



NEW MEXICO - NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION
2025

New Mexico Public Education Department



Organization Information

Organization Name *

Collins Lake Outdoor School



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1. Part B - Executive Summary

The executive summary should be no more than two to three pages long and should address, in a narrative form, the following points:

- The proposed school's name and a description of the charter school's projected students, including key demographic data (academic performance, home languages, special populations), based on the local community or the school district in whose geographic boundaries where the charter school applies to operate
- Where the charter school's projected students are most likely being educated currently and why they are expected to choose the proposed charter school for their future educational needs
- Evidence that there is a community need for the proposed charter school a school of this nature in the area local community or the school district in whose geographic boundaries the charter school applies to operate. Note: NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-6(L)(5) provides, "[a] chartering authority may approve, approve with conditions, or deny an application. A chartering authority may deny an application if...the application is otherwise contrary to the best interests of the charter school's projected students, the local community, or the school district in whose geographic boundaries the charter school applies to operate." Evidence of community need is required. Specific data and evidence is required in the application itself. Therefore, specific statistical information does not need to be provided here.
- The key innovative and unique programmatic features the school will implement to accomplish its mission (non-traditional school year, longer school day, partner organizations, curriculum and assessment, etc.)
- How the proposed school will improve student achievement and exceed the academic performance of the existing public schools in the local community or the school district in whose geographic boundaries the charter school applies to operate. Provide a brief summary of any data that supports this assumption.
- The founders or applicant team of the proposed school, their background, expertise, and what drives them to engage in this endeavor.
- If different from the list provided above, the proposed governing board and their vision of charter school governance, and how the proposed school will benefit the community.

Q1.

New Charter Application Executive Summary



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Collins Lake Outdoor School (CLOS) is applying with the Public Education Commission (PEC) to operate a K-8 public school in the Mora County area. While some students will undoubtedly transfer from the Mora Independent School District (MISD) to our outdoor school, we anticipate that most students will come from the home-school population in the area and from the nearby school districts in Las Vegas, Taos, Peñasco, and Angel Fire. The student enrollment cap for CLOS will be 35 students in grades K - 4 based on the certified Academic Year 2024-25 40-day number for Mora Independent School District (MISD). The CLOS team will use a multi-age classrooms or composite classes with students from more than one grade level in a classroom. The goal is to eventually add grades up to 8th grade and seek an increase to the enrollment cap based on successful student outcomes. The school will be located in Cleveland, NM at Collins Lake Ranch, a 300-acre property owned in part by Collins Lake Autism Center (<https://collinslakeranch.org/>) (CLAC), a non-profit corporation, with most of the remaining acreage owned by Stephen Smaby, one of the founders of CLOS. The Collins Lake Autism Center is accredited by CARF (<https://carf.org/provider/collins-lake-autism-center-dba-collins-lake-ranch-264467/>) International, an independent nonprofit accreditor of health and human services.

The unique aspect of CLOS will be the school's focus on outdoor education as well as the focus on working with students who have Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs). The Founder, Steve Smaby, and his team have extensive experience in supporting adults with developmental disabilities and see firsthand how much their lives improve by getting residential clients outdoors in nature. The applicant team believes that younger individuals with disabilities will see the same benefit from being outdoors, perhaps even to a greater extent than neurotypical students. The Collins Lake Ranch team believes students need to be *in* nature and have opportunities to learn outdoors. The Collins Lake Ranch team have seen the benefits of younger students in an outdoor setting. During the Covid pandemic, students were given the opportunity to learn and study at the ranch and the Collins Lake team observed students thriving in this environment. Mr. Smaby and his team offer SOMA day (<https://collinslakeranch.org/outdoor-recreation-education/>)s (Science, Outdoor, Music, and Art) where students use their senses to engage in learning at the ranch. Also, Collins Lake Ranch sponsored the NMPED Summer Reading program during the summer of 2024 and will sponsor the program again this summer. These types of learning events at the Ranch established the desire for the team to open a school.

Charter School's Projected Community

CLOS will be located within the boundaries of the Mora Independent School District (MISD), a small rural district. The chart below provides a snapshot of the students in the Mora Independent School District. The information in the chart below was taken from the NMPED (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/information-technology/stars/>)2024-2025 Enrollment Subgroup Percentages. The 2023-24 Homeschool Report indicated that 26 students were homeschooled in the Mora area. From working with the home-school coalition, the Collins Lake Team has observed this number increasing significantly in the past year. In discussion with the leaders of the Mora Home School Learning Coalition, which supports roughly half of the home school students in the area, the Mora area has approximately 100 students who are homeschooled.



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The data tables below indicate that the community of Collins Lake Outdoor School is mainly Hispanic and about half of the residents are economically disadvantaged. The 2024-25 NMPED (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/information-technology/stars/>) Stars data indicates that less than 5% of students enrolled at MISD are English learners. However, the New Mexico Economic Development Department reports a large percent of the population speak another language other than English at home.

Table 1: Key Demographics of Enrollment in MISD School District in the Geographic Boundaries

| *2024-25 Subgroup Enrollment | Percentage of the Population |
|---|------------------------------|
| Hispanic | 95.24% |
| Multi-Racial | Less than or equal to 2% |
| Caucasian | Less than or equal to 2% |
| Black or African American | Less than or equal to 2% |
| Asian | Less than or equal to 2% |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native | Less than or equal to 2% |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | Less than or equal to 2% |
| Students who are English Learners | Less than or equal to 1% |



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| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Students with Disabilities | 15.29% |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 43.61% |
| Student identified as Gifted | Less than or equal to 2% |

*Data extracted from the 2024-2025 Enrollment Subgroup Percentages (https://web.ped.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/_legacy/2025/02/SY2024_2025_40D_Enrollment_Subgroup_Percentages.xlsx)

Table 2: Languages Spoken at Home in Mora County (population 5 years and older)

| *2021 Report on Languages Spoken at Home | Total Estimate |
|--|----------------|
| Speak only English | 30% |
| Speak a language other than English | 70% |
| Speak Spanish at Home | 69% |

* Data extracted from the New Mexico Economic Development (<https://edd.newmexico.gov/documents/language-spoken-at-home/>)

The data in the table below displays the MISD 2023-2024 proficiency rates in math, science and English language Arts. Mora Independent Schools' proficiency rates in all 3 subjects are below the state average proficiency rates.

Table 3: Academic Performance MISD 2023-24 by Subgroups

| *ELA Proficiency Rates | *Math Proficiency Rates | *Science Proficiency Rates |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Overall District: 36% | Overall District: 10% | Overall District: 28% |
| Hispanic: 36.1% | Hispanic: 10.6% | Hispanic: 27.9% |



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| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Multi-Racial: Data Masked (DM) | Multi-Racial: Data Masked (DM) | Multi-Racial: Data Masked (DM) |
| Caucasian/White: 33.5% | Caucasian/White: 11.0% | Caucasian/White: 15.9% |
| Black African American: DM | Black African American: DM | Black African American: DM |
| Asian: DM | Asian: DM | Asian: DM |
| Native American: DM | Native American: DM | Native American: DM |
| English Language Learners: DM | English Language Learners: DM | English Language Learners: DM |
| Students with Disabilities: Less than or equal to 10% | Students with Disabilities: Less than or equal to 10% | Students with Disabilities: Less than or equal to 20% |
| Economically Disadvantaged 36.3% | Economically Disadvantaged: 9.7% | Economically Disadvantaged: 27.4% |

***Data Extracted from NM Vistas | Mora Independent School District**
(https://www.nmvistas.org/Mora_Independent_Schools)

Community need for the proposed charter school:

Data from informal inquiries, as well as formal surveys and letters of support, informs the team that there is an indicated need for CLOS. Educators, parents, and students have expressed positive feedback on the inviting beauty of the environment, the level of engagement with learners, and the diversity of learning experiences at Collins Lake Ranch. With our unique outdoor-based program for diverse learners, we have assessed that there is a significant need for our school and this need is reflected in local demand. Our three-part outreach plan includes: surveys and letters of support, community workshops in surrounding areas, and a culminating event for families to enjoy a day of outdoor learning. Objective measures and data collection and analysis, such as questionnaires and interviews, are included in our application. Preliminary surveys that went to local homeschool families have already yielded valuable data for us.

Innovative and unique programmatic features that will improve student achievement:



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Collins Lake Outdoor School will provide a Nature Based Learning model (NBL) that includes all subjects: reading, math, science, social studies, physical education and art. The Nature Based Learning model will align with all NM State Standards, Common Core Standards, and the reading curriculum aligns to the Science of Reading (SOR) model.

Mission: Collins Lake Outdoor School is built on the foundational beliefs that learning is an act of life, and teaching is an act of love. Our vision is to grow expert learners who have the skills and knowledge to care for themselves, their families, their culture, their community, and their natural environment.

Vision: *Learning is an act of life and Teaching is an act of love*

Collins Lake Outdoor School recognizes that much of what we know about the learning process has given way to one-size-fits-all approaches and even “teaching to the test.” Too many educational programs center test scores as not only the measure of effective instruction, but also as the means and method of mechanized program delivery. At Collins Lake Outdoor School we will rely on what we have learned from cognitive and behavioral science and grounded pedagogical theory: that learners are human beings biologically predisposed to engage with their environment and the people in it, that learning is driven by social motivation, and children learn best from play. Centering the behavioral needs and cognitive development of our learners in our outdoor educational environment, our content and engagement, and our assessment methods, ensures that our learners will benefit from the proven improved academic outcomes that our unique nature-based program will offer. Improved outcomes such as better grades and test scores are attributed to increased wellness and executive functioning, more time engaging with experiential learning and higher order thinking, and stimulating the Vagus nerve during learning activities. Rather than trying to acquire academic skills in the vacuum of screen time, Collins Lake Outdoor School will apply skills through experiential learning so that literacy and language, numeracy and mathematics, social studies and sciences, are all integrated as lived experiences of our learners.

Collins Lake Outdoor School is committed to creating a learning community that is inclusive, that embraces diversity while teaching equity, and applies practices of love pedagogy throughout all aspects of our program. Authentic relationships are both an educational resource for teachers and a learning skill for children. At a time when families must navigate the preschool-to-prison pipeline and schools require active-shooter drills, the mandate is clear for educators to meet the social emotional learning (SEL) needs for learners and our greater communities. Collins Lake Outdoor School offers the inimitable resource of the natural world as the setting for teachers to engage in holistic, healing, and loving instruction that serves as a balm for burnout, and the deep sense-of-belonging that every learner needs to thrive. The curriculum will prioritize depth over breadth and will allow students to deeply process ideas they are experiencing in a safe and supportive environment, improving learner outcomes. By integrating content and community while anchoring learning processes with a sense of belonging and caring, teaching as an act of love not only increases positive outcomes, but also mitigates negative conditions. Collins Lake Outdoor School will nurture a love of education and will collaborate with the community and stakeholders as we believe they are an essential component of our school community and create meaningful involvement for parents, cultural educators, and the many role models and mentors in the extended educational



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community. Through evidence-based and sustainable practices in inclusive, culturally and linguistically responsive, and nature-based learning, Collins Lake Outdoor School will foster a learning community that values interconnectedness and equity. CLOS staff and community will embrace diversity and multiple ways of knowing and develop and sustain a learning environment that nurtures a sense of belonging, fosters self-efficacy, sparks curiosity, and engages all learners in educational progressions that align curriculum and skills with high expectations for academic excellence. Natural settings provide many different settings and stimulation for children to use their imagination (Sobel, 2016). Research has demonstrated that outdoor learning benefits students' academic performance and increase their engagement (Ennis, 2025). The American Institute of Research conducted a study on the benefits of outdoor learning and their data indicates that "participation in an outdoor school was associated with higher ratings of conflict resolution skills and cooperation" (American Institutes for Research, 2005)

The founders or applicant team:

The founder of CLOS is **Steve Smaby**. Mr. Smaby founded Collins Lake Autism Center in 2010 and currently serves as the board chair, focusing on strategic planning and fundraising. Mr. Smaby is a father and primary caregiver for his autistic son, now 29 years old and participated in his son's applied behavioral analysis (ABA) therapy and has worked closely with his son's schools throughout his life. **Marvin MacAuley** has over 24 years of experience in education as both an administrator (principal and superintendent) and educator in Peñasco Independent Schools and as the Education Director at Picuris Pueblo. **Kaya Long** is a licensed special education teacher and ASL-English Interpreter with 30 years working of experience with students with disabilities as a Special education teacher and case manager. Additionally, Kaya is currently developing inclusive outdoor education programs for diverse learners. **Becky Kappus** has more than 30 years of educator experience, including working as a university education administrator and professor, and classroom teacher. **Tina Crunk** has been a elementary classroom teacher, most recently at Mora ISD. She is one of the founders of the Mora Home School Learning Coalition and has been active in many community-based projects.

The Governing Board:

The CLOS Governing Board will include Mr. Smaby, Mr. MacAuley, Ms. Long, Dr. Kappus and Ms. Crunk. Their brief bios are listed above. The current members of the Governing Board are dedicated to ensuring that diverse students in rural northern New Mexico have the opportunity to choose a school that will foster a unique outdoor learning environment through a process of teachers, students, *and* parents/caregivers interacting and creating an environment that includes educational teaching strategies that embrace students' diversity so all students *can see themselves* in the curriculum and feel valued.

References

American Institutes for Research. (2005). Effects of outdoor education programs for children in California. Palo Alto, CA.



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Ennis, J. (2025) Benefits of Outdoor Learning: Why Outdoor Education is Important for Students. The Learning Adventure.<https://thelearningadventure.com/blog/general/benefits-of-outdoor-learning-for-students/>

Sobel, D. (2016). Nature preschools and forest kindergartens: The handbook for outdoor learning. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press. Disponível em: <https://research-ebSCO-com.highlands.idm.oclc.org/linkprocessor/plink?id=c0550413-9e9b-32ba-936d-4b9f01dff5d1>. Acesso em: 15 abr. 2025.



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2. Part C - Written Responses

Rating: Along with each prompt, the application identifies the elements that must be present for a response to be evaluated as “Meets the Criteria.” The following rubrics govern general rating practices. Please be sure that each response also completely addresses the bulleted points in the rubrics for each individual prompt.

A. Meets the Criteria

1. All required elements present
2. Sufficient detail present, enabling the proposal to be implemented without requiring further proposal development
3. The proposal is reasonable and realistic
4. Fully consistent with other sections, including budget and mission
5. Fully consistent with all requirements of law
6. Coherent and easily understood

B. Approaches the Criteria

1. The majority of required elements are present, but not all
2. Insufficient detail; further proposal development will be required before the applicant can begin to implement the concept
3. Minor inconsistencies with other sections of the application
4. May raise questions about legal compliance, but does not demonstrate non-compliance
5. May raise questions about reasonableness or viability of the proposal

C. Does Not Meet the Criteria

1. None or less than a majority of the required elements are present
2. Contradicts or is substantially inconsistent with other sections
3. Insufficient detail to understand the proposal, which includes:
4. Copying statutory, regulatory, or policy/guidance language as a sole response to the prompt without articulating how the school would implement the requirements listed.
5. Includes statements that violate or conflict with the requirements of law
6. Incoherent or confusing
7. The proposal is patently unreasonable or unrealistic

2.1. Academic Framework

Q2.

A.(1) Mission

•A complete response must

1. Identify how the proposed school will achieve its mission.
2. Discuss the importance of the mission to your proposed community
3. Be clear, concise, innovative, and measurable
4. Discuss what mission success will look like
5. Narrative only



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Mission: Collins Lake Outdoor School is built on the foundational beliefs that learning is an act of life, and teaching is an act of love. Our mission is to grow expert learners who have the skills and knowledge to care for themselves, their families, their culture, their community, and their natural environment.

Collins Lake Outdoor School will achieve its mission by providing a safe, accessible outdoor learning environment for all students. Collins Lake Outdoor School will provide a Nature Based Learning lens (NBL) that integrates all subjects: reading, math, science, social studies, physical education and art. The Nature Based Learning model will align with all NM State Standards, Common Core Standards, and the reading curriculum will align to the Science of Reading (SOR) model. This environment will allow students to engage in cooperative learning with their peers in a natural setting which will result in students having many opportunities to engage in discourse with their peers as well as a supportive setting for learning (Kuo, Barnes, & Jordan, 2019). Kuo, Barnes, & Jordan's (2019) research present strong evidence that "experiences with nature do promote children's academic learning and seem to promote children's development as persons and as environmental stewards" (para. 4).

Learning is an act of life:

Collins Lake Outdoor School recognizes that much of what we know about the learning process has given way to one-size-fits-all approaches and even "teaching to the test". Too many educational programs center test scores as not only the measure of effective instruction, but also as the means and method of mechanized program delivery. At Collins Lake Outdoor School we rely on what we have learned from cognitive and behavioral science and grounded pedagogical theory: that learners are human beings biologically predisposed to engage with their environment and the people in it, that learning is driven by social motivation, and children learn best from play. "In academic contexts, nature-based instruction outperforms traditional instruction" through improving executive function, physical fitness, stress regulation, and providing opportunities for both collaboration and autonomy, and fostering "developmentally beneficial forms of play." (Kuo, *et. al.*, 2019). Centering the behavioral needs and cognitive development of our learners in our outdoor educational environment, our content and engagement, and our assessment methods, ensures that our learners will benefit from the proven improved academic outcomes that our unique nature-based program offers. Improved outcomes such as better grades and test scores are attributed to increased wellness and executive functioning, more time engaging with experiential learning and higher order thinking, and stimulating the Vagus nerve during learning activities. Rather than trying to acquire academic skills in the vacuum of screen time, Collins Lake Outdoor School will provide students with continuous opportunities to apply skills through experiential learning so that literacy and language, numeracy and mathematics, social studies and sciences, are all integrated as lived experiences of our learners.

Teaching is an act of love:

Collins Lake Outdoor School is committed to creating a learning community that is inclusive, that embraces diversity while teaching equity and applies practices of love pedagogy throughout all aspects of our program. Authentic relationship is both an educational resource for teachers and a learning skill for children. At a time



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when families must navigate the preschool-to-prison pipeline and schools require active-shooter drills, the mandate is clear for educators to meet the social emotional learning (SEL) needs for learners and our greater communities. Collins Lake Outdoor School offers the inimitable resource of the natural world as the setting for teachers to engage in holistic, healing, and loving instruction that serves as a balm for burnout, and the deep sense-of-belonging that every learner needs to thrive. The curriculum will prioritize depth over breadth and will allow students to deeply process ideas they are experiencing in a safe and supportive environment, improving learner outcomes. By integrating content and community while anchoring learning processes with a sense of belonging and caring, teaching as an act of love not only increases positive outcomes but also mitigates negative conditions. When a “love-oriented” learning environment cares for the emotional needs and relationships of learners and teachers, it “booms learning and teaching processes” such as “engagement and interpersonal skills”, while simultaneously it minimizes harm from stress, disengagement, and lack of motivation. (Wang, Derakhshan, & Pan, 2022). Moreover, “love in education” necessitates the “it takes a village” approach and the essential component of community for our school, creating meaningful involvement for parents, cultural educators, and the many role models and mentors in the extended educational community.

Mission Success:

As mentioned above, mission success will be observed by providing a safe, accessible outdoor leaning environment for all students. However, Mission success will also be measured by several parameters. The Collins Lake applicant team will measure success of the mission by the following measures:

1. Family and student feedback that support the school's mission and add the implementation of the mission through the use of surveys, meeting notes, discourse with family and student members.
2. Students will collaborate on a regular basis. This will be measured by student and family feedback in addition to teacher observation. Teachers will provide training to students on how to collaborate while working on projects and in restorative justice processes such as restorative circles.
3. Students will engage in instructional activities that teach them about how to respect and care for their environment.
4. Students will learn and demonstrate skills that demonstrate they know how to care for the environment.
5. Students will demonstrate problem solving skills when they are working through their projects or working through a conflict.

Benefits to the Community:

The Collins Lake Outdoor School team believe students attending CLOS will develop a deep respect for the local environment and this may result in their commitment to the local area that they share with their families and community. Additionally, research demonstrates that teachers working in an outdoor setting also benefit from this type of environment. As Donison & Halsall (2023) report from their research, working outdoors can also support mental health and provide opportunities to relieve stress. These benefits to educators will help retain teachers and staff at CLOS. Another benefit to the community is that the CLOS team is dedicated to providing educational activities at the Ranch that are open to the community.



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References

Donison, L., & Halsall, T. (2023). 'I'd rather learn outside because nature can teach you so many more things than being inside': Outdoor learning experiences

of young children and educators. *Journal of Childhood, Education & Society*, 4(3), 373–390.
<https://doi.org/10.37291/2717638X.202343281>

Kuo M, Barnes M, Jordan C. (2019). Do experiences with nature promote learning? Converging evidence of a cause-and-effect relationship. *Front Psychol*.

2019 Feb 19;10:305. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00305. PMID: 30873068; PMCID: PMC6401598

Wang Y., Derakhshan A., Pan Z. (2022) Positioning an agenda on a loving pedagogy in second language acquisition: Conceptualization, practice, and

research. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13.
<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.894190>

Q3.

A.(2) VISION STATEMENT

•A complete response must describe

1. The team's reasoning and purpose

2. Why your team is committed to providing a public education platform for your proposed community

3. How your team intends to interact with your proposed community in order to provide their children with better academic outcomes

4. What about your proposed program serves the proposed community in unique and innovative ways?

5. Narrative Only

*Please note for this question only, a rating of "Meets" equals "Complete", and a rating of "Does Not Meet" equals "Incomplete".

**NEW MEXICO - NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION****2025****New Mexico Public Education Department****Reasoning and Purpose:**

The CLOS team has witnessed the powerful positive impact that students have experienced from learning and exploring in an outdoor environment. The CLOS team believes this type of environment will especially be conducive for students with disabilities. Several research studies (Atchley, Strayer, & Atchley P (2012); Rylance, 2022; Brannan, 2003; James, 1917) extol the benefits of an outdoor learning environment for students with disabilities. "Outdoor learning provides a rich and stimulating environment that can enhance learning experiences for all children. For students with special needs, it may actually remove barriers to learning and may improve self-regulation and social-emotional development." (Green Schoolyards America, n.d. para 2). The CLOS vision and purpose comes from both witnessing the positive effects from students learning in an outdoor setting and the research that provides evidence of the value of this type of environment.

Please note, within the application we refer to the applicant team. Please see the attached document to review the team.

Why/Community:

Mr. Smaby, the founder of CLOS, has a personal connection to serving students with disabilities. His passion comes from his work with his own son and the drive to establish Collins Lake Autism Center for people with disabilities. (Please see the Collins Lake Ranch site. (<https://collinslakeranch.org/>)) Mr. Smaby's team and work with community led the way to the idea for a charter school at the Ranch. Collins Lake Ranch has offered multiple opportunities for school children and community members to come and learn at the Ranch. Additionally, the Ranch has held the NMPED Summer Reading Program during 2024 and will hold it again this summer. Events like these have provided the community with educational opportunities and the space to hear from community members regarding their hopes and goals for education in the local area. Over the years, visitors to Collins Lake Ranch have commented that it is an ideal setting for a school. Parents whose children are in traditional schooling and those who are homeschooled have benefited from the educational programming offered at Collins Lake Ranch and have expressed interest the possibility of a charter school.

New Mexico schools are struggling to serve their students, as evidenced by low student outcomes, low attendance rates, and low literacy rates. Nature-Based Learning (NBL) has a causal relationship with improved learner outcomes that traditional classroom learning lacks: it improves cognitive skills and executive functioning, social skills and belonging, and physical and mental wellness. In our natural learning environment, we can:

- provide holistic development that focuses on kindergarten-readiness skills and closes the gap for early learners
- improve literacy through science-of-reading and instill the joy of reading with a language-rich environment
- boost math skills through play-based learning that builds cognitive skills along a developmental progression.

Innovation



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Mora Valley is rich in history, culture, community, and natural beauty. The residents of Mora County have a deep connection to the land and this school will honor this connection. CLOS will offer an innovative school where students will be able to learn, touch, feel, smell, and see their curriculum come to life.

Vision Statement: Through evidence-based and sustainable practices in inclusive, culturally and linguistically responsive, and nature-based learning, Collins Lake Outdoor School provides:

- a learning community that values interconnectedness and equity, embraces diversity and multiple ways of knowing;
- a learning environment that nurtures a sense of belonging, fosters self-efficacy, sparks curiosity, and engages all learners in educational progressions that align curriculum and skills with high expectations for academic excellence;
- and learning experiences that transform understanding, grow skills, and build a foundation for a life-long love of learning that empowers learners to thrive and succeed.

References:

Atchley RA, Strayer DL, Atchley P (2012) Creativity in the wild: Improving creative reasoning through Immersion in natural settings. PLoS ONE 7(12): e51474.

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___Outdoor Learning Initiative — Green Schoolyards America ([https://www.greenschoolyards.org/inclusive-design#:~:text=Outdoor%20learning%20is%20more%20than,improved%20\(Ambrosini%2C%202014\).](https://www.greenschoolyards.org/inclusive-design#:~:text=Outdoor%20learning%20is%20more%20than,improved%20(Ambrosini%2C%202014).))

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<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=16360>

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Applicant Evidence :



CLOS Applicant Team.d...

Uploaded on **6/1/2025** by
Becky Kappus

Q4.

A.(3) UNIQUENESS AND INNOVATION

•A complete response must

1. Describe the uniqueness, innovation, and significant contribution of your educational program to the local NM public education environment;
2. Describe the needs of the community; and
3. Demonstrate how the applicant team knows there is a compelling demand for the proposed school's educational program in the geographic area in which the school plans to locate.
4. Ensure that the evidence establishes a compelling demand for the proposed school's educational program based on reliable research, effective practices, or demonstrated success in schools with diverse characteristics
5. Narrative Only



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**Uniqueness and Innovation**

The Collins Lake Outdoor School (CLOS) applicant team believes education needs to be a continual reflection and discovery of how the curriculum that is being implemented is educating the *whole* child. Curriculum is more than textbooks and district mandated materials. It is all that happens in the learning environment. CLOS's unique and innovative approach is to develop students' creativity and critical thinking in a safe outdoor learning environment, and our focus on working with special education students. The CLOS founder and team have extensive experience in supporting adults with developmental disabilities and have seen firsthand how much their lives improve by engaging them outdoors in nature. We believe that younger individuals with disabilities will see the same benefit from being outdoors, perhaps even to a greater extent than neuro-typical students. Research completed by Li, *et.al.*, 2019, provides evidence to the benefits of learning in an outdoor setting for students with Autism. This study revealed that students with Autism improved their sensory motor skills, both fine and motor skills, as well as providing emotional and social benefits to children with ASD. Ambrosini (2014) research indicates that when students with disabilities are in an outdoor environment they participate more, and their self-esteem rises. The outdoor environment will provide a unique and innovated approach to students' understanding and connection to the content. The main advantage of this approach is the creation of a learner-centered environment that provides opportunities for students to connect nature to their learning. Hopefully, these connections will help students see how their choices influence their communities and even the world.

The Collins Lake Applicant Team has received valuable feedback from the community (Please see Appendix H). While there are some charter schools in surrounding communities, the Mora area does not have any charter schools to date. Due to lower populations, oftentimes, families in rural areas do not have the same advantage to select a charter school as the larger urban communities have. Shakeel & Maranto (2019) posit that rural families are underserved when it comes to school choice. Given that NM is mainly a rural state with over 70% of NM described as rural, we believe that allowing charter schools in rural areas will increase equitability for rural areas. The Collins Ranch applicant team believes this Collins Lake Outdoor School is unique in its offering of nature-based learning in an outdoor environment. As a *choice for learners*, the school will provide the thrill of outdoor learning and the support of a low teacher/learner ratio. As a *choice for families*, the school environment will provide a nurturing and diverse learning community that embraces the needs of each student. And as a *choice for educators*, the school workplace will provide a healthy and sustaining work environment, an integrated curriculum, and professional development support.

As stated in the previous question, the residents of Mora County have a deep connection to the land and have dealt with challenges brought by wildfires such as Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon. The CLOS applicant founder, Mr. Smaby, and several of his team members live in the Mora community and have experienced the same challenges. The Collins Lake Center and area are already an important part of this community. The applicant team values the community members and seeks out their knowledge, skills and expertise. Collins Lake Outdoor School will be a community school and will continue to provide community activities to support the community and provide



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opportunities during parent meetings, educational events, etc. for team members to share their knowledge, skills and ideas. (Please see article for reference (<https://sourcenm.com/2022/09/16/northern-nm-ranch-wants-to-use-states-largest-wildfire-to-educate-children-people-with-disabilities/>))

New Mexico educates students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) at a rate higher than the national average yet underutilizes SPED funds; many students with IEP's are not receiving services they need to access learning. (NM LFC, 2023). The CLOS Team understands that special education sets accessibility requirements such as a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), and the 11 considerations for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) that emphasize behavioral supports and modified means of engagement. We are committed to inclusive instruction that can satisfy these requirements and meet the individual needs of all learners. With a student-centered and family-supportive approach to the IEP process, we know we can address and accommodate diverse learning.

As stated in the question above, Nature-Based Learning (NBL) improves cognitive skills and executive functioning, social skills and belonging, and physical and mental wellness. In our natural learning environment, we can:

- provide holistic development that focuses on kindergarten-readiness skills and closes the gap for early learners
- improve literacy through science-of-reading and instill the joy of reading with a language-rich environment
- boost math skills through play-based learning that builds cognitive skills along a developmental progression.

We understand that outdoor education and NBL is better for all learning - not just for learning about nature - as a unique and versatile resource that benefits all learners, making it a viable and valuable educational choice. Collins Lake Outdoor School is dedicated to developing strong readers and believes active interactive strategic processes that support the science of reading (SOR) will build student fluency and promote reading comprehension. This year, we will be hosting our second Summer Reading Program that aligns the goals of the NMPED and our outdoor-based learning approach. Through partnering with NMPED, we expect this program will continue to see increased achievement in reading skills. (Please see the news clip covering our first program: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ct7-LFlcMOE> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ct7-LFlcMOE>)). (NMPED, 2025)

We commit to accessibility for diverse learners. In response to the Yazzie-Martinez mandate to provide accessible education for learners with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and for learners with disabilities, we recognize the responsibility to meet expectations from families that their children are given the chance to become successful learners. The New Mexico Voices for Children reports in their Kids Count Data Book (2023) that in 2022-23 Mora County had a relatively high chronic absentee rate at 32%. The CLOS team hopes to instill in its students a love for learning through a unique and engaging curriculum. Collins Lake Outdoor School has an integrated curriculum that centers the strength of cultural and linguistic relevant learning while accessing extended learning programs, technology, research-based reading programs, and resources for social and emotional wellness - all essential assets of an equitable education. (NMPED, 2022) We believe that effective education is a shared effort that includes cultural leaders, field experts, mentors, and role-models who can



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prepare learners beyond academic content and empower them with the social and practical skills to pursue their life goals. We see our commitment to meeting the needs of learners and expectations of families as a primary reason for Mora students to choose Collins Lake Outdoor School.

References:

Ambrosini, K. (2014, December 27). Accessible outdoors: Kids with social, emotional and physical disabilities go outside! (<https://www.teachingthehudsonvalley.org/accessible-outdoors-kids-with-social-emotional-and-physical-disabilities-go-outside/>) *Children & Nature Network*.

Li, D., Larsen, L., Yang, Y., Wang, L., Zhai, Y., & Sullivan, W. C. (2019). Exposure to nature for children with autism spectrum disorder: Benefits, caveats, and

barriers. *Health and Place*, 55, 71-79. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2018.11.005>
(<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2018.11.005>)

New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee (NM LFC), Progress Report on Special Education, Program Evaluation Unit. 2023.

