



**STATE OF NEW MEXICO
PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
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ALAN BRAUER, CHAIR
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**2024 NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUBMIT
CHARTER APPLICATION**

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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 9, 2024**.

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

Sangre de Cristo Public Waldorf School

- School district where proposed school will be located

Santa Fe School District

- Grade levels to be offered and enrollment projections

Grade Levels to be offered	Projected Total Enrollment
Transitional Kindergarten (2 years of kindergarten) to 12 th Grade	275

- Primary Point of Contact

Name	Jayita Sahni		
Mailing Address	26 Puesta del Sol		
City	Santa Fe	State	NM
Phone	505-231-1333		
Email	jsahni@santafewaldorf.org		

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

Name	Role on Team	Qualifications: Education, Employment, and Experience
Jayita Sahni	Founder	Education: Master’s in Architecture, UNM, 2003; Bachelor’s in Architecture, University of Mumbai, 1999 Employment: Project Advisor, Facilities Management Division, GSD, State of New Mexico Experience: Project Manager, Programming Specialist, Architectural Consultant, Designer, with over 20 years of experience in architectural design, planning and project management. Jayita has been involved in the design and project management of numerous complex projects with multi million dollar budgets and intricate schedules, including K-12 schools and campuses. A long time Waldorf parent and member of the Santa Fe Waldorf community, Jayita currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the Santa Fe Waldorf School which closed operations on 8/4/23. She is committed to establishing a diverse and equitable Waldorf public education model in Santa Fe.
Daniel Wendland	Founder	Education: B.S. Kinesiology, Humboldt State University 2001; California Teacher Credential 2002; Level 1 Spacial Dynamics 2011; Level 1 New Mexico Coaching License; CPR/First Aid Certified Employment: Santa Fe Waldorf School, SF, NM— Movement Teacher, Athletic Director, District 7A Chair, Aug 2004 - July 2023; Al Akhawayn School of Ifrane, Ifrane, Morocco—P.E./A.D. August 2002 - June 2004 Eureka High School, Eureka, CA—Student Teacher P.E dept. Sept 2001 - July 2002 Experience: Daniel has served as the Movement Teacher and Athletic Director of the Santa Fe Waldorf School for 19 years. He has taught Movement to grades 4th - 12th and gardening to grades 3rd - 12th. He started the after school athletic program at the Santa Fe Waldorf School in 2004, coaching multiple girls and boys team sports for many years. Under his steady leadership, the Varsity Girls Volleyball team and the Varsity Boys Basketball team reached the District Championships and the State Championships in multiple years. A long time Waldorf educator, parent and member of the Santa Fe Waldorf community, Daniel exhibits a strong sense of leadership, motivation and is dedicated to continuing Waldorf education in Santa Fe under a public education model.
Matthew Burritt	Founder	Education: B.A. in Liberal Arts, St. John’s College Santa Fe, 2001; Waldorf High School Teacher Certification in Mathematics & Physical Sciences 2008; CPR/First Aid Certified. Employment: Santa Fe Waldorf School, SF, NM - High School Math & Physics Teacher, Wilderness Program Coordinator, Registrar, College Guidance Counselor - Aug 2005 - Aug 2023; Peace Corps Guinea, West Africa - Environmental Education Volunteer - Oct 2002 - Nov 2004 Experience: Matthew has taught high school math, physics, and art classes at the Santa Fe Waldorf School for 18 years. He was a long-term member of several leadership circles in the school, as well as serving as the HS wilderness program coordinator. Matthew also served as HS registrar and as a college guidance counselor for several years.
Briana Bassler	Founder	Education: B.S. Political Science & Journalism, Univ. of Houston, 2004; Juris Doctorate, Univ. of Houston 2007 Employment: Attorney and Founder of Bassler Law Firm, LLC, a business law firm in Santa Fe NM serving TX and NM Experience: Briana has practiced law for 16+ years at some of the nation’s most elite law firms. While her background is in complex commercial litigation for large corporate clients, her current practice focuses on transactional work for entrepreneurs in varied industries from food and beverage, to cryptocurrency, to sound design, to tech. She is interested in emerging hybrid business models for entrepreneurs aspiring to serve the public good while operating financially successful businesses. Briana has been part of the Santa Fe Waldorf School community since 2019. She has studied diversity and cares deeply about more accessible and diverse alternative education options. Briana also served as the volunteer assistant track and field coach at the SFWS for three seasons.

