

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO
PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
300 DON GASPAR
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501-2786
Telephone (505) 827-6661
www.ped.state.nm.us**

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2023 NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUBMIT CHARTER APPLICATION

According to NMSA § 22-8B-6(B) a Notice of Intent to Submit a Charter Application (“NOI”) must be filed by the organizers of a proposed charter school to the Public Education Commission **AND** to the superintendent of the school district in which the charter school is proposed to be located no later than the second Tuesday in January of the year in which the application will be filed.

The NOI must be submitted electronically to charter.schools@ped.nm.gov with a cc to the district superintendent by 5:00 PM Mountain Time **January 10, 2023**.

Notices of Intent that are not received by the Public Education Commission **and** the district by the deadline may result in the application being rejected.

The NOI is intended to provide the primary point of contact information of charter developers and preliminary information about the charter proposal. Use the form below to submit the NOI, which should not exceed 5 pages.

1. General Information

- Name of Proposed School

Sundance Montessori School

- Grade levels to be offered and enrollment projections

Grade Levels to be offered	Projected Total Enrollment
Pre-K-8	225

• Primary Point of Contact

Name	Angela Feathers				
Mailing Address	300 Paseo de Peralta Suite 203				
City	Santa Fe	State	NM	Zip	87501
Phone	901-734-0945				
Email	sundanceschoolnm@gmail.com				

2. Names, roles, and current employment of all persons on the applicant team, and qualifications of the team members to establish a high-quality charter school

Names	Role on Team	Qualifications: Education, Employment, and Experience
Angela Feathers	Founder	BS- SLP & Aud, minors in Soc and Sped, Old Dominion University MA- Montessori Ed, St. Catherine University AMI- Montessori Primary Diploma AMI- Administrator Diploma AMI- Philosophy of Indigenous Education AMI- Whole School Leadership 20 years Private Montessori School Owner, Administrator 4 years Public Charter Montessori Superintendent/Head of School 15+ years Montessori classroom experience
Willie Williams	Community Outreach, Equity and Diversity	BA- Communications, Purdue University 20+ years as a Community Liaison for Omaha Public Schools, Urban League of Indiana, local charter schools Served as the State Representative for Region V National Coalition Title I ESEA Parents Served on Boards, on State Parent Involvement Committees, and as a Community Liaison in educational settings Administrator for Juneteenth Nebraska and New Mexico Executive Director for the Coalition of Minority Parents

3. Model or focus of the proposed school (e.g., performing arts, dual language, college prep, STEM, Montessori, IB)

Montessori education is based on the scientific discoveries of Dr. Maria Montessori. Dr. Montessori, credited with being one of the first female physicians in Italy, innovated the Montessori approach to education. The Montessori method has successfully been in existence for over a century, with schools located all over the world.

Hallmarks of an authentic Montessori program include a prepared environment, a three year cycle, a trained adult, a three hour work period, and respect for the child, the environment and each other.

The foundation of the Montessori Method is the Four Plane of Development. At each plane, the associated human tendencies and characteristics dictate how one can best prepare an environment for optimal learning. Children are taught in a prepared environment, specifically designed to implement Dr. Montessori's vision and philosophy of education. Classrooms have a full complement of Montessori materials. Montessori classrooms are multi-age, utilizing a three year cycle (3-6, 6-9, 9-12 & 12-15 years) based on the Four Planes of Development. The adult is trained at the appropriate level by a MACTE (Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education, the international standard setting and accrediting body for Montessori educator preparation) approved program. Children are allowed to work in a three hour, uninterrupted work cycle. They are allowed to choose work freely and are given individualized instruction.

4. Does the school expect to contract with another entity for either management, or substantial oversight or direction in the school's operation? £ Yes X No If YES, describe the entity and the role it will have in the school's operational plan

5. Does the applicant team or any members of the team currently operate any other schools? £Yes X No

6. Vision/Mission statement (2-3 sentences)

Sundance Montessori School will “follow the child” by providing an authentic, high fidelity Montessori education. We will boldly strive towards empowering our students to exemplify compassion, independence, and a lifelong love of learning as we encourage the development of the whole child. At the heart of our mission is not a method, but rather a goal: to help young people construct themselves as complete human beings.

7. Student population and geographical setting of the school

- Define the targeted geographical area from which the proposed school is expected to draw a significant number of its students

We anticipate the students attending Sundance Montessori School will come from Santa Fe and possibly surrounding areas. Currently, there are no public Montessori schools in the Santa Fe area, the closest public Montessori schools being in Albuquerque and Española- over 45 minutes away. With private Montessori schools costing between \$10-17k, families in Santa Fe and surrounding areas are looking for affordable and authentic Montessori options.

