school who works with students every day, was scheduled to take Montessori courses in the sciences, SPED and STEM areas along with basic Montessori principles in order to be consistent with the training of other teachers at the school. Their training was discontinued as of Fall 2023. As of Spring 2022 teachers had been discussing a cohesive and comprehensive plan for Montessori-specific training for all staff who had not yet received it.

SIMS Southwest Institute of Montessori Studies, reached out to offer a spot in the Primary Course- the info was forwarded info to Cliff Tompson. Nothing came of this opportunity- staff were told no new PO's can be issued.

- D. Students are offered comprehensive arts integration studies throughout the week and will begin agricultural instruction this semester.

Lorraine Gray returned SY23 as the Agriculture teacher only to quit her 2nd day back. In her complaint, she listed racist remarks, the destruction of the agriculture equipment, including the brand new hydroponics system and the discarding of materials and pieces of equipment as her reason she could not stay.

She filed an ignored grievance with the board, sent many emails to officials including the PEC, and even spoke at a PEC meeting. She was called in to be rehired late October, only to be told once she arrived that there was a hiring freeze (something other potential school employee applicants report, too).

She was only called back in when the school received its Notice of Breach.

- E. Future Montessori training will be provided to our staff by the Indigenous Montessori Training Center.

This is insufficient training and shows how disconnected the GC is from understanding the current level of Montessori training already acquired by the existing staff of LTMAS. The IMI is small and does offer a course called the Philosophy of Indigenous Education and specializes in indigenous language programs in Montessori schools. It is important to note that the Philosophy of Indigenous Education course has ALREADY been completed by 3 of the 6 teachers— 2 current teachers and 1 removed teacher. The IMI is not a comprehensive Montessori training facility, and has no certified Montessori trainers on staff, nor do they work with public schools. The Philosophy course was excellent and very culturally relevant to the teachers as they want to have a greater inclusivity with children from the Pueblo. Finishing this course is not accrediting anyone in Montessori methods.

<https://kclcmontessori.org/training-courses/>

Additionally, the GC reported in its Dec 10th, 2022 meeting that it had contacted Montessori Accreditation Center for Teacher Education, an organization whose work and mission is in accreditation of teacher training programs, not aligned with the assistance needed by the Governing Council, and Indigenous Montessori Institute, an organization whose principal work is that of indigenous language curricular development, rather than direct support for work associated with LTMAS mission, educational program, or mission-specific goals.

- 3) *Further, if there was an issue with authority to enter into Charter Contract, the School failed to timely remedy any possible issues related to the contract from the time period May – July 2022 even after being directed to correct these issues by the PEC on August 19, 2022.*

The board was not elected into their new posts until July 12, 2022. *This would have made it irregular to issue any remedies with potential concerns as we were not in the position to do so.*

The current members of the board were elected after a vote to remove Ms. Willy Williams as president. She was replaced by Isaac Casados as president with Brenda Attencio as vice president and Delisha Gordon Brown as secretary at this meeting. In further statements by Isaac Casados this meeting is referred to as the “annual board meeting.” There was no public notice of this meeting or the subsequent meeting on July 18 as the required annual board meeting.

The board was never informed by the Public Education Commission during the August 19, 2022 meeting to provide documentation that warranted an objection to the charter contract

nor provide remedies to correct such issues.

The board did provide lengthy overviews both in writing and verbally as to the deficiencies they identified in the Charter contract to the Charter School Division, Director Chavez, and the Public Education Commission

Even though these challenges and concerns were raised, this board has continued to uphold the fidelity of the approved Charter Contract Amendment as of June 22, 2022.

ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL	Staff or entity responsible	DOCUMENTATION DUE TO PEC
Modification of the Charter Mission Statement	Governing Council	Ongoing. Will present for consideration at the February 2023 PEC meeting.
Modification of the Mission Specific Goal	Governing Council	Ongoing. Will present for consideration at the February 2023 PEC meeting.
Modification of the Charter Contract Language, including Name Change	Governing Council	Ongoing. Will present for consideration at the February 2023 PEC meeting.