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

The Sangre de Cristo Public Waldorf School is a proposed transitional kindergarten through 12th grade non-sectarian, college

preparatory school, that will provide a pedagogy based on the educational principles of Rudolf Steiner. Waldorf education has a pedagogical philosophy that emphasizes whole life learning while nurturing a student's physical, social, emotional, intellectual, creative, and spiritual capacities. The educational philosophy is based on the following principles:

1. Anthroposophical understanding of child development guides the educational program.
2. Waldorf schools support freedom in teaching within the context of the school's shared agreements.
3. Waldorf schools foster social renewal by cultivating human capacities in service to the individual and society.
4. The conscious development of human relationships fosters individual and community health.
5. Collaboration and shared responsibility provide the foundations of the curriculum and how the needs of individual students are met.

The Santa Fe Waldorf School has successfully followed this same pedagogical model for 39 years with a 94% college matriculation rate. The goal of this education journey is to allow each person to learn through their hands, their hearts, and their minds to become morally strong, capable, and self-directed individuals.

4. Does the school expect to contract with another entity for either management, or substantial oversight or direction in the school's operation? Yes 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 No **Two members on the applicant team, Jayita Sahni and Briana Bassler, currently serve as trustees on the Santa Fe Waldorf School Board. The Santa Fe Waldorf School ceased operations on August 4, 2023.**

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

The mission of the Sangre de Cristo Public Waldorf School is to cultivate the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, creative and spiritual capacities of the developing individual through an age appropriate early childhood through twelfth grade curriculum based on the pedagogical principles of Rudolf Steiner. We educate the whole child in a balanced and healthy way. Our students engage in rigorous academics and gain a fundamental connection to the natural world and their community, an appreciation of themselves and others, and the ability for moral discernment. Waldorf graduates become thoughtful, fulfilled citizens who think imaginatively, communicate effectively, relate compassionately, and initiate healthy change in the world.

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

As the only Waldorf school in Northern New Mexico, we expect to draw students from all five zip codes in Santa Fe County as well as from surrounding communities in Northern New Mexico, rural communities, and pueblo members. Additionally, Waldorf education is an attractive option for homeschool communities looking to step into a more formal educational experience. From past years of data gathered by the Santa Fe Waldorf School, we have also found that families move to Santa Fe for the express purpose of sending their children to a K-12 Waldorf School. We are actively designing a lottery based fair enrollment process that allows the Sangre De Cristo Public Waldorf School to recruit a diverse range of students while maintaining adherence to our pedagogical philosophy.

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

Many different types of families choose a Waldorf education for their children. All children respond positively to a pedagogy that meets each individual child as a whole human being and connects them with the restorative powers of nature on a daily basis, this is especially true for neuro-diverse children. Students thrive under a balanced, evidence based, developmentally appropriate academic curriculum that honors physical movement and the performing and fine arts by interweaving them throughout academic lessons into every school day, while cultivating skills for creative thinking and problem solving in a low-stress and nurturing learning environment. From past years of data gathered by the Santa Fe Waldorf School, **a significant percentage of the student population served across every grade level was neuro-diverse and/or needing therapeutic supports for a variety of wide ranging issues, including sensory processing disorders, ADHD, dyslexia, dysgraphia, SLD, autism spectrum disorder, gender dysmorphia and Down's Syndrome.**

We expect to serve students from all ranges of the economic spectrum including a significant portion of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Admissions data from the Santa Fe Waldorf School from the last 5 years shows that 30%-50% of the school population received a substantial amount of financial aid. Up to 45% of the Santa Fe Waldorf School's tuition earnings in any given school year were waived in the form of financial aid. Through our ongoing listening campaign we have also spoken with multiple families not enrolled in the former Santa Fe Waldorf School who would be interested in a holistic Waldorf education with the barrier of tuition removed. The data gathered from the Santa Fe Waldorf School along with our ongoing listening campaign underscores a strong need and desire for Waldorf education across the economic spectrum. **By turning to a charter school model we expect to increase access to a Waldorf education to all interested families regardless of their financial circumstances.**

While not a religious curriculum, the Waldorf pedagogy's acknowledgement of a spiritual component to human existence is a draw for families from many different faith traditions and spiritual paths.

Through our enhanced open lottery system for enrollment, that will be fleshed out in our application, we expect to welcome a diverse range of students from all backgrounds, religions, ethnicities, and socio-economic levels.

- 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

The closure of the Santa Fe Waldorf School forced many of its students to move to other public and private schools across Santa Fe County. We have learned through our ongoing listening campaign that the desire for Waldorf education remains strong in our community and we expect many of these former students and families to enroll in the lottery for the Sangre de Cristo Public Waldorf School. In addition, as demonstrated by the number of families receiving substantial financial aid at the Santa Fe Waldorf School, there are many Santa Fe families who desire a Waldorf education but are limited due to financial reasons. We have also learned through our listening campaign that families in the larger Santa Fe community are interested in a K-12 public education offering that focuses on a more holistic approach to education, one that integrates outdoor education, movement and the arts into academics, prioritizing creative expression as learning, and ministering to social-emotional needs in a nurturing environment. The pivot to a free Waldorf education model removes the cost barrier for many of these families.

