

New Mexico Public Education Commission



2023 Charter School Renewal Application Part B: Progress Report

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Instructions

Please read the entire Charter School Renewal Application Kit before preparing documents. In an effort to help applicants understand the requirements of the Renewal Application, the CSD will hold a minimum of two technical assistance workshops. Applicants will be notified of the dates, times, and locations of the workshops.

Enter applicant responses in boxes below. Answer all questions unless the question indicates that applicants should answer only under certain conditions (e.g., rating on a Performance Framework indicator requires explanation, etc.). Narrative responses should be verifiable through documents submitted or observable evidence at the renewal site visit and will be scored according to the rubric in the main 2022 Charter Renewal Application document.

School Information

Name of School:	TAOS ACADEMY
Authorizer:	New Mexico Public Education Commission
Current Charter Term:	2019-2024

Academic Performance

Student Outcomes

1. Academic Performance

The school reports on its academic performance during the term of the contract, including achieving its goals, student performance outcomes, state standards of excellence and accountability requirements set forth in the Assessment and Accountability Act.

School response:

It is our privilege to provide 5th-12th grade students with engaging and rigorous core curriculum, highly motivating elective classes, leadership and career training, college preparation and community involvement through our state-of-the-art 21st century learning environment.

At Taos Academy, we hold the belief that every learner deserves access to excellence in educational opportunities regardless of his or her abilities or location. Our hybrid educational delivery model uses a unique combination of direct classroom and digital instruction with proven curriculum to address each learner's individual needs. Flexibility in scheduling allows the student to work in our technology labs or wherever a high-speed internet connection is available. Students attend the Taos Academy facility for tutoring, workshops, and classes in our media arts lab or in our science/math/engineering lab.

Classes are conducted both on-site and from remote locations. Each student is assigned an instructional advisor for consistent contact, guidance, feedback and encouragement. Tutoring is available for students in need of additional support. Teachers also provide support for leadership training, outdoor education, and community service-learning projects.

A Unique Approach to Learning

We combine a strong core curriculum focused on mastery with an emphasis on 21st Century Learning skills, workplace skills, technology skills and emotional intelligence skills to develop well-rounded life-long learners.

Taos Academy uses a variety of digital core curriculum providers, including Edgenuity, Rosetta Stone, and Khan Academy designed to motivate students while meeting and exceeding all state standards. The curriculum meets each student at their personal learning level and prescribes a learning path that best fits their academic growth. Students are assessed and given an individual learning plan (ILP) according to the skills assessment, not grade level. A student may need remediation in one area yet be strong in another. This is the beauty of digital education. We customize the learning for each student to best fit the need.

Key unique features of the curriculum design and delivery include:

- State-of-the-art electronic curricula allows for flexibility in scheduling and enables teachers to specifically tailor instruction to individual student needs.
- State-of-the-art media arts lab and a science/math/engineering lab.

- High academic standards focusing on continuing education preparation.
- Dual credit and advanced placement options permitting students to earn college credit while attending high school.
- Internship program for students who may not be college bound.
- High vocational standards focusing on media arts and engineering.
- Parent involvement on advisory groups and fund raising.
- Community collaboration to support enrichment opportunities.
- Outdoor education and leadership training.
- Focus on 21st Century Learning Skills.

Academic Distinctions

Taos Academy has demonstrated strong academic success related to the state standards of excellence, student performance outcomes, and achievement of its goals. Some examples follow:

- **New Mexico VISTAS Spotlight School:** Taos Academy scored above the 75th percentile of schools statewide based on 2021-22 data.¹
- **Graduation Rate above 90%:** More than 90% of students graduated within four years with a high school diploma.
- **One of the Top Performing Schools in the Nation:** In 2023 Taos Academy was acknowledged by U.S. News & World Report as one of the top performing schools in the nation. Schools are ranked on their performance on state-required tests, graduation and how well they prepare students for college, among other criteria. Our national rank places us as #23 of all schools in the state of New Mexico! We rank as #563 out of all Charter High Schools nationally. We are one of the best choices in the state for students seeking to pursue higher education options.
- **Met or exceeded its Mission-Specific Goal** in each year of the contract term.
- **New Mexico Governor’s STEM Challenge:** Taos Academy students won **First place four years in a row including 2019, 2020, 2021(virtual), and 2022 (virtual).**

1.a. Student Outcomes

1.a. How has the school measured student proficiency and growth, including action taken in the absence of state summative assessments in 2019-20 and 2020-21? Describe interim and formative assessments used, and the results of those assessments. Include a detailed narrative that addresses the actions taken to improve student outcomes, and the success of those actions. Schools may take the opportunity to include data in support of the narrative. If providing data to support the school’s narrative, provide it in **Appendix A-1 Academic Data**. Implementation of the described improvement actions should be verifiable through evidence at the renewal site visit.