This table is an example of the lack of transparency by the GC to its communities of parents, teachers and students and shows their continued plan of “kicking the can down the road”. Even under the duress of a Breach of Contract, the GC did not find time to sit and do the work necessary to satisfy the breach.

Neither students, parents, nor teachers have requested changes to the Mission Statement or Goals. In fact, teachers and students collaborated to create the Mission Statement and Mission Specific Goals that are currently in place.

All of the above activities listed in this table are completely driven by the members of the Governing Council. Parents who have heard about these 3 planned activities are dismayed to know there are ANY planned changes to the school’s mission and goals. There has been no official communication from the GC to the parent or teacher communities about why there are changes being proposed, or what changes are being made. This has created an atmosphere of mistrust and fear among staff and parents about what is being planned and how it will impact the school curriculum. Requests for information about these changes at the GC meeting held the week of Jan 22 were ignored.

Parents are sending their students to LTMAS based on the Montessori curriculum and Montessori name. To change this will likely mean many families will leave LTMAS, leading to financial crisis of the school.

Section 4, Section 5

1, Purpose

2, Mission

*4, Comprehensive Educational Program of the School
Performance Framework*

The Governing Board breached the contract by failing

1) “to institute a Montessori program with trained Montessori staff”; to provide documentation to CSD regarding how the mission-specific goals are being implemented, and to fully implement the mission and educational program as negotiated,

There has been no change to our educational Montessori program from the former Montessori head learner. There has been no modification to the work schedule, the curriculum, instructional material or teaching staff. Many of the staff are from the prior school administration, some recently returning. At no time has the governing council or the head learner directed the teaching staff to change course nor have we limited or modified the learning environment.

- Trainings submitted for P. Krane, a 7th/8th grade teacher, for the Adolescent Community went ignored. Purchase Orders were not signed.
- Trainings for 3 elementary teachers were not followed up on.
- Montessori SPED training opportunities were submitted January 2023 to Patricia Herrera. These requests were also ignored.

ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL	Staff or entity responsible	DOCUMENTATION DUE TO PEC
Begin offering Montessori training to our teachers (who have been at the school longer than 3 years per the Mission Specific Goals) by the Indigenous Montessori Learning Center.	Governing Council and Head Learner	<p>The Indigenous Montessori Learning Center has been contacted and the HL is arranging a more in-depth conversation to begin providing training to our staff.</p> <p>Being that our Mission Specific Goal #2 doesn't provide for training to staff of less than 3 years, we believe this will help jump start this process.</p> <p>Update: April 2023</p>

2) *to set up the mission-specific goals and set up a scoring sheet for the implementation of the mission-specific goals, and*

The Governing Council has worked with our Head Learner Patricia Herrera and Mrs. Chavez to address our two mission special goals: Our planes of development screening and testing and the educational training of Montessori-inspired methodology and techniques.

The original intent of having teachers trained by their third year included at least one year of participation in a full Montessori training course and the 9-month internship that goes with training. This would require training to begin after a new staff's first year. The characterization of the training plan offered by the GC is incorrect. Further, there are not lengthy discussions needed with an organization such as IMI. They are not independently capable of providing the training LTMAS needs, and we believe this item has been offered merely in an effort to placate the PEC with no real thought or intent to follow through. Without classrooms sorted by planes of development, and the necessary training and equipment for those planes, it is unrealistic and misleading to make statements regarding mission goals based on the planes.

Mission Specific Goal #1

The board has provided clarity to the HL to ensure that mission specific goal #1 isn't just observation based, but provides "**documentation to families and the administration supporting such mastery**". We will be proposing a minor change to the Mission Specific Goal #1 at the February 2023 PEC meeting.

We hope that with this much needed change in Mission Specific Goal #1, all staff will provide documented proof that our students are attaining their level of instructional understanding.

The students at LTMAS were learning at high levels prior to the GC transition in Summer 2022. Staff were not involved in this specific mission change or told why this mission change was necessary. The GC statements regarding observation and teaching content, assessments are ill-informed. While we understand assessment and participation in state-wide testing is important, this GC is not showing proficiency in understanding how to best implement such steps that both satisfy the state and the Montessori charter, nor have they reached out for assistance in these matters.

