



STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
300 DON GASPAR  
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501-2786  
Telephone (505) 827-5800  
[www.ped.state.nm.us](http://www.ped.state.nm.us)

MARIANA D. PADILLA  
SECRETARY DESIGNATE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM  
GOVERNOR

**Charter Schools Division  
Renewal Analysis and Recommendation  
November 1, 2024**

**School Name:** Monte del Sol Charter School

**School Address:** 4157 Walking Rain Road Santa Fe, NM 87507

**Head Administrator:** Dr. Zoe Nelsen

**Governing Board Chair:** Peter Mitchell

**Contract Term:** 2020–2025

**Statutory Renewal Requirements**

According to New Mexico Statutes Annotated (NMSA) 1979, Section 22-8B-12 K., a charter may be suspended, revoked, or not renewed by the chartering authority if the chartering authority determines that the charter school:

- (1) committed a material violation of any of the conditions, standards or procedures set forth in the charter contract;
- (2) failed to meet or make substantial progress toward achievement of the department's standards of excellence or student performance standards identified in the charter contract;
- (3) failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management;
- (4) for a charter school located on tribal land, failed to comply with ongoing consultations pursuant to the Indian Education Act; or
- (5) violated any provision of law from which the charter school was not specifically exempted.

## Preliminary Renewal Recommendation

The Charter Schools Division (CSD) recommends Monte del Sol be renewed with a charter term of five years with the following condition:

Due to repeated audit findings and sub-par financial ratings on the performance framework over the charter term, Monte del Sol “failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.” Therefore, school leadership and the governing board will provide a financial report and finance committee minutes to CSD quarterly, beginning in July 2025 (with final quarter FY24 information). The school leadership and governing board will improve financial systems and will continue to show consistent improvement on financial indicators and audit results over the next charter term.

### Part B: Progress Report

The school’s narratives in Part B are rated **Meets the Standards, Demonstrates Substantial Progress**, or **Failing to Demonstrate Progress** according to the rubric on pages 6-7 of the 2024 Charter School Renewal Application.

Part B: Progress Report	
Academic Performance	Rating
1.a. Student Outcomes	Demonstrates Substantial Progress*
1.b. Mission-Specific Goals	Meets the Standards
Organizational Performance	Rating
2.a. Educational Program	Meets the Standards
2.b. Financial Compliance	Failing to Demonstrate Progress
2.c. Governance Responsibilities	Demonstrates Substantial Progress
2.d. Equity and Identity	Meets the Standards
2.e. Tribal Consultation	N/A
2.f. Other Performance Framework Indicators	Demonstrates Substantial Progress

*\* Results from 2023-24 Vistas data, scheduled to be released in November 2024, could change this rating in the final recommendation.*

#### 1.a. Student Outcomes

Monte del Sol has a traditional designation on the NMVISTAS. The math proficiency is 15% less than the district and state average, reading proficiency is 42% and science is 26%. They use NWEA Map for interim assessments, SAT for eleventh grade and they use Assessment of Science Readiness (ASR) to test their eighth and eleventh grade students. Monte del Sol has struggled with their math proficiencies and they have taken adult actions to increase math scores throughout the years. School leadership reflected on the professional development that they do

in order to review data which is taken from multiple sources which then drives strategic interventions for students.

MDS used NWEA MAPS for the first couple of years of its charter term, they assess students three times a year and they also used formative assessments which were used by teachers to drive instruction. School leadership and teachers saw consistent growth in interim assessment results. School leadership also created a more cohesive teacher group especially for the eighth grade group. For next year, their goal is to have one teacher teach the same subject (math). They are looking forward as the school has taken a dip in Math- they've taken immediate actions to try and remedy this issue. For the 2023-24 school year the school added the MSSA assessment as well. They've seen growth in their data but are still taking actions to increase proficiencies all across. The school works with some of the most vulnerable students, so data is skewed. They have created small cohorts of students to provide interventions to those students who are struggling, so they can adapt to challenges and be engaged (6 students have improved in grades, attendance and two other students' math scores increased by the support that MDS has provided them.

The school is organized into departments: STEM, Humanities, Art & World Languages and is divided into two cohorts-lower (7-9 grade) and Upper (10-12). The departments set annual instructional goals and professional development for each cohort and schoolwide. During professional development the school develops SMART Goals which help them throughout the school year. MDS also implements Multi-layered System of Supports (MLSS) to all of their students. For the 2024-25 school year, the school has restructured the math department, so they can focus on math as a stand alone instead of keeping it housed under the STEM department. The math curriculum has also been revamped and the school has committed to hiring highly qualified math teachers.

### **1.b. Mission-specific Goals**

For two of the four years of the contract term, Monte exceeded its mission-specific goal and for one year they met their goal. 60-74% of Monte del Sol students in grades 7-8, enrolled on both the 40th and 120th day, successfully completed their mission portfolio with a passing grade, based on the portfolio rubric, and 75-84% of Monte del Sol students in grades 9-12, enrolled on both the 40th and 120th day, successfully completed a mission portfolio, formal presentation, and reflection with a passing grade, based on the portfolio rubric, with at least 10% of students achieving a 'Pass with Distinction'.