School response:

¹ https://nmvistas.org/Taos_Academy/Taos_Academy

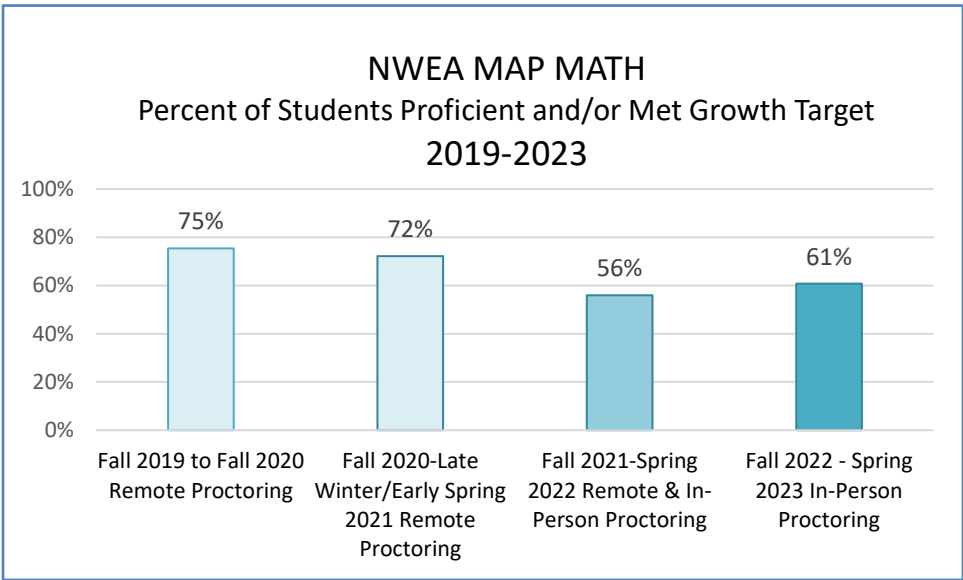
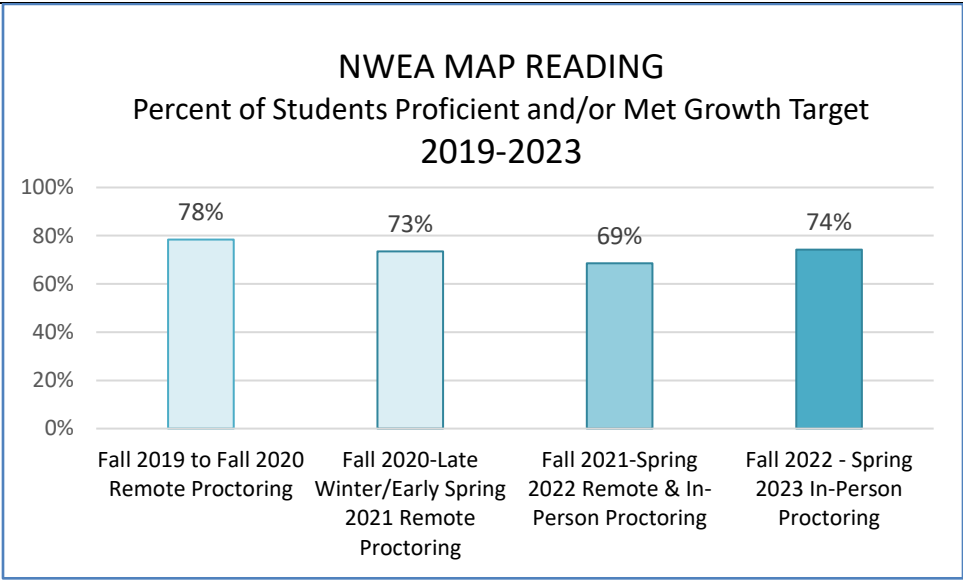
NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) are utilized both for measuring student proficiency and growth and for instructional planning at Taos Academy. All stakeholders, including the Governing Council, school leadership, teachers, students, parents, and community, review the data.

Typically, the MAP assessments are administered in the fall, winter, and spring of each year. In-person proctoring is required by school policy. Although this typical schedule and in-person proctoring was disrupted during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, Taos Academy continued to administer and make use of general assessment information for instructional planning throughout the period in question. The use of data was adapted to the circumstances of each year and teachers were the primary holders of the larger picture for each student. Data gleaned from the assessments continued to provide a valuable part of the whole picture of each student’s instructional needs.

