

U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [X] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Cindy Montoya

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name New Mexico School for the Arts

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 275 East Alameda Street

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Santa Fe State NM Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 87501-2113

County Santa Fe County

Telephone (505) 310-4194 Fax (505) 820-3592

Web site/URL http://www.nmschoolforthearts.org E-mail Cmontoya@nmschoolforthearts.org

Twitter Handle	Facebook Page	Google+
<u>https://twitter.com/NMSchoolforArts</u>	<u>http://facebook.com/nmschoolfort</u>	_____
YouTube/URL	_____	Other Social Media Link
<u>http://youtube.com/user/NMSchoolfor</u>	_____	<u>http://vimeo.com/nmschoolfort</u>
<u>thearts</u>	Blog _____	<u>hearts</u>

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*Ms. Cindy Montoya E-mail cmontoya@nmschoolforthearts.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name New Mexico School for the Arts Tel. (505) 310-4194

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Ms. Sherry Thompson
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	18	42	60
10	8	49	57
11	23	26	49
12 or higher	17	28	45
Total Students	66	145	211

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 4 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 29 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 61 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 6%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	11
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	196
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.056
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
0 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

N/A

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 43 %
Total number students who qualify: 85

8. Students receiving special education services: 5 %
11 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- 1 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 2 Other Health Impaired
- 8 Specific Learning Disability
- 0 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	6
Classroom teachers	12
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	5
Paraprofessionals	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 18:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	95%	94%	94%	95%	0%
High school graduation rate	88%	86%	96%	96%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	43
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	67%
Enrolled in a community college	12%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	7%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	14%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

To provide access to a rigorous mastery arts and academic education leading to a high school diploma, postsecondary learning, and careers in the arts.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

NMSA students are selected through blind auditions in their specific artistic discipline (Music, Dance, Theater, or Visual Arts), with assessments broadly based on passion, promise, and aptitude in those disciplines. Each discipline has a set of baseline requirements that applicants are required to demonstrate in their auditions/portfolio reviews. Entrance to NMSA is based only on these auditions, regardless of geographic/home community in New Mexico, family income, or previous academic standing.

PART III – SUMMARY

New Mexico School for the Arts (NMSA) is a public charter high school in Santa Fe, located in the former St. Francis Elementary School. It opened in 2010 with 137 students and currently serves 211 students from 34 New Mexico communities in all three Congressional districts, of which 19 students are served by the school's Residential Program. It is the only public, arts-focused high school in New Mexico with a Residential Program that gives students from across the state access to NMSA's rich, highly motivated dual-track, rigorous academic and mastery arts education in Music, Dance, Theater, and Visual Arts. Mastery arts training at NMSA are not "arts enrichment" programs, but full pre-professional, skill-building arts curricula. NMSA students spend a normal school day in academic studies and at 2:00PM turn to their arts studies. NMSA is a Title I school, with 43% of students qualifying for no or low-cost meal programs. Students represent a cross-section of the ethnic and income diversity characteristic of the state, with slightly more than 50% coming from Santa Fe County due to proximity. The mastery arts training at NMSA provides a potent bond among students that contributes strongly to a sense of shared community and motivation to do well-NMSA students know they could never have accessed such training in their home communities at no cost.

NMSA since 2010 has garnered four consecutive A grades from the New Mexico Public Education Department; was designated an "Exemplary School" by the national Arts Schools Network in spring 2014; was granted full accreditation in spring 2015 by Advanc-ED; was ranked the tenth best high school in the state by US News & World Report in its annual national high school review, and, was also named by Newsweek Magazine in 2015 as one of the best high schools in the country for its success in closing the "achievement gap". NMSA's 44-student 2015 senior class received \$5.4 million in scholarships and financial assistance offers. NMSA graduates are being accepted at schools such as Oberlin, Middlebury, Smith, Penn State, Sarah Lawrence, New York University-Tisch School of the Arts, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Rhode Island School of Design. Within three years of opening, NMSA outgrew its first location and began searching for a site for a permanent campus; in September 2015, a subsidiary of its nonprofit partner, the NMSA-Art Institute, which raises the funding for the arts curricula, acquired the former Sanbusco Market Center on which to build a permanent NMSA home. When completed, the new campus will mark the school's transition to an integral part of the capital city's vibrant art and retail Railyard District.