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)

Data from the records of the Santa Fe Waldorf School show strong enrollment numbers from 1983 through the 2022-23 school year. Right before the start of the 2023-24 school year, enrollment stood at 138 students. The highest enrollment was in the 2006-07 school year at 275. During the last 10 years 30%-50% of the student population received substantial tuition assistance. Tuition has always been a significant barrier for many Santa Fe families. In recent years, while no family was turned away by the generous financial assistance program, it was still a significant hurdle for many families, particularly those with multiple children. **Enrollment and financial assistance data from the Santa Fe Waldorf School demonstrates that a free tuition model is the only model that removes the financial barriers for the largest number of local families.** The Santa Fe Waldorf School Board is actively engaged in a listening campaign with members of the former Santa Fe Waldorf School community as well as the larger Santa Fe community. 80+ one-on-one conversations and small group workshops demonstrate that there is a strong support for a Waldorf Charter School in the Santa Fe community. We have also engaged in preliminary conversations with the SFPS Board of Education and SFPS Superintendent Hilario Chavez. These conversations indicate that there is interest and support for a Waldorf Charter School within SFPS leadership as well.

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

Centering human-to-human relationships

Waldorf pedagogy centers human-to-human relationships in all aspects of school life. Student-teacher and teacher-parent relationships are fostered through a 5 to 8 year looping journey through grades 1-8. Each class becomes a family on an educational journey together with the class teacher as their captain. The active participation of the parent community in the cultural and festival life (described later in this section) of the school creates a close-knit community of families and faculty. In its 39 years of operation, the Santa Fe Waldorf School cultivated deep and meaningful relationships with many families. Several alumni students and parents have remained actively engaged with the school during its operation, serving on the board, volunteering, teaching and returning in the form of parents and grandparents.

Teacher-led learning

The cornerstone of the human-to-human relationships in a Waldorf school is the student-class teacher relationship. All lessons are led and delivered by the teacher, who instructs and steers their class through multiple disciplines and modalities throughout the lesson. Waldorf grade school class teachers take their students on a multi-year journey through looping. This journey can last anywhere between 3-8 years depending on the specific teacher and class. The longevity of the relationship allows for the growth of both student and teacher and allows the teacher to deeply know every student, nurture their growth as human beings and foster a true partnership with their families to create better educational and life outcomes for all their students. The high school is based on a 100% team teaching model for all the core and track classes. Each freshman class is assigned 1-2 "Class Sponsors", who are teachers that guide the individuals and the cohort group on their high school journey. The Class Sponsors accompany the class on each of their wilderness trips, facilitate class bonding and deliver the graduating address to the senior class.

Story-based learning

Concepts in all core subjects are introduced to students through a narrative structure. Core subjects are taught in Main Lesson - a multi-discipline 2 hour block of time that is led by the class teacher. Alternating Math and Language Arts main lesson blocks are supplemented with art skills, movement and music through Extra Main Lessons throughout the week. Storytelling anchors the learning concepts, providing the structure to learn mathematical concepts, scientific concepts, grammar, comprehension, vocabulary and moral

lessons. The stories gain complexity as the students journey through the grades, from the magical realism of fairy tales in 1st grade, fables in 2nd grade, creation stories in 3rd grade, Norse mythology in 4th grade, ancient history and myths in 5th grade, the history of the middle ages in 6th grade to more modern history in the 7th and 8th grade. These stories are revisited in the high school years in a more critical and analytical manner.

Relationship to nature

A unique aspect of Waldorf education is the deep reverence for the natural environment and the emphasis placed on fostering a connection with nature in every human being that comes into the school community - teacher, student or parent/guardian. This connection to nature begins in early childhood through the forest kindergarten program and progresses steadily through the grades until it culminates in the Senior Solo (described later in this section) in high school. The reverence for nature is evidenced by the former Santa Fe Waldorf School campus, which will be the home for the Sangre De Cristo Public Waldorf School. The campus is unlike any other school campus in Santa Fe. It is situated on 8 acres of carefully preserved natural wilderness. In Waldorf education, there is an expectation to be outdoors and moving for some portion of the day, every single day, weather notwithstanding. A oft quoted proverb is "There is no bad weather, only bad clothing". Students and families are educated on anticipating, preparing for and dressing for various weather and environmental conditions through daily practice and the Wilderness Program, described later in this section.