Students were assessed in the Fall of 2019 but were not assessed in the spring of 2020 due to the in-person closure. Students did take the MAP assessments in the Fall of 2020 and in the Spring of 2021. Both of these assessment windows were proctored remotely; however, the data could not be considered reliable. Testing during the 2021-2022 school year was completed both in-person and remotely. Taos Academy used the data to gather general information and did not specifically use the data to make instructional decisions unless assessments were proctored in-person. All testing returned to being proctored in-person in the Fall of 2022. The table below summaries the status of proctoring for each year.

School Year	Data available	Proctored	Data/Information Gathered
2019-20	Fall (½ year)	remotely	General
2020-21	Fall to Spring	remotely	General
2021-22	Fall to Spring	Remotely and in-person	General and specific data
2022-23	Fall to Spring	In-person only as per school policy	Specific Data

The following graphs show the percentage of students who reached proficiency and/or met their projected growth score based on the MAP data for Reading and Math. Note that each description below the individual bars indicates the testing periods and proctoring circumstance for the data represented.



Although the data for both Reading and Math reflect some apparent loss during the pandemic and recovery years, it is clear that proficiency and growth in both reading and math are again trending upward. Reliability of test data increases as full in-person proctoring was again implemented for the 2022-23 school year.

Taos Academy emerged from some difficult times during the prolonged pandemic, but its mission did not falter. Taos Academy is dedicated to serving its students and by teaching them to adapt, they are being taught to succeed. The unique blended learning model lent itself well to student success in the midst of the pandemic. Students were used to having to complete part of their work on their own. Digital courses just kept going.

1.b. Mission-specific or School-Specific Goals

Report on the school’s performance in relation to the school- or mission-specific goals in the negotiated performance framework. Performance reports related to school or mission specific goals should be supported by raw data (masked to protect PII) and provided in **Appendix A-2 Mission Goal Data**. The school should report on the performance in each year of the contract term.

Schools that have not met their school- or mission-specific goals in each year of the contract term should provide a narrative that addresses the improvement actions taken and the success of those actions. The purpose of the narrative is to demonstrate substantial progress toward meeting the school or mission specific goals and maintaining that performance level. Implementation of the described improvement actions should be verifiable through evidence at the renewal site visit.

School response:

Taos Academy negotiated one Mission-Specific Goal as part of its Performance Framework:

Students in grades 5-12 at Taos Academy, enrolled on both the 40th and 120th day of the academic year, will complete at least 1 credit in Career and Technology Education (CTE) course (21st Century classes, dual credit, internship, STEAM Institute classes, career prep, elective and/or honors classes). The student Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and student transcript will document credit earned and grade in the class, respectively, as demonstrated by an exported report from the school’s Student Information System (SIS).

Taos Academy Met or Exceeded Standard for each year of the contract term:

Year of Contract Term	Percent of Students completing at least 1 credit in CTE course each year with a passing grade of “B” (80%) or higher.	Measure Rating Category
2019-20	82%	Exceeds Standard 80% or higher
2020-21	71%	Meets Standard 70% to 79%
2021-22	75%	Meets Standard 70% to 79%
2022-23	80%	Exceeds Standard 80% or higher

2. Organizational Performance

2.a. Educational Program

How is the school implementing the distinctive educational program described in its contract (Performance Framework Indicator 1.a.)? The response should address the ways in which the school is implementing the family, teacher, and student-focused terms of its contract. Please discuss any innovations the school has implemented in support of its mission and educational program.

School response:

In its 2019-2024 Contract with the Public Education Commission, Taos Academy not only provided descriptions of its distinctive educational program, but also included a description of the ways in which it is implementing its Comprehensive Educational Program terms:

Educational Philosophy - Taos Academy provides a hybrid learning environment that combines direct and digital instruction with experiential curriculum to create a holistic learning environment able to meet each student's academic and social/emotional needs. Taos Academy blends traditional classroom teaching methods with the latest technological advances, allowing students to benefit from both group and one-on-one approaches.

Instructional Approach - Using proven educational practices, intentional instructional design, and meaningful assessments, the school provides students with the individualized instruction necessary to meet their learning goals. After a thorough assessment, students are placed appropriately according to academic need. Placing students according to present performance levels ensures student success by building on their individual knowledge base rather than grade level. The school provides academic classes to students in a highly interactive digital format with the flexibility of anytime, anywhere learning. After students begin digital studies, their advisor will monitor all academic activities through the web-based program. The advisor has access to all daily academic activity, is able to track time spent on assignments, view scores of individual lessons and quizzes, and determine areas of weakness. Advisor and student are able to communicate using state-of-the-art web-based communications with the capability for audio, visual, and written communication, or live face-to-face communication in a traditional manner. Students are required to attend Math and Language Arts enrichment classes and have access to tutoring to further support academic excellence.