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/ALFC%20111423%20Item%203%20-%20SPED%20Progress%20Report%202023-11-14%20FINAL.pdf> (<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/ALFC%20111423%20Item%203%20-%20SPED%20Progress%20Report%202023-11-14%20FINAL.pdf>)

New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED), 2022, Discussion Draft Action Plan Decisions about Martinez/Yazzie v. State of New Mexico.

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Martinez-Yazzie-Discussion-Draft-2022.05.09.pdf> (<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Martinez-Yazzie-Discussion-Draft-2022.05.09.pdf>)

Shakeel, M. D., & Maranto, R. (2019). Left behind? School choice in rural communities. *Journal of School Choice*, 13(4), 463-466.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15582159.2019.1691852>

Q5.

B. Mission-Specific Goals

•A complete response must

1. Include two mission-specific goals;

2. Align to the student outcomes identified in the mission response (A.1.);



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3. Be guided by the elements of the SMART format:

4. Include measures and metrics.

5. Include how the board of the proposed school intends to regularly monitor equitable mission success

6. Narrative Only



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Mission Specific Goals

The work of Mr. Smaby, the founder of the proposed Collins Lake Outdoor School, has been centered on providing a nurturing environment for adults with autism and other developmental disabilities. This work and his personal story with regards to Mr. Smaby's autistic child, forms the foundation of the mission of CLOS.

Mission: Collins Lake Outdoor School is built on the foundational beliefs that learning is an act of life, and teaching is an act of love. Our mission is to grow expert learners who have the skills and knowledge to care for themselves, their families, their culture, their community, and their natural environment.

Vision: Through evidence-based and sustainable practices in inclusive, culturally and linguistically responsive, and nature-based learning, Collins Lake Outdoor school provides:

- a *learning community* that values interconnectedness and equity, embraces diversity and multiple ways of knowing;
- a *learning environment* that nurtures a sense of belonging, fosters self-efficacy, sparks curiosity, and engages all learners in educational progressions that align curriculum and skills with high expectations for academic excellence;
- and *learning experiences* that transform understanding, grow skills, and build a foundation for a life-long love of learning that empowers

With the help of the CLOS applicant team and governing board members, the two mission goals are listed below:

Goal 1: Collins Lake Outdoor School students will successfully complete 2 project based learning opportunities during the year (one per semester) by scoring an 80% or higher on the summative assessment associated with each project.

This PBL goal aligns with CLOS mission because the outside environment at Collins Lake Outdoor School offers the inimitable resource of the natural world as the setting for teachers to engage in holistic, healing, and loving instruction that every learner needs to thrive. The curriculum will prioritize depth over breadth and will allow students to deeply process ideas they are experiencing in a safe and supportive environment, improving learner outcomes. These projects will implement an interdisciplinary approach, will be culturally and linguistically relevant, aligned to standards and will engage students in an outdoor setting. The CLOS team understand their responsibility to create an accessible, safe environment that is safe for students. The CLOS team will regularly monitor students working outside on projects to make certain they are dressed appropriately for the weather, have sunscreen and that the area they are working in is safe and accessible.

Centering the behavioral needs and cognitive development of learners in our outdoor educational environment, the content and engagement, and assessment methods, ensures that learners will benefit from the project-based learning approach that the unique nature-based setting offers. Rather than trying to acquire academic skills in the vacuum of screen time, Collins Lake Outdoor School applies skills through experiential learning so that literacy and language, numeracy and mathematics, social studies and sciences, are all integrated as lived



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experiences of our learners. During their daily outside time, students will engage in a nature rich setting and make connections to what they are learning through project-based learning. These experiential activities will help student develop academic skills and social –emotional skills. The outdoor setting of CLOS will provide all students with unique sensory experiences that they would not be able to experience in a traditional classroom setting.

Goal 1 Measurement: Teachers will plan projects that integrate subjects and are aligned to standards. An essential piece of their planning will be how they will assess students' mastery. Through summative assessments, teachers will be able to determine if students scored at least an 80% on the summative assessment. Teachers will work with students who may not score 80% and provide them with scaffolds, support and new opportunities to complete the assessment. Assessment associated with a project usually involve a final product such as a poster, diagram, play, or another product; therefore, CLOS teachers will develop grade-level rubrics. Teachers will use checklists and formative assessment during the implementation of the project to ensure students work is on track for meeting the assessment requirements. Essential to the success of PBL is the ability of students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills to solve the problem or issue presented at the start of the project.

Goal 2: One hundred percent of third and fourth graders at CLOS will successfully complete a mentorship training that includes strategies to engage in a restorative justice process during the first semester at CLOS.

The training for CLOS 3rd and 4th graders will focus on how to be a mentor to a younger student at CLOS. Mentors at CLOS will work with their younger classmates in the outdoor setting. The CLOS education team will select a training program that aligns with the mission. The CLOS applicant team will suggest the education team review the *Learning for Justice* (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/spring-2021/toolkit-the-foundations-of-restorative-justice>) toolkit and training as it align with the CLOS mission. The Learning for Justice Toolkit offers real-world examples that the CLOS team can modify to best serve the students. A major piece of the training will include how to mentor younger students. The mentor will be a buddy to the younger student to help keep the younger student safe and help the student with academic and social skills development. The training will help mentors to use a restorative justice approach on how to resolve conflicts. This goal aligns with CLOS mission because it fosters students' ability to care for others and to develop their abilities to care for themselves as they develop their social and emotional skills.

The second goal relates to student mentoring. Operating in an outdoor environment creates unique opportunities for students to interact and collaborate that are not found in typical classroom settings. Further, we are hoping that we attract a diverse student population with a wide range of learning styles and capabilities. Based on past experience, particularly with regard to Mr. Smaby's autistic child, there is a huge benefit from more advanced or older students pairing up and mentoring struggling students. This benefits not only the student that needs extra help, but even more so, the student that is doing the mentoring. Our goal is that every student will actively engage on a regular basis in one or more mentor/mentee relationships. Students will be formally assigned partners, in addition to the natural relationships that are built without direct teacher intervention.

Restorative justice in early learning environments prioritizes connection over correction. It emphasizes mutual respect, listening, and healing rather than punishment (Klevin, 2021). For younger students, this requires



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simplified language, relationship-based modeling, consistent adult behaviors, and embedded cultural practices that affirm students' sense of identity and belonging. The CLOS training program for 3rd and 4th graders will also include a "Family/Community Restorative Circle" component where family members will have an opportunity for storytelling, cultural connection, and co-creation of practices support and understand community perceptions of discipline and justice.

Goal 2 Measurement: Goal 2 will be measured by the successful completion of mentorship of all 3rd and 4th grades at CLOS. Additionally, teachers, family members, and students will be asked to provide feedback on the training and implementation of training so the CLOS team can make continuous improvement to this critical piece of implementing the mission.

If approved, the CLOS team will use the planning year to determine the most effective programs to support the mentorship goal. In addition to the mentorship training, students will include restorative justice strategies and SEL strategies. The CLOS team will implement the NMPED SEL framework as part of the restorative justice piece. The CLOS team has reviewed several SEL frameworks and resources. If approved, the team will use the planning year to develop a calendar to implement SEL strategies. The team feels that the CASEL (<https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/>) framework and resources align well to the CLOS mission and restorative justice approach. The CASEL approach incorporates active forms of learning to develop students' skill.

Report to Governing Board: The Head Administrator will speak to the progress of the mission goals at each governing board meeting. This will be a standing agenda item. The CLOS team is dedicated to proving a safe outdoor learning environment where student develop critical thinking skills, social skills, and a love and respect for nature. These goal will be discussed and monitored thought the year.

References:

Klevan, S. (2021). Building a positive school climate through restorative practices. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/178.861>.

Q6.

C. Curriculum, Educational Program, Student Performance Standards

•A complete response must

1. Describe the proposed school's curriculum including research-based evidence that supports the effectiveness of the selected model and the target population;
2. Describe how the proposed school's curriculum will meet the requirements of equity for all underserved populations.

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3. Identify information that demonstrates how the curriculum will align with the New Mexico Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and New Mexico Content Standards;
4. Identify information that demonstrates how the curriculum will align with the proposed school's mission; and
5. Include a reasonable (as based on the professional judgment of experienced educators) timeline and plan for the development of the entire proposed curriculum—including scope and sequence, unit plans, daily lesson plans, project plans and rubrics, and unit and course assessments.
6. Narrative Only



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Curriculum, Educational Program, Student Performance Standards

The CLOS applicant firmly believes that the schools' mission will only be achieved by incorporating the stories, histories, languages, and cultures of those who are part of the CLOS community and presenting them in the curriculum as belonging and having value.

Schools should be designed to help all students become successful members of their community. Nonetheless, some students have more challenges than their classmates and these challenges may be difficult to address in some school environments. While Collins Lake Outdoor School is committed to provide all students with opportunities to reach their fullest potential, research demonstrates that an outdoor learning environment is especially effective in helping students who are Autistic and students with disabilities (Bailie, Finch, & Kenny, 2016; see also Dillenschneider, 2007; Sara, 2011). An effective school must create or adapt educational curriculum to reflect the interests and needs of their students. Such a curriculum empowers learners to discover, respect, and celebrate each other. The CLOS teaching/learning model is based upon premise that the student is an active participant in the learning process. CLOS learning model based on application rather than memorization. Students will learn lessons in class they may immediately apply in their interactions, and in their communications. Implementing a project-based approach to learning will allow students to explore different solutions to problems and challenges.

The CLOS approach also emphasizes the collaborative mentorship learning method. Students do not teach themselves and faculty members alone do not teach students; instead, all course participants teach and learn from one another. The facilitator learns equally with the students; each role is interdependent, with joint responsibility for learning.

The CLOS applicant team will implement a Nature-Based Curriculum in which student will engage in project-based learning as they connect their subjects to the outdoor learning environment. Chawla (2019) defines "nature-based learning an educational approach that utilizes the natural environment as the content or context for learning" (slide 4). If CLOS is approved, the educators hired at CLOS will spend time reviewing the curriculum choices and working with the head administrator to make selections on which high quality instructional materials will be adopted. The CLOS team comprehends how important high quality instructional materials (HQIM) are to successful student outcomes. The use of HQIM will form the instructional core of the curriculum and help ensure students gain the skills they need to thrive at school and in their community. Marzano (2003) underscores the critical role of HQIM in the classroom by reminding educators that "one of the most significant factors that impacts student achievement is that teachers commit to implementing a guaranteed and viable curriculum to ensure no matter who teaches a given class, the curriculum will address certain essential content and provide a coherent experience for every student." Additionally, all HQIM materials approved by NMPED represent a variety of cultural and linguistic perspectives and highlight diversity in culture and language through multiple perspectives to support students in making meaning of each content area (NMPED (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/instructional-materials/>), Instructional Materials)



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Currently, the applicant team is considering the following HQIM materials as we believe they align to the CLOS mission, and curriculum vision:

| Content Area | HQIM Choice |
|----------------|---|
| ELA | Core Knowledge Language Arts by Amplify Education, Inc. |
| Math | Eureka Math |
| Science | STEM Accelerate Learning Inc. |
| Social Studies | IMPACT Social Studies, Learning and Working Together, |

A brief description of the HQIM selections is listed below.

Amplify Education *Core Knowledge Language Arts* (CKLA) is a K–5 core literacy is grounded in the science of reading principles and include a structured literacy foundation. The CKLA approach used by Amplify Education Inc. integrates science, social studies, and the arts (Please see the attached PDF that provides an overview to the Amplify CKLA curriculum.)

Eureka Math is included as a strong possible choice for math as it is developed from a UDL framework and provides tools to help meet students individualized needs.

Accelerate Learning interactive STEM curriculum is designed to engage students' natural curiosity and meets the CLOS mission to apply STEM to natural environment with experiences that connect content to their lived experiences.

Impact Social Studies by McGraw Hill designs lessons around essential questions and an inquiry based approach. This textbook aligns with our PBL approach.



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Additionally, The CLOS team will use the resources listed below to support their PBL approach in an outdoor setting. These supplemental resources provide an integrated approach that supports learning in an outdoor environment.

1. Hands-On Nature: Information and Activities for Exploring the Environment with Children developed by Jenepher Lingelback (Editor), Lisa Purcell (Editor), Susan Sawyer (Illustrator)
(<https://www.acornnaturalists.com/catalogsearch/result/?q=Jenepher+Lingelback+%28Editor%29%2C+Lisa+Purcell+%28Editor%29%2C+Susan+Sawyer+%28Illustrator%29>)
2. Indigenous Wisdom Curriculum (<https://indianpuebloeducation.org/>) developed by the NM Pueblos.
3. Literacy Moves Outdoors: *Learning Approaches for Any Environment* by Valerie Bang-Jensen
(<https://www.heinemann.com/authors/100407.aspx>)

CLOS teachers will use the NMPED Instructional Scope Documents (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/curriculum-instruction/new-mexico-instructional-scope-nmis/>) to help guide their planning of the scope and sequence of the curriculum. CLOS teachers will be required to take the Canvas Training that will provide insight on how to use these documents The CLOS Team will carefully review the following NMPED instructional scope documents:

1. NM Indigenous Instructional Scope
2. NM Language Arts Instructional Scopes
3. NM Mathematics Instructional Scope
4. NM Science Instructional Scope

The CLOS teachers will plan together to develop integrate PBL lessons using the attached PBL template. The CLOS applicant team believes that using the attached PBL template will guarantee that teachers scaffold their planning as they engage in focused conversations with their peers. During the planning they will need to constantly reflect on how they are meeting the needs of ALL learners and what target scaffolds are needed to assist students as they monitor students' progress.

An example of a PBL lesson at CLOS would be a project entitled, *What Happens when you Plant a Seed?* This project would incorporate math, literacy, science, art, and reading. Students would be guided by essential questions on how to take care of a planted seed and, at the same time begin to understand the delicate and amazing process of seed germination. Students would have choices on how to tell the story of what happened to the seed they planted. The project would be developed around the following standards:

Math

Science

Science of Reading

ELA



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Describe and compare measurable attributes.

CCSS.Math.Content.K.MD.A.1
(<https://www.thecorestandards.org/Math/Content/K/MD/A/1/>)

Describe measurable attributes of objects, such as length or weight.

Describe several measurable attributes of a single object.

Students who demonstrate understanding can:
K-LS1-1. Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive.

Students will demonstrate how to blend phonemes

Combining individual sounds to make a word

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.K.4
(<https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/K/4/>)
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on kindergarten reading and content.



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Classify objects and count the number of objects in each category.

CCSS.Math.Content.K.MD.B.3
(<https://www.thecorestandards.org/Math/Content/K/MD/B/3/>)

Classify objects into given categories; count the numbers of objects in each category and sort the categories by count.

K-ESS2-2. Construct an argument supported by evidence for how plants and animals (including humans) can change the environment to meet their needs.

Students will demonstrate how to manipulate phonemes by

Adding, deleting, or substituting sounds in a word to create new words

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.K.4.a
(<https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/K/4/a/>)
Identify new meanings for familiar words and apply them accurately (e.g., knowing *duck* is a bird and learning the verb to *duck*).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.K.5
(<https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/K/5/>)
With guidance and support from adults, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings.



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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.4
(<https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/K/4/>)
Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.

K-ESS3-1. Use a model to represent the relationship between the needs of different plants or animals (including humans) and the places they live.

Students will demonstrate knowledge of consonant-vowel-consonant constructions

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.K.5.a
(<https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/K/5/a/>)
Sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.1
(<https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/K/1/>)
With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.2
(<https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/K/2/>)
With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.3
(<https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/K/3/>)
With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story



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The outdoor environment will provide the perfect setting for learning about how seeds grow and what elements can help or hurt the seeds' growth. While outside on a nature walk the teacher will point out seeds that have fallen from plants and trees, etc. and ask students what will happen when they plant a seed. The teacher will read aloud books about seeds like *From Seed to Plant* by Gail Gibbons or *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle. The teacher will also scaffold the lesson by using pictures with names to identify the objects. Also, students will be able to find and organize seeds and plants they find outside by color and size. The possible PBL on planting a seeds is to demonstrate how powerful and seamless it will be to integrate subject areas and provide students with hands-on engaging learning as they explore the lifecycle of plants.

If CLOS is approved to begin a charter school, during the planning year, the CLOS head administrators, teachers, and hopefully family members will come together to vet HQIM materials and plan PBL project in September of 2025. A timeline is provided below for the curriculum development.

September: Gather, review, vet and select HQIM materials and decide the PBL projects for the 2026-27 school year. This process will involve taking a look at the big picture and ensuring the curriculum aligns with the schools' mission and vision.

October: Outline the "big" ideas and topics and align them with the standards

November and December: Dig into the standards and unpack them to ensure all of the standards are met. Develop assessments to document student growth and outcomes aligned to the standards.

January- March: Writing and sequencing the lessons that are part of the projects and daily school environment. This process includes the following steps:

Select the Standards

Brainstorming Ideas that are culturally relevant

Decide the Scope of the Project and how to incorporate all content areas

Differentiate the lessons to support students' needs and determine how students will be assessed

Understand the essential questions and how they align to the school mission

Designing the Project to ensure student engagement and an a UDL approach to support student's needs

April- May: Seek community stakeholder's feedback and tweak to ensure the local community's ideas are incorporated.

Curriculum is usually referred to as a long-term course of study which includes the objectives of the course, the materials and assessments to be used, and learner outcomes. During the planning year, the CLOS educator team will develop a scope and sequence that includes standards, objectives, content, and materials, and



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assessments.

Supporting Students through the curriculum:

The CLOS team understands the power of literature and the importance of the literature and the power literature has. It can convince readers of the way life *should* be. Therefore, when literature espouse only one way of life, those who adhere to another may feel isolated or feel less of value. Traditionally, the literature being read in public schools promotes a “white and western” culture. The problem is that a large percent of students are not part of this culture and as a result, in the area of literature, some students are being marginalized. The 2024 STARS 40 Day count reports that 95% of students in the MISD system are Hispanic. Teachers at CLOS must find ways to validate and affirm their students' cultures and literature can be this tool. The CLOS mission focuses on developing expert learners who have the skills and knowledge to care for themselves and other. Therefore, the CLOS team realized the importance of teachers evaluating their own positions in their classrooms and be willing to open their classrooms to the sociocultural forces in the lives of their students. As teachers select books for their classroom they will use literature as either a “mirror or a window” (Sims, 1993, p. 379). Literature should help students learn about other cultures and let their students see themselves in the stories they hear or read. When students see characters in these stories, which look similar to themselves, they compare themselves to these characters, so the books teachers select to use in the classroom can have a powerful influence on students' self-worth (Quintero, 2010). Given the powerful impact literature can have on a person's life, teachers must be conscious about the choices of literature they are using in their classrooms. The literature they choose must not portray stereotypes of ethnic groups; rather it should portray various ethnic groups in their “authentic” culture.

We know that New Mexico educates students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) at a rate higher than the national average, yet underutilizes SPED funds; many students with IEP's are not receiving services they need to access learning. (NM LFC, 2023). We know that special education sets accessibility requirements such as a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), and the 11 considerations for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) that emphasize behavioral supports and modified means of engagement. We are committed to inclusive instruction that can satisfy these requirements and meet the individual needs of all learners. With a student-centered and family-supportive approach to the IEP process, we know we can address and accommodate diverse learning.

We understand that many New Mexico schools are struggling to serve their students, as evidenced by low student outcomes, low attendance rates, and low literacy rates. A Nature-Based Learning (NBL) lens has a causal relationship with improved learner outcomes that traditional classroom learning lacks: it improves cognitive skills and executive functioning, social skills and belonging, and physical and mental wellness. In our natural learning environment, we can:

- provide holistic development that focuses on kindergarten-readiness skills and closes the gap for early learners
- improve literacy through science-of-reading and instill the joy of reading with a language-rich environment
- boost math skills through play-based learning that builds cognitive skills along a developmental progression.



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We understand that outdoor education and NBL is better for all learning - not just for learning about nature - as a unique and versatile resource that benefits all learners, making it a viable and valuable educational choice. Collins Lake Outdoor School Is dedicated to developing strong readers and believes active interactive strategic processes that support the science of reading (SOR) will build student fluency and promote reading comprehension. This year, we will be hosting our second Summer Reading Program that aligns the goals of the NMPED and our outdoor-based learning approach. Through partnering with NMPED, we expect this program will continue to see increased achievement in reading skills. (Please see the news clip covering our first program: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ct7-LFlcMOE> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ct7-LFlcMOE>)). (NMPED, 2025)

The curriculum at CLOS will provide accessible education for learners with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and for learners with disabilities, we recognize the responsibility to meet expectations from families that their children are given the chance to become successful learners. Collins Lake Outdoor School has an integrated curriculum that centers the strength of cultural and linguistic relevant learning while accessing extended learning programs, technology, research-based reading programs, and resources for social and emotional wellness - all essential assets of an equitable education. (NMPED, 2022) We believe that effective education is a shared effort that includes cultural leaders, field experts, mentors, and role-models who can prepare learners beyond academic content, and empower them with the social and practical skills to pursue their life goals. We see our commitment to meeting the needs of learners and expectations of families as a primary reason for Mora students to choose Collins Lake Outdoor School.

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[direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1099429](https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1099429) (<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1099429>)

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Applicant Evidence :



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CKLA_3E_ProgramGuide...

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Q7.

D(1). Bilingual Multicultural Education, Indian Education, Hispanic Education and Black Education - Bilingual Multicultural, Indian, Hispanic and Black Education Acts

• **A complete response must ensure equal education opportunities for students in New Mexico by:**

- 1. Addressing the goals of the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act (NMSA §22-231) including:**
 - a. providing students with opportunities to expand their conceptual and linguistic abilities and potentials in a successful and positive manner;**
 - b. teaching students to appreciate the value and beauty of different languages and cultures; and**
 - c. meeting state academic content standards and benchmarks in all subject areas.**
- 2. Addressing the goals of the Indian Education Act (NMSA §22-23A-1) including:**



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- a. Ensuring equitable and culturally relevant learning environments and culturally relevant instructional materials for American Indian students
 - b. Providing for the study, development and implementation of educational systems that affect the educational success of American Indian students to close the achievement gap, increase graduation rates;
 - c. Encouraging and fostering parental involvement in the education of their children; and
 - d. Providing mechanisms to improve educational opportunities for Native American students for the purpose of closing the achievement gap, increasing graduation rates, and increasing postsecondary enrollment, retention, and completion.
3. Addressing the purpose of the Hispanic Education Act (NMSA §22-23B-2), including:
- a. Providing for the study, development and implementation of educational systems that affect the educational success of Hispanic students to close the achievement gap, increase graduation rates;
 - b. Encouraging and fostering parental involvement in the education of their children; and
 - c. Providing mechanisms to improve educational opportunities for Hispanic students for the purpose of closing the achievement gap, increasing graduation rates, and increasing postsecondary enrollment, retention, and completion.
 - d. initiate and organize an equity council composed of multiple school stakeholders with the intent to create more equitable learning opportunities for marginalized students.
4. Address the purpose of the Black Education Act (HB 43), including:
- a. Developing and including anti-racism policies
 - b. Developing curricula and instructional materials that recognize and teach black culture and anti-racism. Implementing anti-racism training for teachers and staff
 - c. Opportunities to explore one's identity and societal systems that may impact their identity and future.
5. Narrative Only



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The applicant team and the governing board are committed to establishing a school that enforces the Bilingual Multicultural Act, the Indian Education Act, the Hispanic Education Act, and the Black Education Act. The effective implementation of these acts will require professional development and training for staff and the inclusion of family members' input into the establishment of policies and procedures. The CLOS applicant team and governing board is committed to providing learning activities that incorporate students' family, language and household cultures.

Bilingual Multicultural Education Act (NMSA §22-23-1)

Although, CLOS will not be implementing a bilingual education program, the CLOS applicant team and governing board understand their critical roles in developing students who can demonstrate proficiency in needed literacy and language skills and meet state academic content standards and benchmarks in all subjects (NMSA §22-23-1).

The CLOS team understands the value of students being able to use their home language to scaffold their learning. When students are attempting to learn a new language they will use their prior knowledge of language to make sense out of the new language. The outdoor learning environment at Collins Lake Outdoor School provides students with a unique and stress-free environment to develop language skills. Research demonstrates that students in an outdoor setting have longer utterances and display more lexical diversity was richer (Richardson & Murray, 2016). Additionally, students at CLOS will work with student buddies in the outdoor environment. Students will be able to share their languages and culture with each other as they navigate different languages. Teacher will be able to use hands on learning strategies to help students learn the content. An example of this would be use of real life objects (realia) in the outdoor setting. Students will be able to see the word, touch the word and share the word in more than one language.

The 2023-24 NM Vistas site reports that Mora Independent School District had less than or equal to 20% of MISD students who have been identified as English Language Learners. The 2023-24 NM Vistas data indicated that less than or equal to 10% of Mora's students identified as English Language Learners achieved proficiency on the ACCESS English language development assessments. (Source NMVistas.org (https://www.nmvistas.org/Mora_Independent_Schools#englishLearningProgress))

Indian Education Act (NMSA §22-23A-1):

The Collins Lake Applicant team and governing board are committed to alleviate the difficult situation many Indigenous students face in the classroom because of the language divide between their native language and English. The CLOS team recognize how the historical use of "repressive policies" (McCarty & Watahomigie, 2001, p. 489) in the United States which have led to punishing indigenous students for speaking their native languages and celebrating their cultures. The CLOS team's mission aligns to the Indian Education as the mission emphasizes the importance of educating the whole person- the emotional, spiritual, social, artistic, physical, and intellectual components (Nava, 2001). By weaving authentic Native American curriculum in an outdoor learning environment the team will create opportunities for all students to connect all aspects of their lives to their learning. The CLOS team will incorporate curriculum from the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, A Pueblo-Based Educational Curricula



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m (<https://indianpuebloeducation.org/>) and NMPED's Indigenous Instructional Scope, Tenets, Strategies, and Resources (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/curriculum-instruction/new-mexico-instructional-scope-nmis/new-mexico-indigenous-scope/>), the CLOS team will unite authentic Native American curriculum into outdoor learning strategies. The CLOS team holds a deep respect for the Indigenous ways of knowing and their connection and respect for the land and water.

The NM Vistas (https://www.nmvistas.org/Mora_Independent_Schools) site 2023-24 for Mora Independent Schools indicates that the data for Native American students is masked. The United States Census Data (<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/moracountynewmexico/PST045224>) that 3.9% of the population identify as Native American or Alaskan Native alone.

Public schools, in theory, are supposed to give each person, regardless of identity, the opportunity to be successful. However, assessment data from the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) indicates that only 23% NM Native American Students were proficient in reading in 2023 and 13% of Native American Students were proficient in math (New Mexico Education Data Summary, n.d.). The CLOS team providing an engaging culturally relevant learning environment and materials will provide Native American Students and all students at CLOS with more opportunities to make connections to the learning and ultimately, lead to better student outcomes.

Hispanic Education Act (NMSA §22-23B-2):

CLOS will employ instructional methods that engage and reach diverse learners. In order to effectively reach all students, teachers will utilize instructional strategies, which are inclusive of students' cultures. The more connections students can make with the curriculum the more meaningful it becomes for students. Parents and family members will be invited to share their funds of knowledge with the school community. Moll (1992) argues part of Hispanic student's failure in school is directly related to the way teachers educate this group, with the bottom line being these teachers fail because they do not incorporate "household" culture or "funds of knowledge" into their teaching. Moll (1992) presents data, which substantiates that children are learning valuable skills from their household cultures and when teachers incorporated this cultural knowledge into their lessons, students were more engaged in their learning. The CLOS team will seek out families' funds of knowledge and incorporate them into the curriculum. The outdoor setting will provide families with opportunities to share their knowledge on many topics from cultivating the land to building structures.

CLOS teachers and staff will engage in professional development that will help them examine their own biases and how they communicate with family members. Staff and teachers will complete NMPED's Canvas Course: *Meeting the Moment: Addressing Racism Through Recognition & Response*. Additionally, the CLOS team will strive to make sure all families feel welcomed through the use of interpreters as needed and sending communications (newsletters, etc.) in the parents/caregivers language.

Black Education Act (HB 43):



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The CLOS applicant team and board members will meet the following requirements of the Black Education Act (<https://legiscan.com/NM/text/HB43/id/2357262>):

1. Post the Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression hotline and link to the portal is included on the website, in handbooks, and includes in CLOS team members' email signatures.
2. Provide a culturally and linguistically relevant curriculum that is curriculum relevant to students' experiences and cultures.
3. Create a discipline policy that abides by the key mandates of the act and is developed and vetted by the family members of the school, and is filed with NMPED.
4. Ensure all CLOS team members (staff, teachers, etc.) complete the annual required Anti-Racism and Racial Sensitivity Trainings.

Collins Lake Outdoor School applicant team and governing board members fully support the Black Education Act and will implement all the required parts of the act. Most importantly, the team believes that all members of the CLOS team must understand how culture impacts the learning and development of Black students. Collins Lake Outdoor School staff and board members will be required to meet the Black Act training requirement by completing the annual anti-racism and discrimination trainings. The CLOS team anticipates using the NMPED's free webinar series (*Meeting the Moment: Addressing Racism through Recognition & Response*) on the CANVAS platform to meet this training requirement.

The CLOS applicant team and board believe educators must look critically at their curriculum since it is much more than what is being taught. Curriculum is everything that happens in the school environment. The CLOS teachers will seek out which cultures in the traditional curriculum are being left out and incorporate multiple perspectives into their curriculum. All cultural groups should be given authentic representation and not just presented on certain dates or within certain areas of study. The CLOS team aligns with Gloria Ladson Billings' (1995a) research on how to effectively serve Black students by drawing upon their students' culture as a vehicle for learning. Ladson-Billings (1995b) underscores the importance of the concept of "cultural congruence." This concept is the idea that children learn better when teachers teach in ways that are culturally similar to students' home culture

The CLOS team is dedicated to creating a safe and welcoming school environment that enable students to value and understand multiple perspectives and critically examine the world around them in order to strive for prejudice reduction within the classroom and beyond. The CLOS team, board members, family members, and students will co-create a restorative justice discipline policy that will be reviewed annually.

The CLOS team will implement restorative practices and strategies to help students resolve conflicts. The CLOS teachers will receive restorative justice training through that will provide effective restorative justice strategies and will help prepare them to remain calm, model cognition, maintain self-control, and avoid power struggles. The focus of the restorative justice strategies will focus on students finding peaceful ways to solve problems while



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reflecting on their actions and how their actions may have affected others (Lang *et.al.*, 2016) Restorative justice “can be used proactively or after an incident, ultimately serving to provide a more equitable format for discussing critical topics or resolving community conflicts.” (Collins, 2021).

The restorative justice approach aligns with CLOS mission as this type of approach teaches students skills needed to care for themselves and their peers. Restorative justice techniques focus on problem solving. The CLOS team will be mindful of students’ needs when engaging students in the restorative justice process. As needed, the team will use tools such as self-regulation hand-held tools, visuals for identifying feelings, and communication tools to support students.

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Q8.