### **2.a. Educational Program**

Monte del Sol has a small school setting, they serve grades seven thru twelfth grade (7-12) with a traditional program. Their advisory class is called a POD (Producing Outstanding Dragons) which has 12-15 students and they meet 3-4 days a week to monitor academic goals and support students. Language offerings have increased in middle school and the school has committed to have a dual credit program- computer science, culinary, Arts, English and History. Last school year, they did a lot of work on graduate profiles- the Portfolio was done thru their

POD teachers. Students' portfolios reflect all four pillars of the school, which are: sustainability, arts integration, global literacy and community.

In the 2023-24 school year the school returned to the 90-minute block schedule to support learning for a longer period of time. Monte also has a thriving Outdoor Experiential education, global literacy, Art + Photography, Mentorship, dual credit pathway courses which all students take advantage of and really enjoy. Students are really happy with Monte-they love the opportunities that they get especially with the mentorship program because they can see what options are there for them after high school.

## **2.b. Financial Compliance**

The school has had multiple ratings of Does Not Meet Standard on financial performance framework indicators across the charter term, and has had both repeat and material weakness findings in every year of the term. The school has a new business manager in the 2024-25 school year and the site visit team saw indications of improving processes during the renewal visit, but the data to confirm that these processes are working will not be available until the next audit.

## **2.c. Governance Responsibilities**

Monte del Sol has maintained the requirements of a five (5) member board throughout its contract term. The school has struggled in submitting amendments/notifications in a timely manner especially in the last three years of its contract. Immediate adult actions have taken place to correct this issue.

## **2.d. Equity and Identity**

Monte has an equity council. School is a designated CEP school (5yr designation) 67% of the student population falls under free, reduced lunch (FRL). The school has a full-inclusion model. They are also dedicated to complying with IEA, HEA, and BEA. Monte has grade level and schoolwide gatherings which occur every week. For the last two years the school has had a heavy focus on restorative justice- some staff and students have been trained on Tier III restorative justice circles. The school's social emotional learning curriculum is based off of the book Love and Logic and all staff have read it. Staff incorporates this in their daily class routines. Monte also hosts various Spanish speaking family nights throughout the year and this school year it has been more robust than in previous years. This year the language department is organizing a dia de los muertos event where students will do presentations to families and staff.

The equity council is run by the assistant head learner in collaboration with parents, students and teachers. In the 2023-24 school year a survey was sent out to all students, staff and families to try and figure out what issues were affecting them (the survey was tailored to each group). Relationships had to be rebuilt and ELL support was one area that was requested to have additional support and that is an action that is being done this school year. For two years the school had a robust training on BEA, they had the organization called A long Talk provide training to all staff and that team did a full training with all staff and students. The school has also worked with Dr. Hollie and everyone has done training on Culturally, Linguistically,

Responsive (CLR) teaching and learning. The school makes sure that the learning environment is positively supporting and teaching students so they can see themselves in the curriculum. Monte has also done a handful of trainings that are geared around the LGBTQ+ community. Parents are comfortable coming into the school and speaking with school leadership and teachers.

**2.e. Tribal Consultation**

The school does not fall under the Indian Education Act (NMSA 22-23A) or the 6.35.2 NMAC definition of a “historically defined Indian-impacted” school.

**2.f. Other Performance Indicators**

Monte del Sol had several repeat findings throughout their contract term. Significant actions have been taken by adults to address all repeat findings. The schools primary challenge has been in their finances and financial management. Adult actions are ongoing to develop strategies to improve this aspect and meet the necessary standards. Their repeat financial findings were addressed in the application and during the business manager meeting. Monte del Sol also received a technical assistance and focused monitoring review letter from the Language and Culture Division (LCD) regarding several findings of non-compliance identified during their spring visit. This letter resulted in a repeated "working to meet" rating for indicator 1.d. During the visit, the head learner and the renewal visit lead met with the Deputy Director of LCD to discuss the findings outlined in the letter and to seek technical assistance. The school learner acknowledged the issues raised and assured the deputy director that a written response with supporting documentation would be provided in the coming days following the visit. For the repeat findings on indicator 3.c.- reporting requirements the head learner stated that adult actions have taken place so amendments and notifications are no longer submitted late especially those that are related to any governing board changes. For indicator 4.c. staff credentialing: the school has begun to work with the licensure bureau. The bureau reported that several teachers lacked background checks on file and noted other discrepancies. Unfortunately, the school was unable to meet the 120-day deadline to address these flagged issues. Since May, however, the school has implemented a new background check policy to ensure that background checks are consistently conducted and to prevent errors during future reviews. This step aims to enhance compliance and ensure the safety of students.

Unrated Sections of Application	
Part D: Petitions of Support	Submitted as Required
Part E: Facilities	Submitted as Required
Part F: Change in Authorizer	N/A

## **Site Visit Attendees**

October 10, 2024

**CSD Team:** Lucy Valenzuela(lead), Dr. Brigette Russell and Kelli Renken

**CSD Remote:** Kenneth Norris, Betty Seeley and Martica Davis

**School Leadership:** Dr. Zoe Nelsen (Head Learner), Erika Penczer (Assistant Head Learner) and Michael Granado (Safety and Culture Support)

**Governing Board:** Peter Mitchell (President) and Ann Salzmann (Vice-President)