21st Century Learning: Taos Academy is devoted to developing a strong community of leaders throughout the organization, focusing our attention on 21st-century learning skills such as communication skills, teamwork, and research skills. Students are required to successfully complete one or more credits per year developing 21Century skills to ensure preparation of future endeavors. Classes offered yearly include but are not limited to, leadership training, global studies, career and technical education development, and STEM institute. Leadership training programs include but are not limited to, classes in emotional intelligence, advisory groups, outdoor education, and service-learning projects. Global studies classes incorporate but are not limited to, global awareness, language study, cultural studies, and geography. The STEM Institute classes offer students a variety of courses, aligned to STEM standards, to enrich the academic programming. Instructional methods include, but are not limited to, direct instruction, guided teaching, and a constructivist approach (inquiry, analysis, synthesis, etc.). Students attend these classes on campus on a regular basis, depending on their individual plan.

Career and Technical Education: Taos Academy students are given choice and flexibility in deciding non-core educational programming. With the development of the individualized career pathway plan, students, parents and the school advisors design a schedule that promotes academic success along with targeting areas of interest with classes aligned to the student's career plan. Career and Technical Education courses such as (21st Century classes, dual credit, internship, STEM Institute classes, career prep, elective and/or honors classes) are offered each semester. Students must earn a minimum of 1 credit per year from the list

above that aligns to the pathway plan.

Note: Additional Career and Technical Education courses added over the term of the contract include Career Explorations, Honors classes and classes in our College and Career Preparation program that include Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and end in a capstone project.

2.b. Financial Compliance

How is the school managing its finances (Performance Framework Indicators 2.a-f.)?

For each year in which the school had a significant deficiency, material weakness, or repeated finding(s) identified in the external audit, the school must provide a narrative explaining the improvement actions made to meet financial compliance requirements and the effectiveness of those actions in improving financial compliance. Success should be identified by specific changes in practice and changes in the audit findings in subsequent years. The purpose of the narrative is to demonstrate substantial progress toward achieving and maintaining financial compliance. Implementation of the described improvement actions should be verifiable through evidence at the site including renewal site visit.

If the school's Board of Finance was suspended at any time during the term of the contract, the school must provide a narrative explaining the actions taken on the school's own initiative to correct financial compliance and regain the Board of Finance Authority and the success of those actions. The school must also describe the current status of the Board of Finance and continuing actions to ensure the same financial challenges do not reoccur. Success should be identified by specific changes in practice. The narrative must be supported by evidence to be reviewed during the renewal site visit.

School response:

The Taos Academy's Board of Finance has never been suspended.

Taos Academy Charter School and Taos Academy Foundation had no significant deficiency, material weakness or repeated findings during the current charter term.

Taos Academy External Audit Findings

Year	Total Findings	Significant Deficiency	Material Weakness	Repeated Finding
FY19	3	0	0	0
FY20	0	0	0	0
FY21	0	0	0	0
FY22	1	0	0	0

Taos Academy Foundation External Audit Findings

Year	Total Findings	Significant Deficiency	Material Weakness	Repeated Finding
FY19	0	0	0	0
FY20	0	0	0	0
FY21	0	0	0	0
FY22	1	0	0	0

2.c. Governance Responsibilities

Describe how the school has met governance responsibilities during the term of the contract (Performance Framework Indicators 3.a.). Specifically, identify any time when membership on the governing body fell below the requirements in their by-laws or the statutory minimum of five members. Identify the amount of time any vacancies were open and identify any board members who did not complete required training hours in any year of the contract term. For any governance requirements the school was unable to meet, provide a narrative describing the improvement actions the school implemented to move toward full compliance. The purpose of the narrative is to demonstrate substantial progress toward meeting all governance requirements. The implementation of such actions must be verifiable through evidence during the renewal site visit.

School response:

Taos Academy met the governance responsibilities during the term of the contract:

At no time did the membership of the Taos Academy Governing Council fall below the requirements of its by-laws or the statutory minimum of 5 members. At no time during the current charter term were vacancies open on the Taos Academy Governing Council.

All members of the Governing Council completed all training-hour requirements in every year of the contract term with the exception of one member due to serious illness that included hospitalization in 2021-22.