D.(2) Bilingual Multicultural Education, Indian Education, Hispanic Education and Black Education - Equity Plan

Proposed school will create an effective and equitable system of supports for all students focused on root-cause analysis, equity-focused leadership, and continuous improvement, and culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum and pedagogy

• **A complete response must ensure equal education opportunities for students in New Mexico by:**

- 1. A plan to initiate and organize an equity council composed of multiple school stakeholders with the intent to create more equitable learning opportunities for marginalized students.**
- 2. If the proposed school is to be located in a historically defined Indian impacted school district, a plan for conducting a needs assessment to determine what supports are needed in the public charter school, at home and in the community to help Indian students succeed in school, graduate with a diploma of excellence and be prepared to enter post-secondary education or the workplace.**
- 3. A detailed plan for the implementation of a culturally and linguistically responsive framework.**
- 4. A detailed plan for attracting and retaining quality and diverse teachers to teach New Mexico's multicultural student population**
- 5. Narrative Only**



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Equity Council Plan:

If approved, the CLOS applicant team and governing board will implement the process of establishing an equity council. First, the governing board will be asked to approve an application to nominate or self-nominate a community member to the equity council. When establishing the CLOS equity council, the Collins Lake applicant team and governing board will make certain that they utilize the New Mexico Public Education Department's required pieces: the readiness assessment, the advisement package, the strategic equity plan (plan and budgets), and the culturally and linguistically responsive inventory and framework. CLOS recognizes that NMPED requires that 50% of equity council members to represent students, families, experts and community organizations that represent the student groups listed in the Martinez Yazzie Consolidate lawsuit (Source NMPED Equity Council Resources (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/yazzie-martinez-updates/equity-council-resources/>)).

The CLOS applicant team and governing board recognizes the important role the CLOS Equity Council will have in making recommendations to them. The Collins Lake Outdoor School applicant team and governing board will seek nominations for the CLOS equity council. CLOS will seek out individuals who are part of the local Mora and Las Vegas communities. The CLOS team will advertise the nomination process to the equity council through the website, newsletters and parent/family meetings. The applicant team and governing board believe all community members invested in the school should be allowed to have a seat at the table and not just for visibility, but to provide insight into meaningful decision-making. All nomination forms will need to be submitted to the head administrator. Once the CLOS head administrator has determined who will serve on the CLOS equity council, the equity council will meet every 6 weeks to advise the CLOS leadership team and governing board. Please see the attached Equity Council (EC) Flowchart and how the steps to create an EC that will inform the CLOS leadership team and governing board.

The CLOS applicant team believes education needs to be a continual reflection and that positive transformation can happen when all stakeholders commit to ensuring all students can make connections with the subject matter and their languages and cultures. Transformation will happen at CLOS as students discover their own value and the value of their classmates. Eisenhart (2000) maintains that individual stories can "...affect and change culture" (p. 371) if one is willing to discover and explore how individuals adapt and adjust to their culture.

Collins Lake Outdoor School is open to all NM students. Given the expertise of the Collins Lake applicant team, the CLOS team anticipates the school will attract and serve diverse students with disabilities along with diverse students who are in the general education programs. The CLOS team will use a person-centered planning approach with all students - focusing on their needs and interests. However, this approach takes on a greater significance for our students with disabilities. The CLOS equity team will provide the school with feedback and guidance on how the school is meeting the criteria outlined in the CLR framework and restorative justice approach. The equity council will review the school's discipline policy and data and provide feedback. CLOS will focus on teaching students to be accepting of others and to find peaceful ways to resolve conflicts. "Research findings in general and across audiences demonstrated that strategies that focus on increasing appropriate behaviors are deemed to be more acceptable than strategies to reduce behaviors" (TASH, 2014, p. 105). The



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unique outdoor setting at CLOS will help students garner a deeper appreciation of what it means for students to make connections with nature, and with each other. Teachers will create opportunities for students to connect all aspects of their lives to their learning. Hopefully these connections will help students see how their choices influence their communities and even the world.

The NMPED Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) Framework requirement is inexorably linked to all aspects of education. The equity council and CLOS team will use the CLR framework tool as a foundation to create the unique CLOS CLR framework. The CLOS equity council will be asked to challenge the CLOS staff to ensure the CLOS curriculum embraces diversity and is working towards social justice through validating and affirming the stories of those who are marginalized. The equity council will allow the communities voice to be heard and help guide the work of the school. The equity council and the school leadership team will embrace their partnership to advocate for systemic changes that support equity for all of CLOS students.

Teacher Recruitment:

Collins Lake Outdoor School will work with New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) School of Education to recruit elementary and special education teachers. If approved to open in the Fall of 2026, CLOS will enter into a school-university partnership with NMHU. The partnership will support the development of "home-grown" teachers and staff at CLOS with a NMHU faculty member supporting CLOS with professional development. The CLOS Team has a strong partnership with NMHU and looks forward to student teachers observing at the school. NMHU is a Hispanic serving institution and many Northern New Mexicans attend NMHU. Collins Lake anticipates recruiting NMHU teacher and Mora community members to teach at CLOS.

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Applicant Evidence :



CLOS Equity Council Flo...

Uploaded on 5/6/2025 by

Becky Kappus

Q9.

E. Graduation Requirements

• A complete response must

1. Identify all of the proposed school's graduation requirements;
2. Provide an explanation of how the proposed school will support students behind on graduation to earn a diploma.
3. Provide proposed Alternative Demonstration of Competency policies, if any
4. Align to state graduation requirements OR explicitly identify all requirements that vary from state minimum requirements; and
5. If there are variances from state minimum requirements explain the following:
 - a. why the proposed school believes the change is important
 - b. how the change supports the mission
 - c. how the change ensures student readiness for college, career, or other post-secondary opportunities.
6. Narrative Only

Not applicable for CLOS.

Q10.

E.(1) Instruction - Teaching and Instructional Philosophy

• A complete response must

1. Describe the teaching and instructional philosophy of the proposed school;
2. Identify primary instructional methods to be implemented that ensure equity and that align to the philosophy;
3. Identify information that demonstrates the instructional methods are researchbased; and
4. Describe how the educational philosophy and instructional methods support and align to the mission and curriculum.
5. How the proposed instructional methods will best support the population the school intends to serve.



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6. Narrative Only

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The Collins Lake applicant team supports different perspective and philosophies. The team understands that each teacher will bring a unique approach to support the students they educate. However, the overall instructional philosophy of the school is based on a **Constructivist** approach. The constructivist theory of education advocates for students learning through experiences and integrating knowledge into that which they already know (Noddings, 1995). The learners actively construct their own understandings of reality through interactions and connections. The applicant team regards learning as an active, social process, and it is through this process that children learn self-control and needed skills to be successful. The Collins Lake Outdoor School instructional methods support a constructivist framework. An experiential approach based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), project based learning (PBL) and Nature-based Learning (NBL) will be the foundation of instruction.

Universal Design for Learning

The Universal Design approach equates to accessibility for all learners. The UDL approach will ensure CLOS educators are designing lessons that are meeting the needs of all learners. Nelson (2021) explains that “UDL requires you to deeply investigate how you design your learning environment (i.e., wherever instruction is delivered), how you design your lessons, how you communicate with your learners, and what tools and resources you make available to them” (p. 1). The UDL approach means teachers must consider all their students before and during the planning of their lessons. Planning will include the essential standards, objectives, outcomes and materials. However, the UDL approach goes further as teachers will include differentiation and accommodations for students. Additionally, teacher will consider cultural connections and applicable ways to engage students in the learning. A critical piece to UDL is planning to make certain that the materials and content align to what the student will discover, accomplish and master as a result of the lesson. Because each student is unique and at different place in their learning, this means that teachers must provide multiple strategies for student engagement and student mastery of the content. An example using UDL in an outdoor setting might be providing one student with a unique graphic organizer to help the student make connections with the content. Whereas, another student may need more support with writing and needs a software program to support writing. As teachers use UDL, it will be essential for them to consider all of the learners’ needs and accommodations to maintain the least restrictive environment. Teachers will need to communicate with family members to better understand how best to serve their student. Teachers at CLOS will be trained on using UDL and the UDL guidelines during their PD days in July. The UDL guidelines are provided by CAST (2024) and attached to this question. The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) ensures that students with disabilities are educated alongside their peers whenever possible, with necessary supports. Research compiled by CAST.org (<https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>) provides evidence that UDL is highly effective at increasing student outcomes. The outdoor setting at Collins Lake Ranch provides learners with multiple means of engagement and sensory experiences. The Universal Design instructional approach aligns with CLOS’ mission because this approach focuses on creating opportunities to develop students’ skills and knowledge through active learning and individual support.

The Chart below highlights research evidence of the benefits of UDL:



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| Source of Research | Research Finding |
|--|---|
| Rock, M. L. (2008). Introduction to the Special Issue: Improving Outcomes for Students With Exceptionalities in the General Curriculum. | Increase in Learners' literacy outcomes |
| King-Sears, M. E., & Johnson, T. M. (2020). Universal design for learning chemistry instruction for students with and without learning disabilities. | Students with UDL lessons scored significantly higher |
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Project Based Learning

Project-based learning aligns with the CLOS vision to cultivate a learning community that values interconnectedness, embraces diversity and multiple ways of knowing. A PBL approach allows learners to consider solutions to real problems and incorporate strategies that engage and reach diverse learners. Farber (2017) explains that PBL allows "students take a real problem or issue, explore it in teams, develop a product and/or solution, or presentation and share it to an authentic, engaged audience" (p. 10). The more connections students can make with the curriculum the more meaningful it becomes for students. A project-based approach provides students with the opportunity to plan and carry out a project within a cross-content approach. The teacher will provide scaffolds, resources, and other materials to support the work. The PBL approach will be modified to meet students' grade levels.

A project approach to learning support both individualized and team learning. A single student or a team of students will decide how they will complete the project. PBL projects support more than students' cognitive skills. Working on projects can also support psychomotor and social skills. Research supports the effectiveness of PBL. Researchers at the University of Michigan and Michigan State found statistically significant differences on the positive impact in literacy outcomes when using a PBL approach with second graders (Duke, *Halvorsen, Strachan, Kim, & Konstantopoulos*, 2020). Research demonstrates that the PBL approach has many benefits for students including the recognition for students that their voices matter (Beisel, 2021).

The CLOS team views a PBL approach as a powerful mechanism to involve family and community members. Projects become the embodiment of funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992) in action. Parents, community members, and students will come together to create, produce, and share knowledge and experience. Projects allow each student to use and share their funds of knowledge. The CLOS team knows that PBL requires dedication by teachers as they plan, organize, and assess the process. Nonetheless, the team is dedicated to using PBL as



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research demonstrates that student outcomes and skills improve. Wurdinger (2016) presents evidence that “PBL is effective for all age levels because it taps into students’ interests and allows them to create projects that result in meaningful learning experiences” (p. 18). Teachers at CLOS will work together to develop projects that are aligned to standards and provide meaningful learning experiences.

Active Learning in a Nature-Based Environment

The CLOS team will engage students with multiple instructional strategies which engage students in an outdoor environment. Active learning strategies emphasize both content and process. Incorporating music, movement, and other active learning activities will promote student engagement in the classroom. Additionally, students have fun while they learn. Teaching methods must engage students and provide opportunities for all students to excel. The outdoor setting at CLOS will provide a place where students feel valued and where they are able to discover and develop their own abilities.

The beauty of learning in an outdoor setting is the connections students will make as they explore and learn. For example, a simple lesson on a certain phonological sound such as “sh” can become a sensory learning experience as they find items in nature with that sound and use a stick to write the word in the mud use a stone to write the word on another stone. For instance, a complex project on the water cycle and the importance of water will help students develop skills and knowledge that are connected to social studies, science, reading and be able to make connections to the land and community in the outdoor setting. The natural environment provides students with many opportunities to experience what they are learning using sounds, colors, smells and visual.

The CLOS team understands the importance of creating a safe environment. The team will have a “home base” for students as they work outside and we will use the buddy system at all times. Students will be taught routines for and procedures on how to work outside.

The Chart below highlights research evidence of the benefits of learning in an outdoor environment:

“Outdoor environments stimulate curiosity by providing students with sensory experiences that spark exploration and inquiry.”

Source School of Education: American University
(<https://soeonline.american.edu/blog/benefits-of-outdoor-classrooms/#:~:text=Cognitive%20Development%20and%20Outdoor%20Learning,the%20Frontiers%20in%20Psychology%20journal.>)



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"What emerged from this critical review was a coherent narrative experiences with nature do promote children's academic learning and seem to provide children's development as persons and as environmental stewards."

Source Kuo, Barnes, & Jordan
(<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6401598/>)

"Outdoor classrooms offer unique opportunities for hands-on, experiential learning, especially in STEM subjects."

Source: OutClass
(<https://outdoorclassrooms.com/blog/integrating-stem-curriculum-in-outdoor-classrooms/>)

"First of all, children experience increased sensory engagement in nature. It provides an opportunity to make discoveries and learn new things while being active and using fine and gross motor skills, helping improve sensory integration."

Source: Pritts: **Autism and Nature: Structured Outdoor Learning**
(<https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/nurture-structured-outdoor-learning/#:~:text=Research%20supports%20the%20benefits%20of,sense%20of%20time%20and%20order.>)

"Outdoor learning provides a rich and stimulating environment that can enhance learning experiences for all children. For students with special needs, it may actually remove barriers to learning and may improve self-regulation and social emotional development."

Source: Green Schoolyards America
([https://www.greenschoolyards.org/inclusive-design#:~:text=Outdoor%20learning%20is%20more%20than,improved%20\(Ambrosini%2C%202014\).](https://www.greenschoolyards.org/inclusive-design#:~:text=Outdoor%20learning%20is%20more%20than,improved%20(Ambrosini%2C%202014).))

While implementing content and integrating Common Core Standards, curriculum, and community, we will provide accessible, experiential, and culturally and linguistically relevant teaching for learners with diverse needs. Our planning also recognizes the NMPED Strategic Plan goals for all schools throughout New Mexico, and the mandate of the Yazzie-Martinez response to provide equitable and relevant instruction for learners to gain and



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master fundamental skills to succeed. Culturally relevant instructional strategies will be embedded in all content areas and instructional strategies. The CLOS team values culturally relevant teaching strategies because they will be able to better educate students from all cultural backgrounds when using strategies that include the history and accomplishments of the students' culture in the curriculum. When educators take advantage of the assets students bring to the classroom, they create a successful learning environment for everyone. The CLOS team understands the responsibility of teachers to recognize the various cultural backgrounds present within their classrooms and then adjust their teaching methods to fit the various styles that exist in the classroom. The applicant team will provide professional development as needed to support teachers in using culturally responsive teaching strategies.

Collins Lake Outdoor School will be uniquely located on 300 acres of forested land, home to the beauty and biodiversity of northern New Mexico as a living presence in our daily learning. Focus areas include: land ethic and cultural heritage, adaptive arts and outdoor recreation, and environmental education and sustainability. Our safe and ADA accessible outdoor campus is also Wi-Fi accessible, allowing learners to incorporate online and digital technology into their learning. In the outdoor setting, students can make learning meaningful: explore, inquire, engage, play and take risks, build identity and community, attain self-efficacy and autonomy - and gain learning skills that last a lifetime.

More than a connection with nature, Collins Lake Outdoor School is supported by a connection with community; educators, leaders, and artists who provide learners with mentoring, shared knowledge, and healing. Currently, the Collins Lake Outdoor Education program partners with outdoor educators to build a network of resources specific to adaptive outdoor learning; specialized learning materials and educational resources for learners such as outdoor equipment and winter gear will be provided as part of our commitment to removing economic barriers to outdoor engagement for our learners. Additionally, our program is in partnership with New Mexico Highlands University: the School of Education and the Institute for Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Learning and Teaching will play a central role guiding effective instructional programming, and teacher development. We intend to support new teachers and retain high-quality teachers, especially special education teachers through this partnership. Sharing resources and responsibility for educational engagement is a long-standing practice at Collins Lake and is central to the culture of our learning community. This culturally rich and well-resourced community makes Collins Lake Outdoor School a place for high-quality learning where 21st century learners can thrive. The team understands the benefits of outdoor education, especially for students who are not effectively served by traditional classroom settings, and commit to developing UDL project-based learning experiences in a nature-based learning environment.

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Applicant Evidence :

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Uploaded on **5/19/2025** by
Becky Kappus



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Q11.

E.(2) Instruction - Yearly Calendar and Daily Schedule**• A complete response must****1. Include a yearly calendar that identifies the following:**

- a. Annual start date and end date**
- b. Teacher professional development days and times**
- c. School-wide assessment periods**
- d. School days, holidays, and partial days**
- e. Teacher parent conferences;**

2. • Include a daily schedule that identifies the following:

- a. Instructional times**
- b. Break times**
- c. Start and end times**
- d. Differences in the daily schedule for full and partial days;**

3. Meet all minimum hour (total instructional time) requirements laid out in NMSA 22-2-8.1;**4. Describe how the calendar and schedule support the proposed school's educational program;****5. Describe how the calendar and schedule are optimal for achieving high outcomes for the anticipated student population;****6. Describe the extended learning time programs to improve academic success of students and professional learning of teachers;****7. If this is an elementary school, and you are participating in k-5 plus or extended learning program, describe the k-5 plus program and extended learning program and provide your calendar for year 2; and****8. Be supported by the proposed budget found in the Financial Framework section of the application.****9. Describe how the proposed calendar supports and values the community it intends to serve.****10. Narrative and Other uploads**



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**Calendar:**

The applicant team of CLOS will ensure that the academic student calendar meets the minimum 1,140 instructional hours per school year as delineated in NMSA 22-2-8.1. If approved, the CLOS team will request a waiver for a 4-day school week. The request for a 4-day week stems from the fact that Mora Independent School District (MISD) received a waiver for a four-day week. The CLOS team anticipates that some students may have older siblings at MISD or family members may be employed by the MISD District. Therefore, the CLOS team believes that the CLOS calendar should mirror the MISD calendar to support families' schedules in the Mora community.

The attached calendars for teachers and students include the start and end dates, teacher professional days, conferences, and holidays. Because CLOS will seek a 4-day week waiver, the calendar does not include any half days. The CLOS team understands that only four days may be used for remote learning if needed due to weather or other undetermined events. The CLOS team understands that the calendar must meet the required hours and will adjust the calendar if there are more than 4 days when school was closed due to weather.

Please note that the New Mexico Charter School Act restricts CLOS to 35 students and as a result the CLOS team will not be able to hire extra staff to cover lunch, recess, and planning times. The Head Administrator, will need to help with covering for teachers. The CLOS team will fully support hiring all ancillary staff to support students with IEPs.

The applicant team has attached the following documents to this prompt:

1. Combined Calendar: This calendar includes the days the required assessments will need to be completed. Because the calendar has so much information, we have provided separate calendars as noted below. Ongoing assessments for students with disabilities and those who will complete ACCESS for Students who are English Learners will depend on where students are in their plan.
2. Student academic calendar
3. Teacher calendar
4. Assessment Calendar
5. Daily Schedule

The student academic calendar is proposing a 4-day week calendar at 157 days with 420 minutes each day. This would result in 65,940 minutes or 1,099 hours of instruction. NMSA 22-2-8.1 allows an elementary school to add up to 60 hours for conferences and professional development. The CLOS team proposes 3 days (21 hours) for conferences and 3 days during the school year for teacher professional development (21 hours). The additional 42 hours brings the total hours to 1,141 hours meeting the required 1,140 hours.



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The teacher calendar includes 6 days for professional development and the last day of the contract is provided as a teacher work day so teachers can complete permanent records and pack up their supplies.

The attached **assessment calendar** outlines the timeframes for required state assessments. The CLOS applicant team understands that NMPED may change the assessment so they will adjust the assessment schedule as needed. The assessment calendar is included as a separate document because of the large number of assessments. Please note all the assessment information comes directly from NMPED. We will use their requirements as the roadmap for this calendar of assessment processes.

The student daily schedule outlines how students will receive 7 hours of instruction each instructional day. The daily schedule includes a 15 minute morning recess and a 30 minute lunch/recess. The CLOS team, in conjunction with CLAC staff, will offer students and families extended learning time programs on several Fridays to improve students' skills and academic success. These SOMA (<https://collinslakeranch.org/outdoor-recreation-education/>) (Sensory, Outdoor, Music, and Art) Days will be communicated to families via newsletters and email.

The CLOS team maintains that the calendar and schedule are optimal for achieving high outcomes for the anticipated student population because students will engage in a rigorous curriculum while exploring learning in a nature-based setting. Students will be engaged in an outdoor setting as weather permits. Students will be confined to the designated school and play area on the property. The campus has a main administration building and 7 Yurts. The main administration building provides offices for staff and private areas for students to receive support services. The calendar provides several breaks for students and staff. The second half (semester) of the year is one week longer than the first semester to accommodate for required testing. The CLOS team believes the calendar will meet the needs of the community as it will mirror what MISD offers. Please see the attached monthly breakdown of days for students.

If approved by the PEC, The CLOS team will meet with families and determine if the families support a K-5 plus calendar. The CLOS applicant team understands the value in the K-5 Plus program, but feel that the decision to add the extra days (charter schools with 4-day weeks add twenty (20) instructional days) needs to be a community stakeholder decision.

The budget attachment in this application provides a budget for 35 students and the budget aligns to the attached calendars in this section.

References:

Chapter 22 - Public Schools 22-2-8.1. School year; length of school day; minimum (n.d.) NMOneSource.com.

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Applicant Evidence :

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
|  CLOS calendar students... Uploaded on 5/15/2025 by Becky Kappus |  student daily schedule.... Uploaded on 5/16/2025 by Becky Kappus |  CLOS Teacher Calendar... Uploaded on 5/16/2025 by Becky Kappus |  Monthly breakdown of ... Uploaded on 5/16/2025 by Becky Kappus |
|  CLOS Assessment Calen... Uploaded on 5/16/2025 by Becky Kappus |  CLOS combined calenda... Uploaded on 5/21/2025 by Becky Kappus | | |

Q12.

E.(3) Instruction - How Instruction will be effective for the student population.

• A complete response must

1. Identify the anticipated student population, including:

- Demographic information based on the local community population
- Educational proficiency based upon enrollment at the school
- Attendance and truancy trends
- English language proficiency
- Diverse populations
- At-Risk populations
- Special Educational needs;

2. Explain any special factors influencing the makeup of the anticipated student population;

3. Explain how the educational philosophy has been designed to meet students' needs;

4. Explain how the instructional methods have been designed to meet students' needs and specifically how they will meet the needs of at-risk students; and

5. Explain how the yearly calendar and daily schedule have been designed to meet students' needs.

6. Explain how the yearly calendar and daily schedule have been designed to meet students' needs.

7. Narrative and Other uploads



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Anticipated Student Population

The STARS 2024-25 report indicates that the Mora Independent School District student population is mainly Hispanic. The data also indicates that about 15% of the student population have been identified as students with disabilities. The data also reveals that a large percent (43.61%) are identified as economically disadvantaged. The NM Vistas site reports proficiency rates for the district. Although much of the data is masked due to small numbers, the overall proficiency rates for the students in MISD are lower than the state averages in science, math and reading.

CLOS believes they will be able to increase proficiency rates as compared to the MISD in math, science, and reading as research demonstrates an increase in student's proficiency rates when they learn in an outdoor setting. (Please see attached research chart for links to research.)

| New Mexico State Proficiency Rates | Mora Independent School District (MISD) |
|---|--|
| 2023-24 | 2023-24 |
| Math: 23% | Math: 10% |
| Science: 38% | Science: 28% |
| Reading: 39 % | Reading: 36% |
| Source: NM Vista (https://www.nmvistas.org/New_Mexico) | Source: NM Vistas (https://www.nmvistas.org/Mora_Independent_Schools) |

| *2024-25 Subgroup Enrollment | Percentage of the Population |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Hispanic | 95.24% |
| Multi-Racial | Less than or equal to 2% |



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| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Caucasian | Less than or equal to 2% |
| Black or African American | Less than or equal to 2% |
| Asian | Less than or equal to 2% |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native | Less than or equal to 2% |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | Less than or equal to 2% |
| Students who are English Learners | Less than or equal to 1% |
| Students with Disabilities | 15.29% |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 43.61% |
| Student identified as Gifted | Less than or equal to 2% |

*Data extracted from the 2024-2025 Enrollment Subgroup Percentages (https://web.ped.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/_legacy/2025/02/SY2024_2025_40D_Enrollment_Subgroup_Percentages.xlsx)

Academic Performance MISD 2023-24 by Subgroups

| *ELA Proficiency Rates | *Math Proficiency Rates | *Science Proficiency Rates |
|---|---|---|
| Overall District: 36% | Overall District: 10% | Overall District: 28% |
| Hispanic: 36.1% | Hispanic: 10.6% | Hispanic: 27.9% |
| Multi-Racial: Data Masked (DM) | Multi-Racial: Data Masked (DM) | Multi-Racial: Data Masked (DM) |
| Caucasian/White: 33.5% | Caucasian/White: 11.0% | Caucasian/White: 15.9% |



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| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Black African American: DM | Black African American: DM | Black African American: DM |
| Asian: DM | Asian: DM | Asian: DM |
| Native American: DM | Native American: DM | Native American: DM |
| English Language Learners: DM | English Language Learners: DM | English Language Learners: DM |
| Students with Disabilities: Less than or equal to 10% | Students with Disabilities: Less than or equal to 10% | Students with Disabilities: Less than or equal to 20% |
| Economically Disadvantaged 36.3% | Economically Disadvantaged: 9.7% | Economically Disadvantaged: 27.4% |

***Data Extracted from NM Vistas | Mora Independent School District**
(https://www.nmvistas.org/Mora_Independent_Schools)

Based on the data provided by NMPED, the CLOS anticipates a large percent of students at CLOS will be Hispanic and that a large percent of students will identified as students with disabilities. Although the data provided by NMPED does not indicate a large percent of student who are English learners, the CLOS team will support students who are learning English with targeted instructional strategies.

The CLOS team will provide a culturally relevant curriculum that draws upon all students' funds of knowledge. The Hispanic community in Mora County has a deep connection to land as many of the community members are ranchers and farmers. (see NM County Website (<https://www.nmcounties.org/counties/mora-county/>)). While engaging in learning an outdoor setting, the CLOS team will seek out their students and family's funds of knowledge. The knowledge and skills that are available to Latino students in their home cultures, Moll (1992) names "funds of knowledge." Although Moll's work primarily dealt with Latinos, the theory of funds of knowledge transfers to all cultures. This theory demonstrates how the labor history and sociological backgrounds of each particular family will determine the funds of knowledge that each family has to share. Heredia (1999) in his article entitled *Cultural Learning Styles* argues that "...A cultural group's values and traditional lifestyle may, through child-rearing practices, influence the learning styles the individual will develop." Heredia claims a child's life experiences will affect how he or she learns in the classroom. The CLOS team will incorporate these funds of knowledge in the PBL curriculum. Teachers will ask family members and students to share these as they build lesson.



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The CLOS team will ensure students who are English learners are supported through targeted strategies. As teachers identify their standards and objectives for their lessons, they will post them in student friendly language and use visuals so students clearly understand what they are expected to do and learn. Teachers will also identify the content and language objectives. The language objectives focus on the academic language functions that students need to master in order to access grade-level content. A critical piece to this process is to teach language objectives explicitly so that student who are English learners (and their peers) can learn the content and language they need. As mentioned above, drawing on funds of knowledge and background knowledge is the hook that students use to build new information. When planning lessons for students who are English learners it is important to access students' existing background knowledge and build background knowledge. Some strategies teacher will use are listed below:

Strategies

- Write an English learner friendly definition for each word and post them where students can see them throughout the lesson.
- Try different strategies to teach each words. If there are five words to be pre-taught, use different ways of engaging the students to hear and produce each word in context.
- Give students ample opportunities to practice each new word both in oral and written languages.
- Look for cognates, or words from different languages that are related. For example, Spanish and English have many cognates ("information" / "*información*") and they are particularly common in terms related to academic content

The CLOS team has found research that demonstrates that students with disabilities thrive in an outdoor setting. Please see attached data chart for links to research. as stated in the Notice of Intent, the CLOS team knows that New Mexico educates students with IEP's at a rate higher than the national average, yet underutilizes SPED funds; many students with IEP's are not receiving services they need to access learning. We know that special education sets accessibility requirements such as a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), and the 11 considerations for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) that emphasize behavioral supports and modified means of engagement. We are committed to inclusive instruction that can satisfy these requirements and meet the individual needs of all learners. With a student-centered and family-supportive approach to the IEP process, we know we can address and accommodate diverse learning. As students work on projects over an extended period of time, teachers will be able to accommodate and support students leaning needs and individualize the strategies to foster learning.

Educational philosophy:

As stated in Question 10, The Collins Lake applicant team supports different perspective and philosophies. The team understands that each teacher will bring a unique approach to support the students they educate. However, the overall instructional philosophy of the school is based on a **Constructivist** approach. The constructivist theory of education advocates for students learning through experiences and integrating



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knowledge into that which they already know (Noddings, 1995). Though the use of a Constructivist approach, students use cognitive processes to construct understanding of materials and learning is active. The learners actively construct their own understandings of reality through interactions and connections. The applicant team regards learning as an active, social process, and it is through this process that children learn self-control and needed skills to be successful. The Collins Lake Outdoor School instructional methods support a constructivist framework. An experiential approach based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), project based learning (PBL) and Nature-based Learning (NBL) will be the foundation of instruction.

Instructional methods designed to meet students' needs

CLOS will use the Universal Design approach because it equates to accessibility for all learners. The UDL approach will ensure CLOS educators are designing lessons that are meeting the needs of all learners. UDL marries well to project-based learning as UDL, like PBL, offers students choices so they can connect to the material in a way that works best for them.

CLOS will use a project-based learning approach, Project-based learning aligns with the CLOS vision to cultivate a learning community that values interconnectedness, embraces diversity and multiple ways of knowing. A PBL approach allows learners to consider solutions to real problems and incorporate strategies that engage and reach diverse learners.

Calendar/Daily Schedule

As mentioned in the calendar section, CLOS anticipates mirroring Mora Independent School District's calendar because we expect that school staff members or students' siblings may be connected to the MISD and it would be easier on families if all members had the same calendar. The daily schedule's start and end times will also mirror MISD for the same reason. The attached daily schedule provides time lunch and recess, and quiet time for SEL strategies and read aloud time in the afternoon.

References:

Heredia, A. (1999). Cultural Learning Styles. *Eric clearinghouse on teacher training and teacher education*. Retrieved 1/27/2003, from ERIC/CASS Virtual Library.

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Noddings, N. (1995). *Philosophy of education*. Westview Press.



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Applicant Evidence :

| | |
|---|---|
|  |  |
| student daily schedule.... | Data to support outdoo... |

Uploaded on **5/27/2025** by
Becky Kappus

Uploaded on **5/28/2025** by
Becky Kappus

Q13.

G.(1a) Special Populations - Instructional Services and Supports for Students with IEPs• **A complete response must****1. Describe how the proposed school will identify and provide:**

- instructional supports and services to the spectrum of needs of students with disabilities, who have IEPs or are eligible for an IEP;
- instructional supports and services to gifted students who have IEPs or are eligible for an IEP;

2. Describe how the proposed school will

- Ensure that students who are ELs are not over-identified as students with disabilities;
- Identify specific responsibilities for school staff, classroom teachers, and special education staff; and
- Identify specific training and support that will be provided to teachers and school staff to ensure they are able to fulfill their responsibilities.

3. Describe the proposed school's:

- Timeline, benchmarks, and people responsible for developing discipline policies and protocols for your special populations.
- Capacity of the school district in the geographic boundaries of the proposed school to provide special education services and FAPE.
- Process for tracking this protected population's progress and services, how that will be reported to the board.