Mission Specific Goal #2

It is our goal to ensure our staff is trained in Montessori methods and techniques. We have reached out to the Indigenous Montessori Learning Center to discuss providing Montessori training to our educational staff. Our head learner will be holding more in-depth conversations in the coming weeks.

- See notes above. Half of the staff has already attended a course by the Indigenous Montessori Institute (above name is incorrect) and does not need to attend the course again.
- Staff received an email this week from the Head Learner that stored Montessori materials in a storage room were being thrown away by the school. This is more evidence that there is an initiative to move away from Montessori methodologies.

3) *to timely seek to amend the contract if the board had concerns with the contract when this requirement was requested of them in August 2022.*

The board was never informed by the Public Education Commission during the August 19, 2022 meeting to provide documentation that warranted an objection to the charter contract document nor provide remedies to correct such issues.

The board did provide lengthy overviews both in writing and verbally as to the deficiencies they identified in the Charter contract to the Charter School Division, Director Chavez, and the Public Education Commission.

Even though these challenges and concerns were raised, this board has continued uphold the fidelity of the approved Charter Contract Amendment as of June 22, 2022.

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Section 4.5, Governance, vi., viii. and ix.

Section 4.6, Operation, ii., iii, vi.

and

Comply with all provisions of the Contract and law, hiring and overseeing the Head Administrator; and comply with Board Training requirements.

The board hired Mrs. Patricia Herrera and has followed strict policy and procedure protocols to ensure she is provided with the support she needs as the leader of our school.

Ms. Herrera simply does not have the tools to support a healthy, thriving Montessori program, and the GC does not have the tools to provide salient policy to support such programs.

All members of the board have completed their required fiscal training and most have completed the full 8-hours of training as required by the Charter School Division. We have until the end of

the year to complete said training, but most have completed within the first months of our newly elected positions. **Remaining training will be completed in January and February 2023.**

Comply with all federal and state laws relating to the education of children with disabilities, comply with all laws related to safety, notify the Commission of allegations or inappropriate contact with a student

Our school and board have complied with all federal and state laws and adhered strictly to our bylaws and policies and procedures concerning children with disabilities, safety, and allegations of inappropriate contact with a student. The Charter School Division has been informed of all allegations as soon as they occur.

The Governing Board breached the contract by inadequately overseeing the Head Administrator to ensure that

The Governing Board oversees our Head Learner with clarity and purpose. We allow the HL to run the school in an effective way that doesn't overstep our authority. Mrs. Patricia Herrera is comprehensive in her updates to the board and works tirelessly to address the many challenges that arise, all while ensuring the school is providing a safe and educational diverse learning environment for the students.

In the past, the former President and former Head Learner worked outside of board authority to enact policy and keep the board in the dark. We have rectified this issue to ensure our whole board is on top of all issues occurring at the school so can address any issues within our jurisdiction. We additionally ask for overviews from the Head Learner on a weekly or daily basis.

1) the educational program is being implemented in the school;

As above, there has been no change to our educational Montessori program from the former Montessori head learner. There has been no modification to the curriculum, instructional material or teaching staff.

It is our goal to ensure that our students are provided with highly trained and qualified educators. This does mean that many will not be Montessori certified due to the limited teaching pool within northern New Mexico. However, we have kept on the former HL as a teacher, who is a certified Montessorian to help ensure the fundamentals of the Montessori method are continually being addressed in our early and primary classrooms. Many of the teachers who were trained under the former HL are still employed in their prior classrooms.

There is no evidence that the former HL, Ms. Feathers is ensuring the fundamentals of the Montessori method are upheld at the school. There has been no request from Ms. Herrera to ensure that Ms. Feathers is mentoring staff.

Again, Mrs. Feathers is not a Montessori trainer. She does not train her co-workers, nor has she professed to. She has given advice, pointers and a few lessons to teachers to help “bridge the gap” until formal and MACTE approved training was to begin. Informal peer training is not advised and is not best practices. (In Mrs. Feathers’ original SY23 contract, it stated she would be a “mentor teacher” with an increased level 3 salary). The board terminated that contract through Cliff Tompson, who realized what was going on and hired her back one week later, (minus the mentor teacher status and additional compensation).