Among the primary strategies used to create this success, perhaps the most striking is that high expectations are blended with awareness of the difficulties incoming students may have experienced in their public middle schools. Low expectations based upon years of discouraging statistics is one reason for those statistics. At NMSA, the school culture is one that assumes students are capable of fulfilling not only others' expectations, but setting and meeting expectations of themselves. NMSA students put in longer hours annually than the standard benchmark, on both the academic and artistic fronts, yet, while overwhelmingly drawn from New Mexico's challenged public school system, achieve ACT and PARCC scores well above the state average. NMSA supports its high expectations with interventions that provide freshmen with assistance in literacy and mathematics, and basic academic tools, e.g., how to organize study time, take class notes, study for tests, write papers, and do research. This support extends through all four years at NMSA, with seniors receiving targeted assistance in identifying and applying to postsecondary institutions (including applying for scholarship and financial assistance), as well as to higher-level arts training programs. A qualified and dedicated faculty and guidance professionals provide individual attention, and address issues such as body image, eating disorders, peer pressure, and health concerns such as diabetes.

As students take on the dual work of succeeding academically as well as artistically, they begin to see themselves as "succeeders". The experience of setting and meeting manageable goals leads to the setting of higher goals, and an inner structure of belief in self begins to be built that will serve NMSA students well beyond graduation.

Note on NMSA graduation rates: NMSA received notification from NMPED on its 2015 four-year graduation rate of 88.7% on Friday, April 15, 2016. It is worth mentioning that all the 44 students who started at NMSA in August 2014 as seniors, stayed at NMSA and graduated in May 2015. The decline in 4-

year graduation rate between 2012 and 2014 is caused by the fact that the first group of students who spent a full four high school years at NMSA were its 2014-2015 graduates. Prior to that year, graduation rates reflected fewer than four years of attending NMSA. Therefore, the graduation rates for 2012 and 2013 are statistically inflated, representing less than four-year cohorts. It is worth noting that between 2014 and 2015, NMSA's graduation rate actually increased, from 86.2% to 88.7%.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Reading/English Language Arts: based on Common Core State Standards, using a data-driven approach for curriculum and instruction. Teachers determine essential CCSS standards and when they will be taught and proficiency assessed. Teachers use vertical alignment of grammar/conventions standards to address gaps in incoming students. The Department selects common writing rubrics aligned to CCSS - writing is assessed on a four-year continuum. Students are assessed three times annually for proficiency using teacher-designed interim assessments emulating the rigor and format of end-goal assessments: PARCC and ACT/SAT examinations. Needs of students performing below grade level are addressed through re-teaching (group or individual); students needing intensive support are placed in a daily 35-minute English Language Arts skills seminar. Students above grade level may take English Honors classes grades 10-12.

Mathematics: based on Common Core State Standards, using a data-driven approach for curriculum and instruction. Teachers determine essential standards within CCSS and when each will be taught and proficiency assessed. Teachers use Pearson Common Core curriculum to address standards, including use of a flipped model in Geometry and the MathXL Algebra I online homework program, which gives immediate feedback. Three times annually, students are assessed for proficiency in essential CCSS skills in Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II using teacher-designed interim assessments emulating the rigor and format of the end-goal assessments: PARCC and ACT/SAT examinations. Teachers use this to ensure proficiency by standard and by student, implementing re-teaching based on needs of the whole class or individual students. The needs of students performing below grade level are addressed through re-teaching (group or individual); students needing intensive support are placed in a daily 35-minute Math seminar. Students above grade level may take Honors Algebra II, Calculus, and online AP courses and dual-credit courses from New Mexico colleges. NMSA has a tutoring partnership with a professional Math organization utilizing national lab scientists.

Science: based on the New Mexico Content Standards and Common Core English Language Arts science standards, using a data-driven approach for curriculum and instruction. For each course, teachers determine essential standards and when each will be taught and proficiency assessed. Teachers use the adopted textbook and resources selected based on their own judgment to teach to proficiency. Three times annually, students are assessed for proficiency in the essential NMCS using teacher-designed interim assessments in Biology and Chemistry emulating the rigor and format of the end-goal assessments: the New Mexico Standards-Based Assessment and ACT exams. Teachers use this to ensure proficiency by standard and by student, implementing re-teaching based on needs of the whole class or individual students. The needs of students performing below grade level are addressed through re-teaching (group or individual) and daily office hours before school. Students above grade level may take Honors Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and online AP, and dual-credit courses from New Mexico colleges.