4. Narrative Only

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At Collins Lake Outdoor School (CLOS), we are committed to providing an educational experience that is comprehensive and inclusive for all students. We recognize that this is especially important for our Students with Disabilities. As such we will address the diverse needs of our students, ensuring that each student receives the support they need to access content and succeed academically. CLOS will provide instructional supports and services to students with disabilities through the IEP process, Layer 1 instruction, Layer 2 intervention and Layer 3 instruction, intervention and support in a setting determined through the IEP process. Our outdoor learning spaces will also provide an opportunity for our students with disabilities to engage with research-based strategies in a multi-sensory environment.

Lesson and unit plans will explicitly connect new content to students' prior knowledge and lived experiences. Teachers will collaboratively plan and refine lessons and strategies for building background knowledge and integrating culturally and linguistically relevant text. Differentiated instruction to inform lessons and activities will provide instruction that is specific and targeted to each student's growth area. To ensure student's learning, scaffold supports, and provide Layer 1 intervention, teachers will employ frequent checks for understanding during every lesson. This will ensure that students are engaging in grade level instruction with appropriate modifications and accommodations as outlined in their IEP.

Teachers will provide scaffolds in all content areas to include but not limited to think time, pre-reading vocabulary instruction, group discussions and multimedia support. Strategies such as KWL charts, anticipation guides, and brainstorming activities will be used to activate and access prior knowledge, while sentence stems and frames scaffold language production. Visual representations including pictures, videos, maps, and artifacts will be used to introduce new concepts and provide structure to more abstract ideas. Graphic organizers such as Four Square, Concept Webs, and Semantic Maps will be used to explicitly teach and support vocabulary acquisition. Hands-on, experiential project-based learning opportunities will connect academic content to real-world applications.

Students who come to CLOS with an IEP from another school will have a transfer IEP scheduled within 30 days of their enrollment. As required the IEP will be scheduled to ensure parent attendance and participation in the IEP. The IEP that comes with the student will be implemented until the transfer IEP is held. All modifications, accommodations and goals will be implemented from day one of enrollment. During the transfer IEP all areas of the IEP will be reviewed with general education, special education, ancillary staff and administration as required and changes and revisions will be made based on the student's individual needs. As CLOS is targeting students that are currently being home school as prospective students, we are aware that students may not come with an IEP. If requested by parents, diagnostic evaluations will be scheduled for students within 30 days of the request.

As part of the Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS) process. Data on students who are progressing through the different levels of the MLSS will be compiled. This data includes information from evidence-based interventions that address academic, social, behavioral, and self-regulatory challenges and will be used to make



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decisions about continued supports, diagnostic evaluations and IEP service eligibility. For students who have not been successful through targeted interventions, the MLSS process culminates in an evaluation for special education, 504, mental health, or other related and ancillary services. This will ensure that students are identified for reasons other than just failing grades or behavior. We will also consider evaluations and diagnoses conducted by outside agencies and document eligibility or denial of eligibility as warranted.

Prior to opening the school, we will conduct a Child Find event in the community to screen any potential students and begin the identification process. As we will be a K-4 school we will complete the Child Find in anticipation of identifying PreK students who might be considering enrollment at CLOS. We will advertise the Child Find event locally through posters and notices in local businesses, community day care/childcare centers, health providers and clinics.

CLOS will provide services to gifted students who have IEPs or are Eligible for an IEP through the IEP process, enriched and rigorous learning environments and experiences. We will make every effort to employ a gifted endorsed teacher who will provide accelerated learning content in the general education setting. CLOS will utilize project-based learning, and differentiated instruction to address the needs and interests of our gifted students. Students who exhibit characteristics of giftedness will be administered a gifted screener. Students who score above grade level or advanced will be placed on a Student Assistance Team (SAT) for enriched, accelerated learning pending a diagnostic evaluation.

At Collins Lake Outdoor School, we are committed to providing an equitable and accurate identification process for all students, including English Learners (ELs). To ensure that EL students are not over-identified as students with disabilities, we will implement the following process:

1. **Assessments and Diagnostics:** We will use a variety of assessment tools and methods to evaluate EL students' academic performance, language proficiency, and overall development. This includes both formal and informal assessments. Diagnostic evaluations will be completed in English and in the student's home language. Progress monitoring will also be completed in the student's home language. We will ensure that assessments are culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate.
2. **Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS):** EL students will be provided with targeted interventions and supports through the MLSS framework. This includes evidence-based interventions. Data from these interventions will be used to make data driven decisions about the student's academic needs.
3. **Progress Monitoring:** The progress of EL students will be regularly reviewed and monitored. This includes tracking their academic performance, language proficiency, and response to interventions. Interim assessments and monthly progress monitoring will be conducted in the student's home language.
4. **Parent and Family Involvement:** We will actively involve parents and families in the identification process. Their input and observations will be valuable in understanding the student's background and needs.
5. **Professional Development:** Teachers and staff will receive ongoing professional development on best practices for working with EL students. Training pertaining to the distinction between language acquisition challenges and potential disabilities is an area that will be addressed in professional development. This training will help staff make informed decisions and avoid over-identification.

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As part of the planning year and planning process, job descriptions will be created for all staff of CLOS. The responsibilities of staff will be outlined in the job description. Some responsibilities and expectations for staff are as follows:

Classroom teachers, both special education and general education teachers will be responsible for planning and delivery of core content instruction. This will include all components of the MLSS structure. Teachers will assess students' progress through formative and summative assessments. Additionally, the classroom teacher will administer all progress monitoring (Istation monthly) and interim assessments (IMSSA 3 times per year). Classroom teachers will share this information with the head of school, and the student's case manager monthly or as needed. Teachers will be responsible for monitoring student growth data as it becomes available.

Special education teachers will plan and deliver grade level content to special education students as outlined in the students' IEP. As the IEP team lead, the student's case manager will be responsible for scheduling the IEP, facilitating the meeting and overseeing task completion for present levels of performance, data gathering, and documentation of progress toward goals in the IEP. The case manager will input progress toward goals in the IEP quarterly. The students' teacher and case manager, which would most likely be the same person, will ensure that service hours and placement as per the IEP are in place. Additionally, the special education teacher will support students and teachers in the general education setting to ensure modifications and accommodations are implemented for each student.

As the administrator of the school, the head of school will attend all IEP meetings as the administrative representative and will serve on the IEP team with teachers, parents and ancillary staff as required.

All staff will work and communicate collaboratively with parents. Communication through in-person meetings, virtual meetings, newsletters and phone calls is an expectation for all staff. This will ensure that information is disseminated to families and that home and school partnerships are prevalent.

CLOS is committed to providing exceptional education for all students, as such we will employ a system of support and training for general education teachers, special education teachers and staff. This system is designed to ensure that our teachers and staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the diverse needs of our students. The school's professional development plan will include professional learning on special education topics, laws, best practices in instruction, behavior supports, and social emotional learning. These and other relevant professional development (PD) topics will be scheduled throughout the school year as per the school's professional development calendar. We will align PD with interventions, curricula, and practices used across our special education program. This alignment ensures consistency and reinforces the strategies

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being implemented in the classroom. Our scheduled PD will encompass research and evidence-based practices. This ensures that the strategies and interventions covered in PD are proven to be effective and therefore beneficial for our students.

To ensure that PD is relevant to the needs of teachers and students we will conduct needs assessments to inform the selection of training. This will allow us to identify areas where additional support is needed and plan our PD accordingly.

We will provide follow-up and support to reinforce professional learning through coaching, mentoring, and observation cycles. These ongoing supports are designed to help teachers, improve their practice, and implement new learning effectively. We will also collect data to monitor the impact of PD on student outcomes. This data-driven approach allows us to measure the effectiveness of PD and training and provide supports to teachers as needed.

New teachers will be paired with a mentor teacher who will support them as they acclimate to their roles and develop their skills. Additionally, we will maintain appropriate caseloads and student-to-teacher ratios. This will ensure that teachers are able to provide individualized attention and support to their students. Through comprehensive training and support we can ensure that our special education teachers and school staff are well-prepared to provide the highest quality instruction to our students.

During the planning year, the head of school and staff at CLOS will create a progressive discipline matrix and adopt discipline policies as required by state statutes. The discipline matrix will be grounded in restorative justice practices and will be presented to the governing board for approval prior to the opening of the school. Below is a timeline for creation of the matrix and policy approval.

Planning Year, Month 1 - All staff trained on restorative justice practices.

Planning Year, Month 2 - Research discipline matrices and policies from other charter schools.

Planning Year, Month 3 - Craft the 1st draft of the discipline matrix.

Planning Year, Month 4 - Revisions to discipline matrix and review by school legal counsel.

Consult with school legal counsel on policy advisory for policies required by state statute.

Planning Year, Month 6 - Policies and Matrix presented to the governing board - 1st read.

Planning Year, Month 7 - Policies and Matrix presented to the governing board – 2nd read.

Planning Year, Month 8 - Policies and Matrix presented to the governing board – 3rd read and approval.

Planning Year, Month 9 - Create discipline handbook and referral forms based on approved policies and matrix.

Planning Year, Month 10 - Discipline matrix and policies reviewed with all staff.



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Staff will complete training on the discipline matrix and discipline policies (ex: Restraint and Seclusion).

Planning Year, Month 11 - Discipline handbook and policies are available to parents and provided as part of the registration process.

At Collins Lake Outdoor School (CLOS), we are committed to providing a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all students with disabilities. FAPE is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It ensures that students with disabilities receive educational services tailored to their individual needs at no cost to the parents. FAPE encompasses special education and related services designed to meet the unique needs of each student and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.

This includes:

1. **Individualized Education Program (IEP):** Each student with an eligible disability will have an IEP that delineates their specific academic goals, functional goals, services, accommodations, and modifications. The IEP is developed collaboratively by the IEP team that includes parents, students, teachers, administrators and related service providers.
2. **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** Students with disabilities will be educated in the least restrictive environment appropriate for their needs. This means they will be included in general education settings to the maximum extent possible, with necessary scaffolds, supports and services.
3. **Progress Monitoring:** CLOS will monitor the progress of students' attainment of their IEP goals through regular assessments, teacher observations, and completed student work. This data-driven approach ensures that instruction and interventions are adjusted based on the individual needs of each student.
4. **SMARTIE Goals:** IEP goals will be written using the SMARTIE goal format, ensuring they are specific, measurable, observable, achievable, ambitious, relevant, time-bound, inclusive, and equitable.
5. **Collaboration and Communication:** Effective communication and collaboration among teachers, parents, and ancillary staff are essential to providing FAPE. Annual IEP meetings will be held to review and update the students' progress and goals.
6. **Professional Development:** CLOS will provide ongoing professional development for teachers and staff to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities.

CLOS will monitor the progress of our students' attainment of their IEP goals through a system of regular progress monitoring. Progress monitoring will be conducted through teacher observations, student work, weekly and bi-weekly assessments and interim assessments (Istation monthly for reading and iMSSA at BOY, MOY and EOY for reading, language usage and math). This will allow our instructional and related services staff to adjust



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instruction, determine interventions, provide supports and integrate modifications based on the individual needs of each student. Students' progress toward goals will be documented quarterly in the IEP. Quarterly IEP documentation will include assessment data, classroom and observational data.

The monitoring of progress toward goals will begin in the IEP meeting (initial, annual, transition). Students' present levels of performance will be reviewed and used to determine the students' IEP goals. The present levels of performance and students' IEP goals will be grounded in observable, measurable data. Utilizing a data-driven approach ensures that the students' services, modifications and accommodations are appropriate for the student's successful achievement of their IEP goal. IEP goals will be written utilizing a SMARTIE goal format. The SMARTIE goal construct ensures that goals are specific, measurable and observable, achievable and ambitious, relevant to the students' overall success, time bound to the current academic year, inclusive (least restrictive environment LRE) and equitable (CLR framework). The CLOS applicant team believes that this approach will guarantee that each student's progress can be accurately tracked and assessed.

Reports on progress and services for students with disabilities will be provided to the governing board at the monthly governing board meeting. The director's report and head of school report will contain a standing report on progress toward program goals. Due to our initial small size, individual student data will not be reported as our size requires that data remain masked.

References:

New Mexico Public Education. New Mexico Multi-Layered System of Support. Student Support Services Division. 2021 <https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/multi-layered-system-of-supports-mlss/guidance-and-tools/> (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/multi-layered-system-of-supports-mlss/guidance-and-tools/>)

U.S. Department of Education. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Retrieved from <https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/disability-discrimination/disability-discrimination-key-issues/disability-discrimination-providing-free-appropriate-public-education-fape> (<https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/disability-discrimination/disability-discrimination-key-issues/disability-discrimination-providing-free-appropriate-public-education-fape>)

Q14.

G.(1b) Special Populations - Monitoring and Evaluation of Special Education Students

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- 1. Describe how the proposed school will monitor the progress toward special education students' attainment of IEP goals;**
- 2. Identify specific responsibilities for school staff, classroom teachers, and special education staff; including when and who will be reporting on progress towards goals.**
- 3. Identify the regular intervals at which progress will be monitored and success will be evaluated;**
- 4. Identify specific actions/reporting that will engage and inform students and or families; and**
- 5. Describe how the school will evaluate the effectiveness of its special education program and services.**
- 6. Describe how mission success will be tracked, measured, ensured and reported on with these special populations.**
- 7. Narrative Only**

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Collins Lake Outdoor School (CLOS) will monitor the progress of our students' attainment of their IEP goals through a system of regular progress monitoring. Progress monitoring will be conducted through teacher observations, completed student work, weekly and bi-weekly assessments of the instructional components. Interim assessment data (Istation monthly for reading and iMSSA at beginning of year, middle of year and end of year (BOY, MOY, EOY) for reading, language usage and math). This will allow our instructional and related services staff to adjust instruction, specify interventions, provide supports and integrate modifications based on the individual needs of each student, which we believe is the foundation for a fluid, data driven Multi-Layered System of Support (MLSS) process. An individualized progress tracker will be utilized to track and document each student's progress. Additionally, students' progress toward goals will be documented quarterly in the IEP. Quarterly IEP documentation will include assessment data, classroom and observation data.

The monitoring of progress toward goals will begin in the IEP meeting (initial, annual, transition). Students' present levels of performance will be reviewed and used to determine the students' IEP goals. The present levels of performance and students' IEP goals will be grounded in observable, measurable data. Utilizing a data-driven approach ensures that the students' services, modifications and accommodations are appropriate for the student's successful achievement of their IEP goal. IEP goals will be written utilizing a SMARTIE goal format. The SMARTIE goal construct ensures that goals are specific, measurable and observable, achievable and ambitious, relevant to the students' overall success, time bound to the current academic year, inclusive (least restrictive environment) and equitable (CLR framework). As the IEP team lead, the student's case manager will be responsible for scheduling the IEP, facilitating the meeting and overseeing task completion for present levels of performance, data gathering, and documentation of progress toward goals in the IEP. The case manager will input progress toward goals in the IEP quarterly.

Classroom teachers, both special education and general education teachers will be responsible for completing the progress tracker, weekly or bi-weekly as data becomes available. Additionally, the classroom teacher will administer all progress monitoring (Istation monthly) and interim assessments (iMSSA three times per year). Classroom teachers will share this information with the head of school, and student's case manager monthly or as needed. Classroom teachers will discuss progress with students through discussions on completed work, comparison of earlier work to current work and through student goal setting conferences.

All staff at Collins Lake Outdoor School are committed to working collaboratively with families, we will communicate with families regularly to ensure a cohesive, synergistic partnership between home and school. Progress toward goals, formative and summative assessment data will be provided and explained to families at each of the three scheduled open house/parent conferences specified in the school calendar.

Collins Lake Outdoor School will employ a comprehensive process to evaluate the effectiveness of its special education program and services. We will collect and analyze student data for growth trends and patterns and create a system for tracking school, grade level and individual student progress toward goals and grade level readiness. Special education program data is shared with staff, fostering a system of shared vision and shared accountability. CLOS will implement a plan, do, study, act model to determine growth areas and to apply a system



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of continuous improvement for the school and the students it serves. The Head of School will monitor the implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), interventions, and instructional practices. The Head of School will conduct classroom observations and provide support and coaching to teachers utilizing an observation, feedback, coaching cycle. Additionally, CLOS will monitor the effectiveness of our Special Education programs, IEP goals, and subgroup performance utilizing the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) State Performance Plan Indicators and Indicator 1-B of New Mexico Charter School Performance Framework (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Performance-Framework-approved-11.15.24-1.pdf>). Finally, through a series of surveys we will solicit stakeholder feedback on instructional programs and operations processes. We will use this feedback as part of our continuous improvement cycles to revisit and reset as needed to ensure fidelity to programs and processes, which ultimately impacts student outcomes. As the survey feedback indicates, we will also celebrate our successes and continue to implement the processes that are working. The CLOS applicant team believes that this approach will guarantee that each student's progress can be accurately tracked and assessed.

Collins Lake Outdoor School is built on the foundational beliefs that learning is an act of life, and teaching is an act of love. Our mission is to grow expert learners who have the skills and knowledge to care for themselves, their families, their culture, their community, and their natural environment. As an Individualized Education Plan indicates, all special needs students will have a goal that is unique to their individualized needs. Additionally, through goal setting our general education students will also have a goal that is unique to them. We will track each student's goal and categorize them by the components of our mission statement: Grow expert learners who have the skills and knowledge to care for themselves, their families, their culture, their community. The application team believes that every student's goal should fit into one of these categories. By deconstructing the mission as a category for each goal, we will be able to track, measure and report on the areas where students have achieved and succeeded. This will allow CLOS to plan instruction and experiences that support and highlight our mission.

References:

New Mexico Public Education (NMPED), New Mexico Charter School Performance Framework 2024. <https://web.ped.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Performance-Framework-approved-11.15.24-1.pdf>
(<https://web.ped.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Performance-Framework-approved-11.15.24-1.pdf>)

Q15.

G.(2a) Special Populations - Required Curriculum and Instructional Supports for English Learners

- A complete response must

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- 1. Describe how the proposed school will identify English Learners (ELs) and provide the required curriculum and instructional services/supports to students identified as ELs;**
- 2. Identify how the school will implement the English Language Development Standards for ELs in its school;**
- 3. Identify how the school will provide ELs with instruction and support to develop English language proficiency;**
- 4. Identify how the school will provide ELs with access to grade-level content;**
- 5. Describe how the school will address the spectrum of needs that ELs may present;**
- 6. Identify specific responsibilities for school staff and classroom teachers; and**
- 7. Identify specific training, professional development and support that will be provided to teachers and school staff to ensure they are able to fulfill their responsibilities;**
- 8. Describe the proposed school's process for tracking this protected population's progress and services, how that will be reported to the board.**
- 9. Narrative Only**



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Collins Lake Outdoor School is committed to creating an inclusive environment where English Learners can thrive academically while developing their language proficiency. The identification of English Learner students is a comprehensive process designed to ensure accurate and consistent determination of language proficiency. This process begins with the completion of New Mexico Public Education Department's (NMPED) approved Language Usage Survey. Upon enrollment in kindergarten families will complete the Language Usage Survey. The survey is required by NMPED and is used to determine program placement. The Language Usage Survey is reviewed by teachers, administrators, and specialists and placed in the students' cumulative education file. Students who are transferring from another school should have a Language Usage Survey in their transfer file. We recognize that students who have been homeschooled may not have completed the Language Usage Survey, therefore it will be completed upon enrollment.

For Kindergarten and Grades 1-12, the WIDA Screener will be used to determine EL program placement. The screening results provide data that is used by teachers to determine targeted instruction, supports and interventions based on the students' language proficiency levels. The WIDA screener will be included in the school's testing schedule to ensure that all new students are assessed in a timely manner upon their enrollment. If needed, testing accommodations will be provided to address the needs of students. Upon identification as an English Learner, a parent notification letter will be provided to families. This letter will outline the identification process, program services, and available support. Additionally, family meetings or follow-up sessions will be scheduled to ensure that families understand the process and feel supported throughout their child's educational journey. As needed translation will be provided for written communication and in person meetings as needed.

Teachers at CLOS will provide grade level instruction in all core subjects utilizing high quality researched based instructional materials that address the Common Core State Standards (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/instructional-materials/new-mexico-adopted-content-standards/>). Teachers will incorporate scaffolds and supports as needed to ensure access to all instructional components. Specific high quality instructional materials (HQIM) will be determined and purchased during the planning year. EL instruction will be provided by a Teacher of English to Students of Other Languages (TESOL) endorsed teacher. All core instruction and intervention will align with the Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS) to ensure EL students receive appropriate academic and language support at each layer. Finally, EL students will engage in one hour of targeted English Language Development instruction daily. This instructional block will target the individual students' English Language Proficiency goal. As stated previously, instruction will be provided by a TESOL endorsed teacher. EL instruction will address the NM English Language Development Standards as well as the Common Core State Standards. Curriculum maps and pacing guides aligned with the New Mexico Instructional Scope (NMIS) (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/curriculum-instruction/new-mexico-instructional-scope-nmis/>) will serve as the foundation for grade level instruction in all content areas. The guides incorporate culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) practices and grade level standards to guarantee that EL students can meaningfully engage with the material. Through carefully constructed lessons, teachers will deliver instruction that respects and celebrates the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their students. Classroom environments further

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reinforce this commitment. Grade-level learning targets and objectives are referenced during lessons, helping students understand how their work connects to broader academic goals. Intentional planning integrating strategies and scaffolds will allow EL students to grasp complex concepts while simultaneously developing their language skills. To ensure effective implementation, teachers will receive targeted training on the NM Instruction Scope, with a focus on differentiated strategies and scaffolded language supports. These professional development sessions will include resources for culturally relevant materials and how to integrate students' cultural and linguistic assets into grade-level instruction.

Teachers at CLOS will participate in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). PLCs will provide time for discussing standards-based instruction and assessments. Teachers will also collaborate to refine instructional methods, and share best practices. In PLCs teachers will also analyze EL student data and student work samples. These samples will provide evidence of differentiated support, scaffolding and student's progress in mastering grade-level content. Additionally, formative, interim, and summative assessments will be used to track student growth, identify areas for improvement, and adapt teaching strategies accordingly. By integrating these practices, the school ensures that EL students are not only included but are given the tools and support necessary to succeed. Through a combination of aligned curriculum, professional development, and differentiated instruction, EL students will have the tools to achieve academic success while developing their English language skills. At Collins Lake Outdoor School, we are dedicated to providing a comprehensive and inclusive educational experience for all students but recognize that this especially important for English Learner (EL) students. Our approach is designed to address the diverse language proficiency levels of our students, ensuring that each student receives the support they need to access content, succeed academically and develop their English language proficiency through planning, implementation of research-based strategies and multi-sensory activities that our outdoor learning spaces will offer.

Lesson and unit plans will explicitly connect new content to students' cultural backgrounds, prior learning, and lived experiences. Teachers will collaboratively plan and refine lessons and strategies for building background knowledge and integrating culturally and linguistically relevant text. Differentiated instruction using WIDA/ACCESS data to inform lessons and activities will provide instruction that is specific and targeted to each student's growth area. Lesson plans in all content areas will include a language goal that is aligned with the NMPED's English Language Development (ELD) Standards/WIDA Language Development Standards. To ensure student's learning and provide supports and Layer 1 intervention, teachers will employ frequent checks for understanding and comprehension during every lesson. This will ensure that students are progressing toward their grade level and language proficiency goals as well as understanding and engaging with content. Teachers will model think-alouds to demonstrate how to link prior knowledge to new learning, and scaffold reading and listening activities with pre-reading discussions, multimedia support, and structured questioning tailored to different language proficiency levels. Tools such as KWL charts, anticipation guides, and brainstorming activities are used to activate and assess prior knowledge, while sentence stems and frames scaffold language production. Visual representation and realia, including images, videos, maps, and artifacts, help introduce new concepts and make abstract ideas concrete.

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Explicitly pre-teaching key vocabulary aligned with MLSS Layer 1 instruction, and the Science of Reading is another essential strategy that teachers will utilize daily. Integration of the student's home language (L1) and the use of culturally relevant texts, examples, and high-quality instructional materials that reflect students' backgrounds, traditions, and lived experiences will further promote engagement and augment learning. Graphic organizers such as four square, concept webs, semantic maps will be used to explicitly teach and support vocabulary acquisition. Hands-on, experiential learning opportunities will connect academic content to real-world applications.

The CLOS staff and teachers' foremost responsibility is to support the academic growth and language development of their EL students. CLOS teachers will provide equitable access to grade-level content for all EL students. Teachers will ensure that English Learners (ELs) receive equitable access to academic content while developing their English language skills. All teachers at CLOS will utilize high quality instructional materials to plan and deliver lessons and interventions that address the varying proficiency levels and linguistic needs of their EL students. Teachers will develop lesson and unit plans that include EL strategies. Teachers will scaffold lessons and provide the necessary supports to help EL students learn and apply core content while simultaneously developing their language development. Teachers will integrate the Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) Framework (https://web.ped.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/CLRF_SbD-Tool-2020.pdf) to ensure that students not only grasp grade-level content but also feel their cultural and linguistic identities are honored. Additionally, teachers and school staff are responsible for analyzing data collected from assessments, classroom observations, and student work samples. Regular reviews of EL students' work samples and data ensure students growth areas are addressed. By examining EL students' progress in language proficiency and academic performance, teachers can identify areas for improvement, adjust instruction, provide intervention and set individualized, data-driven goals.

Professional development (PD) to support teachers in their knowledge and ability to fulfill the responsibilities required for instruction EL students will be integrated in the school's professional development plan. Teachers will attend and engage in targeted training that provides tools for supporting EL students. Professional development on the WIDA ELD Standards and Multi-Layered System of Support (MLSS) (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/multi-layered-system-of-supports-mlss/guidance-and-tools/>) will provide the initial foundations for EL instruction as professional learning in these areas will enhance their effectiveness in supporting EL students. Professional development that emphasizes EL instructional strategies, scaffolding and differentiation of lessons is another area for professional development. This professional development will focus on best practice strategies for teaching EL students as these strategies ensure equitable access to academic content for EL students by addressing their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The integration of the CLR Framework further enhances this approach by promoting culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices that honor and leverage the cultural assets of EL students. Professional development on using WIDA/ACCESS assessments to inform instruction will also be a focus. These assessments provide data on the language proficiency and academic progress of EL students. By understanding how to effectively utilize these assessments, teachers can differentiate instruction and intervention for each student. Growth and development



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of teachers will also be provided through Observation, Feedback, and Coaching Cycles (OFCC) focused on EL students. These cycles provide support to teachers in refining and improving their instructional practices, as they offer opportunities for teachers to receive constructive feedback and engage in reflective practice. Professional development will be provided utilizing NMPED offerings, contracting services, Regional Educational Cooperatives (RECs) as available and based on their offerings.

Collins Lake Outdoor School will monitor the progress of our EL students' attainment of their English language proficiency goals through a system of regular monthly progress monitoring. Progress monitoring will be conducted through teacher observations, completed student work, weekly and bi-weekly assessments of the instructional components, and interim assessments (Istation monthly for reading and iMSSA at BOY, MOY and EOY for reading and language usage). This will allow our instructional staff to adjust instruction, specify interventions, provide supports and integrate modifications based on the individual needs of each student, which we believe is the foundation for a fluid data driven MLSS process. An individualized progress tracker will be utilized to track and document each student's progress monthly. Documentation will include assessment data, classroom and observational data. Additionally, EL students will be assessed annually using the WIDA ACCESS assessment. Students' progress toward goals will be monitored and documented annually using their annual WIDA ACCESS assessment results. An internally created data tracker will be used to track students' WIDA ACCESS scores from year to year to ensure that students' proficiency is improving. The goal for all students is to exit EL identification with a WIDA language proficiency score of 4.5 or higher within 4 to 5 years of identification. Reports on EL student progress and services will be provided to the governing board at the monthly governing board meeting.

References:

NM Adopted Common Core Standards <https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/instructional-materials/new-mexico-adopted-content-standards/> (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/instructional-materials/new-mexico-adopted-content-standards/>)

New Mexico Public Education. Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Framework: School by Design. Language and Culture Division. 2020. https://web.ped.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/CLRF_SbD-Tool-2020.pdf (https://web.ped.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/CLRF_SbD-Tool-2020.pdf)

University of Wisconsin-Madison (WIDA), ELD Standards Framework. <https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eld> (<https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eld>)

University of Wisconsin-Madison (WIDA), ACCESS for ELLs. <https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/access> (<https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/access>)

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New Mexico Public Education. New Mexico Multi-Layered System of Support. Student Support Services Division. 2021. <https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/multi-layered-system-of-supports-mlss/guidance-and-tools/> (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/multi-layered-system-of-supports-mlss/guidance-and-tools/>)

Q16.

G.(2b) Special Populations - Monitoring and Evaluation of English Learners**• A complete response must**

- 1. Describe how the proposed school will monitor the progress of ELs toward English language proficiency, both annually and within the school year;**
- 2. Identify specific responsibilities for school staff and classroom teachers;**
- 3. Identify the regular intervals at which progress will be monitored;**
- 4. Identify specific actions/reporting that will engage students and/or families;**
- 5. Describe how the school will evaluate the effectiveness of its EL program and services; and**
- 6. Describe how the school will monitor exited EL students (reclassified fluent English proficient students—RFEPs) for two years for academic progress.**
- 7. Narrative Only**

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Collins Lake Outdoor School (CLOS) will monitor the progress of our EL students' attainment of their English language proficiency goals through a system of regular monthly progress monitoring. Progress monitoring will be conducted through teacher observations, completed student work, weekly and bi-weekly assessments of the instructional components, and interim assessments (Istation monthly for reading and iMSSA at beginning of year, middle of year and end of year (BOY, MOY, EOY) for reading and language usage. This will allow our instructional staff to adjust instruction, specify interventions, provide supports and integrate modifications based on the individual needs of each student, which we believe is the foundation for a fluid data driven Multi-Layered System of Support (MLSS) process. An individualized progress tracker will be utilized to track and document each student's progress monthly. Documentation will include assessment data, classroom and observational data. Additionally, EL students will be assessed annually using the WIDA ACCESS (<https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/access>) assessment. Students' progress toward goals will be monitored and documented annually using their annual WIDA ACCESS assessment results. An internally created data tracker will be used to track students' WIDA ACCESS scores from year to year to ensure that students' proficiency is improving. The goal for all students is to exit EL identification with a proficient WIDA score of 4.5 or higher within 4 to 5 years of identification. Once students achieve an exiting score of 4.5 or higher we will continue to monitor progress for 2 years using the internal tracker to ensure their continued progress. We will document students' progress, WIDA ACCESS assessment scores in their student academic cumulative folders and in our student information system (SIS).

A Teacher of English to Students of Other Languages (TESOL) endorsed teacher will be identified as the EL lead teacher, the EL lead teacher will serve as the student's case manager for EL services and progress monitoring. The EL lead teacher will be responsible for data gathering and documentation of progress toward the student's English Language Proficiency goal. The EL student's case manager will document progress toward goals in the student's cumulative file and student information system. Classroom teachers will be responsible for completing the progress tracker, weekly or bi-weekly as data becomes available. Additionally, the classroom teacher will administer all progress monitoring (Istation monthly) and interim assessments (iMSSA three times per year) and WIDA ACCESS annual assessment.

As stated in a previous response, all staff at CLOS are committed to working collaboratively with families, we will communicate with families regularly to ensure a cohesive, synergistic partnership between home and school. Progress toward EL proficiency goals, formative and summative assessment data will be provided and explained to families at each of the three scheduled open house/parent conferences specified in the school calendar. Classroom teachers will share EL proficiency goals and student proficiency information with the head of school, teachers and parents monthly or more often if needed. Classroom teachers will review progress with students through feedback discussions on completed work, comparisons of earlier work to current work and through student goal setting conferences.