2) *the school staffing is appropriate, and the staff is trained to implement the mission and educational philosophy;*

The Head Learner has done a remarkable job ensuring that we have qualified and trained educators who are passionate about education and the success of the students at LTMAS. She recently hired a 5-6th grade educator who also brings years of special education experience to the school and brought back the Agricultural teacher.

The recently hired educator may have many skills but is not a certified Montessori educator. We have no idea if she has even been offered training or told that she would have to receive training. She removed items from the classroom, including the “peace table” used for conflict resolution.

The board President, at the direction of Director Chavez, had conversations with the Indigenous Montessori Learning Center to discuss providing Montessori training to our staff. This training will fulfill mission-specific goal #2 and will begin next month.

ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL	Staff or entity responsible	DOCUMENTATION DUE TO PEC
Begin offering Montessori training to our teachers (who have been at the school longer than 3 years per the Mission Specific Goals) by the Indigenous Montessori Learning Center.	Governing Council and Head Learner	<p>The Indigenous Montessori Learning Center has been contacted and the HL is arranging a more in-depth conversation to begin providing training to our staff.</p> <p>Being that our Mission Specific Goal #2 doesn't provide for training to staff less than 3 years, we believe this will help jump start this process.</p> <p>Update: April 2023</p>

3) *the school is not appropriately working to meet the needs and requirements of special education students; and*

The Special Education Department has worked diligently to provide comprehensive services to our students. This is a primary reason why the board hired Patricia Herrera as head learner and special educational coordinator because of her wealth of expertise.

Her team has been pulling students from classes and has been monitoring them through their teachers. A few weeks ago, an additional educator with special education experience was hired as the new 5th and 6th grade teacher— bringing decades of experience in the field to our school. She will be assisting with the special education program in her classroom.

The statements above are inaccurate. What team? Who is on this team? Who are they pulling?

There is no monitoring that teachers are aware of.

Teachers have submitted SAT paperwork, requested help, requested information- including health, allergies, and accommodations. Nothing has been provided. Teachers find out children have significant health issues and major allergies (autism, blindness, seizures, etc) through siblings or parents.

Accommodations *were* shared with teachers at the beginning of the year as were IEPs. However, they were not correct or out of date. Ms. Herrera was made aware of this several times and formally at the PD January 13, 2023- so far no corrected or up to date information has been shared with teachers.

A. Current progress monitoring is ongoing and parents will be receiving an updated overview on their child's process during the week of January 16-20, 2023.

As of January 27, 2023, this has not happened.

- B. The Occupational and Speech Therapists have been seeing children virtually for at least three sessions as of last December 2022. A new in person Speech Therapist starts Thursday, January 12, 2023.
- C. The Social Worker has been coming into the school every Thursday morning to service the children on his caseload— conducting IEPs and SATs as necessary.
- D. Parents will begin receiving letters from the department regarding ancillary compensatory services within the next couple of weeks. Students and the program will institute set office hours which will allow for "pull-out" and inclusion support.
- E. Teachers will be receiving written Modifications and Accommodations as they did not receive them earlier this year. Teachers will also have a comprehensively overview with the department to go over IEPs so they can better understand their role in the IEP process and instruction.

Accommodations were shared with teachers at the beginning of the year as were IEPs. However, they were not correct or out of date. Ms. Herrera was made aware of this several times and formally at the PD January 13, 2023- so far no corrected or up to date information has been shared with teachers.

- F. Indicator 13 is also being implemented for 8th grade students who will be moving on to the High School. These transition services are a must whether the child is 14 years of age or not. Those IEPs will be conducted before the end of January, 2023.
- G. A Diagnostician will be testing students for Gifted programs before the end of January, 2023.

The potentially gifted students have been referred for testing and services since November 2021. Children were again referred several times in June & July and at a staff meeting in August. Patricia Herrera informed staff gifted testing would take place in October 2022. No current plans have been shared for testing before Tuesday, Jan 31st.

ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL	Staff or entity responsible	DOCUMENTATION DUE TO PEC
Progress monitoring and parental updated on child's process	Special Education Team / Patricia Herrera, HL	Update March 2023

Occupational and Speech Therapists have been seeing children virtually for at least three sessions. Continual therapy is ongoing	Special Education Team / Patricia Herrera, HL	Continual update to CSD
Speech Therapist starts Thursday, January 12, 2023.	Special Education Team / Patricia Herrera, HL	Continual update to CSD
The Social Worker has been coming into the school every Thursday morning to service the children on his caseload — conducting IEPs and SATs as necessary	Special Education Team / Patricia Herrera, HL	Continual update to CSD

Parents will receive letters from the department regarding ancillary compensatory services	Special Education Team / Patricia Herrera, HL	February 15, 2023
Students and the program will institute set office hours which will allow for "pull-out" and inclusion support.	Special Education Team / Patricia Herrera, HL	Update March 2023
Indicator 13 is also being implemented for 8th grade students who will be moving on to the High School.	Special Education Team / Patricia Herrera, HL	Update March 2023
Diagnostician will be testing students for Gifted programs before the end of January, 2023.	Special Education Team / Patricia Herrera, HL	Update March 2023

4) to address safety and health issues at the school.

School safety and health is incredibly important to this board and the head learner. We strictly adhere to our policies and procedures (per 200 Personnel Policies) which cover harassment, sexual misconduct, assault, violent or aggressive conduct by a school employee, among other policies to protect the health and wellbeing of not only our students but our staff. **(Please see appendix C)**

It is hard to find evidence that school safety is a priority to the board. The School Safety Plan is not posted or available to parents. At this time, it is unclear if the school has submitted one.

No health or safety information is shared with teachers.

There is a rock propping the unmanned door open every morning. Even after the PEC meeting Jan 20th, the rock continues to be used- not by teachers.

No drills have been conducted since September 9, 2022.

There has not been an active shooter training or drill conducted this school year.

The elementary playground has been deemed unsafe for children by POMS and Associates as of Jan 25th. Children are no longer allowed to use it.

There have been no playground safety checks, maintenance or repairs made for the playground for SY23.

The safety concerns the GC has had to discuss or address are all items brought to them by parents. They have inadequately addressed several large concerns parents have about the safety of the school, based on our responses below.

The issue that provoked this violation stems from a parent who inaccurately accused a staff member of “assaulting their child”. The head learner immediately conducted an investigation which had already been elevated to the Rio Arriba County Sheriff’s office. After an extensive investigation, the Sheriff’s office said they could not corroborate the allegations due to witness interviews that invalidated the incident. As a precaution, the staff member was put on paid leave by the head learner until the conclusion of the investigation. The charter school division was informed of the incident.

This is filled with untrue statements. There are two different investigations. The school investigation, according to the parents, was nonexistent. There was no discussion of the incident with teachers or other students. There was never any communication from the school administration or the GC to the parents about any investigation. In fact a school incident report was never shared with parents despite repeated attempts to obtain one and get details of what happened at the school that day.

This week the PED has made an official request for information regarding the case and opened an investigation of how this incident was handled by the LTMAS administration.

The second untruth is that the investigation has concluded. In fact, the Sheriff’s investigation has been extended. The Sheriff’s investigation is still open. The police investigation is moving slowly as the witnesses in this case were minors. In order to utilize minor witnesses parents need to be involved as well as a host of other conditions to protect these witnesses.

As stated above, the staff member involved in the assault was put on leave, but it is very important to note that the accused staff member on leave DID return to the school days later

with no notice to the parents of the child. Since the parents were not notified, the child was present at school and was re-traumatized by the proximity of the staff member. The parent pulled their child from the school and received no communication from the school about why the staff member returned and how to protect their child from this staff member while the investigation was ongoing.

Repeated requests for information in the weeks after the incident about this staff member's presence at the school, and how to protect the child, or what protocols were in place, were met with silence. No phone calls were returned or emails returned with information for the parents of this child. The GC muted the parent of the child at GC meetings in November and December and called them out of order for requesting information.

CYFD was notified about the assault by the hospital where the child was treated the evening of the assault. The hospital mandated that the parents call the Sheriff's department based on the injuries of the child and that the child reported the assault occurred at school. The parents were not given a choice by the hospital.