Social Studies/History: based on the New Mexico Content AND Common Core English Language Arts standards, using a data-driven approach for curriculum and instruction. Teachers determine which standards are essential, and when each will be taught and proficiency assessed. Teachers use the adopted textbook and resources selected based on their own judgment to teach to proficiency. Three times annually, students are assessed for proficiency in the essential standards using teacher-designed interim assessments in World and United States History emulating the rigor and format of the end-goal assessments: New Mexico end-of-course assessments and New York Regents examinations. Teachers use this to ensure proficiency by standard and by student, implementing re-teaching based on needs of the class or individual students. The needs of students performing below grade level are addressed in the classroom through re-teaching (group or individual) and daily office hours before school. Students above grade level may take United States History Honors, and online AP courses and dual-credit courses from New Mexico colleges.

Core Curriculum supports College and Career Readiness by alignment with college- and career-ready standards (CCS Standards for English, Mathematics, Science, History/Social Studies; New Mexico Content Standards), further supported by NMSA's focus on teaching and assessing for success on college- and

career-ready exams such as PARCC, ACT and SAT. Teachers embed instruction in 21st century skills such as problem-solving, collaboration, technology fluency, perseverance, and communication, daily instruction of English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

NMSA has four artistic disciplines that are cornerstones of the Core Curriculum: Dance, Music, Theater, and Visual Arts. Every student who comes to NMSA is admitted into one of these four “majors,” based on passion, promise, and aptitude in that art form. Beginning in freshman year, and continuing through senior year, students receive two-three hours of daily artistic training in their art discipline. After four years of study at NMSA, every student will have accumulated approximately 1,980 hours of rigorous training, specialized coursework, and practical application. NMSA places the arts at the center of its identity and purpose.

The Dance Department cultivates student physical, creative, and analytical growth through intensive dance training and education. Its curriculum is rooted in Classical Ballet with additional focus on Modern Dance training, and includes classes in Contemporary Dance, Dance in Community Settings, Dance Composition, Dance History and Culture, Gyrokinesis, Music for Dancers, Partnering, Pilates, and Jazz. Dancers also experience classes with guest teachers and choreographers, guest artist residencies, opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaborations, site-specific and staged performances, research and creative projects, and field and study trips.

The Music Department at NMSA is one of New Mexico’s premiere high school music programs, offering pre-professional courses designed to prepare students to enter into competitive, post-secondary music programs. Pre-college coursework includes Music Theory, classic piano, ear-training, Composition, and improvisation. Every student in the Music Department receives weekly one-hour Applied Lessons with individual coaches who specialize in their area of study, e.g., voice, violin, piano. While overall Departmental emphasis is on classical music, students are exposed to a variety of genres through studio classes, coaching from faculty and guest artists, as well as ensemble opportunities in chamber, choral, jazz, and orchestral groups that regularly perform in public. Close partnerships with professional organizations offer students regular access to performances of internationally acclaimed soloists and world premiers. The NMSA Choir in 2013 were the All-State Champions.

The Theater Department provides a diverse and rigorous curriculum that trains the entire body, voice and mind, fosters independent thinking, and prepares emerging artists for higher education and professions in theatre arts. The pre-professional coursework includes voice and movement for actors, character development, playwriting, introduction to Shakespeare, scene study, theater history, acting for camera, directing, and monologue preparation. Additional areas of study include clown, elements (LeCoq), Alexander technique, Meisner, stage make-up, masks (larval, Commedia dell’Arte, and others), cinematic mime, and viewpoints. An ambitious production schedule enhances the curriculum, providing every student in the department with numerous performance and production opportunities.

In the Visual Arts Department, students learn the fundamentals of visual communication by creating, presenting, and responding to art and design. Instructional emphasis is placed on skill development, critical thinking, risk taking, craftsmanship and clarity of intention. Students graduate with a rigorous grounding in visual fundamentals, the ability to plan, organize, and execute self-directed projects, the ability to collaborate, and a strong sense of self and community. Drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, photography and media arts are among the disciplines studied. Art history and visual literacy supplement the studio-practice based learning. Exhibitions and collaborations with community partners, plus internships with professional artists enhance the curriculum. Students culminate their learning in the creation and exhibition of a body of work and final portfolio.

All four arts disciplines insist upon a firm grounding in artistic tradition and technique, while simultaneously cultivating the individual, expressive potential of each student. Students graduate from NMSA not only

well-versed in the “Four C’s” of a 21st century education—critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity—but also part of a close-knit, forward-thinking, extraordinarily accomplished artistic community.