The administration and staff at CLOS will employ a comprehensive process to evaluate the effectiveness of its EL program and services. We will collect and analyze student data for growth trends and patterns and create a system for tracking school, grade level and individual student progress toward their English Language proficiency goals. EL education program and student growth data are shared with staff as part of the professional learning



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community (PLC) process, fostering a system of shared vision and shared accountability. We will implement a plan, do, study, act model to determine growth areas and to apply a system of continuous improvement for the school and the students it serves. To monitor the implementation of the EL program, service delivery, interventions, and instructional practices, the Leader of School will conduct classroom observations and provide support and coaching to teachers utilizing observation, feedback, coaching cycles. Additionally, we will monitor the effectiveness of our EL program, English language proficiency goals and subgroup performance using WIDA assessment data. Our goal is to achieve a rating of meets or exceeds on the WIDA ACCESS assessment. Indicator 1.B Outcomes for Student Groups of the New Mexico Charter School Performance Framework will also be used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our EL program.

Finally, through a series of surveys we will solicit stakeholder feedback on instructional programs and operations processes. We will use this feedback as part of our continuous improvement cycles to revisit and reset as needed to ensure fidelity to programs and processes, which will ultimately impact student outcomes. As the survey feedback indicates, we will also celebrate our successes and continue to implement the processes that are working.

References:

New Mexico Public Education (NMPED), New Mexico Charter School Performance Framework 2024. <https://web.ped.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Performance-Framework-approved-11.15.24-1.pdf>
(<https://web.ped.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Performance-Framework-approved-11.15.24-1.pdf>)

University of Wisconsin-Madison (WIDA), ACCESS for ELLs. <https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/access>
(<https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/access>)

Q17.

G.(3) Special Populations - Plan to adhere to ESSA and State Statutes

• A complete response must

1. Describe how the proposed school will:

- a. Develop an educational framework to address the educational needs of Native American, Hispanic, Black and bilingual multicultural students within a culturally and linguistically responsive approach to learning;
- b. Identify specific responsibilities for school staff and classroom teachers, including professional development for teachers;
- c. Ensure that the best practices are used in teaching, mentoring, counseling and administration are culturally and linguistically responsive to students;
- d. Ensure policies will be culturally and linguistically responsive;

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- e. Demonstrate rigorous and culturally meaningful curricula and instructional materials will be developed and implemented;**
 - f. Identify the regular intervals at which progress will be monitored;**
 - g. Identify specific actions/reporting that will engage students and/or families; and**
 - h. Evaluate the effectiveness of its programs to improve educational outcomes.**
 - i. Describe how the proposed school will meet the specific requirements of the Black Education Act**
- 2. Narrative Only**

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The CLOS will ensure the school policies and curriculum support all learners and meet the state and federal requirements. The CLOS team will implement all required testing and training for teachers. The team understands the importance of tracking students' progress to determine if they are developing and growing in their knowledge and skills. As the school staff will work as a team to plan UDL and PBL units that meet the needs of students, the team will align units to standards and use formative and summative assessments to growth determine mastery.

Classroom teachers, both special education and general education teachers will be responsible for completing the progress tracker, weekly or bi-weekly as data becomes available. Additionally, the classroom teacher will administer all progress monitoring (Istation monthly) and interim assessments (IMSSA three times per year). Classroom teachers will share this information with the head of school, and student's case manager monthly or as needed. Classroom teachers will discuss progress with students through discussions on completed work, comparison of earlier work to current work and through student goal setting conferences. The school will hold 3 parent conference as indicated in the calendar.

All staff at Collins Lake Outdoor School are committed to working collaboratively with families, we will communicate with families regularly to ensure a cohesive, synergistic partnership between home and school. Progress toward goals, formative and summative assessment data will be provided and explained to families at each of the three scheduled open house/parent conferences specified in the school calendar.

The novice teachers at CLOS will be required to complete a mentorship training. If CLOS hires a new teacher, the new teacher will be required to complete a mentorship during at least the first year and will be paired with at least a Level 2 teacher. The level 2 teacher will receive a stipend for their work to support the mentee.

CLOS understands that effective preparation increases teachers' efficacy and makes it more likely they will remain in the profession. If approved, the team will use the planning year to develop a mentorship process. The foundation of this process will involve opportunities for professional collaboration and shared decision-making, and resources for teaching and learning

The CLOS team will seek the governing boards' approval to the mentorship process. CLOS will seek support and approval from the governing board on all employee processes to include the mentorship requirement.

CLOS will employ instructional methods that engage and reach diverse learners. In order to effectively reach all students, teachers will utilize instructional strategies, which are inclusive of students' cultures. The more connections students can make with the curriculum the more meaningful it becomes for students. Parents and family members will be invited to share their funds of knowledge with the school community. Moll (1992) argues part of Hispanic students' failure in school is directly related to the way teachers educate this group, with the bottom line being these teachers fail because they do not incorporate "household" culture or "funds of knowledge" into their teaching. Moll (1992) presents data, which substantiates that children are learning valuable skills from their household cultures and when teachers incorporated this cultural knowledge into their lessons,

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students were more engaged in their learning. The CLOS team will seek out families' funds of knowledge and incorporate them into the curriculum. The outdoor setting will provide families with opportunities to share their knowledge on many topics from cultivating the land to building structures.

CLOS teachers and staff will engage in professional development that will help them examine their own biases and how they communicate with family members. Staff and teachers will complete NMPED's Canvas Course: Meeting the Moment: Addressing Racism Through Recognition & Response. Additionally, the CLOS team will strive to make sure all families feel welcomed through the use of interpreters as needed

The applicant team and governing board are committed to establishing a school that enforces the Bilingual Multicultural Act, the Indian Education Act, the Hispanic Education Act, and the Black Education Act. The effective implementation of these acts will require professional development and training for staff and the inclusion of family members' input into the establishment of policies and procedures. The CLOS applicant team and governing board is committed to providing learning activities that incorporate students' family, language and household cultures.

The CLOS team understands the value of students being able to use their home language to scaffold their learning. When students are attempting to learn a new language they will use their prior knowledge of language to make sense out of the new language. The outdoor learning environment at Collins Lake is particularly appropriate for this learning strategy.

Collins Lake Outdoor School provides students with a unique and stress-free environment to develop language skills. Research demonstrates that students in an outdoor setting have longer utterances and display more lexical diversity was richer (Richardson & Murray, 2016). Additionally, students at CLOS will work with student buddies in the outdoor environment. Students will be able to share their languages and culture with each other as they navigate different languages. Teacher will be able to use hands on learning strategies to help students learn the content. An example of this would be use of real life objects (realia) in the outdoor setting. Students will be able to see the word, touch the word and share the word in more than one language.

The CLOS applicant team and governing board are committed to alleviate the difficult situation many Indigenous students face in the classroom because of the language divide between their native language and English. The CLOS team recognize how the historical use of "repressive policies" (McCarty & Watahomigie, 2001, p. 489) in the United States which have led to punishing indigenous students for speaking their native languages and celebrating their cultures. The CLOS team's mission aligns to the Indian Education as the mission emphasizes the importance of educating the whole person- the emotional, spiritual, social, artistic, physical, and intellectual components (Nava, 2001). By weaving authentic Native American curriculum in an outdoor learning environment the team will create opportunities for all students to connect all aspects of their lives to their learning. The CLOS team will incorporate curriculum from the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, A Pueblo-Based Educational Curriculum



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and NMPED's Indigenous Instructional Scope, Tenets, Strategies, and Resources, the CLOS team will unite authentic Native American curriculum into outdoor learning strategies. The CLOS team holds a deep respect for the Indigenous ways of knowing and their connection and respect for the land and water.

References

McCarty, T. L., & Watahomigie, L. J., (2001). Language and literacy in American Indian and Alaska native communities. In *Literacy: A critical sourcebook*

(pp.488-615). Boston, MA: Bedford.

Moll, L. (1992). Literacy research in community and classrooms: A sociocultural approach. In R. Beach, J. Green, M. Kamil and T. Shanahan (Eds.),

Multidisciplinary perspectives on literacy research (pp. 211-244). Urbana, IL.: National Council of Teachers of English.

Nava, R. G. (2001). *Holistic education: Pedagogy of universal love*. (M. Newman Rios and G. S. Miller, Trans.). Brandon, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal.

Richardson, T., & Murray, J. (2016). Are young children's utterances affected by characteristics of their learning environments? A multiple case study.

Early Child Development and Care, 187(3-4), 457-468. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2016.1211116>

Q18.

H.(1) Assessment and Accountability - Assessment Plan

• A complete response must

1. Include an assessment calendar that identifies all state or district mandated assessment periods and dates related to teacher analysis/use of assessment data to inform instruction

a. Include assessments/progress monitoring for special populations;

2. Identify, for all state or district mandated assessment periods, the grade levels at which the assessments will be administered;

3. Describe, for all state or district mandated assessment periods, the specific data that will be collected, reported, analyzed, evaluated, and utilized to inform instruction;

4. Describe how the data identified will be used to inform instruction;



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5. Describe the school's philosophy on the use of data and how teachers will be onboarded, trained and supported to ensure the schools philosophy is followed;
6. Align with all state assessment and data reporting requirements;
7. Describe how the assessment plan meets the specific needs to equitably assess the proposed school's projected student population;
8. Describe how the assessment plan aligns to the proposed school's mission and any assessments that may be used to determine, measure and track equitable mission achievement; and
9. Include any assessments that may be negotiated as part of the performance framework and contract.
10. Narrative and Other uploads

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An assessment calendar is attached that displays the required assessments, grade levels, and timeframe. The attached assessment calendar is divided into the beginning of the year (BOY), middle of the year (MOY), and end of year (EOY) timeframes. The attached calendar includes the grade levels associated with each assessment requirement. The CLOS head administrator will make sure that the school has a testing coordinator and is trained on the testing process through NMPED.

The applicant team at CLOS understands the importance of assessment and using the data to support student learning. The CLOS applicant team understands that assessment is critical to achieving the school's mission. In order to help CLOS students grow into expert learners, assessment will be collected from a variety of sources to synthesize the data to determine how well or how much students have learned and what skills they have mastered. Additionally, the CLOS team realizes that charter schools have a tremendous responsibility to make sure students are achieving and students are taking all the NMPED required assessments and using the data to improve instruction.

In order to support all students, including students with IEPs, teachers will be expected to use formative assessments on a regular basis to adjust their instructional decisions. Teachers will use the NMPED Multi-Layered Support System (MLSS) to support student learning and student outcomes. Teachers will be required to take the NMPED MLSS: New Mexico Multi-Layered System of Support Canvas trainings. NMPED offers four trainings on how to effectively implement MLSS into the daily classroom. The MLSS system provides teachers with three layers of classroom supports that help teachers collect data in a responsive, data-driven, and efficient manner. Each of the three layers of the MLSS takes part in the classroom. MLSS reinforces the fact that all students are general education students first (NMPED, 2021). Level One of the MLSS process focuses on using high quality materials and effective teaching strategies for all students that is aligned to the required standards and includes culturally and linguistically responsive practices. Level Two of the MLSS process focuses on targeted interventions for students who need more support and scaffolds to foster learning. In addition to the Level One strategies, students in Level 2 will receive targeted supports in areas in which students need support based on data collected. These targeted supports may be working in small groups or supplemental high quality instructional resources. If a student is identified as needing MLSS Level Three supports, the student will still receive Level One and Level Two support, but now the student will receive Level Three supports based on identified needs and will have a plan. A diagnostic assessment will guide how best to implement the intervention and assess a student's progress. The MLSS system will assure that students are getting the supports they need and if warranted by the data, students may be referred to SAT process for further diagnostic assessment in order to create a plan that best supports students. Within the MLSS process, teachers will be able to identify the strengths and needs of students and all students will receive the Level One high quality instruction.

The CLOS team understands the students may often require supports that CLOS does not have at the facility. Therefore, when reviewing plans, the team will ensure students receive the wrap-around supports they need and are part of their plan. These supports may be bringing in a speech-language therapist or other specific



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professionals to support students in areas they need to develop to be successful.

The CLOS team's philosophy on data collection is that data should be transformative. Transformative assessments will allow teachers to drill down into the data and adjust strategies to support learning. All assessments used need to be carefully considered and reviewed. Teachers must understand what the required summative tests and assessments involve and are measuring so they can plan their formative assessments to check and monitor student progress. As mentioned before, The CLOS educators will use formative assessment on a regular basis to determine if students are understanding the material and making progress toward successful mastery of the materials. Formative assessments are those check-ins to provide teachers information on students' progress. Formative assessments can easily be monitored in an outdoor setting as teachers can have students provide TAG Feedback (Tell your peer something they did well), and then share out to the whole class. These type of formative assessments can help students build social skills. Teachers can also have students use exit slips and other quick formative assessments to guide their instruction. Formative assessment is a process and takes place during instruction. The CLOS head administrator will check lesson plans and conduct observations of the CLOS teachers to determine if teachers are using formative assessments on a regular basis and provide feedback and possible training if needed.

The CLOS team will collect, analyze and use **iStation and IMMSS data** to modify instructional strategies and adapt materials to support students' progress. Teachers will be able to view the data on a regular basis. However, the expectation is that teachers chart and analyze the data monthly and share this data with family members so family members/parents can help support students reading at home.

The iStation data which measures a student's progress in phonemic awareness, alphabetic decoding, letter knowledge, vocabulary, spelling, comprehension, and fluency will help teachers determine which students may be at risk as readers. If approved, the CLOS team will review all the NMPED's support materials (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/assessment/istation-resources/>) that align with iStation. To support students' literacy skills teachers will also use the LETRS screeners. The NMPED approved and required LETRS science of reading program includes spelling screeners, that all K-3 students will receive and as needed for those in 4th grade. The spelling screeners will provide teachers with targeted areas to help students spelling. Additionally, teachers will use the Phonological Awareness Screening Test (PAST) with all K-1 students and as needed with those in grades 2-4. The PAST assessment provides teachers with critical information on a student's phonological manipulation. The LETRS spelling screeners and PAST assessment will be given during the first 9 weeks and then as needed to diagnose issues in either spelling or phonological manipulation. With several data points from the iStation data, iMSSA data and the LETRS assessments, teachers will have a complete picture of students literacy skills.

The iMSSA data which measures reading, language usage, and mathematical abilities will provide critical data for literacy skills and mathematics skills and knowledge. The iMSSA mathematics assessments provide measures of students' understanding of, and ability to apply, grade-level appropriate mathematical concepts. If approved,



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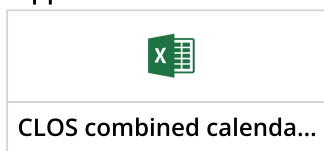


during the planning year, the CLOS team will review the iMSSA resources (<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/assessment/imssa-resources/>) so they will be able to effectively administer these assessments and analyze the data.

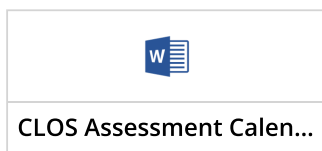
The CLOS team believes that assessment is about decision-making and these decisions will involve teacher, students, and parents/caregivers. Teachers need to determine where help or support is needed to ensure students are progressing and how to help students improve. Through the use of the MLSS system and data collected from iStation, iMSSA, and LETRS screener, teachers will have valuable data to make decisions and have conversations with family members on how best to support students.

The aggregate data will be reviewed and shared with the governing board each semester so that all stakeholders can review overall progress and determine where improvements and changes are needed.

Applicant Evidence :



Uploaded on **5/26/2025** by
Becky Kappus



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Becky Kappus

Q19.

H.(2) Assessment and Accountability - Plan for Data Assessment Analysis

• A complete response must

1. Identify the processes the school will use, including specific action steps, triggers that would prompt action steps, responsible parties, timelines, and associated costs, to

a. monitor academic performance and

b. take appropriate corrective action if the school is not on track to or does not meet academic performance expectations;

2. Address specific responsibilities related to

a. meeting student academic achievement or growth expectations at the school-wide level and

b. meeting student academic achievement goals at the individual student level (remediation/at-risk student); and

3. Describe how the school will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of its academic program generally and the effectiveness of specific corrective actions or interventions.



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4. Describe how the proposed school intends to use the data gathered from assessments to drive instruction

**5. Describe the board's role in analyzing the data gathered to inform school wide progress and potential changes. **

6. Narrative Only



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**Monitor Academic Progress****CLOS Goals**

The CLOS team will use iStation and iMSSA interim assessments to determine students' progress in reading and math. The CLOS team needs to review the iStation and iMSSA data monthly to monitor progress and make appropriate changes to instruction.

Academic Goal: By the end of the school year, **students will increase their reading and literacy skills from the beginning of the year to the end of the year by engaging in a science of reading program that is implemented in a language-rich outside environment.**

Academic Goal: by the end of the school year, **students will increase their math skills from the beginning of the year to the end of the year** through play-based learning that builds cognitive skills along a developmental progression.

Mission Goals:

Mission Goal 1: Collins Lake Outdoor School students will successfully complete 2 project based learning opportunities during the year (one per semester) by scoring an 80% or higher on the summative assessment associated with each project.

The CLOS team will also use project rubrics to determine successful completion (70% or higher) of the projects during the school year. These projects will use an interdisciplinary approach and will be aligned to standards and engages learning in an outdoor setting.

As mentioned in the Mission Goal Section, teachers will plan projects that integrate subjects and are aligned to standards. An essential piece of their planning will be how they will assess students' mastery. Through summative assessments, teachers will be able to determine if students scored at least an 80% on the summative assessment. Teachers will work with students who may not score 80% and provide them with scaffolds, support and new opportunities to complete the assessment. Assessment associated with a project usually involve a final product such as a poster, diagram, play, or another product. Therefore, CLOS teachers will create rubrics develop grade-level rubrics. Teachers will use checklists and formative assessment during the implementation of the project to ensure students work is on track for meeting the assessment requirements. Essential to the success of PBL is the ability of students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills to solve the problem or issue presented at the start of the project.

Mission Goal 2: One hundred percent of third and fourth graders at CLOS will successfully complete a mentorship training that includes strategies to engage in a restorative justice process during the first semester at CLOS.

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The training for CLOS 3rd and 4th graders will focus on how to be a mentor to a younger student at CLOS. Mentors at CLOS will work with their younger classmates in the outdoor setting. The CLOS education team will select a training program that aligns with the mission

The CLOS team will measure Mission Goal 2 by the successful completion of mentorship of all 3rd and 4th grades at CLOS. Additionally, teachers, family members, and students will be asked to provide feedback on the training and implementation of training so the CLOS team can make continuous improvement to this critical piece of implementing the mission.

Monitoring and Reporting

As mentioned above, the CLOS team will use the MLSS process to support, monitor and make decisions about students' progression. Teacher are responsible for identifying and supporting students' learning and behavioral needs throughout the school year. Teachers will use their professional judgement and make data-informed decisions regarding the students in their classrooms. Decisions regarding layered interventions are made by the classroom teachers and support personnel closest to the students. Please see the attached graphics that demonstrates the process for identifying how students will move through MLSS and the SAT process. (Source of graphics: NMPED, 2021).

The school academic team will meet monthly to review progress toward goals and this information will be shared with the governing board at regular meetings. As data is collected form assessments, decisions will be made to adjust strategies to support student progress. The academic team will look for data trends and anomalies to determine if the current strategies and curriculum are getting the job done or if adjustments need to be made, It is impossible to explain all the ways adjustments can be made to get back on track toward meeting goals, but teachers will dig deep into the data to determine if there are certain topics or items that students are struggling with and research ways to better present the content and engage students.

Part of the data analysis may mean that a particular teacher needs more support or training on how to better serve students. It is possible that the data reveals that the teacher may not be the right fit for CLOS. The data analysis will also include looking at other forces that may affect learning such as absenteeism or social emotional supports.

The school will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of its academic program's effectiveness by requiring updates on progress toward goals during the governing body's meetings. As part of the head administrator's evaluation the governing board will consider how the school is making progress toward the goals and mission. If the school has not been making substantial progress, then the board will have to determine if the head administrator is the right person for the job or if additional training and support may be needed.



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Applicant Evidence :



MLSS Process Graphics....

Uploaded on **5/27/2025** by
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Q20.

H.(3). Assessment and Accountability - Plan for Student Progress/Achievement & Communication Plan

A complete response must

1. Identify how student achievement and progress will be communicated to

a. Students

b. Parents

c. The governing body

d. The authorizer

e. The broader community;

2. Identify the communication plan for each of the specific sources of student achievement data identified in H.(1) and any other relevant sources of student achievement data; and

3. Provide information that demonstrates the plan is effective in reaching the targeted population and the specific community in which the school plans to locate.

4. Narrative Only



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Although CLOS students will be younger **students**, the CLOS team believes students should understand how they are growing and progressing in their learning and skills. Teachers will use a variety of tools to convey student progress to students. Students can have a letter chart and place a sticker each time they master the sound of a letter. Students iStation data can be broken down into specific skills and the teacher can share the graph of progress with students. Students need to be able to see how they are improving and see those areas where they need to improve.

The CLOS team is mindful of how student success at CLOS is inextricably bound to **families, parents, and other caregivers**. If approved, the CLOS team is committed to establishing and maintaining open lines of communication with families. CLOS will have 3 parent teacher conferences during the school year to provide student progress and data to family members. However, teachers will not wait until conferences to let family members know about student progress. Through phone calls, calendars, newsletters, websites, etc., family members will be notified of testing periods and how the data from the assessments is used. As mentioned in Question 18, through use of the MLSS process, family members will be notified of any supportive plans are put in place if a student is considered to be at Level three. Parents and caregivers will be asked to meet with the teacher to discuss how to build and implement the best plan for the student. As CLOS teachers see a need for more intensive academic and behavioral supports it is essential to remember that students may now move up and down through the MLSS layers and parents will need to be informed so they understand how the targeted interventions are in place to support students. When sharing student progress with families, teachers need to ensure they may time to allow parents to ask questions and to listen to their concerns. When communicating with families, teachers must seek insight into the lives of these families so that they can come to better understand and appreciate their culture and values.

Teaching is a process of teachers and students interacting and creating a shared learning environment. Included in this environment is a set of values and beliefs. It is through this interaction that teachers and students create a shared reality. CLOS educators should understand and recognize the universal truth that parents have turned over their greatest treasure, their children, to them for the school year and they have the tremendous responsibility to teach and influence these children. Teachers have to discover parents' expectations of them and develop a professional and respectful relationship with parents. Many inequalities that occur in classrooms are the result of larger cultural and societal structures; still teachers must not give up, or believe that what they do in the classroom cannot make a difference. CLOS firmly believes that family members must be part of the assessment discussion so all can work together to support students' knowledge and skills.

The CLOS head administrator will be responsible for providing assessment data to the **governing board** on a regular basis. This reporting could be a standing agenda item or can coincide with the times when assessment data is received and complied. The progress on mission goals and required assessments will be shared and discussed with governing board at meetings.



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The progress on mission goals and the iStation and iMSSA assessment will be shared with the **Public Education Commission (PEC)**. The CLOS team will provide all requested data to the PEC so they are able to determine if the school is making substantial progress. The CLOS applicant team appreciate the accountability measure put in place by the PEC and implemented by Charter School Division (CSD). On annual basis, the CLOS team will provide the PEC and CSD the required progress data annually and as requested.

Assessment data will be available to the **community** through the school's website and through the NM Vistas website. The school will include the goals and results on the website for the community so they see the how the school is doing in meeting their goals.

Collins Lake Autism Center and proposed school provide many educational activities at the Ranch and will post and share information about the school and the school goals and progress at these events. Community members who attend these events are the targeted population for the school as they are interested in learning more about the Mora outdoor environment and the tremendous knowledge that comes from being in the outdoor setting.

Q21.

I. Replication: data from existing schools using the model (if applicable)

If the proposed program is the replication of a charter school model in use elsewhere in New Mexico, provide:

- **a list of the names and locations of all open schools in New Mexico, which should be open for one full charter term, in which the program has been implemented**
- **student academic data that demonstrate the academic success of school(s) currently using the model. Include all available data on each school.**

A complete response must include a list of the names and locations of schools in New Mexico in which the program has been implemented and, for each identified school, for all available years:

- 1. Student performance data on a state or other accountability system demonstrating strong academic achievement and growth;**
- 2. Student enrollment data, including trends and variance between projected and actual enrollment;**
- 3. Graduation rates (if applicable);**
- 4. Annual authorizer reports;**
- 5. Narrative describing how the model would be successful in this community.**

Not Applicable for CLOS.

**NEW MEXICO - NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION****2025****New Mexico Public Education Department****2.2. Organizational Framework**

A charter application shall include a description of the governing body and operation of the charter school, including: (1) how the governing body will be selected; (2) qualification and terms of members, how vacancies on the governing body will be filled and procedures for changing governing body membership; and (3) the nature and extent of parental, professional educator and community involvement in the governance and operation of the school (NMSA 22-8B-8(I)).

Q22.

A.(1) Governing Body Creation/Capacity - Key Components of Governance Structure**• A complete response must****1. Summarize key governance components in the application response as follows:****a. Membership structure (number, roles, length of terms)****b. Officer structure (roles, election process, responsibilities, length of terms)****c. Committee structure that includes both legally required committees and school-specific committees (selection process, responsibilities, membership, length of service terms)****d. Member recruitment, selection, discipline, and removal processes.****2. Narrative Only**

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CLOS proposes that the governing board consists of five members and remains that size until the need for additional board members is clearly identified. The initial five board members have been identified and each of these individuals is agreeable to serving. Further information about these five initial board members can be found in the Executive Summary.

Future board composition must balance the need for continuity and well as the need to bring fresh perspectives to the group. Our current plan is that board members will generally be elected for five-year staggered terms with one board member chosen each year. The initial members will have terms of one to five years. Board members will be elected in June of each year. The board member whose term is set to expire each June will have the option to apply for another five-year term. Additional candidates will be proffered by the remaining board members. The candidates will be evaluated and voted on by the entire board (with the departing board member recused if they are a candidate). The winning candidate must garner at least three votes.

Board members are expected to regularly attend all regular and special board meetings. Missing three or more consecutive meetings may subject that member to be removed if all four other members vote to do so. Special circumstances related to the absences will be considered and the other members are under no compulsion to vote for removal.

While the expectation is that board members will serve the entire five-year term, there will be times when a member is not able to continue serving. Hopefully, that member will give as much advance notice as possible and the remaining members will search for a replacement to serve out the remaining term of the departing member. The replacement member will be selected in the same fashion as above.

Each year in June the board members will select a chair, a vice chair and a secretary. Any member may apply for one of the positions, and if multiple members apply for any position, a vote of at least three members will determine the successful candidate. No officer shall hold the same role for more than three consecutive terms. The board chair will be responsible for creating the meeting agenda while any other member can propose adding additional board items. The chair will conduct all meetings with the vice chair filling in if the chair is not in attendance. The secretary shall be responsible for board minutes and other official secretarial duties.

All board members should actively assist in new member recruitment. The board composition should be balanced with regard to skills and community representation. Skills that are important include school finance knowledge, administrative and regulatory background, educational and curriculum, especially related to SPED students and outdoor education, as well as having ties and experience with the community and student/parent relations. While no one board member will likely possess all these traits, the board should look to new members that will help maintain this critical balance.

Q23.

A.(2) Governing Body Creation/Capacity - Governing Body Qualifications



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• A complete response must

1. Identify all qualifications and skill sets that the governing body will require and ensure those are represented within its regular membership and how the proposed board would be able to ensure the long-term success of this school if, by some circumstance, the Founders were no longer involved.
2. Explain why and how the identified qualifications and skills will ensure the governing body has the required capacity and enable the governing body to operate a successful, high-quality public school;
3. Describe how the board will ensure robust board membership including training expectations, time commitments, and member onboarding.
4. Ensure all proposed initial governing body members are included in Appendix A.

5. Narrative Only

Some of the items in this section were addressed in Question 22, but we will touch on each of them here as well.

Skill sets for board members were discussed above and new board member selection should always consider the need to have a balance of the required skills. Hopefully the school will operate long after the founders are no longer active. By staggering the member terms, we believe that the intent of the founding members will more likely be preserved. Change is inevitable, but having a strong historical context is important as well. Staggered terms will also help mitigate the chance of a coup by new individuals that would be counter to the spirit of the founders.

While the board members must defer to the administration in the operation of the school, they should, as a group, be knowledgeable of the totality of managing and operating a school in order to assess the performance of the school administration and ask the hard questions that will challenge the administration to operate at peak levels. Members may not have all the skills that the board collectively needs, but each member should strive, through training and experience, to become more conversant and competent in understanding all aspects of managing a high performing public school.

Serving on the school board is not a honorary position. All members are expected to attend all meetings with the understanding that personal issues may occasionally preclude that. The time and dates for board meetings will be set annually and these should be etched in each member's calendar. New board members will be coached by the chair with regard to expectations and school history. Training for new members shall be completed within two months and shall include legal and fiduciary requirements as well as specific expectations for this school. New members will be expected to spend at least a half a day on site during the class time with the head administrator and teachers, observing the day-to-day functioning of the school. Again, the purpose of the board is not to micro-manage the operations, but to be knowledgeable of the issues that affect the successful operation of the school.



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Q24.

A.(3) Governing Body Creation/Capacity - Selection of Governing Body Members

• A complete response must

1. Identify a regular and ongoing governing body recruitment process, including identification of action steps, timelines, and responsible parties;

2. Describe the onboarding process, the board's role in chartering and rechartering, authorizer relations, and time commitment.

3. Narrative Only

New board member recruitment is not just the purview of the board chair, but is the responsibility of each member. The head of school may be consulted regarding potential members, but their role is limited. Ideally, the board maintains an ongoing list of potential new members with the skills and attributes of each person clearly identified. No later than three months before selecting a new member, the board shall meet in executive session to discuss potential candidates and determine which skills are most critical in the next member. The chair may assign various members to contact potential candidates to determine their interest in serving and get their approval to be considered for the position. If multiple candidates are available, they shall meet with the board the month before elections so that everyone can assess their qualifications. Upon final selection by the board, the new member shall be contacted immediately and the onboarding process will begin.

Onboarding was described in more detail above, but the key players in the process are the board chair and the head of school.

Chartering and re-charting are the joint responsibility of the board and the head of school. While the administration shall complete the application, it will be reviewed throughout the process by the full board. At least two of the board members should be actively involved in the process, including meeting with the charter school governing body. It is expected that all board members attempt to establish a relationship with the PEC and PED members and staff so that they understand the dynamics of the public charter school goals and objectives and are familiar with any changes in the enabling laws. Taking time to meet with State personnel is expected, in addition to regular board meeting attendance.

Q25.

B.(1) Governing Body Training and Evaluation - Governing Body Training Plan

• A complete response must

1. Identify a process for governing body member onboarding to ensure new members are properly trained and able to meet the obligations and fulfill the responsibilities of governing body service, include action & monitoring steps, timelines, and responsible parties;

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2. Describe how the plan will identify governing body training needs, meet governing body training needs, and comply with state requirements, including any requirements that may change from year to year;
3. Identify any costs required to support the training plan or onboarding process and describe how those costs are supported in the budget; and
4. Develop an onboarding process and training that all new board members will be expected to complete including an outline of topics, who will be responsible for onboarding new board members, timeline for onboarding, and procedure for gathering feedback on the effectiveness of the onboarding process.
5. Ensure the onboarding process and training plan address training on the open meetings act and responsibilities.
6. Narrative Only



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GOVERNING BODY ONBOARDING

The key organizational team has completed extensive efforts in planning and implementing an educational program that meets the needs of the community's students. This program is designed to be highly effective in teaching essential educational skills in all areas from language proficiency in reading, writing, and verbal expression and on to STEM subjects so critical to effective life navigation in today's world. The framework has been created in such a way that it has future flexibility based on lessons learned as well as research-based techniques advancing learning capacities. As new individuals enter the organization, it is critical that they understand the framework established for effective teachers, their role in supporting the school's mission and vision, and the regulatory requirements for state, federal, and local compliance. Board members must also understand their part in ensuring that the school comply with requirements to ensure re-chartering during state-mandated renewal periods.