2.d. Equity and Identity

How is the school protecting the rights of all students (Performance Framework Indicator 4.a.)? How is the school complying with the Martinez-Yazzie mandate to provide culturally and linguistically relevant instruction and to support and validate students' cultures, identities, and sense of belonging? How is the school complying with the requirements of the Indian Education Act (NMSA § 22-23A), the Hispanic Education Act (NMSA § 22-23B), and the Black Education Act (NMSA § 22-23C)? What role does the school's equity council play in protecting the rights of all students?

School response:

Performance Indicator 4.a.

Taos Academy met all requirements outlined in Performance Framework Indicator 4.a., demonstrating protection of the rights of all students throughout the term of the charter contract. The school has developed clear policies and practices that provide guidance in protecting student rights. A consistent rating of "Meets Standards" is reflected in the Charter Schools Division Annual Reports for this indicator, with the exception of the 2020-21 Annual Report for which schools provided "Assurances" that the indicator was fully met. In brief, the school has received no valid complaints regarding the Taos Academy lottery, admission, and enrollment practices, school discipline hearings and practices, students' privacy, civil rights and constitutional rights, compliance

with the requirements of the McKinney Vento Act and the foster care system, or its board-approved complaint policy and dispute resolution process.²

Equity Council

Taos Academy is in compliance with the requirements of the Indian Education Act (NMSA § 22-23A), the Hispanic Education Act (NMSA § 22-23B), and the Black Education Act NMSA § 22-23C) as guided by its Equity Council.

The Taos Academy Equity Council has been developed through its Parent Advisory Council and will continue to be part of the school's efforts to reach out to the community to set guidance in the areas of most interest to parents as well as developing an equity plan. Goals include bridging the gap for servicing subgroups and addressing the needs for equity in educational opportunities. Cultural responsiveness, developing a positive school culture and protecting the rights of all students are all part of the process for this group.

Equity Council activities over the term of the charter contract have included:

- An equity presentation by guest speaker Miguel Santistevan addressing the role of local indigenous culture and local history in addressing the needs of students;
- An assessment of the support and offerings that are available for the economically disadvantaged subgroup;
- Re-evaluation of the original needs assessment to update and include any additional areas of focus;
- A focus on Social Emotional Learning and mental health;
- Continuing outreach to families and the community for membership on the Equity Council and attendance;
- Plans to teach learning strategies to families;
- Discussion of “Equity and Voice – How do you gauge success for your student?”
- Presentation of recent expanded learning opportunities at Taos Academy;
- An open discussion regarding The Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Framework Inventory;
- Staff awareness trainings to identify any possible personal bias in the classroom; and,
- School-wide restorative practices training addressing equity (includes Governing Council).

2.e. Tribal Consultation

Pursuant to the Indian Education Act, NMSA 22-23A-1 et. seq, and Subsections C and D of the Charter School Act, NMSA 22-8B-12.2, if the school is located on tribal land or serves a high percentage of Native American students, describe how the school complied with the requirements of ongoing consultations with tribal authorities.

² For full and complete Indicator 4.a. criteria statements, see page 26 at <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/PEC-Charter-and-Performance-Review-and-Accountability-System-1.pdf>

School response:

Although Taos Academy is not located on tribal land and does not serve a high percentage of Native American students, the school does have regular communications with the Tribal Governor's Office. The Governor's Office responds to any questions the school may have and the school is informed when tribal activities will involve Taos Academy students. Students are then excused for those activities.

2.f. Other Performance Framework Indicators

For any Performance Framework indicator for which a school received a "Does Not Meet Standard" or a repeated "Working to Meet Standard" rating over the term of the contract, the school should provide a narrative to address improvement actions it has made to correct those findings. The purpose of the narrative is to demonstrate substantial progress toward meeting organizational performance expectations. Implementation of the described improvement actions should be verifiable through evidence at the renewal site visit.

If the school has received any Office of Civil Rights (OCR) complaints, formal special education complaints or NM Attorney General complaints, the school must identify those, provide all communications (redacted to protect PII) related to those complaints in **Appendix B-1 Complaint Communications**, and describe the current status of the complaint process. If any of those complaints have been resolved and resulted in a finding that the school violated any law, the school must provide a narrative describing the required compensatory and corrective actions required and their status in implementing those actions. The implementation of such actions must be verifiable through evidence during the renewal site visit.

School response:

Taos Academy did not receive any "Does Not Meet Standard" or any repeated "Working to Meet Standard" ratings over the term of the contract.

One formal special education complaint was received during the term of the contract. All communications related to the complaint are provided in Appendix B-1 Complaint Communications.