Physical Education/Health/Nutrition: PE provides instruction and development skills in physical fitness.

Health Class includes coverage of body systems, fitness, nutrition, stress management, drug-alcohol abuse prevention, human sexuality (STDs, contraception, CPR/First Aid, and community and environmental health).

Foreign Languages: Spanish I-IV are taught.

Technology-Embedded in all classroom work.

Other Programs: Academic Seminar—a regulated plan of instruction where students spend classroom time producing evidence of learning. It support students in developing and enhancing skills leading to successful learning across all high school and post-secondary classes: close reading, writing well, problem-solving, and implementing effective study strategies. Senior Seminar—focuses on helping senior students identify appropriate colleges and apply for admission.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

NMSA uses a variety of instructional methods and interventions to support the goal that all students will be college- and career-ready when they graduate. Teachers use research-based instructional methods to engage students in the curriculum. Cooperative learning can be seen in fishbowl Socratic seminars in English, History, and Science classes; in hands-on labs and activities in Science; in problem-solving in Mathematics; in all aspects of the arts classes (staging plays, collaborative multimedia installations, choreographing dances, etc.). Teachers differentiate in a variety of ways: multisensory input (visual, aural, kinesthetic), leveled readings, graphic organizers, explicit instruction in skills, academic vocabulary instruction, tiered assignments, personalized online activities (such as No Red Ink for grammar practice), read-alouds, think-alouds, student choice, targeted questioning techniques, and resources posted online on Blackboard. Teachers support the success of all learners through implementation of a consistent school culture (uniform expectations and instructions around effective learner behaviors), frequent formative assessment, and instruction in and reinforcement of the growth mindset. All freshmen take Ninth Grade Academy, a course designed to give them direct instruction and practice in essential non-cognitive skills (note-taking, organization, self-advocacy, data monitoring, collaboration, etc.). High-performing students are challenged through universal design and differentiation as described above, and through Honors instruction in various core classes (which includes the opportunity to work on and contribute to an Honors blog). Students who struggle receive differentiation in the classroom as described above, as well as the support of re-teaching based on interim assessment results. Additionally, in Mathematics, students receive the instructional support of professional mathematician tutors in regular classes, before school, and/or during the 35-minute daily Math intervention class. In Spanish, the instructor has established a successful peer tutoring program. Students who are below grade level in either Math or English Language Arts receive focused instruction during a daily 35-minute intervention block. Additionally, all students have daily access to one-on-one instruction from their teachers during teacher office hours immediately preceding the start of the school day.

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

NMSA teachers have carried out extensive professional development on formative assessment to inform instruction, identified as a high-lever tool for improvement. They then increased strategies such as bellringers, think-pair-share, and other assessment strategies requiring 100% participation allowing teachers to make quick adjustments. NMSA teachers use PARCC and SBA test results in several ways: collaboratively analyzing data in terms of what is going well, opportunities for improvement, and action plans to address the latter. In this way, teachers determine which standards students are struggling with and plan responsive instruction, and plan interventions (e.g., daily 35-minute intervention classes in Math and English Language Arts and daily teacher office hours) for students below grade level. NMSA has

achievement gaps in three areas: African-American, and disabled students', Reading scores are more than 10 percentage points below those of all students; economically disadvantaged students' Math scores are more than 10 percentage points below those of all students. This is addressed with daily office hours, daily 35-minute intervention classes in Reading, Writing, Math, and executive function/organization, and re-teaching following interim assessments. Students and parents receive results of state tests and information about what the results mean and how parents can support students. Administrators and teachers directly instruct students about the importance of achievement on these tests, and of developing college- and career-readiness skills. NMSA publishes state test results to inform the community of student achievement levels. Arts classes use uniform, rigorous performance-based assessments, shared with students, who use them to improve their artistic practice; with teachers, who use them to improve instruction; and with parents.