Action and monitoring steps:

1. Preparation of indoctrination materials providing organizational information about the school and its operation as well as educational materials about state and local governance requirements. Materials will be provided to new governing body members upon their acceptance of positions among the governing body (both staff and volunteer). Monitoring will include obtaining verification that individuals have read and understand those materials.
2. At least once each year, a facilitated indoctrination session will provide in-person guidance to new members of the governing body. Attendance will be monitored to ensure required information is shared and obtained.

During their first year of services, time commitment for board training alone is anticipated to require:

Two hours—Charter school governing ethics and responsibilities and overseeing organizational performance.

Three hours—Financial tracking and accountability for the school

Two hours—Understanding how to evaluate academic data

One hour—Understanding linguistic complications in a multi-cultural setting and other Equity and Cultural considerations.

Initial training time investment will be in addition to the estimated 6 to 10 hours required each month to meet their organizational oversight duties.

Identifying and meeting governing body training needs:

The effectiveness of governing body organizational instruction will be monitored throughout the year through both formal and informal techniques. This will include the level of engagement (e.g., attendance and completion of assigned tasks), participant surveys, and an individual's level of understanding of applicable

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educational principles. This will be accomplished with staff support and overseen by officers of the governing board.

Based on lessons learned, governing body orientation and educational materials will be modified accordingly. Board members and senior staff will participate in identifying any needed modifications as well as, when appropriate, participation in preparation of those materials.

Incorporating governing body needs into budget:

Senior staff-time supporting governing body orientation and long-term support will be included in the operational budget. The same will be true of printing needs and, as appropriate, contractual training by expert presenters. Other items may be added as appropriate.

Onboarding Process and Training

Steps for onboarding training, and timeline will be as follows:

1. Develop initial indoctrination training materials for governing body. At a minimum, those materials will include organizational mission and objectives, overview of regulatory requirements for the school, and job descriptions and responsibilities for board positions. Timeline: prior to school opening and upon initiation of the original board
2. Distribution of initial indoctrination materials to initial and subsequent new governing body members. Timeline: Materials will be disbursed within two weeks of board members accepting positions. Verification that materials have been reviewed and understood should be received within two weeks of receipt of materials.
3. Orientation session will be held for new governing body members including a minimum of eight hours of training concerning administrative needs and educational principles. This will likely take place on or near the beginning of a new fiscal year.

Compliance with Open Meeting Act and State requirements

1. All board meetings will be posted with dates and agendas as required by state and local legal requirements.
2. The governing board will comply with all state and local requirements concerning open discussion and voting requirements related to decision making votes.

CLOS will ensure compliance with Section 6.80.5 of the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) requiring all charter school governing board members to receive training. Each year the New Mexico Charter Schools Division Governing Board Training Schedule will be adhered to as required. Year 2024 Charter Schools Division Governing Board Training Schedule.

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As reflected in the description of initial principal individuals in planning and implementing CLOS, the governing body includes highly qualified and experienced educators. As the school continues, finalizing planning and implementing educational programs, the emphasis will continue on recruiting and empowering those with the knowledge and skills needed as well as a personal understanding of the unique needs of the Hispanic-majority population.

Q26.

B.(2) Governing Body Training and Evaluation - Governing Body Self-Evaluation Plan**• A complete response must**

- 1. Identify a plan for annual governing body self-evaluation, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties, timeline on the annual board calendar and identified criteria or standards; and**
- 2. Describe how the identified plan will focus on and support continuous improvement.**
- 3. Narrative and Other uploads**

**NEW MEXICO - NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION****2025****New Mexico Public Education Department****Governing body self-evaluation:**

At least once each year, members of the governing body will be required to complete user surveys including a self-evaluation based on areas such as 1) Level of knowledge of educational and social requirements affecting students and families; 2) Effectiveness in accomplishing assigned tasks; 3) Honest expression of areas of identified personal weaknesses and working with staff and board officers to discuss possible solutions. Senior staff, working with board officers, will be responsible for creating assessment tools enabling self-evaluation as well as reviewing those evaluations and responding to lessons learned in both educational and administrative functions.

Considerations incorporated into self-evaluation assessment tools will include but not limited to:

- Effectiveness of the board as a whole and the individual member in setting applicable goals and objectives to continually improve educational success for CLOS.
- Does parental and community interaction effectively ensure that educational efforts address the needs of the families and communities as well as the individual students?
- The extent to which school board efforts include diversity, equity, and inclusion in strategic and operational planning for CLOS.
- Does financial management ensure that the school operates in a fiscally responsible manner?
- Does board composition effectively represent the communities served?
- The extent to which the board itself maintains a collegial spirit, thereby ensuring that members make decisions based on a shared passion for educational success for the students.
- Under the board's guidance, does the school effectively administer educational programs to ensure not only short-term academic success for students but also the knowledge and skills needed for success throughout life.

Continuous improvement

The highly qualified educational professionals integral to CLOS planning and implementation maintain continuous research on new and improved educational techniques. As appropriate, board members will be advised of recommended changes in curriculum and instructional techniques. In some instances, this will apply also to how the governing body interacts with faculty, administrative staff, parents/guardians, and the community itself. Improvements will be incorporated as appropriate.



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Applicant Evidence :



Sample Governing Boar...

Uploaded on 6/2/2025 by

Steve Smaby

Q27.

C.(1) Leadership and Management - Governing Body Plan for Monitoring Outcomes**• A complete response must**

1. Identify a plan for how the governing body will monitor academic performance on an ongoing basis, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and identified criteria or standards;
2. Identify a plan for how the governing body will monitor organizational performance on an ongoing basis, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and identified criteria or standards;
3. Identify a plan for how the governing body will monitor financial performance on an ongoing basis, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and identified criteria or standards;
4. Describe how each of the monitoring plans will focus on ensuring the school is meeting its mission, providing a quality education, and acting as a responsible public entity; and
5. Describe how all of the above will be reflected in meeting agendas and the annual board calendar.
6. Narrative Only

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Plan for monitoring academic success:

Staff and contractual academic professionals will provide the expertise to create or obtain curriculum that enables a balanced and thorough academic program. It will be the board's responsibility to not only review and approve educational structure but also the board must have a leadership role in ensuring that instruction meets state and federal academic standards in addition to the needs of the students. While CLOS does not intend to "teach to the tests," maintaining awareness of the degree of success in students scoring at acceptable levels on standardized tests must be included in the monitoring of CLOS' degree of academic success.

Obviously, the board will not supervise day-to-day or even month-to-month the operation of the school. That duty will be the responsibility of the Head of School and the teachers at the basic classroom level. In turn the Head of School will be responsible for reporting to the board on a monthly basis the status of academic performance. Monitoring of status will be based on the principle of "Preparing the Whole Child." Regular updates by the principal will be important concerning academic performance measures such as the overall status of the student body related to grades, participation, and attendance. In addition, less quantifiable factors must be included determining factors such as overall student motivation, whether CLOS succeeds in encouraging a joy in learning among its students and nurturing parental and family support for the success of each child. In order to effectively determine the learning atmosphere and culture at the school, the Head of School will be responsible for creating or soliciting evaluation tools used by students, teachers, and parents for regular input concerning intangibles such as attitudes toward learning, basic satisfaction with the educational experience, and the sense of collaboration between the school, families, and even the community.

As part of regular monitoring of academic success, the Head of School may wish or be requested by the board to include teachers, students, and parents as participants during in-person updates to the board. In doing so, this will aid the board in decision-making based on the realities of the classroom as well as quantifiable test scores, attendance records, and retention levels.

The timeline for monitoring efforts and responsible parties will include:

- Each month overall reports about academic status will be presented to the board by the principal.
- At least once each quarter, the Head of School will work with teachers to assess the degree to which existing curriculum meets student needs, noting any identified deficiencies to be addressed in long-term academic planning. Monthly reports by the principal will be included in reports to the board at the following monthly meeting.
- Standards for success will be determined not only by the status of success in quantifiable testing required by state and federal programs but also based on research-based academic systems identified by and incorporated by the principal, contractual curriculum providers, and the classroom teachers. As identified, those standards will be a part of monthly reports to the board.
- Parents and the community will also have an opportunity for input concerning CLOS academic status. This may be achieved through public comments at board meetings as well as regular satisfaction surveys that will be provided to parents on parent-teacher days or through documents sent home with their children.

**NEW MEXICO - NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION****2025****New Mexico Public Education Department****Monitoring organizational performance**

The Board of Directors will bear ultimate responsibility for not only determining direction, mission, goals and objectives for CLOS, but also for monitoring the degree to which staff, faculty, students, teachers, and community are effective in implementing the schools' purpose and direction. This will include at least semi-annual review of pre-determined quantifiable data such as student enrollment, attendance and retention rates; academic performance by the student population, faculty status concerning certifications and performance reviews, status of state and local certifications and monitoring, and more as identified by the Head of School and members of the board. In addition, opportunities for individual qualitative input will be provided for students, parents and guardians, faculty, and administrative and facility staff.

Results from the monitoring of performance will be closely reviewed, including identification of identified need to address deficient areas and opportunities for improvement. Such findings will be incorporated into both long-term strategic planning and immediate operational planning and implementation.

The Board will work with educational professionals both on staff and contractual in an ongoing effort to ensure adequate monitoring and assessment of school status and performance. Relying on the Principal, faculty, and, as needed, contractual expertise, the board will continually strive to identify research proven educational methods appropriate for implementation at the school in order to continually improve educational effectiveness.

Monitoring financial performance

The Board of Directors' monthly meetings will include ongoing reports on financial status including, but not limited to cash on hand, income and expenditures during the prior month, accounts payable, accounts receivable, and business office and/or accountant projections concerning adequacy to meet pending obligations. The school will also comply with all requirements for external audits, including striving to avoid any identified deficiencies and addressing those deficiencies if identified.

Monitoring to ensure school compliance, internal and external

Both summative and formative compliance measures will be included in strategic, organizational and project planning. Measurable objectives will be incorporated in all levels of planning to apply as summative evaluation determining the extent to which school operation complies with mission, educational quality, and meeting standards necessary as a quality and accountable public entity. Those objectives will state specific quantifiable criteria to measure success that will include but not limited to overall student data such as academic performance, attendance and retention, and survey responses by students, faculty, staff, and parents/guardians.



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The Board will work with the Head of School and other senior faculty and staff for regular review of status related to measurable objectives with a specific emphasis on a comprehensive review at least twice each year. The Head of School will be responsible for overseeing the compilation of data required to monitor objective compliance as well as preparing reporting documents to ensure the Board remains informed.

Formative evaluation will involve ongoing monitoring of specific activities to support organizational and project objectives. Although the Head of School will bear primary responsibility for reviewing implementation status, ensuring implementation of specific activities and recording and reporting on status will be the responsibility of faculty, staff, and even volunteers responsible for carrying out those specific activities. Once material is compiled and reviewed, the Head of School will organize regular updates to the board both as written reports and, when appropriate, in person presentations by key faculty, staff, and, potentially, contractual advisors.

Monitoring reflected in agendas and calendars

Calendars for board meetings will include set days for comprehensive reports about the State of the School at least twice each year. In addition, each monthly agenda will include update reports concerning monitoring at all levels to include but not necessarily limited to Academic Success, Organizational Status, Financial Performance, and Compliance with Internal and External Quality Standards.

Q28.

C.(2). Leadership and Management - Plan for Hiring Head Administrator

• A complete response must

1. Identify an ongoing process for hiring a head administrator, both for the initial hiring and for any time the position becomes vacant, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and identified criteria or standards;
2. Identify all leadership characteristics and all qualifications the head administrator must possess; 2025 New Charter School Application Part C Written Responses 15 of 29
3. Explain why and how the identified leadership characteristics; including educational background, experience and qualifications will ensure the head administrator has the required capacity and enable the head administrator to operate the proposed school as a successful, high-quality public charter school;
4. Explain how the identified leader, both for the initial hiring and for any time the position becomes vacant, will be on boarded including setting the expectations of how they will be reporting to, and working for and with the board.



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5. Describe how the identified process will ensure the school is able to identify and equitably (openly advertise and interview multiple candidates) hire a highly qualified, licensed administrator; and
6. If a potential head administrator has already been identified and/or is a founder, include an assurance that the individual understands they must be selected and hired by an independent governing body and identify the individual's specific leadership skills and qualifications, through verifiable prior experience, that makes them qualified for the position, including holding the required licensure.

7. Narrative Only

**NEW MEXICO - NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION****2025****New Mexico Public Education Department**

The Head of School (HoS) is the top operational staff member of CLOS and shall report to the Board of Directors. This is the only employee that reports to the Board.

CLOS has not yet selected a HoS and will not select a permanent candidate until we have been approved as a Charter School. We have identified three potential candidates for this position and will conduct a thorough job search as soon as we have been notified that our charter school application has been approved.

Upon acceptance of our application, and at any time in the future when the HoS position is vacant, the Board shall use the following procedure to hire the HoS.

1. The Board Chair shall select three or more members from the Board, possibly including themselves, to act as an ad hoc Hiring Committee. Whenever possible, the hiring process will start four months prior to the expected vacancy.
2. The Hiring Committee shall prepare a job description and post this in area newspapers, ACES Education Services, and other sites that they feel would attract suitable candidates. The posting shall be listed for one month.
3. Applicants must submit a resume and at least three professional references and proof of licensure.
4. Applicants will be reviewed by the Hiring Committee to ensure that they meet the minimum requirements for the position. All of the ones that meet the requirements will move to the interview phase.
5. This list of applicants will be interviewed by phone or Zoom by the Hiring Committee and the list of candidates will be narrowed to a minimum of two potential candidates.
6. The finalists will be invited for a site visit and meet with the full board and spend the day observing the school operations.
7. The full board shall meet in Executive session and select their top candidate and their first alternate. A contract will be created by legal counsel and negotiated with the top candidate, including salary and any non-standard benefits. In the event that an agreement with the top candidate is not reached, an offer shall be made to the alternate candidate.
8. Applicants that are not selected at any stage of the process shall be notified within three days of those decisions. Once a contract has been completed with the HoS, the result shall be announced on the school website and social media.

The ideal candidate for the HoS shall possess most or all of the following traits and qualifications.



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Education - A bachelor and master's degree from an accredited university, preferably with a focus on the needs of special education students, long with an Educational Administration licensure.

Experience - At least five years of experience in an administrative role at another New Mexico public school.

Other attributes - The ideal candidate shall have proven leadership skills with the ability to attract and retain strong teachers and staff. As our proposed school is quite small, the HoS must be willing to take on a wide range of tasks that might otherwise be delegated to other staff members. The HoS must have experience with the philosophy of Outdoor Education and be willing to engage with staff and students in an outdoor environment. He or she must be adept at problem solving and finding collaborative solutions to conflicts that arise. They must be able to effectively balance the needs of the teachers, staff, students and parents while following the policies and procedures set by the Board. A strong understanding of school finances is critical, both to ensure compliance, but also to maximize the opportunities to utilize all funding sources. Lastly, the HoS, along with the Board, shall set the culture and expectations of the staff and students and help define and demonstrate what it means to be part of the CLOS family.

By the time a new HoS is hired, he/she will have a good idea of the mission and vision of CLOS and the priorities that the Board has identified to ensure the success of the school. Those conversations will grow and expand once the HoS has started working at the school. The Board chair will spend the first month being extra available to answer any questions and give specific guidance on any issues that might arise. As the HoS settles into the job, the amount of interaction will decrease, but the Board chair, or any other board members will always make themselves available to provide guidance. Over time, the primary interaction with the Board members will be through the monthly and special Board meetings. While the strongest relationship with the Board will most likely be through the Board chair, it is important that all parties recognize that the HoS reports to the Board as a whole and that all Board matters must be approved by the majority of the Board members, not just the Board chair.

Upon coming on board, the HoS shall review the school charter and discuss any questions with the Board members and possibly the legal counsel. Any areas that are not clear with the HoS must be addressed and resolved such that the HoS and the Board see eye-to-eye on the terms and conditions of the charter.

The Board has many responsibilities, but the most critical task to ensure the success of the school is the selection, training and assessment of the HoS. Board members should actively participate in state-wide workshops and events to get to know other school leaders, both board members and administrators, to develop a sense of what other schools are doing effectively and to traits of great leaders and potential future staff candidates.

Q29.

C.(3) Leadership and Management - Distinguished Roles & Responsibilities

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- 1. Identify the process the governing body will use for distinguishing their roles and responsibilities with those of the head administrator;**
 - 2. Include specific actions the governing body will take to ensure the head administrator understands the obligations of the charter contract, the boards' role in oversight and chartering, and the requirements of all elements of the plan contained in this application; and**
 - 3. Attach a job description in Appendix B that includes the following:**
 - a. Lists all major responsibilities of the head administrator**
 - b. Includes responsibilities that are unique to charter school leaders**
 - c. Includes responsibilities that specifically relate to the school's mission, goals, and educational philosophy**
- Identifies all hiring requirements including all previously identified requirements related to characteristics and qualifications.**

4. Narrative Only

While the board and the Head of School share the same objective to create a high-performing public charter school, their roles and responsibilities are very different.

The board is primarily responsible for setting policies to ensure the mission and vision of the school are carried out. They have one employee, the Head of School, and they are responsible for the hiring, development, evaluation and possibly removal of that individual.

The Head of School is responsible for the operation of the school, including hiring, development and evaluation of all staff members. While the board may express their opinion about staff issues, the Head of School retains the ultimate authority for all staffing decisions. Concerns of students, teachers and parents shall always be addressed with the Head of School (unless the issue relates to that person, in which case the concerns shall be directed to the Board Chair). Any issues that are not resolved with the Head of School may be brought to the board for review. If that happens, the board shall provide their thoughts and input to the Head of School and then leave it to that person to decide how the issue will be handled. In other words, the Board will listen to the concerns and provide feedback to the Head of School, but they will not attempt to override the final decision.

The Head of School will be an active participant in the charter application process and is expected to understand all the requirements set forth therein. When a new Head of School is hired, one or more of the board members shall meet with that person and review the charter to ensure that each requirement is understood and will be fulfilled.

A copy of the job description for the Head of School is attached in Appendix B.



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Applicant Evidence :



Job Description Head of...

Uploaded on **5/26/2025** by
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Q30.

C.(4) Leadership and Management - Head Administrator Evaluation Plan**A complete response must**

1. Identify the plan for annually evaluating the head administrator, including action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and standards or criteria including how this will be maintained in the boards' annual calendar process;
2. Include action steps to evaluate the effectiveness of the head administrator
3. Describe how the plan specifically takes into account ensuring the equitable implementation of the mission and goals of the proposed school; and
4. Ensure the plan meets the requirements identified in NMAC 6.69.7.8 and 6.69.7.9.
5. Narrative Only

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Evaluating head administrator

Requirements for qualifications for the Head of School (serving as head administrator) will be clearly defined in the position job description. At a minimum the individual will need a Master's degree specific to education and at least five years of experience as an educator with that including at least two years in educational administration. Hiring consideration will include documentation of the level of successes as an educator including preference for documented successful implementation of innovative and research-based educational initiatives.

At least once annually, at the close of the academic year, the Head of School will meet with members of the Board for a formal performance review. The results of that review will be considered during negotiations applicable to contract renewals.

Board membership includes highly experienced academicians knowledgeable in criteria and techniques for school administration. As a result, the Board will compile evaluation criteria to determine the expectations for the Head of School's performance as head administrator. If needed, the Board will identify contractual expertise to ensure performance evaluations will be organized to best ensure an academic environment that will best nurture the quality of learning and of personal development for CLOS students. The identified criteria will be clearly communicated to the Head of School to avoid confusion as to Board expectations.

In addition to success indicators determined by the Board, evaluations will incorporate also New Mexico and federal requirements for school administration.

Action steps for administrator evaluation

The logical development of effective administrator evaluation will include the following steps:

1. While creating job descriptions for the hiring of the Head of School, the board will create evaluation criteria for both the head administrator and for the general learning environment within the school.
2. The search process for a Head of School will include consideration of evaluation criteria to identify the candidate best able to nurture learning and to create an academic environment that nurtures both the knowledge and skills for students to succeed in school and in life.
3. At the end of the Head of School's first three months and again at six months as head administrator, Board members will meet with the Head of School to determine initial performance status and to enable modifications to organizational planning and implementation if needed.
4. A formal annual performance evaluation will be conducted by Board members each year at the termination of the academic year.

Equitable administration of mission and goals



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Concept development and initial planning for CLOS focuses on the need for customization of education to ensure applicability to the unique population within the school's proposed service area. This minority-majority region includes a Hispanic population of roughly 85% and Indigenous of 3%. Historical failure to customize based on the cultural norms and priorities of local cultures has long been a stumbling block to ensuring student success within a traditional academic environment. Any individual hired to serve as Head of School must understand the unique nature of the mission and goals of CLOS while also implementing programs enabling students to succeed in the "mainstream" world as well. Ensuring compliance with mission and goals will begin during the hiring process as the board and selection committee clearly expresses the importance of identified mission and goals.

In addition to formal employment reviews, throughout the year, the Board will monitor the degree to which day-to-day operation of the school supports the mission and goals of the institution. If a deviation from the heart of the CLOS vision is perceived, the Board will address possible issues with the Head of School, including discussions as to how best to ensure effective education while staying true to the initial vision.

Meeting NMAC 6.69.7.8 and 6.69.7.9 requirements

The New Mexico Administrative Code provides clear and effective guidelines for evaluation of principals and assistant principals. As the Board creates performance guidelines, these will be incorporated into expectations for the head administrator's performance. For example, the Head of School will be evaluated on the effectiveness of his or her efforts to assure quality education through evaluation of teachers using the three-tiered licensure performance evaluation.

The Board and the Head of School will work together to ensure that state requirements found in the New Mexico Administrative Code will be incorporated in the schools administrative and evaluation system.

Q31.

D.(1) Organizational Structure of the Proposed School - Organizational Chart

• A complete response must

1. Include an organizational chart for each year as part of the rollout with grade additions;
2. Show how the Equity Council is incorporated into to organizational chart;
3. Include a narrative that describes the structures and relationships represented in the organizational chart;
4. Include all entities essential to the operation and success of the proposed school; and
5. Describe the relationship among each of the relevant entities.
6. Narrative and Other uploads

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As stated earlier, CLOS will start off as a relatively small school, initially serving up to 35 students in grades K-4. Our hope is that our success will allow us to expand and add additional grades over time so that students can continue their education at CLOS beyond the 4th grade. However, for the sake of this application, we have assumed that our school remains as stated above. With this small school size, the organization is quite simple. The Board has one employee, the Head of School (HoS). The HoS, in turn, will have four employees, two certified teachers (with at least one of them certified as a SPED teacher), one Educational Assistant to support the needs of students that need extra attention, and a part-time Administrative Assistant who will handle a wide variety of tasks as needed. We plan to contract for any legal services, financial reporting and food services. We do not anticipate offering transportation services. All staff will report to the HoS. This structure will remain in place for the full five years of the school, unless the charter is amended at some point in the future. The organizational chart is attached, which is the same for all five years.

The Board is the entity that is responsible for the charter school and ensuring that CLOS fulfills the mission as laid out in the approved charter. It is responsible for hiring, overseeing and assessing the performance of the HoS. It is also responsible for reporting to the PEC and PED regarding our financial and academic performance. The Board shall hold monthly meetings in accordance with the New Mexico Open Meetings Act and comply with all aspects of the Act. The Board is responsible for setting policies and procedures that the HoS will implement.

The HoS reports to the Board and is responsible for the operation of the school and implementing the policies and procedures set out by the Board. The Hos is responsible for hiring, overseeing and assessing the performance of all staff members. He/she may consult with the Board on specific staffing issues, but he/she retains the ultimate decision making responsibilities.

The Equity Council will be composed of interested parents and community members to advise the school regarding culturally and linguistically responsive issues. We also expect to work closely with Highlands University to help meet both the spirit and the law regarding the Yazzi-Martinez lawsuit. The Equity Council will work directly with the HoS but will also provide reports directly to the Board.

The teachers and aide will report to the HoS and will be responsible for the direct education of our students, including those with special needs. At times, students will be grouped by grade level and age, while there will other activities where they will be grouped by competency level. With the freedom that is possible with outdoor education, we expect a much more fluid learning environment and much more collaboration among students than is typical in a standard classroom.

The Administrative Assistant has the difficult job of filling many roles. In conjunction with the HoS, they both must assure that all administrative activities are completed, including interacting with the contract financial experts. A quality that we will look for in this position, as well as all staff members, is a willingness to step in and help the team whenever needed.

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Applicant Evidence :



CLOS Org Chart.pdf

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Q32.

D.(2) Organizational Structure of the Proposed School - Job Descriptions for Certified/Licensed Staff

• A complete response must

1. Identify the following:

- all certified and licensed staff identified in the application
- all non-certified or unlicensed staff identified in the application who could be considered essential to the operation and success of the proposed school
- any non-traditional roles or positions;

2. Describe why the identified roles are key to the operation and success of the proposed school; and

3. Attach staff job descriptions as Appendix C for all of the positions identified in the application response and include the following:

- List all major responsibilities of the positions
- Include responsibilities that specifically relate to the school's mission, goals, and educational philosophy
- Identify all hiring requirements including qualifications and licensure or certification
- Identify reporting lines ("reports to") that align to the organizational chart.

4. Narrative and Other uploads

Again, due to the small size of our proposed school, there are only a small number of staff. We are planning on two certified teachers, at least one of which is SPED certified, an educational assistant and an administrative assistant. The teachers are the core personnel that will be responsible for instructing our students. The educational assistant will support the teachers, primarily with special education students that require individualized support for a portion of their day. The administrative assistant will support the Head of School and ensure the smooth operation of the administrative functions of the school.




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Applicant Evidence :

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|  |  |  |  |
| Teacher Job Descrptio... | SPED Teacher Job Descx... | EA Job Description.docx | Admin Asst Job Descript... |
| Uploaded on 5/26/2025 by Steve Smaby | Uploaded on 5/26/2025 by Steve Smaby | Uploaded on 5/26/2025 by Steve Smaby | Uploaded on 5/26/2025 by Steve Smaby |

Q33.

D.(3) Organizational Structure of the Proposed School - Staffing Needs and Plan

• A complete response must

1. Identify an ongoing staffing plan and process for hiring all necessary staff, both for the initial hiring and for any time a position becomes vacant, include action steps, timelines, responsible parties;
2. Describe how the staffing plan and process will ensure the school is able to hire highly qualified staff, no later than two weeks prior to the start of the proposed school year, on an annual basis, and fill all vacancies within a reasonable time; include how the school will recruit and hire highly-qualified licensed staff;
3. Describe how the staffing plan and process is reasonable and adequate to support effective and timely implementation of the academic program/curriculum during the planning year and for all subsequent years;
4. Describe how the staffing plan and process is aligned with the budget and the school's projected enrollment; and
5. Describe how the school will make adjustments to the staffing plan in the case that there are differences in projected and actual enrollment.
6. Narrative Only



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Ongoing staffing plan and process for hiring

Educational and administrative professionals are key participants in initial planning for CLOS. They will continue to be valuable as the original staffing plan is put into place for selection of initial faculty and staff. As needed, contractual assistance may be pursued if needed in the creation of job descriptions, compilation of a list of essential faculty and staff, and creating the framework upon which initial hiring can be based. Both planners for the inauguration of CLOS and, if needed, contractual Human Resource services will be used to ensure that the hiring process not only provides for efficiency but also complies with any state, local, or federal regulatory requirements.

Once a hiring system is in place, the process of identifying new positions will follow guidelines established to ensure an effective process that complies with legal requirements. The organization of employees will use standard educational human resource systems including the designation of all employees as exempt or non-exempt and as full-time or part-time. Employment categories will include:

- Full-time employees – at least 32 hours per week and eligible for benefits.
- Part-time employees – fewer than 32 hours per week and ineligible for benefits.
- Certified employees – Certified by the New Mexico Public Education Department. Professional Licensure Bureau for their specific grade level or content area.
- Non-certified employees – those positions that do not require specific licensure.
- Exempt employees -- do not qualify for overtime pay, per the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
- Non-exempt employees -- qualify for overtime pay, per the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
- Consultant or contract employees – retained on an as-needed basis to fulfill specific tasks in their areas of expertise.
- Temporary Employees – hired on a limited time basis to fulfill a specific need and do not qualify for benefits.

CLOS planners anticipate completion of an inaugural hiring plan at least six months before the planned opening of the school. Selection of employees should be completed one months prior to opening with the hiring process completed at least two weeks prior to opening. Members of the initial planning and implementation team will be responsible for inaugural hiring with support as needed from contractual services. In subsequent years the Head of School will oversee determination of what positions need to be filled with candidate solicitation support provided by staff or contractual expertise as needed. The goal for hiring will be completion at least one-month before the position is incorporated into school staff.

Hiring staff with sufficient time to meet school needs

At the close of each school year, the Head of School will lead efforts to renew contracts or conduct searches for new employees to ensure a fully operational facility during the following school year. Special summer programs which will require assigning existing employees to those programs or hiring temporary personnel. The goal will be to hire at least two-weeks before the launch of designated summer programs.



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Highly qualified educators are included in the CLOS planning team. They bring with them prior knowledge of how and where to recruit and identify qualified faculty and staff. This will include communication with institutions of higher education critical to educating new teachers as well as avenues through teaching professional associations and publications.

Reasonable and adequate staffing plan

The CLOS initial planning team will work together to compile the initial academic and operational plan. Curriculum selection and operational needs will drive identification of positions needed. That will serve as the template to initiate the selection and hiring process. Once the school opens, it is likely that lessons learned will require modification of staffing plans and new personnel will be hired as needed.

Ongoing evaluation processes will guide the Board and senior staff in the modification of future staffing plans. The lessons learned from the evaluation process will guide leadership in ensuring needed positions are filled while also striving for efficiency to make best use of school fiscal resources.

Plan aligned with budget and enrollment

While quality education comes first, like all institutions CLOS must deal with budgetary realities. As a result, planning will include identifying the positions most needed and while also ensuring expenses do not exceed available financial support. In addition, decisions concerning the personnel needed will be determined by actual or projected student enrollment. The number of students by grade will be the primary driving factor in determining the number of faculty and support staff needed.

Hiring adjustments based on actual rather than projected enrollments

The CLOS senior administrative staff and Board members will monitor actual enrollments and adjust hiring accordingly. Should enrollment exceed expectations, that will support ease in adjusting faculty since hiring new personnel is a far easier decision than any need to eliminate positions. Should the latter be required, CLOS will comply with both legal requirements and organizational policies concerning contractual obligations to employees.

Q34.

D.(4) Organizational Structure of the Proposed School - Professional Development Plan

• A complete response must

1. Identify an annual professional development plan with action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and associated costs

a. Describe how the plan meets state requirements and rules; and

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b. Describe how the school will ensure professional development time is not used for routine staff meetings.

2. Identify a mentorship plan for novice teachers, including action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and associated costs that meets the requirements of PED rules; and

3. Describe how the annual professional development plan and the mentorship plan for novice teachers ensure the following occur:

a. are supported by the budget

b. support the implementation of the proposed school's educational plan, mission, and performance goals

c. not only address required annual training, but are also tailored to address school- and teacher-specific professional development needs.