Balanced education

Waldorf education folds the fine arts, performing arts, practical arts (woodworking and handwork), music and movement (PE) within the core curriculum. These are not "special subjects". They are a foundational part of the developmentally appropriate curriculum for each grade. Art and movement permeate the day. Students create their own main lesson books for all subjects. These books include carefully handwritten notes, illustrations, calligraphy, detailed executions and interpretive renderings. Movement facilitates learning. Academic classes start and are punctuated with stretches and warm-up exercises; math and literacy concepts are taught with ball tossing and jump rope work to integrate rote concepts more deeply into the student's whole system. Students attend Movement Education classes twice a week and learn games, exercises and sports that inform and are informed by other curricular lessons. Eg.1: In 5th grade students study ancient history and mythology of various cultures, including Greek and Roman history. They perform a play based on an ancient myth as their class project. They learn the five sports of the pentathlon in movement (PE) and compete in an inter-school pentathlon as a culmination of their year-long studies of the Greek sports. Eg.2: In the 7th and 8th grades students study modern history and read the works of Chaucer - The Canterbury Tales. By now they have also received 2 years of instruction in woodworking and 6+ years in handwork. Students begin hand carving their wooden marionettes in 7th grade in woodworking. They study and sew period appropriate costumes for their marionettes in 8th grade and the 7th and 8th grade classes together put on a marionette play based on one of Chaucer's tales as their joint class project. Each year, the 7th grade begins this journey as apprentices to the 8th graders and complete their journey the following year as 8th graders while mentoring a new 7th grade.

Community building through festival life

Daily, weekly and seasonal rhythms anchor the school year in a fulfilling and comforting cycle. An essential part of the seasonal rhythms are the seasonal festivals celebrated through community participation on the school campus. Michaelmas, All Hallows Eve, Lantern Walk, the Advent Spiral, the Holiday Faire and May Faire are school-wide festivals celebrated by the entire school community. These festivals are celebrated in a non-sectarian, non-religious manner, emphasizing their connection to seasonal rhythms. Of these, the Holiday Faire is open to the larger Santa Fe Community as well. Parents and guardians are strongly encouraged to volunteer and participate in the organization, set up and celebration of these festivals. Festivals bring families to the campus to gather as one, get to know each other and the faculty, thus building a strong community. Volunteering and participating in festival life creates a sense of ownership within the community and fosters the feeling of partnership in the educational journey. The Santa Fe Waldorf School has a decades long track record of successfully celebrating these festivals on campus. We bring our expertise and experience to ensure that the festival life of the Sangre de Cristo Public Waldorf School is vibrant and full of vitality.

Wilderness Program

The Sangre de Cristo Public Waldorf School considers nature, experiential learning, and wilderness expeditions as essential components of the curriculum. The Wilderness journey begins in early childhood through daily explorations in the early childhood pedagogical garden and the Forest Kindergarten program which is based in the natural wilderness on campus. Starting in 1st grade, each grade goes on at least one class camping trip annually that increases in duration and ruggedness with each passing year. 1st graders typically camp overnight on campus along with a parent/guardian for one night. 2nd graders camp off campus with their parent/guardian for 1-2 nights. 3rd graders independently go on a farm trip as well as a camping trip for 2-3 days. 4th graders study Norse mythology, which is heavily influenced by the cosmos, and camp independently at Chaco Canyon for 3-4 days. Starting in 5th grade, camping trips are 4-6 days in duration and informed by particular aspects of the curriculum. The 8th grade camping trip is a week-long class trip that is the culmination of the wilderness journey through the grades. In high school, the wilderness program increases in intensity in sync with the academic program. Each year in high school there are two week-long outings for each grade. Trips range from river rafting and backpacking to organic farming (9th grade) and ecology week (10th grade). The fall wilderness retreat for the seniors concludes with a twenty-four-hour contemplative solo in the woods of northern New Mexico. These experiences build a student's sense of self reliance and will forces, help to ground students and balance hectic, technology-filled lives

10. Describe how the school will be more effective in terms of academic achievement than the schools currently serving the targeted student population. Provide any data you have to support this assumption.