The most useful data for improving teaching and learning are provided by teacher-created interim assessments, given at the end of the first three-quarters of the year. These test student proficiency on essential CCSS- and New Mexico Content-aligned standards. Teachers use a fine-grain data analysis report to analyze results by student and standard. Teachers meet with content-area experts and administrators to discuss data and plan re-teaching. This also embeds professional development, as teachers seek more effective strategies to help students achieve success. Following re-teaching, teachers reassess to determine whether the new approach worked. When students demonstrate readiness for higher challenges, teachers target them with more challenging instruction and/or curriculum. This way, data-driven instruction, with interim assessments as the centerpiece, drives growth for students at all levels of skill and supports NMSA's efforts to maintain its high levels of achievement.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

NMSA engages and motivates students in many ways. An important channel is the mastery arts program, in which each student works toward mastery in Dance, Music, Theater, or Visual Arts. Academic teachers help students see how the skills of motivation and engagement developed in their arts studies transfer into the rest of their education. NMSA motivates students by direct instruction in, and consistent application of, the growth mindset. Students learn, through both arts and academic studies, that failure is fodder for success, a poor test score isn't an end but an inevitable stumble in the process of achieving mastery. NMSA teachers put great energy into knowing and caring for each student, creating relationships that help to motivate students. Students report that they feel they are truly known at NSMA: they will not slip through the cracks. All freshmen take Ninth Grade Academy, providing instruction that helps students master skills leading to academic, social, and emotional growth (graded on a rubric entitled "Effective Learner Rubric"). Students learn to collaborate (e.g., learning to use "and" rather than "but" in peer problem-solving); how to advocate for their needs with teachers through role play and coaching, and how to take ownership of their learning through weekly grade monitoring, charting grades and tying them to specific actions. Students engage in a process of shared leadership: the Student Advisory Board works with teachers and administrators to address problems such as dress code or public displays of affection, and leads the annual Arts Exchange Day, designed to reinforce NMSA's positive culture. Teachers are also engaged in shared leadership through the Instructional Leadership Team, which develops solutions to questions or challenges confronting NMSA: how to get students to complete homework on time; choices within school control re teacher evaluation and performance pay. Teachers and staff contributed to the creation of the Consistent School Culture Plan, which asks: "If we want to be nationally recognized for student achievement, what do the students need do? What do the adults need to do to teach and support the students in doing those things?" Teachers agreed they should be in the halls during passing times; that they should say, "We don't say that here," when they hear profanity or identity-based put-downs; that there should be a teacher at the door each morning to greet students by name as they enter. All this has solidified NMSA's positive, supportive culture.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The primary source of engagement for families is the performances and exhibitions in NMSA's four arts disciplines. These events create a bond between NMSA and families that extends well beyond these events. Academic teachers are able to draw on this connection as they engage families in their students' academic learning. Teachers routinely contact parents to report on the progress of students. If there is a problem, teachers are able to approach parents as partners because of the goodwill that has already been established through parents' participation in the arts programming. One way teachers intervene with students who are struggling is through morning office hours: because parents trust NMSA, they are willing to provide the support necessary to get their students to school a bit early when necessary. Various departments draw on the expertise of community members and subject-area experts to support student engagement and achievement. The Arts Departments bring in nationally renowned guest artists and lecturers to engage students in real-world connections to their areas of interest. The English Department has partnered with the Lannan Foundation to bring nationally-known writers, poets, journalists, and novelists to speak and work with students. The Math Department partners with an association of professional mathematicians (many of them retired scientists from nearby LANL) to support students in the classroom and with one-on-one tutoring. Students also have various opportunities to participate in internships. For example, Visual Arts students get the opportunity to work in local galleries and studios; Theater students get the opportunity to intern at the premier local performing arts venue. NMSA has also established relationships with local higher learning institutions, notably the Institute of American Indian Arts, which provides dual-credit writing and public speaking courses. NMSA also has dual-credit agreements that allow students to take courses for free at Santa Fe Community College and other four-year colleges in the state. As a result of these partnerships with families and community resources, students have been able to achieve high levels of success on measures of college- and career-readiness, and alumni report that they arrive at college well-prepared to compete and succeed in both academics and arts.