4. Narrative and Other uploads



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Annual professional development plan with action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and associated costs

CLOS planners have existing relationships with the New Mexico Highlands University School of Education as well as the Northeast Regional Education Cooperative (Reg.4). Both senior staff and the CLOS Board will be proactive in connecting with professional development, especially as it relates to maintaining certification for teachers. In addition to ensuring faculty obtain the necessary CEU's and other requirements to maintain certification, there will be an ongoing search for workshops and other educational programs related to research-based cutting-edge educational techniques assuring continue improvement in opportunities for faculty, administrators, and students.

Professional development action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and associated costs

1. Each semester, create a list of professional development opportunities available to faculty. Timeline: August and January of each year; Responsible Party—Head of School and administrative assistant; Associated costs: TBD during organizational budgetary process.
2. Create a professional development tracking system for each teacher, including scheduling of opportunities to meet requirements for certification renewals. Timeline: Created upon hiring and upgraded each summer; Responsible Party—Faculty members, Head of School and administrative assistant; Associated costs: TBD during organizational budgetary process.
3. Schedule in-service days including professional development available to entire faculty. Timelines: As available; Responsible Party—Faculty members, Head of School and administrative assistant; Contractual providers as appropriate; Associated costs: TBD during organizational budgetary process.
4. Provide opportunities for faculty to enroll in professional advancement classes through area institutions of higher education or online programs. Timeline: ongoing; Responsible Parties: Head of School and faculty; Associated costs: TBD during organizational budgetary process.
5. Every three months, review professional development requirements created by the New Mexico Department of Education and modify professional development planning and scheduling accordingly. Timeline: August, November, February, and April each year; Responsible Party - Head of School; Associated costs: TBD during organizational budgetary process.
6. CLOS policies will preclude the inclusion of professional development as a part of regular staff meetings. Timeline-- NA; Responsible Party—CLOS Board; Associated Costs—NA.

Mentorship plan for novice teachers

1. Include professional development planning specific to novice teachers. Timeline—upon hiring and semi-annually thereafter; Responsible parties—Teacher, Head of School, administrative assistant; Associated costs: TBD during organizational budgetary process.



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2. Recruit experienced teachers as mentors and provide instruction on mentoring techniques. Timeline: Last month of spring semester; Responsible parties—Head of School and experienced teachers;
3. Assign experienced teachers as mentors for novice teachers. Timeline—Upon employment of novice teacher. Responsible parties—Experienced teachers, Head of School; Associated Costs: minimal since no additional hiring or materials needed.
4. Review project effectiveness by monitoring novice teacher instructional success. Timeline: Ongoing; Responsible parties: Head of School: Associated costs: Minimal
5. Obtain input from matched novice and experienced teachers. Timeline: End of each semester. Associated costs: minimal.

Institutional support for professional development and novice teacher mentoring.

Budget support

Professional development will be fully incorporated into the operational budget. Line items will include: on-site training by qualified professionals; travel and registration fees for applicable workshops, conferences, and seminars; tuition support for teachers obtaining CEUs or enrolling for graduate or professional development classes.

Support school's educational plan, mission, and performance goals

Selection of professional development opportunities will include review of relevance to CLOS identified educational priorities as well as alignment with the mission and performance goals. The Principal may recruit a committee of experienced faculty to not only provide input in creating and updating CLOS educational priorities but also in the selection of educational materials used in the classroom as well as professional development opportunities for teachers. Matching experienced teachers as mentors for novice teachers will ensure an ongoing pipeline of faculty participating actively in academic decisions made on behalf of the students.

Tailored to address school- and teacher-specific professional development

Creation of a tracking system of instructional needs for individual teachers will enable enhancing both the careers and the teaching abilities of faculty. Annual training selected by the Principal with assistance from senior teacher advisors will be selected to meet comprehensive needs of the entire faculty, but each teacher will be encouraged to pursue individual or small group learning opportunities to encourage ongoing improvement in their skills as educators.

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Q35.

E. Employees - Employer/Employee Terms**• A complete response must**

- 1. Identify all primary classes of employees the school will employ (e.g., administrative, professional, term, contract);**
- 2. Include an employment policy and handbook**
- 3. Provide an explanation for onboarding new staff and re-training returning staff on the terms within the handbook and policy.**
- 4. Explain how the school, through the governing body and head administrator, will address employee unions and other school-specific employee representatives.**
- 5. Narrative Only**

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CLOS employees are classified according to several parameters.

Full-time employees are those that work throughout the school year for more than 32 hours per week. Part-time employees are those that regularly work less than 32 hours per week.

Licensed employees are those that must hold an educator's license in order to perform their duties, as defined by the NM PED Licensure Bureau. Non-licensed employees do not need to hold an educational license to perform their job duties.

Exempt employees are those that do not qualify for overtime pay, per the Fair Labor Standards Act. The provisions of the Act will be used to determine if an employee is Exempt or Non-exempt. Non-exempt employees are those that do qualify for overtime pay.

Consultants or Contract employees are not employees of CLOS, per se, but work under the terms and conditions of a written agreement. They do not qualify for CLOS benefit programs.

A copy of the proposed Employee Handbook is attached. This handbook is subject to the review, modification and approval of the Board upon acceptance of the CLOS charter school.

All new and returning staff will be subject to a formal training regimen.

The main purpose of the training is to ensure that all employees are familiar with the terms of the Employee Handbook, are familiar with all other CLOS policies and procedures and fully understand their role in the CLOS organization. Additionally, the training is intended to understand the culture of the school and to emphasize our mission and vision and each individual's role in building and sustaining that culture. In addition to this initial onboarding process, regular staff meeting will continue to reinforce the CLOS values and create a collaborative team.

CLOS does not anticipate that it will have an employee bargaining agreement during the first five years of operation. In the event that one is certified at any time during the school's operation, the Board of CLOS will negotiate a collective bargaining agreement in good faith as provided in the Public Employees Labor Relations Act. CLOS will comply with all applicable statutes as provided under New Mexico law.

Applicant Evidence :**Employee Handbook.do...**

Uploaded on **5/28/2025** by
Steve Smaby

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Q36.

E.(1). Community/Parent/Employee Involvement in Governance - Parental, Professional Educator, and Community Involvement in Governance Plan**• A complete response must****1. Identify school operation and governance structures that will provide the following:**

- a. A meaningful opportunity for parental input and participation**
- b. A meaningful opportunity for professional educator input and participation**
- c. A meaningful opportunity for community input and participation;**

2. Describe how the structures will facilitate parental involvement that will help advance the proposed school's mission;**3. Explain the role of the Equity Council in the governance and operation of the proposed school;****4. Include assurances that the school understands it may not require family or parental support or involvement as grounds for accepting, not accepting, enrolling, dis-enrolling, or otherwise differentiating treatment of a student; and****5. If the school plans to offer opportunities for parent support, explain the process of opting out for parents who are unwilling or unable to meet the proposed school's support opportunities.****6. Narrative Only**

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CLOS believes that one of the major keys to successful education is a strong, collaborative partnership between the school and the parent/guardian unit. To maximize the opportunity for learning, parents and teachers must work together to reinforce the lessons learned at school and the lessons learned at home. Too often the school and parents are at loggerheads, each blaming the other for behavior issues and lack of academic progress.

On a macro basis, there are many strategies to encourage parent involvement in the operations and governance of the school.

The first line of attack is developing a clear, concise Parent Handbook that lays out the mission, vision and culture of the school. This will be available on the school website and a hard copy given to new student parents (as well as any community member that requests a hard copy). This helps establish the values that the school believes in and sets the expectations for the relationship between the school and the parents.

CLOS intends to hold an "All Hands" meeting before the start of each school year where all parents, staff, and governing board members can meet and discuss the plans for the coming year. This will include a discussion of academic goals, financial performance and staff development. This meeting will be a two-way discussion where parents can share their expectations for the coming year as well as concerns they may have.

Parent/teacher conferences are the next regularly scheduled meetings where parents and teachers can discuss specific goals, expectations and results of each individual child. While not mandatory, these conferences will be widely advertised and presented in a way that is most accessible to all of the parents, striving for maximum attendance.

The monthly CLOS Board meetings are another way parents can participate in the governance of the school. They are obviously open to all parents (and other community members) and participation will be encouraged, not just when a parent has an issue, but as a way to be kept abreast of school matters. We will offer the opportunity to attend both in person and via remote technology.

On a more granular level, parents will be encouraged to meet with administration and academic staff at any time there is an issue that needs to be addressed. Our philosophy is that direct and open communication can solve most problems before they fester and create a bigger problem.

Our core value of getting students outdoors as much as possible creates the need for volunteers to help support the teachers. All parents, as well as other community members, will be encouraged to register as volunteers and invited to spend time at the Ranch to see firsthand how the children are progressing. We have so many talented community members that want to share their gifts and we will work hard to integrate them into the daily curriculum.

On a more formal note, CLOS will establish an Equity Council to ensure that we are creating and implementing culturally and linguistically responsive programming that honors the the community's identity, culture and language. The Council will draw on the full range of community members and the results and recommendations will be shared on our school website for everyone to view and comment.

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Over the years, Collins Lake Autism Center and the Ranch have opened their doors to the community in many, many ways. The philosophy has always been to share the beautiful resources we have here and be a core institution in the community. We will continue that tradition with CLOS and always share our successes and our shortcomings, with the goal to continuously improve our services to the students and the community.

Lastly, while we will encourage all parents to fully participate in their child's education at CLOS, we recognize that not everyone has the time or resources to do so. There will be no requirement for anyone to participate in school activities and functions. Lack of parental involvement will in no way impact the treatment of a student, negatively or positively. We will always look for ways to encourage involvement and make it easier for parents to participate, but we also recognize that it is the parent's choice whether and how they are able to collaborate with us.

Q37.

E.(2). Community/Parent/Employee Involvement in Governance - Plan for Processing Concerns and Complaints**• A complete response must**

- 1. Identify a grievance process to receive and process concerns and complaints from the community, parents and families, and students that includes action steps, timelines, and responsible parties;**
- 2. Include a final step in the process that provides the grievant a meaningful opportunity to be heard by, and receive a response from, the governing body; if they are unable to obtain resolution from the head administrator;**
- 3. Describe how the process is transparent, fair, accessible to the community, and ensure a timely and meaningful response; and**
- 4. describe how the school will provide assurances that the school will additionally meet the specific legal requirements of the McKinney Vento and special education grievance processes.**
- 5. Narrative Only**

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CLOS believes that the education of students is a partnership between the school and the parents/guardians (herein after simply referred to as "parent") of the students. Through continuous written communication, teachers and parents will be able to express concerns about student behaviors and other actions that should be addressed by both parties. In the unlikely event that an issue remains unresolved, CLOS will establish a formal procedure for filing a grievance. The grievance procedures will be spelled out in the parent handbook, given to all parents at the start of each school year (or upon student arrival in the case of a mid-year student enrollment). The grievance procedure will also be posted on the school website.

Teachers and staff will be trained before the start of each school year on ways to most effectively deal with parent complaints. Through this informal process, it is expected that most concerns can be immediately addressed.

If the grievance is not resolved informally, the parent may proceed to file a formal grievance in writing to the Head of School. The grievance should be clearly defined, including dates of the alleged incident and the persons involved, and must ask for specific actions to be taken to resolve the issues. In the event the grievance is against the Head of School, the grievance shall be filed with the Board Chair. All grievances must be filed within 30 days of the alleged incident.

The Head of School (or Board Chair) shall institute a formal investigation, gathering evidence and interviewing participants. A written response detailing the outcome of the investigation shall be provided to the complainant within 10 school days and an invitation to meet in person will be offered to the complainant. If warranted, a plan to resolve the issues at stake will be presented to the complainant, including steps to prevent future occurrence's.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Head of School, they may appeal to the School Board by asking to be added to the agenda of the next scheduled Board meeting (or the following meeting if the time to add agenda items has passed). The Board shall review the complaint and then meet privately with the Head of School to mutually determine if any changes to the original response are warranted. The final decision will remain with the Head of School, after considering the advice of the Board members, and this final decision will be transmitted within 30 days of the complainant presentation to the Board. This process is intended to establish that the Head of School is the final arbiter of complaints but that he/she will seriously consider the advice and counsel of the Board members.

While this process timeline should be the norm for most complaints, it is recognized that more complicated or serious complaints may take longer to resolve.

Whenever possible, the Head of School shall maintain confidentiality of the aggrieved parties, as well as any witnesses or participants, to protect the reputation of the complainant or student. Retaliation against a student or parent is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.



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Collins Lake Outdoor School is dedicated to ensuring that special circumstances, including homelessness or special needs do not result in disputes between the school and our families. The McKinney Vento act requires that schools develop policies that ensure that students experiencing homelessness are able to access enrollment and attendance of schools without barriers. Per the Act, schools shall regularly review and update their policies to support students experiencing homelessness. CLOS intends to avoid McKinney Vento grievances through annual reviews of our policies and practices considering the unique challenges of homelessness. However, if there is a grievance, we will first attempt to resolve the grievance through our standard process outlined above. If the grievance is not resolved by that means, CLOS will follow the protocol outlined in NMAC 6.10.3, as outlined by the NMPED. This process entails completion of the NMPED dispute resolution paperwork and a write-up of the school's response submitted to the NMPED Homeless Liaison within five days of the school's formal decision.

CLOS is particularly concerned with the unique challenges of our students and parents of children with special needs. We believe the regular contact with families of students with special needs will prevent most grievances. In the case of a grievance that cannot be resolved through our standard grievance process, our special education grievance process will be based on the NMPED Parent and Child Rights in Special Education: Procedural Safeguards Notice.15F 116. Families should first follow the school's standard grievance procedure, or the school and the family may elect to seek out mediation from a trained mediator via the NMPED Special Education Bureau. Finally, families may file a formal complaint with the State. This process will follow the deadlines and requirements outlined in NMAC 6.31.2.13.

Q38.

G.(1) Student Recruitment and Enrollment - Outreach & Recruitment Plan

• A complete response must

1. Identify a prospective student outreach and recruitment plan, including action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and associated costs;

2. Describe:

a. how the plan is tailored to ensure equal access to the school

b. why the plan is likely to attract a student body that is demographically reflective of the local community and school district;

c. describe how the school will change recruitment plans and outreach if projected student enrollment is not reached

3. Describe how the school will annually evaluate the effectiveness of the outreach and recruitment efforts in ensuring equal access to the school and attracting a student body that is demographically reflective of



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the local community and school district and how the school will use that information to make adjustments to the outreach and recruitment plan.

4. Narrative Only

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CLOS will design a robust marketing and outreach plan that will be set in motion immediately upon approval of our charter school. Members of the founding team have already secured several commitments from local parents to enroll their children among the home school group as well as children of CLAC employees. Our efforts to date have been rather tentative as we cannot be certain that we will be approved.

Our three main targeted populations will be current Mora ISD students, home school students that previously attended Mora ISD, and students from the two Las Vegas school districts.

Mora is a small rural community and the most effective communication strategies are 1) word of mouth, 2) posting flyers in the local post offices and other businesses around town, and 3) Facebook postings, both the existing CLAC page as well as community bulletin boards. This may seem very primitive but it has proven very effective in other outreach efforts that CLAC has undergone in the past.

As discussed elsewhere in this application, CLAC and the Mora Home School Learning Coalition have a strong connection. The Coalition visits the Ranch weekly for group educational programs and are intimately familiar with the plans for a charter school at the Ranch. Once approved we will prepare a formal presentation to the group and have application materials available. We will follow up with individual meetings with any of the parents that have further questions or concerns.

Another strong potential for student recruitment will be with the Summer Reading program that will take place at the Ranch starting in early June. Based on feedback from last year's program, many of the parents are eager to participate in a charter school at the Ranch. We will not have received approval for our school at the time of the Summer Reading program, but we will have preliminary materials available at that time and will follow up with interested parents upon school approval.

Another in-person opportunity for recruitment is at the coffee shop that CLAC operates in the Mora County Complex. We will have materials available for any customers that express an interest in the school.

CLAC will be hosting a Music Festival at the Ranch in collaboration with Queen Bee and the New Mexico Music Commission on June 21. This free event will be open to all community members. Donations to support the various CLAC education initiatives, including the charter school application, will be accepted. Information about the charter school program will be provided to all attendees and staff will be on hand to answer any questions.

CLAC currently has a contract with the Las Vegas Optic to run monthly articles about events and activities at the Ranch. We have submitted one article about our efforts to apply for a charter school and will be submitting several more once we know we have been approved. There is also a small monthly newsletter, La Voz, that is published in Mora and we will be submitting an article in there as well.

We will also be looking for future events in the Las Vegas area, similar to the Autism Amazing! program, where we can actively recruit students to apply for a spot at CLOS. We have not identified these opportunities yet, but know that these events will continue to be held.



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Depending on the success of the June Music Festival, we may hold another similar event in the fall specifically to educate the community about our charter school and to push for enrollment applications.

The majority of our recruitment efforts will be targeted to the community at large. As such, we expect that the student population will be representative of the entire community. No student, or groups of students, will be excluded from our recruitment efforts or from having full access to the application process.

Recruitment efforts will be one of the primary responsibilities of the Head of School. Board members will also be expected to assist with the recruitment efforts, especially Kaya Long and Steve Smaby, along with other CLAC staff. The cost for recruitment is relatively minor. The Las Vegas Optic costs CLAC \$162 per month while La Voz articles are free. The Music Festival will not cost CLAC or CLOS anything (in fact, it should provide net positive donations). There will be some nominal expenses associated with creating and printing flyers, but it should be less than \$100. The Head of School will report, no less than monthly, to the Board with the number of applications received.

Applications will be accepted as soon as we receive word that our application is approved and we are able to create application packets. We expect that the number of applications will exceed our cap, so all applications will remain sealed, other than the grade level of the student. If a lottery is needed, our plan is to hold that in late March 2026. We will monitor the number of applications received up to that point and will redouble our recruitment efforts if we feel that we may not reach our student enrollment cap.

Admission will be open to any New Mexico student and we will not discriminate based on sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, or physical, emotional or learning disability. No tuition will be charged and no admission requirements will be imposed, other than New Mexico residency.

We will institute the same process in future years, with applications accepted from September through March of the preceding school year. Unless we are able to increase the student enrollment cap, we expect that most of the new students in future years will be children entering kindergarten.

Q39.

G.(2) Student Recruitment and Enrollment - Lottery Admission Process

• A complete response must

- 1. Identify a plan to implement a lottery admission process if necessary, include action steps, timelines, and responsible parties;**
- 2. Describe each of the steps of the process to include the following:**
 - a. Pre-lottery entry**
 - b. Lottery**
 - c. Post-lottery registration**



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- d. Waitlist maintenance and entry; and**
- 3. Describe how the lottery process supports equal access to the school.**
- 4. Narrative Only**

**NEW MEXICO - NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION****2025****New Mexico Public Education Department****Pre-Lottery**

Applications will be accepted by the Head of School any time during the Open Enrollment period from September through March of the preceding school year. The final registration date will be set by the Head of School, generally a week before the lottery drawing date. In the likely event that the number of applicants for any grade level exceeds the number of slots available, an open and equitable lottery process shall be used to determine which students will be accepted. The lottery process is triggered only if the number of applicants in any grade exceed the number of available slots.

Lottery

Per New Mexico Statutes and the New Mexico Administrative Code, sibling of existing students (not applicable the first year) or children of CLOS staff members will be preferentially admitted. Further, returning students will be offered the opportunity to automatically be accepted the following year. The remaining slots for each grade level, if any, will be drawn randomly at a live event where any community member may witness the results. Names will be drawn until all slots are filled. The remaining applicant names will be drawn to be put on a waiting list, in the order they were drawn. This process will continue, by grade level, until all slots are filled.

Post-Lottery

Upon completion of the lottery process, each selected student's designated parent or representative will be notified in person (if at the lottery drawing) or by email and phone (if not in attendance). Each student's designated parent or representative will be asked to formally accept or decline the invitation to attend CLOS. If there is no response after five business days, the student will be deemed to have declined the invitation and their name will be withdrawn from the class roster. Any declined slots will then be offered to the students at the top of the waiting list with the process continuing until all slots are filled or the waiting list has been exhausted. Any open slots after that point in time will be considered Available Openings and will be filled by any student who subsequently applies, on a first-come, first served basis. Open slots will be posted on the school website until filled.

This process shall apply for the first school year and any subsequent years. The Head of School shall be responsible for receiving all applications and overseeing the lottery process.

This process ensures that all students who which to apply for a slot at CLOS will have an equal opportunity to do so. Students that apply early in the Open Enrollment process do not have an advantage over those that apply later. The drawing of names will be conducted by a third party, unaffiliated with the school, and will be open to any parent or community member to ensure fairness and non-partiality.

Q40.



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H. Legal Compliance - Conflict of Interest Policy

• A complete response must

1. Provide a governing body conflict of interest policy that includes action steps, timelines, and responsible parties;

2. Describe how the policy meets the requirements of New Mexico law addressing all areas of potential conflicts of interest; and

3. Include all forms the governing body will or may be required to submit pursuant to the policy.

4. Narrative Only

We have taken a legal Conflict of Interest policy and modified it slightly to meet the unique requirements of CLOS. This is attached as an appendix to the application. It is our intent to present this to the CLOS Board at its first meeting for review and approval.

This policy outlines the requirements of Board members and staff regarding any potential or actual conflicts that may arise. All board members will be required to review the policy and acknowledge their compliance with all applicable terms and conditions. The Head of School will also review and acknowledge the parameters of the policy as part of the condition for employment. Further, the Head of School shall train all staff regarding the terms and conditions set forth therein and have each staff member review and acknowledge their compliance.

The Conflict of Interest policy incorporates NMSA 11-8B-5.2 to ensure that it meets all applicable New Mexico law requirements.

Board members will be required to review the policy annually and will be required to sign a simple statement acknowledging so and to identify any conflicts that may arise.

Applicant Evidence :



Collins Lake Outdoor Sc...

Uploaded on **5/21/2025** by

Steve Smaby

Q41.

L.(1) Evidence of Partnership/Contractor relationship - Essential Third Party Relationships (if applicable)

A complete response must

1. Identify any third party relationships with specific, identified organizations that control or influence essential elements—including the existence, operation, curriculum, or instruction of the proposed charter



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school—that are required by a partner organization or any part of the application;

2. Describe, in detail, the relationships;

3. Describe why the relationships are essential or required, or how they control essential elements of the proposed charter school;

4. If any such relationships exist identify the following:

a. The specific, identified organizations

b. Contact information for that organization

c. Specific individuals in the organization that will be associated with the proposed school;

5. Describe all legal implications of the essential/required relationships, including the legal benefits and responsibilities of each party.

6. Narrative Only

Not applicable for CLOS.

Q42.

I.(2). Evidence of Partnership/Contractor relationship - Appendix D Attachment Formal Agreement Documentation

• A response is only required if relationships were identified in question 20. A complete response must

1. Identify all MOUs or formal agreements that are attached in Appendix D;

2. Include proposed formal agreements or MOUs that are signed in Appendix D; and

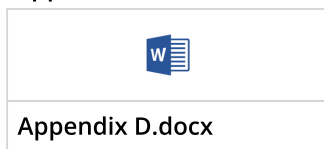
3. Identify the responsibilities, activities, and costs of both sides.

4. Any uploads associated with I.(1)

Not applicable for CLOS.

☒ Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

Applicant Evidence :



Uploaded on **6/2/2025** by
Steve Smaby

Q43.

J.(1). Transportation and Food - Transportation Plan



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A response is only required if the school plans to offer regular transportation either for daily transportation to/from school OR for transportation to/from school specific activities and events that are a necessary part of the mission. All schools must be prepared to meet IEP transportation requirements.

• A complete response must

1. Identify a plan for establishing transportation services at the school including specific action steps, timelines responsible parties, and associated costs that address the following:

- a. Identifying equipment purchase or contracting needs
- b. Identifying hiring and or contracting needs
- c. Hiring or contracting
- d. Establishing training needs and inspection process needs
- e. Establishing travel routes and pick up/drop off points
- f. Establishing transportation policies and practices
- g. Identifying student transportation needs; transportation plan costs; and

2. Identify all, but at least one, specific entities or organizations that have been identified as potential partners or vendors for these services

3. Narrative Only

Due to our small enrollment and our rural location, we do not currently plan to offer transportation services. We will evaluate this plan over time to determine if there is a cost effective, equitable option that would serve the students better. One option may be to contract with the local school district to transport students from their homes to the main school location and then arrange for transportation from there to CLOS.

Q44.

J.(2) Transportation and Food - Food Services Plan

• A complete response must

1. Identify a plan for establishing food services at the school, including specific action steps, timelines responsible parties, and associated costs that address the following:

- a. Identifying equipment purchase or contracting needs
- b. Identifying hiring and/or contracting needs
- c. Hiring or contracting
- d. Establishing training and inspection process needs
- e. Identifying and completing relevant program application and reporting requirements;

2. Identify all federal and state food service programs the school plans to participate in;

3. If providing or planning to offer a PreK or Early Childhood program, provide a plan for food service;



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4. Identify how the school will fund the food service plan costs prior to receiving any applicable reimbursements; and

5. Identify all, but at least one, specific entities or organizations that have been identified as potential partners or vendors for these services and describe all steps that have been taken to create a relationship, establish a relationship, or develop a partnership to provide these services.

6. Narrative Only

CLOS intends to offer meal service for students attending our school. The first and easiest approach will be to contract with Mora ISD and purchase pre-packaged meals from their food service organization. Our Administrative Assistant would pick up the meals from the school (approximately 3 miles from CLOS) and deliver them to the CLOS kitchen yurt. Cold items would be stored short term in the existing refrigerators while hot items could be re-heated, if necessary, in the CLOS stoves.

A second option is to contract with Collins Lake Autism Center (CLAC) and have them prepare and deliver meals to the school location. This has the advantage of being very nearby (approximately 200 yards) and would allow meals to be delivered exactly when needed. CLAC operates a licensed commercial kitchen and currently prepares meals for their residential clients and staff. They are aware that there are numerous regulations associated with this service and will begin exploring all the requirements when we are approved as a charter school.

The cost of providing meals is included in our operating budget.

Q45.

K.(1) Facilities/School Environment - Appendix E Attachment: Facilities Master Plan Ed/ Spec Checklist

• A complete response must

1. Demonstrate the applicant submitted a Facilities Master Plan to PSFA by the deadline;

2. If offering or planning or offer a PreK or Early Childhood program, provide a description of the facilities and playground in the Facilities Master Plan; and

3. Demonstrate the PSFA has approved the applicant's Facilities Master Plan.

4. Narrative and other uploads

The Facilities Master Plan was submitted to PSFA by the deadline as was approved on March 28, 2025. Copies of the Plan and the approval letter are attached.

We will not be offering Pre-K or Early Childhood programs at this time.



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Applicant Evidence :



Collins Lake FMP Ed Spe...

Uploaded on **5/6/2025** by

Becky Kappus

Q46.

K.(2) Facilities/School Environment - Evidence of Researched Facilities/Properties

• A complete response must

1. Demonstrate the applicant has done the following:

a. Conducted outreach and researched multiple facilities or properties in the targeted geographic location to understand if there are public facilities that are available, appropriate, and viable

b. Identified whether or not each potential property will meet the requirements of NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-4.2, including occupancy, adequacy, and ownership;

2. Identify at least one potential facility or property that meets requirements.

3. Identify a plan that would enable the applicant to prepare the facility/property to meet the facility needs of the proposed school in time for the proposed school's opening date, include specific action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and capital outlay needs;

4. Identify how the project to prepare the facility will be funded.

5. Narrative and other uploads

We have identified the site that we will be providing services. It will be located at Collins Lake Ranch and will be leased from Collins Lake Autism Center (CLAC), a 501(c)3 corporation that owns the facilities. Upon approval for the charter school, we will begin negotiating a lease agreement, including any modifications that may be necessary to ensure the facilities meet all requirements. Funding for any improvements will most likely be provided by CLAC. If any modifications or changes are ultimately the responsibility of CLOS, these costs will either be covered by interim funding that CLOS secures, or they may be funded by CLAC and then reflected in the lease agreement.

2.3. Financial Framework

Q47.

A. School Size - Projected Enrollment

• A complete response must



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1. Identify the anticipated number of students for each of the first five years and “at capacity”, based on the long-term strategic plan;
2. Identify the grade levels requested to be served in each of the first five years (phase in plan) and “at capacity”, based on the long-term strategic plan; and
3. Identify the student/teacher ratio (not student/staff ratio) that aligns with the number of students served, grade levels, and staffing plan for each of the first five years and “at capacity”, based on the long-term strategic plan.
4. Narrative and other uploads

Our original plan was to provide educational services for grades K-8 with a total of 8 students in each grade, or a grand total of 72 students. However, we understand that State Statutes require that the initial student enrollment for charter school applications be limited to 10% of the district student population. Per Melissa Brown with the PED, that number is 35 students, significantly less than what we envisioned. With that in mind, we have modified our plans to only offer services for grades K-4 with only 7 students per grade, a total of 35 students. The CLOS team will use a multi-age classrooms or composite classes with students from more than one grade level in a classroom. We will have an opportunity to ask for amendments in the future, but for the purposes of this application, we understand that we cannot assume any growth beyond the 35 students. Therefore, our budget is built on 35 students for each of the first five years.

Our budget assumes two full-time teachers, which results in a student/teacher ratio of 17.5.

Applicant Evidence :



Student Enrollment Cap...

Uploaded on **5/26/2025** by
Steve Smaby

Q48.

B.(1) Budget - Attached Appendix F, 910B5 State Equalization Guarantee (SEG)

• A complete response must

1. Include a complete 910B5 Worksheet in Appendix F. Please download the attached resource file here, "910B-5-Tool New Charter.xlsx", complete and upload to this question.
2. Use appropriate values and computations in each year;
3. Use projected unit value; and
4. Budget the correct special education percentage based on the local special education population, unless the school has a sufficient justification for why it will have a larger population (provide justification, if



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applicable).

5. Required to use tool provided

The attached 910B-5's prepared by the Vigil Group meet all of the requirements listed above. A separate worksheet has been included for each year, with the only significant year-to-year change being an assumption of a 3% growth in unit values. We have used the same 3% growth assumption in our budgeted expenses.

Resources



910B-5-Tool New Charte...

Applicant Evidence :



CLOS FY25 910B-5 Year ...

Uploaded on **6/1/2025** by
Steve Smaby



CLOS FY25 910B-5 Year ...

Uploaded on **6/1/2025** by
Steve Smaby



CLOS FY25 910B-5 Year ...

Uploaded on **6/1/2025** by
Steve Smaby



CLOS FY25 910B-5 Year ...

Uploaded on **6/1/2025** by
Steve Smaby



CLOS FY25 910B-5 Year ...

Uploaded on **6/1/2025** by
Steve Smaby

Q49.

B.(2) Budget - Attached Appendix G: Proposed five-year Budget Plan

• A complete response must

1. Include a five-year budget plan in Appendix G that is based on the 910B5 SEG Revenue Worksheet from Appendix F. Please download the attached resource file here, "Appendix-G-5-Year-Budget-Plan-2018.2.9-1 MB3.6.25", complete and upload to this question.
2. Support the proposed school's mission and all elements of the proposed program laid out in the application; and
3. Align with the proposed school's five-year growth plan
4. Required to use tool provided



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A five-year budget plan has been attached as Appendix G that meets all of the requirements listed above. The budget assumes that we will maintain student enrollment at 35 students for all five years. We have also prepared a budget with the assumption that we will be able to expand our student enrollment cap, but we have not included that budget in this application. We are prepared to discuss the positive financial benefits of increasing the enrollment cap, including the ability to reduce and eventually eliminate the need for Collins Lake Autism Center Support by the end of the fifth year.