Another staff member was terminated by the head learner with due cause for violating policy 219, Sexual Misconduct. Another extensive investigation was conducted, but due to FERPA we are will limited in the information we can share due to the severity of this issue. The charter school division was informed, as was CYFD, which has referred the issue on to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

This pertains to an ongoing staffing matter that was not even referred to in the PEC Letter of Breach. There are several inaccurate statements here. We are unsure why this is even being brought up, but it is completely inappropriate for it to be included in the Corrective Action Plan. This staff member has had their termination *recommended* and they have appealed. The policy cited here was not cited in the letter recommending this employee's termination. The 'extensive investigation' involved no interviews with co-workers or (to our knowledge) parents. This counterclaim is based on anonymous discussions with staff members.

This staff member was the one who notified the parent his child was injured due to an alleged assault at school **(in the incident outlined above)**. He was put on Administrative Leave along with another staff member who also helped notify the parent the same day as the incident.

This staff member was also claiming sexual harrassment. No action was taken when this harassment was reported to Cliff Tompson, and the claim of harassment was denied by Patricia Herrera despite evidence and text messages submitted. Again, in investigating this claim of sexual harassment, no coworkers were questioned, despite having knowledge of the incidents.

The board is actively looking at modifying the policy 200 to provide additional tools and fail safes. The new cell phone policy was introduced following the above mentioned staff member using their personal cell phone to contact the parent of the child who was assaulted. That staff

member used their own cell phone because the head learner refused to contact the parent at the behest of the student's teacher.

ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL	Staff or entity responsible	DOCUMENTATION DUE TO PEC
Create, Institute and Implement a more streamlined and updated Grievance and Employee Harassment Form; Pet Policy; Student and teacher cell phone policy and a Discipline write up form	Governing Council	Completed. The GC voted and passed this new form on December 10, 2022.
Create, Institute and Implement a more streamlined and updated Incident Report form	Governing Council	Completed. The GC voted and passed this new form on November 15, 2022.
Modify the 200 Policies	Governing Council and Attorney	April 2023

Section, 5.2, i., ii. and iv.

Participate in State-required assessment and meet State’s standards of excellence

The Governing Board breached the contract by failing to meet or make substantial progress toward achievement of the department's standards of excellence or student performance standards identified in the charter contract including achieving academic outcomes and participation in state-wide testing.

Students at LTMAS participate in state-required assessments to ensure we are achieving academic outcomes.

Students receive ongoing istation screening (all ages) on a monthly basis.

Students were also tested by the: NWEA Maps- kinder - 3rd grade at the beginning of year (December 2022); WIDA Screener - all grades in August 2022; Dyslexic screener - 1st Grader in August 2022;

Children in Kindergarten did not receive the required WAPT/WIDA test. Children in other grades were not given dyslexic screener when dyslexia was suspected, despite teacher requests. One child in 1st grade is listed as having taken the dyslexic screener, despite having left early that day. It was overheard in the office to “mark him as passed, because he is smart.”

Students will be screened for: NWEA Maps- All Grades Middle of Year testing in February 2023; Access for ELL students in March 2023, and NWEA Maps- All Grades End of Year

testing in May 2023.

ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL	Staff or entity responsible	DOCUMENTATION DUE TO PEC
Istation screening (all ages) on a monthly basis WEA Maps- kinder - 3rd grade at the beginning of year December 2022 WIDA Screener - all grades August 2022 Dyslexic screener - 1st Graders August 2022	Head Learner and office staff	Completed.
NWEA Maps- All Grades Middle of Year testing February 2023 Access for ELL students March 2023 and NWEA Maps- All Grades End of Year testing May 2023	Head Learner and office staff	Ongoing. Will provide an update in April 2023 and June 2023

Teachers find it difficult to administer Istation tests because students are not allowed to use the new iPads purchased for them because “someone might steal them.” Students are forced to share a few iPads (5-10 out of the 80 purchased for them) or use old Chromebooks, some missing keys, some damaged, to take tests. Not all Chromebooks support Istation because they are so outdated. Teachers must attempt to access it on each one, wasting valuable time. Ipads are locked in an Ipad cart, not accessible to anyone but the office manager.

Teachers expressed frustration to P. Herrera who promised to get the cart opened. Nothing has been done.