



**STATE OF NEW MEXICO
PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
300 DON GASPAR AVENUE
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501-2786
Telephone (505) 827-6909
www.ped.state.nm.us**

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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 on the due date.

NOIs 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 five pages.

Name of proposed school

Sundance Montessori School

School district where proposed school will be located

Santa Fe Public Schools

Grade levels to be offered and enrollment projections

Grade Levels to be offered	Projected Total Enrollment
Pre-K – 8th	400

Primary point of contact

Name	Angela Feathers				
Mailing Address	63 Avenida Colibri				
City	Santa Fe	State	NM	Zip code	87508
Phone	901-734-0945				
Email	sundanceschoolnm@gmail.com				

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
Angela M. Feathers	Founder	BS-SLP & Audiology, 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

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

Montessori

Does the school expect to contract with another entity for either management or substantial oversight in the school’s operation? Yes No

If YES, describe the entity and the role it will have in the school’s operational plan.

Does the applicant team or any members of the team currently operate any other schools? Yes No

Vision/Mission statement (2-3 sentences)

Sundance Montessori School will *follow the child* by providing an authentic, high fidelity Montessori education that fosters collaboration, cooperation, and peace; that encourages curiosity, exploration, and engagement. We will encourage the development of the whole child that champions the cause of all children. We believe that all children have the capacity and responsibility to develop themselves into complete, flourishing human beings. Our mission is to humbly guide and to empower them to realize that capacity.

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 surrounding areas. Currently, there are no public Montessori schools in the Santa Fe area. Currently, Santa Fe, parents and students only option for public. Montessori education is to attend a public Montessori school in Albuquerque – obviously not a realistic possibility for most families. On the other hand, enrollment in private Montessori schools can be prohibitively expensive cost in between \$15,000 and \$20,000. Families in Santa Fe and surrounding areas are looking for a viable option for affordable, authentic Montessori.

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.

Prospective Sundance Montessori School students are most likely currently being educated in the Santa Fe Public Schools, private Montessori schools, private alternative education schools and homeschools. Some students may be attending public schools in surrounding school districts and their families have indicated they will commute/relocate to be able to attend a Montessori school.

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).

Currently, New Mexico has only three public Montessori schools. There are no public Montessori Pre-K programs in the state. The applicant team has consulted with families in Santa Fe area, families from neighboring counties, and families who have or have had children enrolled in private Montessori schools. The consensus is overwhelming support for public Montessori in Santa Fe! With the support of the Montessori Network of New Mexico and MPPI (Montessori Public Policy Initiative), the team is working diligently to ensure that we bring a high fidelity, authentic Montessori program to families who may not be able to afford the rising costs of tuition.

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 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 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 or times.

Imagine a school where people and cooperation are not just utopian ideals, but critical skill sets that must be cultivated and honored.

Imagine a place where children are treasured collaborators in their own education.

This is Montessori education.

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 approach to education has successfully been in existence for over a century, in 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 uninterrupted work period, and respect for the child and the environment.

There are fundamental characteristics of the Montessori method that must be present in each learning environment. These are based on the Four Planes of Development. The curriculum is based on the sensitivities of each plane. Adults prepare the environment based on the characteristics of these planes. Montessori classrooms are multi-age, utilizing the three-year cycle (3-6, 6-9, 9-12, and 12-15 years of age.) Children work in three-hour uninterrupted work cycles. They are free to choose their work and receive personalized guidance. Classrooms have a full assortment of Montessori materials. The adult is trained at the appropriate level by a MACTE (Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education, the accrediting body for Montessori educator preparation) approved program.

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.

As New Mexico schools continue to underperform on 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! Now more than ever family struggle with the rising cost of preschool, daycare, and or a private education. They should not have to pay for quality education. They want and deserve options for their children.

Local traditional schools are failing. Santa Fe Public Schools reported an 18% proficiency rate in mathematics and a 30% proficiency rate in reading language arts. The state average for New Mexico is not much better: a 21% proficiency rating in mathematics and a 33% proficiency rating 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 and grow and thrive in a natural and joyful process of discovery. Traditional education all too often stifles or squashes the spark in the child. Conversely, Montessori schools entice children with fascinating materials, interesting and collaborative lessons, and respectful environments, which inspire children to explore and discover.

The Montessori method is an educational approach that has a long and proven history. It is, in fact, less a 'method' in the conventional sense than a goal, an aspiration to honor children's innate capacity to construct

themselves as complete human beings. We realize this aspiration, through enabling active rather than passive learning, guided by the principle that children learn best as active participants in their own education – motivated by the rewards, intrinsic to exploration and discovery, not by external inducement, and least of all by coercion.

Classrooms will be child-centered, rather than teacher-centered. Lessons will be individualized, given when the child is ready rather than pacing with the class. Children will be free 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 the adult will give children the 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.

Research and a variety of disciplines has indicated Dr. Montessori's pioneering work, finding that children enrolled in public Montessori schools, outperform their peers on several measures of academic competence and psychological well-being. They are more likely to enjoy school, and benefits to their executive functioning last well into adulthood.

Signature of primary point of contact

Date