Resources



Appendix-G-5-Year-Bud...

Applicant Evidence :



CLOS FY25 Appendix G ...

Uploaded on **6/1/2025** by
Steve Smaby

Q50.

B.(3) Budget - Budget Narrative

• A complete response must

1. Explain basic assumptions;
2. Identify reliable sources for each assumption;
3. Include priorities consistent with the proposed school's mission;
4. Include priorities consistent with the proposed school's educational program;
5. Include priorities consistent with the proposed school's staffing; and
6. Include priorities consistent with the proposed school's facility.
7. Narrative Only

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As noted above, CLOS is severely limited with our total student enrollment cap, due to the small number of students in the Mora ISD 40-day enrollment. With a cap of only 35 students, our operating budget reflects this reality.

The budget was built using the following basic assumptions.

We will have 35 students, 7 each in grades K - 4.

We will have 11.5 Special Needs student, or 33% of the total population. This is higher than the Mora ISD values, but we will be marketing specifically to SPED students and expect a higher than average SPED enrollment.

We have budgeted for 1 Gifted student.

We will hire a Head of School, one regular education teacher, one special education teacher, one educational assistant and a part-time administrative assistant.

We will contract with a third-party for the financial reporting tasks, presumably with the Vigil Group. We will also contract for ancillary services.

We will contract for Food services. Our assumption is that revenues for Food services will equal the expense of obtaining services.

We have assumed we will receive Lease support payments equal to \$816.50 times 35 students. We have also assumed that our lease payments to Collins Lake Autism Center (CLAC) will equal that same amount.

We have assumed that CLAC will raise funds from grants, donations and other operating income equal to \$100,000 per year to help support the school.

These assumptions were generated in collaboration with the Vigil Group. They have many years of experience in public school financing and have come highly recommended by various school administrators and from the Public Charter Schools of New Mexico. Working with them over the past several months has reinforced our belief that our assumptions are realistic, and in fact may be somewhat overly conservative.

A part of our mission is to focus on students with special needs. We believe that our staffing is sufficient to meet these needs. The extra revenue we generate in SEG funds has been allocated to supporting these students.

The second focus area of our mission is to operate our programs in an outdoor environment, as much as possible. The facilities at CLAC are ideal for this approach. Our need for higher cost traditional classroom buildings is much less than other charter schools and the cost of leasing space from CLAC is much lower than what other charter schools typically need to spend. The lease assistance from the PSCOC Awards is approximately equal to the lease payments that CLAC would normally charge for these facilities and preliminary discussions have suggested that CLAC would be amenable to leasing the required facilities for that amount.



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The staffing that we have assumed will result in a student/teacher ratio of 17.5, consistent with our expectations for effective educational services. The educational assistant has been included to reflect the needs of our special education students. Our administrative staff levels are very low, but we feel that that is consistent with the student enrollment levels.

As noted above, the facility expenses are consistent with our master facility plan.

Q51.

B.(4) Budget - Budget Narrative (if replicating a model)

• **A complete response must:**

1. Describe the relationship between the new school and the existing school or network of schools
2. List the services to be contracted from the existing school or network,
3. Detail the proposed budget for those services, and
4. Include a scope of work for a proposed contract or request for proposals.
5. Narrative Only

Not applicable for CLOS.

Q52.

B.(5) Budget - Budget Adjustments

• **A complete response must**

1. Describe budget control strategies as well as budget adjustments that will be made to meet financial budget and cash-flow challenges;
2. Describe budget control strategies as well as budget adjustments that will be made to address the failure to receive any anticipated funding sources;
3. Include explanations that are viable and realistic, based on the professional judgment of experienced, licensed, school business officials;
4. Address how special education students will receive services before special education funding is provided, based on accurate 40-day counts; and
5. Address how gaps between budgeted students and actual enrollment will be addressed.
6. Demonstrate how budget control strategies provide capacity to manage the budget successfully.
7. Address how the school will modify the budget for students with special needs.
8. describe how the proposed school will address the budget in the event that the proposed school has budgeted for more students, based on early enrollment, than actually enroll in the proposed school at the



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beginning of the proposed school year.

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It should be clear from the five-year budget plan that CLOS cannot be financially viable using SEG funds alone at the 35 student cap and that we will need some supplemental funding to balance the annual budgets.

Collins Lake Autism Center (CLAC) and its founder, Steve Smaby, are the parties that are pursuing the vision of a charter school at Collins Lake Ranch. CLAC was first established as a 501(c)3 corporation in 2010 with the mission to provide supported living, educational opportunities and therapeutic services for individuals with developmental disabilities. It began operations in January 2014 and has been extremely successful, by any of a number of measures. They currently employ 22 full and part time staff and have 4 disabled clients that live at the Ranch full time. They have been providing educational programs for over ten years for their residents and other community members. They are providing a number of therapeutic services and have plans to increase the scope of those services over the next several years.

The idea of creating a charter school at the Ranch was first developed in the fall of 2020 as the world was struggling with COVID. As schools closed their doors and transitioned to remote learning, CLAC opened their campground facilities to local students that were having difficulties with this new paradigm, whether due to lack of internet access, lack of parental support, or inability to successfully learn in this new mode. Students brought their laptops and worked outdoors in a medically safe environment and had support from instructors that helped them navigate the problems of remote learning. Most significantly, after the students completed their online work, they were able to hike the property, work with the animals and learn in a nature-based setting. The results were amazing. Students that were ready to drop out of school suddenly saw opportunities where they could prosper. They found that education had meaning and could help improve their lives. Perhaps it was the passion of the instructors, or the environment that they were working in, but these students' lives were changed during the year that they spent at the Ranch.

Once students were able to return to their classrooms, CLAC found ways to provide out-of-school enrichment activities. Whether it was Environmental Education for Mora students on Thursdays, home-school programs on Wednesdays, or SOMA (Sensory, Outdoor, Music and Arts) on Fridays, CLAC continued to experiment with ways to enhance the educational opportunities for area students.

Based on these experiences, CLAC has chosen to invest in the goal to create a charter school. The two principles that guide their vision are Outdoor Education and a focus on students with Special Needs. There are several reasons that CLAC is willing to allocate both their financial resources and personnel to this cause. First, they have seen firsthand the evidence of how this can impact students' education. Second, our schools are struggling, whether due to the pandemic, the 2022 wildfires, or a general decline in education. Third, CLAC relies on skilled, caring staff and they believe that students that attend CLOS will be prime candidates for rewarding job opportunities at CLAC. Lastly, the parents, teachers and volunteers that work at or visit the Ranch help spread the word of the work that CLAC does and help create a better understanding of the unique individuals that call this place home.

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That said, CLAC is prepared to invest significant financial resources to get CLOS to the point where it is fiscally sustainable. The CLOS budget assumes that CLAC will contribute \$100,000 per year during the first five years of operation. With this funding, CLOS will have a balanced budget with a slight cash carryover each year. Our assumptions are fairly conservative and it is hoped that through prudent management this full amount will not be required.

Like any new business venture, we believe that our vision will be successful and that the results of our program will create a demand for our services beyond the original 35 student cap. Our hope is that we can add a grade level each year so that our older students can continue attending CLOS as they grow older. Hopefully our original goal of serving students K-8 will be possible with the support of the PEC.

While not presented herein, we have developed a five-year budget plan based on our original goals and found that if our enrollment can be increased as hoped, our financial picture improves to the point where by year five we no longer need supplemental support from CLAC. That would be our ultimate goal, to be fully self-sustaining and be able to serve students throughout the first nine years of their education.

In response to the specific items in Q52, our responses are as follows:

1. A detailed monthly budget will be prepared for each school year in accordance with all PED requirements. A monthly report will be prepared for the Board showing actual vs budget results as well as projections for the remainder of the year. Opportunities to reduce expenditures will be presented each month along with the ramifications of cutting those items. The Board will balance the needs of our students with the cost of programming and will adjust the amount asked from CLAC as necessary.
2. Our budget is quite conservative and relies almost exclusively on SEG funding. If our funding is reduced due to fewer SPED students, we will adjust the hours of our Educational Assistant. We also expect, based on past experience, that we will be able to call on parents and other community members to volunteer time to help fill unmet needs.
3. We have also established a strong partnership with Highlands University, and their Education Department specifically. For example, much of the work to prepare this application was donated by the University at no cost to CLOS or CLAC. We believe that we will be able to draw on additional resources in the future and collaborate with Highlands in a mutually beneficial arrangement.
4. During each year, we have budgeted a \$100,000 financial contribution from CLAC. As part of that commitment, it is understood that some funding will need to be front-end loaded to match the CLOS cash-flow needs.



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5. Based on the community outreach we have done to date, we believe that we will have many more students applying to CLOS than our limited number of open slots. If we have a shortfall of students in one grade level, we are prepared to increase the number of students in other grades while still not exceeding the original student cap. If we do happen to have less students than budgeted, we may reduce the hours of selected staff or may ask CLAC for additional support.

6. The key to any successful budget control strategy is to identify potential problems as early as possible and to react quickly. As one of the fire fighters would remind the community during the 2022 wildfires, hope is not a strategy. Plan ahead. Prepare contingencies. Act on the results. As an example, we will not stop recruiting when we have exactly 35 students enrolled. Some students will end up dropping out, for a wide variety of reasons. While we hate to disappoint any parent or student, we need to have a waiting list so that we can keep our enrollment filled at all times.

7. Our budget is designed with a certain number of special needs students in mind. As you know, funding is increased for special needs students and we will adjust our services based on the actual enrollment. Our philosophy is that any extra funding associated with special needs students will be used to meet the needs of those students.

8. This question was fully addressed in Item 5 above.

Q53.

C.(1) Financial Policies, Oversight, Compliance, and Sustainability - Internal Control Procedures

• A complete response must

1. Describe how internal control procedures will include the following:

a. safeguard assets

b. segregate its payroll

c. segregate cash and check disbursement duties

d. provide reliable financial information and promote operational efficiency

e. ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state statutes, regulations, and rules;

2. Clarify how procedures that—based on the professional judgment of experienced, licensed, school business officials—successfully ensure appropriate segregation of duties; and

3. Provide a process the school will use to regularly evaluate compliance with the internal control procedures that have been described above.

4. Narrative Only



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Due to our small size, CLOS intends to contract our financial reporting to an outside firm, most likely the Vigil Group from Albuquerque. They have helped with the budget plans included in this application and we have found them to be thorough, professional and timely. With their help, we are committed to developing and maintaining financial procedures and policies that ensure robust internal controls in accordance with GAAP and applicable laws and regulations governing State Charter Schools.

The Board, with the guidance of the Finance Committee and the Audit Committee, have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the school assets, revenue and expenses are properly accounted for. The Head of School and the Administrative Assistant have the day-to-day responsibility of accounting for all revenue and expenses and reporting those transactions to our outside financial consultants. The outside consultants have the responsibility to ensure those reports are reasonable and advise the Finance committee of any suspected improprieties. They will also provide monthly financial reports for review and approval by the Finance Committee and the Board.

In addition to our internal controls, we will hire an independent third-party auditor pursuant to PED requirements to audit our financial statements and identify any specific concerns or concerns regarding operational integrity. The audit report will be presented to the Board for their review and approval.

Q54.

C.(2) Financial Policies, Oversight, Compliance, and Sustainability - Staff for Financial Tasks

• A complete response must

- 1. Identify the appropriate staff to perform each financial task identified in the response to B(1) and all other required financial tasks;**
- 2. Align completely with the organizational chart from response to D(1) in the Organizational Framework;**
- 3. Align completely with the budget in A(1) and A(2) responses in Financial Framework;**
- 4. Describe appropriate qualifications and responsibilities for each of the identified positions; and**
- 5. Include a plan that will result in the recruitment, identification, the evaluation of candidates, and the hiring of highly qualified staff for each of the identified positions, no later than two weeks prior to the start of the proposed school year.**
- 6. Narrative Only**



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As noted in our organization chart, we expect to have a very small staff to operate the school. On the administration side, we will only have an Administrative Assistant and our Head of School. To ensure appropriate checks and balances, the Administrative Assistant will prepare all disbursements and attach invoices and other supporting documentation. The Head of School will have signatory authority for checks up to a certain level to be established by the Board. For amounts over that threshold, a second signature will be required by either the Finance Committee Chair or the Board Chair. The Administrative Assistant will prepare a monthly bookkeeping of all revenue and expenses. This will be reviewed by the Head of School before being transmitted to the outside financial consultant. They will then be responsible for preparing financial reports for the Finance Committee that comport with PED reporting requirements.

The Administrative Assistant will be required to have at least an Associate's degree with a focus on accounting or business administration. They will also be required to obtain training specifically related to School finance and accounting procedures.

The qualifications for the Head of School include:

Education - A bachelor and master's degree from an accredited university, preferably with a focus on the needs of special education students, along with an Educational Administration licensure.

Experience - At least five years of experience in an administrative role at another New Mexico public school.

Other attributes - The ideal candidate shall have proven leadership skills with the ability to attract and retain strong teachers and staff. As our proposed school is quite small, the Head of School must be willing to take on a wide range of tasks that might otherwise be delegated to other staff members. The Head of School must have experience with the philosophy of Outdoor Education and be willing to engage with staff and students in an outdoor environment. He or she must be adept at problem solving and finding collaborative solutions to conflicts that arise. They must be able to effectively balance the needs of the teachers, staff, students and parents while following the policies and procedures set by the Board. A strong understanding of school finances is critical, both to ensure compliance, but also to maximize the opportunities to utilize all funding sources. Lastly, the Head of School, along with the Board, shall set the culture and expectations of the staff and students and help define and demonstrate what it means to be part of the CLOS family.

Given the limited staff, particular training and skills in school finances will be a priority in selecting that individual. The process for selecting the Head of School was discussed in detail in Question 28.

Q55.

C.(3) Financial Policies, Oversight, Compliance, and Sustainability - Governing Body Legal & Fiscal Oversight

- **A complete response must**



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1. Describe how the Governing Body audit and finance committees will be formed and how they will:

a. Function generally

b. Ensure proper legal oversight

c. Ensure proper financial oversight;

2. Describe how the proposed school's audit and finance committees will interact with the school's management; and

3. Describe how the audit and finance committees will interact with the full Governing Body.

Upon notice that our Charter School application has been approved, the founding members will formally appoint the Board members. We have identified five qualified candidates which we described in the Executive Summary. We believe that this group of individuals collectively have the skills and experience needed to effectively oversee the operation of CLOS.

The Finance Committee shall be comprised of three Board members, including the Board Treasurer, with experience in corporate finance, financial accounting and/or school finances. The Head of School shall also be a member of the Finance Committee. The Head of School shall prepare the annual school budget, with assistance from the outside financial consultant. Once reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee, it shall be presented to the full Board for their review and approval. Monthly finance reports shall be prepared and reviewed in the same manner.

The Audit Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that the annual audit is performed in accordance with all laws and regulations related to Charter Schools. In addition to appointed Board members, the Audit Committee may include non-Board members with specific skills in legal and financial expertise. We expect to contract with an outside legal firm to address any legal issues that may arise, including lease agreements, employment contracts and other legal matters. The Audit Committee shall meet with the outside auditor and support their work as needed. They shall review the audit report and present it to the full Board, in conjunction with the outside auditor, for the Board's review and approval. They shall also be responsible for developing a strategic plan to address any audit findings and to ensure that the Head of School implements that plan.

2.4. Evidence of Support

Q56.

A. Outreach Activities - Outreach Program

• A complete response must

1. Describe an outreach program to develop community support for the proposed school that has been implemented during the application process;

2. Complete Appendix H: Community Outreach to delineate the specific activities conducted by the applicant team in the community to demonstrate robust community engagement and demand for the



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- school. Indicate the date, targeted stakeholder group, a description of the outreach, location, information/input obtained and the specific actions taken to incorporate feedback on the application to demonstrate a broad audience, representative of the community has had input and
3. Indicate the number of attendees at each outreach activity.
 4. Narrative and other uploads



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**Collins Lake Outdoor School Outreach Activity Report**

Collins Lake Autism Center (CLAC) has been providing educational programming in the Mora community for over ten years. Community educators have given workshops, training, and enrichment for families and children. From fire safety to making ristras, from forest health to mental health, supporting the Mora Valley community has been central to our work. CLAC has expanded these educational connections through its own programming and conducting outreach specifically for the establishment of a charter school. Through outdoor learning, media, community engagement, and developing relationships with individual stakeholders, we have developed vital and valuable connections for our learning community.

Outdoor Programming

SOMA Days: A series of outdoor-based learning days with a focus on social, emotional and executive functioning skills development to improve academic achievement. SOMA (Sensory, Outdoor, Music & Arts) Days included educators from New Mexico School for the Arts, Indigenous Education Network, Queen Bee Music, Roxy Wellness & Yoga, Cooking With Kids, and the Highlands Conservation Science Center. Our "Learn & Earn" intern program provided hands-on job and leadership skills and a stipend for high school students. Learners attended from San Miguel, Mora, Colfax, and Taos counties, including elementary and middle school students from local schools and homeschool families. Every month, learners and educators gathered at the Collins Lake Outdoor Campus to spend their instructional day by the lake and amongst the trees.

Our SOMA Days program serves a specific educational need in the Mora area. Currently, the lack of sensory and arts education has created a significant gap in learning particularly for young learners. We know that hands-on creative learning provides development and mastery of critical executive functioning skills necessary for academic success. Our small group collaborative learning provides important social emotional skills development. Fine and gross motor skills, muscle memory, higher order creative thinking and problem-solving, combined with the physical benefit of the outdoors, and social emotional benefits of a sense of belonging are all part of the joy of learning at Collins Lake SOMA Days.

Acequia Day: On this day for cultural learning and community service, learners got their feet wet while learning about the cultural and technological importance of the acequia system in northern New Mexico. Our local mayor domo provided hands-on history as he taught our learners about how the centuries-old acequia system was built and maintained by Norteno families. Dr. Jenn Aldred of the ARMAS Center at New Mexico Highlands University taught learners about the engineering of the acequias as they applied principles of physics, topography, and erosion to their own models. Combining culture and STEM, heritage and technology, learners received culturally and linguistically relevant and accessible learning. Our outdoor-based campus gave learners the chance to participate in cultural self-care and hands-on environmental science while having fun in the mud.



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Forestry Day: Another day for hands-on environmental learning and field service, learners spent the day in the forest with our Forestry Service Ranger, Noah Aragon. A native of Las Vegas and graduate of New Mexico Highlands University, Noah brings his own heritage and professional expertise to outdoor education. Learners engaged in lessons integrating biology, botany, fire and fuel practices, and conservation and field service. In alignment with NMPED's college and career readiness and strategic plan, Forestry Day connects learners with field experts in a sensory-based skill-building learning environment where they can explore and experience applied STEM and field work firsthand. Cone collecting, species identification, burn scar impact, and tree climbing are all part of the fun on Forestry Day.

Summer Reading Program: Literacy skills development is a foundational aspect of Collins Lake Outdoor Education. We know that literacy and language skills are the cornerstone for academic achievement and through our outdoor-based learning program we optimize literacy instruction with science of reading and hands-on learning. In 2024, our program was highly successful in engaging preschool - 5th grade learners in daily literacy and language skills development while having fun outside. For summer 2025, we anticipate another successful program with science of reading, science of learning, and learning through play.

Our Summer Reading Program fills a critical gap in the Mora Valley area. Not only do we provide important literacy support for local learners who cannot access our service through the school district, we work with parents and families and provide resources for at-home learning during the most important formative years of literacy and language development. Families are our most valuable asset: establishing and nurturing these vital connections with families by working directly with parents is a core commitment in the success of our program. Feedback from the 2024 program reinforced the strong interest in a year-round education program at Collins Lake Ranch.

Direct Community Outreach

In order to establish both educational need and community support for our program, Collins Lake Outdoor School has taken a trifurcated approach to outreach: media, community engagement, and individual stakeholders. Evaluating the educational landscape through data and provider insight, seeking direct feedback from targeted community members, and getting the word out through information sharing are all successful aspects of our strategy.

Social and Legacy Media: Through informational and interactive engagement on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and our own website, we have created increased visibility of our programs and awareness of educational choices for families in northern New Mexico. In a series of articles published in the Las Vegas Optic, we have also utilized legacy media to share our program's focus and highlights with the Mora Valley and San Miguel communities. We also communicated directly through email with targeted community members in the local homeschool communities.



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Community Events: Collaboration and connection with community is our primary method of outreach.

Interacting with families and folks from various support service organizations provides us with direct insight and meaningful feedback from both parents and professionals. We successfully utilized several community events as strategic data collection points through surveys and interviews. In addition to surrounding area events, we conducted information sharing and surveying at Collins Lake Cafe in downtown Mora, and at our own outdoor campus with the Mora Homeschool Coalition. Data we collected measured the need for school choice in northern New Mexico and the level of interest in our outdoor-based educational program. Our findings show that there is a need for an alternative to the local school, that there is moderate to high dissatisfaction with current schooling experiences, and there is a very high interest in outdoor-based learning. Events we attended include: the annual Dr. Seuss Party in Taos, the Early Childhood Coalitions's Noche de Familia in Sapello, the Autism Amazing! event at New Mexico Highlands University, and the Easter Fiesta in downtown Mora.

Individual Stakeholders: Through the years of educational programming at Collins Lake, we have grown a network of educators, community advocates, and service professionals who have taught and supported the Mora Valley community and families. It is this core collaborative work that connects us with the community we serve. Individual stakeholders including parents, administrators, educators, and support service providers, have expressed both the need for our program and the benefits we provide our learners and their families. Attached are letters of support from these individual stakeholders that evidence the need and desire for Collins Lake Outdoor school as an alternative educational choice in Mora Valley.

Applicant Evidence :

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| Music.jpg | Indigenous Education.jpg | Outdoor reading - deck.... | Outdoor reading - apple... |
| Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Steve Smaby | Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Steve Smaby | Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Steve Smaby | Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by Steve Smaby |
|  |  |  |  |
| Kids in acequia.jpg | Pavillion.jpg | Classroom.jpg | Classroom yurt.jpg |
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Q57.

B. Community Support - Evidence of Community Support and Demand



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- A complete response must

1. Provide evidence of demand for the proposed school through quantitative and qualitative measures of family interest in enrolling their student in the school.
2. Provide a description of educational options for similar populations in the community to demonstrate why there is a need for a high-quality charter option serving that particular demographic. Provide evidence that demonstrates need such as low academic performance in existing options, lack of programmatic/instructional models responsive to community, low access to seats in available schools (e.g., waitlists or lack of program offerings), and / growing population in the target grade levels.
3. Ensure the demonstrated support is specific to the community of the targeted geographic location, grade levels and other demographics of the targeted student population.
4. Narrative and other uploads

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While we have not yet begun actively recruiting students, our community outreach programs have provided us a good picture of the interest from local parents regarding a Mora-based charter school and specifically a charter school at Collins Lake Ranch.

From all our surveys, the most striking observation was the number of parents that were interested in an alternative school for their children. Roughly 90% of all groups surveyed answered that they would like to see more school choices.

While Taos is located approximately 45 miles from Collins Lake, we believe there are several families that would consider enrolling their children at CLOS. These families have friends in the area and have visited the Ranch many times over the years. Our outreach at the Dr. Seuss party in Taos revealed that the most attractive feature of the proposed CLOS program was the emphasis on outdoor education. A total of 28% of the survey respondents indicated that they would consider enrolling their children here, but we expect the total number of applicants would be much lower, considering the commute and the large number of other charter school options in the Taos area.

The event that we attended in Sapello was relatively small and it is difficult to draw any significant conclusions from the respondents. The areas that generated the most interest were literacy, experiential education and special needs education.

On April 19th we participated in an event in Las Vegas called Autism Amazing! There was a large turnout of families with children on the autism spectrum and a very keen interest in the activities at Collins Lake Ranch. We collected 35 surveys that represented most of the families in attendance. As you might expect, there was a very strong interest in a charter school that focused on special needs students. There are two school districts in Las Vegas as well as one District Charter School (Rio Gallinas). We have hosted special needs students from one of the public schools in the past that really benefitted from the outdoor setting. While most surveys expressed a strong interest in the CLOS vision, we believe there were approximately 10 families that would seriously consider enrolling their children at CLOS, notwithstanding the 30-mile commute.

Another potential source of students is from the families that currently home school their children. There is a Mora Home School Learning Coalition that has been meeting one day a week at the Ranch over the past two years. They have approximately 60 students in their group, of which one third are the age of our proposed school grades. Based on their research, they believe that there is another 60 home-school students that are not part of the coalition. Most of these families have decided to home school due to their desire for a higher quality education than Mora ISD is providing. Many, but not all, of these parents would welcome the chance to enroll their children in a charter school that focuses on outdoor education, relieving them of the significant burden of home schooling.

Elsewhere within the Mora community we have gathered surveys and visited with parents and grandparents of Mora students. Mora ISD has struggled ever since COVID and the wildfires. Behavior issues create a difficult learning environment, not unlike many schools throughout the country. Teacher burnout is significant and they

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have had a difficult time attracting new teachers. There is a general lack of communication between the school and the families with each side feeling that the other is not doing enough for their children. CLAC operates a small coffee shop in the county courthouse and has the opportunity to interact with community members on a daily basis. Through surveys and conversations, we would estimate that roughly 50% of the community members are very interested in an alternative to the existing public school, another 40% would consider looking into an alternative, and the remaining 10% feel that no alternative is necessary. Two of the CLAC staff members have children on the autism spectrum and they would both enroll them at CLOS if possible.

In summary, there is a large number of parents in the Mora area that would like to have an alternative to the existing public school. Many of these parents have taken the difficult step of withdrawing their students and home schooling them. This is a large burden on these families and we believe that a charter school would be very attractive for most of these families. Many other families are looking for an alternative but are unable to devote the time and resources to home school. While Las Vegas is a fair commute from Mora, we believe that we will attract students from there as well, particularly students with special needs.

The only options for parents in the Mora area are sending their kids to Mora ISD, home schooling, and driving their kids to Las Vegas or Taos (surprisingly, there are more parents that do that than you would think). Las Vegas has two public school systems as well as one District Charter School, Rio Gallinas Charter School. Taos has a public school system as well as several charter schools. At this time, none of those schools focus on outdoor education or special needs students.

Based on anecdotal data from the Mora Home School Learning Coalition, the number of home-school students that have left Mora ISD has skyrocketed in the past year. The 40-day student enrollment figures only capture a portion of this student decline. We do not have access to the 120-day figures, but would like to see those in order to confirm what we are hearing.

Based on the composition of the home school coalition, most of their students are elementary age, followed by middle school age and a few high school age students. There are a few special needs students that are home-schooled, but generally those students are too challenging to be with their parents full time.

We have attached a sample of the survey results we obtained from the Taos event. We modified our survey somewhat after that and the sample surveys for Las Vegas and Mora reflect our updated form. We have copies of all surveys if anyone is interested in more details. We have also attached support letters from a few parents that felt strongly enough to submit these.

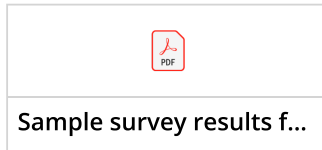


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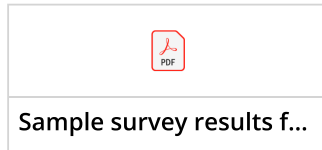
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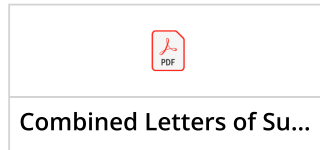
Applicant Evidence :



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Steve Smaby



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Steve Smaby



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Steve Smaby

Q58.

C. Community Relationships - Networking with Community

• A complete response must

1. Identify and describe specific meaningful and strategic networking relationships with local community agencies, groups, or individuals that will support the school. Include evidence of these relationships;
2. Identify and describe specific meaningful and strategic resource agreements with local community agencies, groups, or individuals that will support the school. Include evidence of these relationships; and
3. Describe why the applicant team believes the identified relationships demonstrate the school will be embraced and supported as the community's school and that there is abundant support for this school as a part of the community.

4. Narrative Only



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Collins Lake Autism Center (CLAC) has established a strong working relationship with Mora ISD over the years and has worked with them to provide enrichment education activities. In partnership with Highlands University we have been hosting Environmental Education programs on a weekly basis (less so in the winter months). When the NM PED offered a statewide reading program, Mora ISD was not able to participate and they asked CLAC if they could sponsor a program for Mora students (they did so and supported 24 K-5 students). CLAC hosted the New Mexico Environthon program for the past two years bringing students from throughout the area for the regional competition. Highlands University has been an important partner, bringing high school and college students to the Ranch in dozens of programs related to education, forestry and environmental science. The Mora Home School Learning Coalition formed two years ago and brings families and students to the Ranch on most Wednesdays for group education programs. The SOMA Days program that CLAC initiated was designed to offer enrichment education to Mora students on Fridays when they are normally out of their regular school. That program drew the attention of Rio Gallinas Charter School and they have sent roughly 30 students to each of those sessions. In fact, they enjoyed their visits to Collins Lake Ranch so much that they chose the Ranch as the site for their end-of-year outdoor camping program.

Over the past five years, Steve Smaby has cultivated a strong relationship with the superintendents at Mora ISD. While we do not expect a ringing endorsement for our application, Norma Cavazos, the current superintendent, has supported us in many ways, recognizing that we all want what is best for the students. Our goal is not to "poach" the best and brightest students from area schools, but to focus on those that would most benefit from the unique mission and vision of CLOS. In the end this should result in more students succeeding in the Mora and surrounding communities.

Q59.

Appendix A: Applicant Team

Use this table to identify Applicant Team Members (examples provided)



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| Applicant Group Member Name/Phone/Email Address | Current Employment | Relevant Experience/Skills and Role in the Application Development | Proposed Role(s) in School (e.g., governing board member, foundation board member, employee, none) | Proposed Position on the Board (e.g., officer or member) |
|--|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| Mr. Courtney Gonzales (505) 555- 5555 email@gmail.edu (mailto:email@gmail.edu) | UNM Education Professor | Curriculum Development Education Plan Committee | Head Administrator | Governing Board President |

Please see attached spreadsheet.

Applicant Evidence :



Appendix A - Applicant ...

Uploaded on **5/26/2025** by
Steve Smaby

Q60. Appendix H: Community Outreach Use this table to provide evidence of community outreach and input (*examples provided*)



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| Date(s) of Outreach (mm/dd/yy) | Target Stakeholder Group | Description of the Outreach | Location of Outreach | Input Obtained | Action Taken on Input | Number of Attendees |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|---|---|
| 01/16/2025 meeting date | Families of SWDs, community members | Sent flyers to community-based organizations serving children and families with special needs. Hosted a meet/greet to introduce team and solicit feedback on application. | ABC Community Center 123 Street, Las Cruces, NM | Need for family partners | Add a family liaison to the staff who is bi-lingual | 22 families of students in grades pre-kindergarten and kindergarten |

See attached spreadsheet.

Applicant Evidence :



appendix h table.docx

Uploaded on 6/1/2025 by

Steve Smaby

2.5. Certification of Completion

Q61.

Upload proof of AI plagiarism screening

☒ Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10



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Applicant Comments :

Due to size of the application, we had to break the application into 6 sections. The Plagiarism results ranged from No Plagiarism to 7%.

Applicant Evidence :



Plagerism Check 6.png

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Steve Smaby



Plagerism Check 5.png

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Plagerism Check 4.png

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Steve Smaby



Plagerism Check 2.png

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Plagerism check 1.png

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Q62.

I certify that the application is complete.

Signature