Developmentally appropriate lessons allow for effective and efficient learning

A Waldorf education balances and interweaves academics, arts, and athletics unfolding the individual's growing intellect, creativity, and physical capacities in a developmentally appropriate way. Meaningful content at the appropriate time is a hallmark of Rudolf Steiner's

insight into education, for nurturing human beings with critical-thinking capacity and moral judgment. There are over 60 public Waldorf charter schools in the USA providing a proven track record of the effectiveness of Waldorf pedagogy to engage, nurture and educate individuals. The skills and lessons learned in a Waldorf school foster a lifelong love of learning, curiosity and appreciation for the world and carry into adulthood. A Waldorf education lays a strong foundation for high levels of success in higher education, private sector careers, and public service

Higher than average college acceptance rates

As a case study we present college acceptance rates of the former Santa Fe Waldorf School. 94% of Santa Fe Waldorf High School graduates have enrolled in college or university immediately after graduation or after a gap year.

College Matriculations for Santa Fe Waldorf High School Students 2005-2018

Acadia University, Nova Scotia	Eastern NM University, Portales	Lewis and Clark College, OR	Smith College, MA
Am. Acad. Dramatic Arts, CA	Eckerd College, FL	Liverpool Inst. of Performing Arts, GB	St. John's College, MD&NM
Antioch College, OH	Elon University, NC	McNally Smith Coll. of Music, MN	Stanford University, CA
Austin College, TX	Emory University, GA	Middlebury College, VT	Syracuse University, NY
Babson College, MA	Emory & Henry College, VA	New York University/Tisch	Univ. of CO, Boulder
Bard College, NY	Eugene Lang College, NY	Ohio Wesleyan University	Univ. of Denver, CO
Beloit College, WI	Evergreen State University, OR	Pratt Institute, NY	Univ. of Massachusetts
Berklee College of Music, MA	Fashion Inst. of Technology, NY	Prescott College, AZ	Univ. of Miami, FL
Boston University, MA	Florida Gulf Coast University	Rensselaer Polytechnic, NY	Univ. of New Mexico
Bucknell University, PA	Fort Lewis College, CO	Rhode Island School of Design	Univ. of Oregon
California College of the Arts	Green Mountain College, VT	Ringling College of Art & Design, FL	Univ. of Redlands
Chapman University, CA	Grinnell College, IA	Rochester Ins. Tech., NY	Univ. of WI, Madison
Clark University, MA	Hampshire College, MA	Rollins College, FL	Virginia Intermont College
College of Santa Fe, NM	Hanover College, IN	Santa Fe Comm. Coll., NM	Wesleyan Univ., CT
Colorado College	Hendrix College, AR	Sarah Lawrence College, NY	Western State Colorado Univ.
Connecticut College	Johnston College, CA	Savannah College Art Design, GA	Wheaton College, MA
Cornell College, IA	Lawrence University, WI	Seattle University, WA	Whitman College, WA
Earlham College, IN	Lesley University, MA	Sewanee: Univ. of South, TN	Willamette Univ., OR

Merit Scholarships and Awards

2006 Gates Millennium Scholarship Winner	2011 National Merit Finalist
2007 Two National Merit Finalists	2017 Daniels Fund Scholarship Winner
2009 National Merit Finalist	2019 Daniels Fund Scholarship Winner

Low stress and nurturing environment allows students to thrive

Students are held to a rigorous academic standard in a structured yet nurturing environment. The comforting rhythms of the school day, week and the seasons allow students to relax and immerse themselves in their learning environment. Waldorf schools strive to keep the learning environment positive, encouraging and filled with beauty to allow every student to engage with every aspect of their education. A multi-faceted curriculum that integrates academics, performing arts, fine arts, practical arts, music and athletics allows every student to find an avenue to shine and thus fall in love with learning.

Restorative connection to nature

Numerous studies have pointed out the unique way in which a connection to nature is calming and restorative to the human being. Sensitively designed and orderly classrooms help minimize distractions and sensory overload. Ample daylight in the classrooms and daily outdoor time balances the individual's circadian rhythms minimizing disruptions to sleep cycles. The wilderness program engages each student with nature and the environment in a safe, appropriate and intimate way inculcating a desire to take care of our collective home, Earth. Threshold experiences in nature on a seasonal cycle through class trips and the Wilderness Program provide the space for self growth as well as building cohesion among the peer group. These threshold experiences are unique opportunities for social-emotional life lessons that carry well beyond school days into adulthood.

A rich seasonal festival life builds community and fosters a sense of belonging in students and families.

The best educational and life outcomes for each student can only be reached through a true partnership between educators and caregivers, teachers and parents/guardians. It takes a village, and the rich seasonal festival life of a Waldorf school builds that village. Each student feels seen, and each family is welcomed into this multi-year journey of building relationships. Many of these relationships last well beyond graduation, strengthening communities and the people within them.

Signature of founder(s):



Jayita Sahni
1/9/2024
Date



Daniel Wendland
1/9/2024
Date



Matthew Burrit
1/9/2024
Date



Briana Bassler
1/9/2024
Date