- Describe the student population including key demographic data (academic performance, home languages, English Learners, and special education populations).

We anticipate the student population to be similar to the current overall population of the Santa Fe Public Schools:

Enrollment by Ethnicity:

80% Hispanic, 16% Caucasian, 2% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander, and ≤ 1% African American.

Enrollment by Student Group:

49% Female, 51% Male

26% English Language Learners

15% Students with Disabilities

74% Economically Disadvantaged

7% Homeless

≤ 1% Foster

≤ 1% Military

≤ 1% Migrant

- Identify where these students are most likely being educated currently and why they are expected to choose the proposed charter school for their future

educational needs

We expect prospective Sundance Montessori School students are currently being educated in the Santa Fe Public Schools, private Montessori schools, private alternative education schools (ex: Reggio Emilia or Waldorf schools) and homeschools. We also believe some student may be attending public schools in surrounding school districts and their families may commute to be able to attend a Montessori school.

8. Provide evidence that the applicant team has assessed community need for the type of school proposed (e.g., objective surveys or other measures of local demand for the educational program)

As New Mexico schools continue to rank at the bottom of most educational surveys and polls, families are seeking alternative forms of education. As Montessorians and educators in the community, we often hear “why isn’t there public Montessori in Santa Fe?” Good question! An even better question might be, “Why is New Mexico perhaps the only state left without public Montessori PreK?”

Now more than ever, families struggle with the rising costs of preschool, daycare, and/or private education. They should not have to pay for a quality education. They want and deserve options for their children.

9. Identify significant innovative features that the school will implement to help realize the school's vision/mission.

Imagine a classroom full of beautiful materials, prepared lovingly to meet all of the needs of the students for whom it was designed. Imagine a teacher trained to implement a method of individualized instruction, ensuring each child receives what they need academically, socially, emotionally and physically. Imagine children who are not only proficient academically, but who are also prepared for life and real world experiences, possessing important skills including collaboration, concentration, self-reliance and critical thinking. Imagine a community of people, adults and children, who respect other people and cultures, including those who may have lived in other places and times. Imagine a school where peace and cooperation are not just utopian ideals, but critical skill sets that must be cultivated and honored. Imagine a place where students are treasured collaborators in their own educational process. **Imagine Montessori education.**

10. Describe how the school will be more effective than the schools currently serving the targeted student population, and/or plans to improve student achievement and exceed the academic performance of existing public schools in the targeted service area and any data you have to support this assumption.

Local traditional schools are failing. Santa Fe Public Schools reported an 18% proficiency in Mathematics and a 30% proficiency in Reading/Language Arts. The state average for New Mexico is not much better. They report a 21% proficiency in Mathematics and a 33% proficiency in Reading/Language Arts. Families need an alternative to a broken system.

Children are naturally curious, driven by what Dr. Montessori referred to as the “horme” or will. This inner force drives children to learn, grow, and thrive in a natural and joyful process of discovery. Traditional education all too often stifles or squashes this spark in the child. Conversely, Montessori schools entice children with fascinating materials, interesting and collaborative lessons, and respectful environments which inspire the child to explore and discover.

The path we will set our students on, for a lifetime of learning and a journey towards a meaningful life, that path is the Montessori method. This educational approach has a long and proven history. This method is not a “method” at all, but rather a goal or aspiration for children to construct themselves as complete human beings. We will attain this goal through *active* rather than passive learning. Children learn best by being active participants, *intrinsically motivated* rather than coerced or rewarded.

Classrooms will be *child-centered*, rather than teacher centered. Lessons will be individualized, given when the child is ready rather than the class. Children will be able to choose what they work on and when. They will have *freedom of movement*, rather than rigid restrictions. Children will be given *freedom within limits*, meaning that the adult will give children freedom to choose work, move about the classroom and handle personal needs without restrictions as they gain more independence and demonstrate responsibility.

Experts agree restricting movement and attempting to control all aspects of the day is not only developmentally inappropriate, it stifles creativity, independence, and critical thinking.

There have been major studies that shed light on the merits on Montessori education. Dr. Montessori was a pioneering scientist and educator. Her work has been studied and developed for many years and is successfully evidenced today in neuroscience and research into the executive functioning of children and adults. World class research on the impact and outcomes of Montessori education have provided insight for educators, families, and fellow researchers.

Signature of founder(s):



Date: January 10, 2023

[PRINT NAME]

Angela M. Feathers M.Ed