3. Professional Development:

NMSA's approach to professional development is embedded in the structures that have been put in place to continually improve student achievement. In essence, professional development is always designed to help solve a problem, question, or challenge. For example, the school has implemented a program of consistent school culture in order to develop the environment and learning behaviors that are a prerequisite for student achievement. This answers the question: "If we want to be nationally recognized for student achievement in academics and arts, what do students need to do throughout the day?" Teachers then engaged in professional development around how to engage in the teacher actions that elicit the desired student outcomes. Teachers engage in weekly meetings called "Student Talk", during which they discuss students who are struggling in the classroom. Professional development is embedded in this practice, as teachers problem-solve and share possible intervention strategies. In implementing a data-driven instructional model, built around interim assessments, the question was: "How can we move all students to the greatest possible level of achievement in each content area, whether they are below, at, or above grade level? An expert consultant was hired to work out an implementation plan with administration, who then provided the necessary professional development so that teachers could develop essential standards, create interim assessments, engage in data analysis, and plan and implement re-teaching plans. Professional development is further embedded into the data analysis meetings following interim assessments. Teachers and administrators collaborate to problem-solve - and then implement - teaching strategies that may help students improve achievement. At faculty meetings, teachers are regularly called on to share effective teaching strategies with their colleagues. The Chairs of the Art Departments are working artists who regularly engage in professional practice outside of school that augments their work with students. NMSA Art Chairs have also partnered with experts from university programs in each of their disciplines to review curriculum and instruction in each of NMSA's four arts disciplines: Dance, Music, Theater, and Visual Arts. Administrators regularly attend professional development provided by the Public Education Department, the New Mexico Coalition of Charter Schools, and New Mexico Highlands University. As a result of its focus on professional development, NMSA has maintained its consistently high levels of student achievement and has succeeded in making progress toward closing the achievement gap.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy of NMSA is based upon 1) NMSA's mission to provide a mastery arts and rigorous academic education to talented youth throughout New Mexico, 2) a commitment to far-reaching advocacy, 3) distributed leadership, 4) the growth mindset, and 5) the principles of continuous improvement. Every structure, policy, and program that is put into place must fit within this philosophy. NMSA is led by a Head of School, who reports directly to a Governing Council. NMSA's non-profit funding partner, the New Mexico School for the Arts-Art Institute, is led by its Executive Director. The distributed leadership team within the school includes the Assistant Principal, who oversees academic instruction; a Dean of Students, who handles student engagement and discipline; a Curriculum Support Specialist, who provides curricular coaching and resources to teachers; and four Art Chairs, who head the Dance, Music, Theater, and Visual Arts departments. The Student Advisory Board also plays an important role in the decision-making processes around issues that impact students, particularly school culture. The Instructional Leadership Team, which includes the Head of School, Assistant Principal, Curriculum Support Specialist, counselor, and multiple teachers, is tasked with developing policies and programs to address challenges and needs facing the school as they relate to student achievement; e.g., it developed teacher office hours and an on-time homework policy for the school. An example of the philosophy and distributed leadership model directly impacting student achievement may be seen in the implementation of a data-driven instructional model, centered around interim assessments. The Head of School, Assistant Principal, and Curriculum Support Specialist received training on this model at a professional development seminar offered by the New Mexico Public Education Department. Seeing its potential, these leaders worked with an outside expert to receive additional training, then worked with teachers in order to determine essential standards and create interim assessments. Because teachers are routinely involved in problem-solving around student achievement, they have the capacity to create the high-quality assessments necessary to implement the framework that leads to increased student achievement.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

NMSA's success may be attributed to its overarching, determined focus on ensuring that its students are college- and career-ready when they graduate from high school. Under this umbrella, NMSA has collected an array of strategies that it implements to achieve this goal. Significantly, students at NMSA are deeply engaged by the arts, and the academic program is able to draft off this connection. Through the arts, students are intrinsically motivated to engage in learning that teaches them not only the content, but also the non-cognitive skills that lead to success in all other areas of their lives (problem-solving, perseverance, endurance, and collaboration). In Ninth Grade Academy, freshmen learn how these skills apply to their academic classes, as well as their arts studies. This connection between the mastery of, e.g., Music Theory and mastery of Algebra I, is reinforced in all classes. In order to ensure that all students achieve the overriding goal of college- and career-readiness, NMSA has carefully established a culture that is positive, nurturing, and focused on the behaviors that lead to success in academic and arts studies. Systems are in place to ensure that every student at NMSA is known, so that none feel they will slip through the cracks. To help those who enter below grade level eventually to graduate at college- and career-ready levels, NMSA has intentionally provided direct instruction to both students and faculty on the growth mindset, followed up with reinforcement of these principles in all classes. NMSA has implemented a system of data-driven instruction to ensure that all students are progressing toward the highest individual level of achievement possible in each subject area, avoiding the "wait-to-fail" model. Because NMSA recognizes the importance of family and community support in getting its students college- and career-ready, it has established close ties, particularly through arts performances and exhibitions, which increase the level of support for students to achieve academically. Though the practices grouped under this umbrella may sound disparate, they all work in concert to help ensure that all students who enter New Mexico School for the Arts are college- and career-ready when they graduate.